

Minutes of the 206th EACC meeting held on Monday 7th November 2023
at the Novotel at Hermiston Gait – Edinburgh

Present Robert Carr (Chair)
Janice Hogarth (Secretary)
Gordon Robertson (Communications Director EAL)
Greg Maxwell (Head of Corporate Affairs EAL)
Kate Watt Ratho & District Community Council
Adam Cumming Edinburgh Airport Amenities Group
David Dunphy Frequent Flyer Representative
Cllr Kevin Lang City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Tom Conn West Lothian Council
Cllr Dave Dempsey Fife Council
Blake Cushnie Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board
Donald Spencer The Consumers Association
Kate Nowakowska Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)
Ken McNab SPAA
Cllr Carol Hamilton Scottish Borders Council
John Howison Crammond & Barnton Community Council
Clare Johnston Passenger PRM Representative
Jimmy Martin ABTA

Apologies Sandy Leggett Air Traffic Services
Gordon Dewar (CEO Edinburgh Airport)
Dougie Main Unite
Cllr Colin Cassidy Midlothian Council
Cllr John McMillan East Lothian Council
Stephen Robb Fife Chamber of Commerce
Pamela Hull Kirkliston Community Council
Brian Butler SEStran

1. Welcome

Robert Carr welcomed everyone to the meeting along with two observers and he asked those present about the venue for 2024 and whether there should be a return to the Doubletree, where there had been some problems during the year with our bookings, or whether we should consider the Novotel, as the room was so spacious and facilities were good. It was decided to look at the Novotel for 2024.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the Meeting on 7th August 2023 were approved.

3. Other matters arising from the Minutes

Robert reviewed the items requiring actions from the last meeting.

Greg Maxwell advised that the new scanners would be operational in June 2024. Greg Maxwell suggested that the EACC could schedule a visit to the airport and control tower for when the new scanners were in position in January 2024.

Action : Greg Maxwell to arrange a visit by EACC members to the airport and control tower for January 2024.

It was reported that Clare Johnston that had been introduced to Ross Gilpin but there had been no progress on her becoming a member of the Accessibility Forum. Gordon Robertson suggested that to move this forward it would be better if Robert Carr and Maureen Morrison (the chair of the EAAF) meet to discuss the involvement of Clare in the EAAF.

Action : Greg Maxwell to introduce Robert Carr to Maureen Morrison

Greg Maxwell advised that the use of the discount cards with Capital Cars raised by Clare Johnston was now resolved and Clare confirmed this.

CEO Report – there had been a request for details of routes offered by package holiday operators such as Jet 2 to be included in the airline updates and this had been included in the latest CEO Report.

Greg Maxwell had created a draft new format for the CEO Report and this item would be discussed during the meeting for feedback under Item 5.

The creation and content of an Annual Report was ongoing and discussion would follow under Item 6.

4. Chief Executive's Report (EAL)

Traffic figures

Gordon Robertson commented that between July and September passenger numbers had continued to be higher than 2022 figures by over 20% and for the first time in this same period they had even exceeded 2019 figures with an increase of 0.7%.

The actual number of aircraft movements was still down, mainly as a result of fewer domestic flights. International flight numbers had grown, particularly with additional transatlantic flights.

The recent announcement of Jet Blue starting to fly from Edinburgh to New York was yet another good news story which will create four daily services to New York in addition to the US flights provided by United and Delta.

Additionally, Jet2.com was adding another aircraft to be based in Edinburgh which meant that there would be seven Jet2 aircraft based in Edinburgh. EasyJet was also continuing to expand its routes with additional frequency on some domestic services.

Wizzair had moved their operations to Glasgow but Ryanair will continue to offer these same destinations. Ryanair also continue to grow at Edinburgh. Many airlines were currently waiting on new aircraft to operate either additional routes or to upgrade their aircraft with fleet renewal needed. This shortage of equipment is ongoing.

Gordon commented that over the last quarter, there had been fewer last minute cancellations although ATC delays were an ongoing issue with the air space closed over Ukraine. There had been major issues at airports such as Gatwick with staff shortages which had led to capacity limits.

Edinburgh Airport was continuing to work on better baggage delivery and especially recently where bags were arriving at different times from the passengers. Things were improving and the baggage handlers had been given warnings regarding their delivery and staffing levels.

There was comment regarding the increases in night movements as a result of increases in scheduled night flights and also as a result of ATC delays and late arrival of inbound aircraft. Given that it was these flights that upset many of the local population on the flight paths, there was a request for further information on this which Gordon Robertson promised to respond with more detail.

Action : Gordon Robertson to provide more details and explanation on increased night flights

Capital Investment

The number of projects continues to increase at a fast pace with expenditure due to rise by £20 million in 2024 and a number of projects due for delivery in January.

There is a great deal of focus on getting the security hall ready for the new liquid scanners which needs to be completed by June 2024 in line with the UK Government promise and this is progressing well.

Another significant project is the US Preclearance which when achieved will create huge opportunities for both inbound and outbound traffic and enhanced growth for Edinburgh and the surrounding catchment area of Scotland. Changes in technologies meant that people could board via a biometric screening and return to the departure lounge without being held in a separate area.

