

## **EDINBURGH AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.**

### **Minutes of the 196<sup>th</sup> meeting held on Monday 10th May 2021 via Zoom.**

#### **Present**

Robert Carr (Chair)  
Janice Hogarth (Secretary)  
Gordon Dewar (Chief Executive EAL)  
Gordon Robertson Communications Director EAL  
Greg Maxwell Head of Corporate Affairs EAL  
Donald Spencer The Consumers Association  
Lindsay Cole Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board  
Kate Watt Ratho & District Community Council  
Alexia Haramis Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce  
Cllr Dave Dempsey Fife Council  
Cllr Tom Conn West Lothian Council  
John Howison Cramond Community Council  
Cllr Kevin Lang City of Edinburgh Council  
Julian Slatter ABTA  
Alan Mitchell Fife Chamber of Commerce  
Adam Cumming Edinburgh Airport Amenities Group  
Ken McNab SPAA  
Anna Herriman Sestrans  
David Hull Kirkliston Community Council  
David Dunphy Frequent Flyer representative  
Gary Harrison Police Services Scotland

#### **Apologies**

Nada Shawa Edinburgh Airport Accessibility Forum  
Cllr Carol Hamilton Scottish Borders Council  
Cllr Russell Imrie Midlothian Council  
Sandy Leggett Air Traffic Services  
Frazer McKinstry Edinburgh Airport Operators Committee  
Sandy Smart STUC  
Cllr John McMillan

#### **1. Welcome**

Robert opened the remote meeting being held by Zoom meeting, adding a warm welcome to Gary Harrison who was attending for Police Scotland and Anna Herriman who was attending for Sestrans.

#### **2. The minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were approved

#### **3. Other matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

Because of Kevin Lang was having to drop out the meeting the report on the Edinburgh Airport Noise Review Panel (“EANRP”) was taken next.

## **8. Report on EANRP**

Kevin Lang, as Co-chair of the EANRP advised that there had been over 90 responses to the recent survey and that alongside the responses there had been a number of interviews carried out with current and former EANAB members and current and former EAL staff by Robert Carr, Janice Hogarth and himself. There had been a late surge in survey responses and these were all now being reviewed by the members of the panel. There was some common themes and issues already appearing and it was hoped to have a report in time for the August EACC meeting.

Kevin Lang again stressed that recommendations would be made to EANAB and EAL and that thereafter it would be for these bodies to act on these recommendations.

Robert Carr added that the review would be keeping up to date on developments in relation to CAP1616 and also ICCAN.

Dave Dempsey asked how it would all connect together and whether it would look at where things were presently and then providing recommendations moving forward. Kevin Lang responded that he hoped that the work carried out would be taken seriously and that it would be in everyone's interests for there to be a body working for the local communities in relation to noise. No one who had been interviewed had felt that the current arrangements were operating satisfactorily. Gordon Robertson added that it was Edinburgh Airports' desire to move forward within a better framework.

Robert Carr also commented that it was not precise to say that EAL had commissioned this review in the sense that EAL had no power to order people to carry out a review. EAL originally initiated matters by inviting persons to conduct a review. The EANRP had then been formed and had set its own remit and would deliver its report with recommendations in due course.

## **4. Chief Executives Report (EAL)**

Gordon Dewar spoke to the slides which are attached. He reported how few flights had been operating and said that this was due to what effectively was a travel ban. The problem moving forward was how quickly airlines could respond to the changing restrictions and whether passenger confidence could return and how quickly.

The Scottish Government Aviation Working Group had met 4 times but not one single action point had been agreed. There was a commitment to follow the UK with a four nations approach but this could change at any point.

The results of the Global Travel Task Force had been disappointing and the current number of flights was less than 5%. The testing levels and high prices of testing was diminishing demand and there appeared to be no commitment to lowering the cost of the tests by Scottish Government. There was also no clarity of how countries could move from one colour to another and ultimately when we get back to normal, would countries move on to a white list of no restrictions ?

It seemed so difficult to get politicians to understand the travel industry and the fact that a domestic tourist spends nowhere near the amount that an overseas tourist will spend. They appear to be giving their briefings direct to the press such as the hotel quarantine which was announced without proper consultation and engagement with the airports. Airports, airlines and travel agents are all saying the same thing and working together to create one voice.

Currently, Scotland is out of step with the rest of the UK and this is encouraging passengers to fly out of English Airports, to the detriment of Scottish Airports. There also appear to be little prospect of any significant inbound travel from any destination.

