

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM**

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Present: Mr Colin Flack OBE – Chairman

In attendance from Birmingham Airport Company:

Nick Barton	-	Chief Executive
Andy Holding	-	Corporate Responsibility Manager
Tom Denton	-	Head of Sustainability
Jon Davies	-	Energy and Carbon Manager
Sam Parkes	-	Sustainability Assistant
Nikki Bains	-	Head of Planning, Transport & Strategy
Matt Wilshaw-Rhead	-	BAATL Safety & Compliance Manager

In attendance from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council:

Mr L Stevenson	-	Representing the ACC Secretariat
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Balsall Parish Council	-	Cllr K Tindall
Barston Parish Council	-	Mr D Elliott
Berkswell Parish Council	-	Cllr R Lloyd
Birmingham City Council	-	Cllr C Green
Castle Bromwich Parish Council	-	Cllr J Macdonald
Catherine de Barnes Residents Association	-	Mr D Cuthbert
Chelmsley Wood Town Council	-	Cllr M Connolly (substitute)
Consumers Association	-	Mr T Baker
Fordbridge Town Council	-	Cllr D Cole
Kingshurst Parish Council	-	Cllr D Cole (substitute)
Knowle Society	-	Mrs E Baker
North Warwickshire Area Committee of Parish Councils	-	Cllr R Habgood
Sheldon Residents Association	-	Mr M Kennett
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	-	Mrs B Hill
Passengers Representative and Vice-Chairman	-	Mrs R Tyler
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	-	Cllr P Kaur

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM**

Warwickshire County Council	- Cllr M Watson
Wolverhampton City Council	- Cllr C Hibbert

Apologies were received on behalf of: -

ABTA	- Mrs S Foxall
Bickenhill & Marston Green Parish Council	- Cllr J Horton
Birmingham City Council	- Cllr D Donaldson
Chelmsley Wood Town Council	- Cllr S Macdonald
North Warwickshire Borough Council	- Cllr D Reilly
Kingshurst Parish Council	- Cllr M Dawson
Shard End Communities	- Mrs M Ball
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Cllr R Grinsell
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Cllr J Butler
Wychwood Club	- Mr G Heaps

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Committee and representatives from the Airport Company. Apologies were as noted by the Secretary and the Airport Company.

RESOLVED

That, the Chairman's welcome and recorded apologies be noted.

2. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman provided his regular update to the Committee on current industry issues and his role as Chairman of UKACC's. Headline issues this time included:

- A recap of a recent positive meeting with the CAA's Sustainability Panel and their intentions as to how the work of that Panel was to be conducted and communicated.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman's update be received and noted.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 1 December 2022 (AGM), was submitted for approval.

RESOLVED

That, the Minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a correct record.

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM**

4. PRE-SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE & MATTERS ARISING

The follow pre-submitted questions were submitted and answered:

Q1: (from) Bickenhill and Marston Green Parish Council – Cllr J Horton

What is the process for measuring the impact of ground noise on local residents, be it from engine testing or take off? Have the M42 J6 works, and associated removal of vegetation had an impact on ground noise levels?

BAL constantly measures aircraft noise at six noise monitors located in the local community, where noise events from overflying aircraft are recorded. These community noise monitors feed into the Airport Noise and Operations Monitoring System (ANOMS), which correlates them with radar data to establish which aircraft movement (if any) was the cause of that specific noise event. In this way we can enforce our noise limits whereby airlines are surcharged for breaches of the relevant policy. The location of the noise monitors is as follows:

No.	Location	Postcode
1	Buckland End, Hodge Hill	B34 6HR
2	Eastcote Lane, Eastcote	B92 0A5
3	Bradley Road, Shard End	B34 7RS
4	The Crescent, Hampton	B92 0BP
5	Airport Fire Station	
6	Manor Road, Stechford	B33 8DH
7	Friday Lane, Barston	B92 0HY

The noise monitors record when they are triggered by a noise event greater than the set threshold of 65dB. Generally, of course, this is when an aircraft passes nearby, but there are many instances where they are triggered by other noise events such as motorcycles, lawnmowers - on one occasion, a monitor was triggered by a hooting tawny owl perched on the monitor itself.