Infrastructure would be needed and the airport are working with Transport Scotland, the US Senate and Congress in relation CDP restraints and there is a need for the bilateral agreement to be passed.

Work on the taxiways is currently underway along with ongoing patching of the runway which had been highlighted recently with a closure due to the breakup of certain areas due to recent weather conditions. Overnight work on the runway is in hand to keep the runway in safe order for aircraft to land and take off.

Community Investment

The community fund comes from the drop off fee. The sum has increased in line with passenger numbers and in 2023 it had £140,000 to distribute with 18 projects receiving funding.

There was once again a request for EAL to provide further breakdown on the percentage of drop off charges which went from EAL to the community fund.

Action : Gordon Robertson to provide further details on the breakdown percentage

Surface Access

There has been an increase in the number of passengers travelling to and from the airport by public transport and also by taxis where things had much improved since the start of the Capital Cars project. Greg Maxwell added that more electric vehicle charge points had been introduced in August with points in the Terminal Carpark, Plane Parking Area and FastPark.

Kevin Lang asked for a breakdown of passengers and their mode of transport to and from the airport with comparisons from 2019.

Action : Greg Maxwell to provide a % breakdown of journeys to the airport v 2019

Noise Complaints

Gordon Robertson talked about the level of noise complaints which were often due to change of flight path and the runway being used as well as night flights. There was also comment on some pilots and certain aircraft potentially altering their descent levels and creating additional noise on arrival leading to additional complaints.

An additional mobile noise monitoring unit will be installed in Dalgety Bay for a year, as soon as a volunteer agrees to take this on.

It is worth noting that over 71% of complaints received in Q3 was from one person in Torphichen.

Route Development

Performance at all airports has improved this summer although there has still been some cancellations particularly due to crew shortage/out of hours. Edinburgh Airport in Q3, for the first time exceeded 2019 levels with passenger volumes recovered to 110% and this has been mainly driven by transatlantic growth increasing by 64%.

Current winter traffic demand is seen as fairly positive at the moment.

Highlights from the airline updates include :

- the introduction of Jet Blue operating another daily flight on their new A321neo aircraft
- Jet2 basing an additional aircraft with 96 flights per week in the Summer
- United will continue to operate their second daily flights to Newark
- Qatar offering the double daily through the winter and adding a larger aircraft with the A350 being introduced in December
- Ryanair continuing to grow and introduce new routes
- Air Canada operating a winter season for the first time
- Loganair introducing a larger aircraft next summer

Passenger satisfaction

The Happy/Sad monitors are currently mainly based outside security, FastPark, arrival baggage reclaim but it is planned to expand this to throughout the terminal including the check in area.

The main dip in the Q3 figures relates to baggage issues which referred mainly to waiting times or missing or delayed baggage. EAL staff continue to provide correct contact details for passengers to contact the relevant agencies to resolve their problems.

Generally, EAL feel that they have maintained acceptable scores with the average of 4/5 across their platforms.

5. Format of the EAL CEO Report

Greg Maxwell had again produced a sample of a new report along with the original one and it was agreed that a bit more work was needed before a final version was ready. He added that there were some of the figures that were not that easy to read and which needed a further look.

Robert Carr suggested that a small working group of EACC members be formed to review and provide comment on the proposed new format and content. This was agreed and volunteers were asked to register their interest to Janice Hogarth.

Action : EACC members to create a sub group to review and comment on the new CEO report format

6. Discussion on viability of Annual Report

Robert Carr still felt that it would be worth taking the minutes of the last year and creating a report similar to those produced by other ACCs. It would mainly consist of a summary of the year's minutes and discussions. Greg would take this forward for the next meeting.

Action : Greg Maxwell to produce a draft annual report for 2023 for the next meeting.

7. ACP Update

EAL was continuing to progress the ACP and the consultation was still scheduled to start in August/September 2024.

8. UKACC Updates

Robert Carr commented that the Civil Aviation Authority had published its revised CAP1616 airspace change process. The package of improvements will make the airspace change process easier to understand and clarify the requirements needed to be met to progress an airspace change proposal.

Robert Carr also added that he would be attending the UKACC conference at Heathrow later in the month along with Janice Hogarth.

The Updates from UKACC continue to be circulated to the EACC.

9. Blake Cushnie introduction as new chair of EANAB

Blake Cushnie introduced himself as the new chair of EANAB and gave some background of his knowledge in the aviation sector having worked for NATS and the CAA before moving to Canada to work in Air Traffic Control in Vancouver and then Toronto.

He is currently an adviser to ICAO and very well versed in all aspects of aviation. He highlighted the current issues with air space congestion and issues relating to air space being heavily congested with Ukrainian Air Space being closed.

10. Quarterly Report from EANAB

Blake commented that he had attended his first EANAB meeting in October and that work was progressing well with the various work streams and groups and he will give a fuller update at the next meeting.

11. Review of Rolling Action Plan

This had already been actioned at the beginning of the meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.30 and the next meeting would be held on Monday 5th February 2024 at the Novotel.

