ANNUAL MEETING - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

NOTE OF THE 28TH ANNUAL LIAISON MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 24TH JUNE, 2004 IN BRISTOL

Present:

General Consumer Council
Northern Ireland (Belfast) - Mr. Eddie Lynch
Birmingham - Mr. Viv Astling
- Mr. Michael Blamire Brown
Bristol - Gp. Cpt. Peter Hutchings (Chairman)
Cardiff-Wales - Mr. Jeffery James
East Midlands - Mr. Barrie Whyman
Edinburgh - Mr. Tom Wright
Glasgow - Mr. John Richmond
Leeds-Bradford - Mr. Malcolm Dobson
Liverpool - Mr. Denis Knowles
- Mr. Mike Flynn
London City - Mr. John Adshead
- Mr. Stuart Innes
London Gatwick - Mr. Peter Bryant
- Mr. Mike Kendall
- Mr. Pat Welch
- Mrs. Paula Street
London Heathrow - Mr. Sam Jones
- Mr. Maurice Hudson
London Stansted - Mr. Morris le Fleming
- Mr. Graham Redgwell
Luton - Mr. Derek Brown
Manchester - Mr. Stephen Wilkinson
- Mr. Ian Jones
Newcastle - Mrs. Dorothy Craig
- Mr. Michael Bowers
NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1. The notes of the last meeting held on 4th July, 2003 were received and noted.

Towards an Ambient Noise Strategy

2. The meeting noted that DEFRA had not responded to requests for an update on the progress of the National Ambient Noise Strategy. The matter would be pursued and Committees would be kept informed via the information service.

DfT Study on Attitudes to noise from Aircraft Sources in England (ANASE)

3. Delegates were informed that Phase 1 of the study was nearing completion and it was intended to ensure that the methodology for valuing subjective annoyance from aircraft noise, to be used in Phase 2 (the main social survey), was robust. The results were to be discussed by the Study’s Steering Group in July as well as how/when Phase 2 will commence.

"THE FUTURE OF AIR TRANSPORT" WHITE PAPER

4. A presentation was given by Mr. Jonathan Sharrock, Head of Airports Policy, DfT, who reminded delegates of the main proposals of the Air Transport White Paper and the action taken subsequently/proposed. It was noted that permission for a judicial review of the White Paper had been granted recently. This would hopefully be determined by the end of the year. A copy of the presentation has been circulated to delegates and copies are available on the Liaison Group’s website at:

   http://www.ukaccs.info/04almfiles/dftpresent.pdf

5. The following points come out of the presentation:-

   (a) Guidance on the preparation of Airport Master Plans was due to be issued prior to the parliamentary summer recess.
   (b) Land outside existing airports that was needed for future expansion must be shown on ‘safeguarding’ maps, which are approved by the
CAA. In the final instance, the Secretary of State had powers of direction under Article 14 of the Town and Country Planning Order 1995.

(c) Recent planning legislation should streamline the procedure for securing for major infrastructure developments.

(d) The DfT would monitor schemes drawn up to deal with generalised blight, to ensure broad consistency across the country.

(e) The Government favours voluntary noise insulation schemes but will use statutory powers if necessary.

(f) A consultation document on a new night time noise regime for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports would be published ‘shortly’.

(g) It was the Government’s duty to comply with EU air quality standards.

(h) When the UK takes over the EU presidency in 2005, one of its priorities would be to seek the inclusion of aviation in a European emissions trading scheme from 2008 onwards.

(i) The CAA remained satisfied that airspace needs could be met despite the increased number of flights envisaged.

(j) Developers were expected to pay where any road or rail development was necessary. If the airport was not the main reason for increased road and/or rail use, the Government may consider the case for a broader funding package. Surface Access to airports was rising up the agenda at DfT and the outcome of the rail review was expected shortly.

6. The DfT specifically commended BAA Stansted for the work it had already undertaken within the existing noise insulation scheme and in bringing forward arrangements for a non-statutory schemes to deal with generalised blight.

7. Delegates also considered a paper by the Conference Secretary highlighting some of the key issues confronting airport operators and airport consultative committees. The views of the Working Group were also considered. Delegates generally felt that although the White Paper provided a good framework to accommodate and manage the growth in air transport over the next 30 years, it was disappointing that there was not more clarity on a number of aspects particularly in relation to surface access to airports. There was concern that any surface access scheme needed to accommodate airport development and growth should be delivered by the airport operator and transport providers at the right time. Delegates also continued to have ongoing concerns in respect of blight, safeguarding land, noise, Master Plans, airspace issues, public service obligations and local air quality and agreed that a letter should be sent to the DfT highlighting the issues in the Secretary’s paper.

8. Delegates also welcomed the Government's intention to undertake a review of the progress made on delivering the policies and proposals of the White Paper by the end of 2006.
AVIATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT: USING ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS - AN UPDATE

9. Delegates discussed the progress made on developing an emissions trading scheme since last year’s annual meeting. Committees generally supported the Government’s approach to encourage a European-wide (and, if possible, worldwide) scheme for the control of emissions from aircraft. Delegates asked the Conference Secretary to write to the European Commissioner in support of the Government’s efforts to secure a European scheme for the control of emissions from aircraft. In relation to the use of economic instruments at individual airports it was emphasised that there should be full consultation before the Secretary of State used his powers.