There is a further noise monitor located on the Airfield which is of relevance for aircraft engine ground runs (testing).

The short answer to the question as to whether the removal of vegetation associated with the road works along Catherine de Barnes Lane has had an impact on ground noise levels is that it is not possible to tell. In order to establish any hard facts around this issue, we would need noise data from before the works commenced with which to compare data gathered following the removal of the vegetation. This data does not exist.

However it may of some reassurance to observe that one academic text suggests that any perceived increase in noise resulting from the removal of vegetation is likely to be just that – a perception.

Peters RJ, Smith BJ & Hollins M, (2011) Acoustics and Noise Control (Third Edition) pp48 has the following:

"A row of trees or bushes will have an insignificant physical effect on sound proportion (although it can have a psychological effect). (BAL italics) If sufficiently dense to completely block the view along the noise propagation path, the foliage of trees and shrubs will provide a small amount of noise attenuation. The attenuation is dependent on the frequency of the sound source and the distance from the dense foliage, as shown below" (it then shows a graph). The text also suggests that the dense foliage would need to be positioned directly between the sound source and the receiver and that the receiver would need to be close to the foliage barrier for the small amount of attenuation to be effective.

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM**

In addition to the reference to a psychological effect, arguably the key line here is '*If sufficiently dense to completely block the view along the noise propagation path*'. It is questionable that the vegetation removed could accurately be described in this way.

It may be worth contacting the contractor, Skanska, to establish if there are any plans to replant once the scheme construction is complete. If so, this may provide a degree of reassurance, albeit over a longer time frame, for those residents who remain concerned.

Discussion Points

Warwickshire County Council (Cllr M Watson) – asked for further background behind the reasoning for setting a noise threshold of 65dB. The Airport Company (Tom Denton) recalled a historical piece of work that was undertaken some years ago that had concluded that 55dB was actually the trigger at which the human ear found aircraft noise disturbing. It was assumed that the noise threshold and siting of noise monitors would be based around an industry standard, however, the Airport Company would need to confirm this outside of the meeting.

Balsall Parish Council (Cllr K Tindall) – asked for further detail on noise penalties. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) confirmed that penalty levels existed for exceedances in excess of the daytime noise limit (90 dBA) and the night-time noise (84dBA).

Knowle Society (Mrs E Baker) – drew attention to the “perception” of noise in addition to the scientific noise threshold itself.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked if there was a need to provide additional information on the Airport’s website to take account of the major construction works that were ongoing next to the Airport and the effects of that on the overall perception of noise. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) advised that no significant increase in noise complaints had been seen but this suggestion could be considered should the situation change.

Castle Bromwich Parish Council (Cllr J Macdonald) – asked if the Antonov-12 aircraft was still flying in and out of Birmingham and what levels of complaints that aircraft generated. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) advised that those cargo operations still existed although very few complaints had been received recently. The Antonov-12 was largely noise compliant.

Barston Parish Council (Mr D Elliott) – asked if there were any known updates regarding changes to glide paths. The Airport Company (Tom Denton) advised that a trial had been undertaken at Heathrow Airport prior to the pandemic to alter glide paths from 3 degrees to circa 3.5/3.75 degrees. It was understood that the trial outcomes had been delayed but initial outcomes pointed towards the changes only having a negligible positive impact on noise.

Q2-4: (from) Catherine de Barnes Residents’ Association – Mr D Cuthbert

Q2: Re the use of the Elmdon Building – is there any thought that part of it could be used for public viewing area?