EAL had been very vocal recently as it had tried to get the Scottish Government to engage properly with the Scottish airports and airline industry in a plea for them to align with the UK in a four nations approach. EAL had offered to help but so far this offer had not been taken up.

Gordon Dewar questioned whether without any movement on the part of Scottish Government, how would Scotland be able to address and succeed in keeping aircraft coming direct to Scotland in the extremely competitive arena across Europe.

There were some new routes due to start up from June onwards such as Air Baltic to Riga, British Airways to Faro, Ryanair to Naples and EasyJet to Jersey & Bournemouth. This was really good news but there was now an urgent need for the brakes to come off and for passengers to be allowed to travel.

David Dunphy talked about how he had seen discussions in some forums about people looking to fly from England until there is an update allowing travel from Scotland. There were always seasonal movements north and south of the border according to the different holiday peak dates but without a positive announcement from the Scottish Government this will be ongoing and will harm Scottish airports.

Gordon Dewar responded that politicians were being led in all decisions by the clinicians. He also added that there needs to be announcements giving a longer lead in time to allow airlines to get positioned in relation to aircraft and crews and for the airport to be ready for an increase in passengers. Scotland is always different to the rest of the UK which causes more problems.

Testing solutions had been offered by the airports but the government was never ahead of the curve and had not taken advantage of their offer. It was fair to say that even with more and more people being vaccinated, they continued to push back on any solution by saying no.

The hotel quarantine introduction had been a mess and badly managed with things only being pulled together on the Sunday night before its introduction on the Monday morning.

Ken McNab commented that everyone in travel should be working together, as contrary to the politicians' views, travel was not a sunset industry and with the levels of vaccination there needed to be an evaluation of data to show the impact of vaccinations and the possibilities of opening up travel.

## **5. Update on PRM presentation from last meeting**

Gordon Robertson spoke to the slides which are attached. He reported that the action of having brought the PRM service in house to EAL was going well and had started at the beginning of April. The staff that had come from ABM had been fully retrained to EAL standards and there was a real desire to ensure that customer service was key. Being in house at EAL would help make many improvements and the results were looking very positive after the first month of operation.

Planning was taking place for a new information service to be ready for August and meanwhile plans continued for recovery with a review of recruitment numbers that could be needed as passenger numbers showed some signs of increasing.

## **6. EAL view on recovery by Kate Sherry – EAL Aviation Director**

Kate Sherry introduced herself and talked of her background in travel which had included 10 years with Ryanair. She spoke to the slides which are attached.

Kate talked about the current low capacity with most traffic coming in via hubs but she added that EAL had seen a slight increase in domestic flights and passengers.

Demand was still quite weak but flights were beginning to return with Air France planning to return on the 21<sup>st</sup> May (having stopped their flights since Mid-April) and it was hoped that Turkish Airlines were planning to return around 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Ryanair was also returning to more destinations and British Airways would be operating a short season from Edinburgh to Faro on the 29<sup>th</sup> May.

All flights these days were subject to continual changes relating to not only demand but also government advice on travel and although many routes were not operating, there was still some light with new flights such as Air Baltic and some increased domestic routes.

The dates of implementation and guidance on travel were creating huge issues with the public in the form of lack of confidence to travel. Forward bookings were generally weak in Scotland which was making it difficult to secure capacity and move towards recovery. Booking patterns showed that passengers were booking closer and closer to departure dates because of the uncertainties of where they could travel to and even airline special offers were not often being very successful.

Edinburgh Airport (along with other Scottish Airports) were being left behind in the competition for new routes and maintaining existing routes due to the high costs of testing.

Ken McNab commented that businesses were also anxious about encouraging travel due to concerns about their duty of care to their employees which was further suppressing volumes.

## **7. EAL new strategy on sustainability and engagement with EACC**

Gordon Robertson spoke to the slides which are attached. He advised that EAL were members of the industry Sustainable Aviation group and EAL would be launching a new sustainability strategy in the next few weeks. He advised that things had changed including the expectation of passengers. Sustainability was about good business and this has been increasingly visible since Covid appeared.

Gordon Robertson spoke about the fact that sustainability was not just about reducing energy consumption but also using more sustainable resources and offsetting the impact of the energy that we use.

A roadmap was being put together and further details would be announced soon including a sustainability brand.

Robert Carr expressed the hope that this initiative would involve full engagement with stakeholders. He observed that the new Scottish Government would be looking closely at the climate crisis and biodiversity especially with COP26 in Glasgow later in the year.