Our main priority for the Elmdon Building is to protect its historical significance and ensure that it is re-used in a way that is economically viable for the Airport whilst remaining part of the Airport. We are currently exploring opportunities to re-use the building with interested parties. At this stage it is too early to advise on whether the re-use of the building will include a public viewing area, but we are certainly considering the feasibility of re-introducing such a facility.

Q3: Brand Sentiment – what is an Omni Channel solution?

Currently if the same customer makes contact via different channels – perhaps a phone call and then a social media post – it can be difficult to keep track. The new system will ensure

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM**

all information relating to that customer, no matter which channel they use to contact us, will be captured and collated enabling us to deal more effectively with that customer's concerns.

Q4: Does the Airport Company have an apprenticeship Scheme? – does it encourage its suppliers to run similar schemes?

Currently we have three apprentices within the HR and IT functions and in the past we've also had opportunities in engineering. We don't currently have any formal process to encourage partners to operate apprenticeship schemes; circumstances and policies vary between companies, but we are exploring options to involve partner companies in on-site employment schemes.

RESOLVED

That, the pre-submitted questions and answers given be noted.

5. AIRPORT ACTIVITIES REPORT

The Airport Company (Nick Barton) - presented the Airport Activities report for the period October to December 2022. The report set out quarterly updates on the following matters:

- Passenger Statistics.
- ATM's
- Aviation Development.
- Key Stakeholder Engagement.
- Complaints Statistics.
- PRM Performance.
- Customer Satisfaction.
- Social Media.
- Security Wait Times.
- Immigration Performance.
- Baggage Delivery Performance.
- Cleaning Performance.
- On-time Turnaround Performance.

General Updates

When introducing the report, Mr Barton drew the Committee's attention to a number of additional headline issues. In summary, this included:

- Business recovery and passenger growth was being maintained.
- Passenger numbers for this financial year was anticipated at 10.3M with further growth expected in 2023/24 (circa 12.3M).
- Recruitment was still ongoing in readiness for Summer 2023. Levels of staffing assurance and business resilience was good.
- PRM's had greatly increased in 2022/23 which had presented challenges. Service provision was now in place for 2023/24, subject to PRM forecasts being accurate.
- The Emirates A380 would return from 1 July 2023, now with 3 classes of service.
- Two further airline announcements would be made in the coming weeks that were recommencing services at Birmingham.
- The effect of Flybe ceasing trading; how routes had been absorbed by other airlines and the redundancy/re-employment of Flybe staff with other airlines.

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM

- Asset investments in the business amounted to circa £70M for the coming financial year.
- Ongoing works were now progressing for the new security hall in readiness for 1 June 2024.
- Carbon neutral by 2033 – first steps being the installation of photovoltaic panels and ancillary equipment this year.
- South terminal aircraft stand reconfigurations to give standardisation and operational benefits.
- Customer experience was still improving – more work still to do but the uplift in Summer season staff would greatly contribute to that work stream.

Discussion Points

Balsall Parish Council (Cllr K Tindall) – highlighted his own experiences with airport security when boarding a flight in January this year insofar as queue times and changes to expected boarding practices. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that the “A gates” had now been temporarily relocated due to the phased development works being undertaken in that location. Some levels of staffing resources at that time might have also contributed to extended queue times and an example was given as to how short term sickness absences impacted on the customer experience. Mr Barton assured the Committee that staffing resilience was improving in readiness for the Summer season.

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (Cllr P Kaur) – asked for further details on current performance and how might the introduction of new technology in the new security hall improve passenger throughput. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that, currently, the target was to process 85% of passengers within 10 minutes and 100% of passengers within 20 minutes. At the present time, those numbers were averaging at 64% within 10 minutes, 92% overall within 20 minutes and 8% beyond 20 minutes* (*at certain times in the morning peak). The Summer uplift in staff would help in achieving those targets. Currently 1 in 7 passengers would also have extended processing times through the current security hall, due to non-compliance with the hand luggage rules for liquids and laptops necessitating hand searches. From 1 June 2024, the new Security Hall would greatly improve this – current security processing (per lane) was 160 to 180 passengers per hour. With the new machines, this would increase to 500 passengers per lane, per hour.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (Mrs B Hill) – asked for further detail on the amount of liquids that could be carried in hand luggage beyond 1 June 2024, and if the liquids still had to be removed. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that there would be no limitation on volumes and liquids could remain within hand luggage.