Gordon Robertson commented that there was an expectation that the next Cabinet Secretary for Transport would have Energy and Net Zero as part of their portfolio. There would also probably be

a Scottish Aviation Transition Committee and this should include engagement with the airports. Perhaps the EACC might be involved.

David Dunphy talked about the example of Arlanda Airport in Stockholm which had moved to carbon neutrality by updating the terminal using natural products as well as a solar farm and wind turbines.

Other airports also had similar initiatives such as Dublin who have bees and all ideas would be welcome.

Gordon Robertson invited EACC members to forward any ideas or questions to him.

## **8. UKACC Updates including recent meeting and updates from ICCAN**

Robert Carr updated the committee on the recent meetings organised by UKACC including with Robert Courts MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport. The DfT on night flights and ICCAN.

Information about the ICCAN publications had already been forwarded to EACC members but Robert Carr reiterated some points from the discussion with Rob Light. ICCAN Head Commissioner and Stephen Cooke, ICCAN Head of Communications and Engagement who had said that they see the future of noise management as being very important. They are looking to set standards relating to this and health is a subject that is very high on their Agenda.

ICCAN would like to be involved in regulation and they feel that there should be a league table produced for airports in relation to noise levels and actions. They see noise action plans as extremely important along with a continuous need for engagement with communities and ACCs

There was recognition that some matters were different in Scotland with regard to the way that local authorities engage with noise and matters like planning.

## **10. ACP and CAA view on CAP 1616**

Gordon Robertson gave an update on ACP commenting on that fact that the UK Government wanted to remodel UK air space. With the current difficult financial situations at airports, the UK Government had awarded some funding to be able to get Stages 1 and 2 completed.

EAL was currently revising the statement of need to cover modernisation and also capacity (which the CAA were assessing) as the existing flightpaths needed modernisation.

EAL will need to resubmit their plans in July and Gordon Robertson confirmed that EACC would be involved with engagement at each stage.

Gordon Robertson advised that the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) will liaise with Scotland along with the DfT and the CAA which will include covering of the important area around the Forth air space.

ICCAN were currently finalising their response on the future of noise.

CAP1616 is currently under review again and the ACOG report is due to be published which will then be followed by consultation in focus group. Gordon Robertson suggested that it was more likely to be tweaks rather than changes which would make it more understandable.

## **Surface Access**

Gordon Robertson spoke to the slide attached in relation to West Edinburgh. The plans for the Eastern Access road to the airport had been rejected by City of Edinburgh Council (“CEC”) due to alignment issues which did not correspond with the CEC West Edinburgh Transport Appraisal, although it was commented that this did not block other developments. Gordon Robertson added that there were concerns about the bus lane that had been introduced on the A8 towards the airport which they had not been consulted upon and which could cause chaos as airport traffic picks up.

The Eastern Access road plan would need further review on the route and planning process to gain a clear view on what is hampering the consent as well as the need to find out what the clear strategy from the Scottish Government is.

John Howison added that Cramond had lodged an objection to the plan but this was based on improving the Gogar roundabout and also the logjam around the A8/City bypass. It was agreed that an integrated approach was needed with the City of Edinburgh Council to give resilience to the levels of traffic. There had recently been awarded a study on the Maybury junction as well but this was 18 months late.

It was noted that there need to be a solution to the heavy vehicles using Turnhouse road in and out of the airport. Gordon Robertson added that EAL was looking to redevelop their cargo operations by creating a Global Air Park but planning was still at an early stage.

## **11. Rolling Action Plan**

Robert Carr suggested and that a new Rolling Action plan be created and invited subjects to be added.

David Dunphy raised the subject of night flights and the surcharging and whether this was having any effect together with what was termed as a night flight. There were comments about Royal Mail and cargo planes and also the considerations on timings when new flights were being discussed. **(please see attached the slides from Gordon Robertson’s presentation on night flights at the February meeting)**

Adam Cumming talked about his discussion with Stefan Slater and also with Christine Jardine and the effect on health which was actively also being discussed with EANAB.

Julian Slatter raised the question of the engagement with Border Force and the concern regarding the issues that could follow as passenger numbers start to increase with the current requirements for checks on passenger locator forms and other testing requirements. Gordon Robertson responded that the airport was also concerned about this and the queues that could follow as E gates could not be used for paper (PLF’s). Digitisation was essential he added. There also was no update on vaccination certificates being introduced.

PRM – to be added to the Rolling Action Plan as well as an item on the CEO report.

## **12. AOCB**

Robert Carr wanted to record the sad passing of Andrew Mather who had been a valuable member of EACC for a number of years and who had been an impressive person who had greatly contributed to the work of EACC.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1245