Balsall Parish Council (Cllr K Tindall) – asked if the new security machines would also reduce the need to take explosive (ETD) trace swabs. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that these swabs would continue. Additionally, the new machines would also improve passenger scanning for metal objects and they would now only scan from the surface of the skin outwards so not to hinder passengers with surgical joint replacements.

Wolverhampton City Council (Cllr C Hibbert) – welcomed the forthcoming security improvements and the better passenger experience it would introduce. Cllr Hibbert asked if the new technology would require less staff in the security hall and put any jobs at risk. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that no job losses would occur because of the new technology. The Committee was also advised of the ongoing creation of jobs at the Airport aligned with its current and future growth forecasts.

Fordbridge Town Council (Cllr D Cole) – asked if the new security scanners were UK built. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that the Airport Company was “sourcing” theirs from a UK supplier (and the body scanners originated from Germany).

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM

Sheldon Residents Association (Mrs M Kennett) – recalled her own experiences in travelling through airport security with a hip replacement and how she had been processed as a passenger when triggering the metal detectors. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) explained the likelihood of those alarms and how that would change (for the better) once the new technology was introduced.

Consumers Association (Mr T Baker) – asked if all airports would be introducing the new security technology or was it just specific to Birmingham. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that, yes, it was a requirement for all UK airports to have them in operation by 1 June 2024. The UK had much tougher security requirements than some European countries and the new changes to security were being driven, in the main, by security requirements and criteria originating in the USA.

Chelmsley Wood Town Council (Cllr M Connolly) – asked for further details of the design of the new scanners and this was given in a detailed explained by the Airport Company as to their overall design, siting and operation.

RESOLVED

That, the contents of the Airport Activities Report for the period October to December 2022, be received and noted.

6. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Airport Company (Andy Holding) presented the Sustainability Report for the period October to December 2022. The report set out quarterly updates on the following matters:

- Sustainability Update.
- Noise Violations.
- Night Flying Policy.
- Engine Ground Running.
- Air Traffic.
- Aircraft Activity Complaints.
- Air Quality.
- Waste (Recycled).
- Energy.

In addition to the above, the Committee's attention was also drawn towards an update within the report regarding community noise and its future reporting to ACC under a new Community Noise Report. Helicopter data analysis was also included within this quarter's report and highlighted to the Committee in response to concerns raised at a previous meeting. This data would also be included in future Community Noise Reports going forwards.

The Airport Company (Nikki Bains) also gave an update to the Committee in regards to Planning, Transport and Strategy matters that included:

- The Elmdon Building – currently still vacant and ongoing considerations as to its future protection and potential for use.
- Solar Panels Prior Notification – (within the operational boundary of the Airport) had now been confirmed as permitted development by the Local Planning Authority. Work was now underway to install those panels and assess what the Airport's future energy needs might be with a view to potentially utilising an off-site facility such as the former Castle Hills Farm land.

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM

- Surface Access Strategy – currently being reviewed in accordance with agreed timeframes to meet future ambitions, targets and challenges.

Discussion Points

Castle Bromwich Parish Council (Cllr J Macdonald) - asked if information was yet available to show a breakdown of complaints via geographical areas such as the community he represented. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) confirmed that future Community Noise Reports would include that level of detail and current data was now available and could be shared with Cllr Macdonald after the meeting.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked if the Elmdon Building was recorded on Solihull's local heritage asset register. The Airport Company (Nikki Bains) advised that the building was locally listed (in addition to being Grade II listed with Historic England).

Knowle Society (Mrs E Baker) – highlighted the difficulties currently being experienced with bus services to and from the Airport, particularly to those living in rural locations such as Knowle.

Fordbridge Town Council (Cllr D Cole) – echoed the sentiments of the Knowle Society and highlighted, additionally, that bus frequency in addition to overall route availability was of ongoing concern to residents in some areas, especially north Solihull.

Wolverhampton City Council (Cllr C Hibbert) – highlighted the negative effects on progress towards sustainable travel that had been caused by the resultant effects of the pandemic. The Airport Company (Nikki Bains) confirmed that future targets for modal shift and sustainable travel would be realistic rather than overly ambitious.

RESOLVED

That, the contents of the Sustainability Report for the period October to December 2022, be received and noted.

7. NOISE UPDATE – VERBAL PRESENTATION

The Airport Company (Tom Denton) – gave a detailed verbal update on two key noise work streams: the Noise Action Plan and the review of the Night Noise Flying Policy.

Discussion Points

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – highlighted that at the last review, there had been lengthy discussions around the validity of quota count limits. Mr Cuthbert asked if those quota count limits would again be up for review. The Airport Company (Tom Denton) confirmed that they would be included.

Castle Bromwich Parish Council (Cllr J Macdonald) – reiterated the perceived increase in noise from helicopters, particularly commercial flights. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) reiterated the information presented earlier in the meeting and drew attention to data which evidenced an increase in police helicopter operations. It was perceived that the increase in helicopter flights over that community may be attributable to police operations and its proximity to the M6 motorway.

Berkswell Parish Council (Cllr R Lloyd) – asked for further detail on helicopter flight paths. The Airport Company (Matt Wilshaw-Rhead) advised that private helicopters have to make a normal landing at the Airport in accordance with standard arrival procedures. Police helicopters flew to a different set of agreed criteria – usually the most efficient flown route to an emergency upon their departure.

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

8. NET ZERO UPDATE – VERBAL PRESENTATION

The Airport Company (Tom Denton and Jon Davies) – gave a detailed verbal update on the ongoing work being undertaken towards the Airport Company's commitment for net zero carbon.

The update also included a summary of the recent announcement in that the Airport Company had created a partnership with ZeroAvia to further innovate air travel using a hydrogen powertrain. The Airport Company would support that partnership by introducing a servicing infrastructure to support the research and development of that.

Discussion Points

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked for a further explanation as to why the Airport had chosen a level 3 classification (out of a total of 6). The Airport Company (Jon Davies) confirmed that a level 3 classification best represented where the Airport Company was in terms of the carbon reduction work stream at the current time.

Wolverhampton City Council (Cllr C Hibbert) – urged the Airport Company, to begin considering sooner rather than later, carbon sequestration as part of the overall work towards net zero.

Berkswell Parish Council (Cllr R Lloyd) – highlighted the work being undertaken by JCB around hydrogen powertrains and suggested that the Airport Company could liaise with them to assist with the project, particularly the storage and distribution of hydrogen. The Airport Company (Tom Denton) acknowledged this and highlighted the Tyseley Energy Park and their hydrogen fuelling station.

Wolverhampton City Council (Cllr C Hibbert) – asked how the responsible phasing of new technology and powertrains might take place. The Airport Company (Tom Denton) advised that the mechanisms and timeframes would need to be done in an environmentally friendly way and that pathway was still being developed.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Airport Company (Andy Holding) circulated updated passenger statistics to be read in conjunction with the Activities Report. Mr Holding highlighted that whilst the numbers differed from those published in the main report, the trajectory of passenger growth was still entirely accurate.

RESOLVED

That the agenda item noted.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The dates of the next three meetings were confirmed as follows (all at 13.30hrs and would be held at Diamond House, Birmingham Airport, B26 3QJ):

Thursday 8 June 2023.

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2023 AT 1.30 PM**

Thursday 7 September 2023.
Thursday 7 December 2023.

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meetings be agreed and noted.