DEVELOPING AND PRESERVING REGIONAL AIR SERVICES

10. The meeting considered a paper drawing attention to current issues concerning the preservation of important regional air services, including the use of Public Service Obligations (PSO). Delegates noted that the DfT would shortly issue a consultation on the Government’s proposals in respect of Public Service Obligations for regional air services operating into London.

WINDFARMS: EFFECT ON RADAR

11. Further to the discussion at the last annual meeting about the impact of windfarms on the operation of radar installations and thus on safety of aircraft, delegates noted that the Air Transport White Paper had acknowledged these concerns. The Government was working with the industry and research community to resolve problems.

GUIDELINES FOR AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

12. The meeting received and noted the DfT’s new guidelines for airport consultative committees which seek to provide greater clarity on the way in which committees’ function as well as giving examples of best practice. With the exception of one committee (Glasgow Prestwick), delegates supported the new guidelines and the fact that local flexibility had been retained.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ANNUAL LIAISON MEETING

13. At the last annual meeting, committees asked the Working Group to consider whether the membership of the annual meeting should be enlarged to include more airports. Delegates noted that the present informal criteria for membership were that an airport should have a passenger throughput of 0.6 mppa or more or otherwise be an airport of regional significance. It was also noted that the passenger throughput and movements data for UK airports for 2002 and 2003 had been examined.

14. The Working Group had given consideration to lowering the criteria to 0.3 mppa but this would automatically increase the size of the Annual Meeting.
from 21 to 28 airports being represented. It was generally felt that involving these smaller airports would change the nature of the meeting which was focussed on national aviation policy. The Working Group had therefore recommended that the current criteria of 0.6 mppa should be retained. As and when other airports that met the criteria, and had a consultative committee, they should be invited to attend. Delegates agreed with the recommendations of the Working Group. The meeting noted that Jersey, Guernsey and Ronaldsway now met the criteria and had been approached. It had been established that Jersey did not have a consultative committee or equivalent. No response had yet been received from Guernsey or Ronaldsway.

SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

15. The meeting considered a progress report on the support arrangements agreed at the Gatwick Annual Meeting in 2002. The arrangements and information service had been operating for approximately 18 months. They had proved to be successful and beneficial to the participating committees. It was noted that a collective website for and about the Liaison Group of Committees had also been set up which provided a source of information on topics of national/international significance both for Committees and other interested bodies. Delegates expressed their appreciation for the new support arrangements and agreed that the arrangements should be continued on a permanent basis.

16. Mr. Innes, Secretariat, reminded the meeting that websites for individual Committees within the Liaison Group framework could be set up by the Secretariat. Liverpool John Lennon, Edinburgh and London Gatwick already had such sites. Other interested committees were asked to contact Stuart Innes.

ACCESS TO AIR TRAVEL FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY (PRM)

17. Delegates noted developments in the UK and at EU level for access to air travel for PRMs. The judgement in Ross v Ryanair and BAA plc was also noted. The Government had commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to benchmark the industry against the UK’s new Code of Practice and some airports or committees may be approached to participate in that exercise.

COMPENSATION FOR DENIED BOARDING OR THE CANCELLATION OR LONG DELAY OF FLIGHTS

18. The meeting noted recent legislation giving passengers new rights in respect of compensation and assistance in the event of denied boarding, cancellations and delays. This was an EU initiative and, although the UK Government voted against it, it had to be implemented EU-wide. Delegates also noted that some aspects of the new legislation were controversial and that IATA and the European Low Fares Association were challenging the Regulation in the courts. The intent of the Regulation to assist passengers
was also acknowledged but delegates expressed reservations at its somewhat draconian nature.

TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES AT AIRPORTS

19. The meeting considered a paper by the Technical Adviser for the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee (HACC) highlighting some of the problems flowing from the regulation of taxis and private hire vehicles at Heathrow Airport and elsewhere. Although the legislative arrangements for London were different to the rest of the United Kingdom many of the problems were the same. The availability, quality and costs of taxi and private hire vehicles played an important part in securing surface access to airports and the meeting supported the concerns to which HACC had drawn attention.

UNINSURED USE OF PRIVATE AIRCRAFT

20. Delegates noted that Regulation EC 785/2004 would take effect from the end of April 2005 and obliges the operators of all private aircraft to have passenger and third party insurance cover. The UK Government had played a major role in determining the sliding scale of insurance cover required (dependant on maximum take off weight). The Government was now in the process of discussing with the CAA the implementation and enforcement of the Regulation.

ILLEGAL IMPORTS OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODSTUFFS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

21. The meeting discussed a paper by HACC’s Technical Adviser updating the meeting on the problems of enforcing the ban on the importation of meat and other foodstuffs of animal origin through airports. Delegates highlighted the need for more visible information signs for passengers in airport terminals as well as the need for clearer information to be given on board arriving aircraft. It was agreed that the Secretariat would write to both DEFRA and HM Customs and Excise regarding the importance of getting the message across to passengers.

EUROPEAN AVIATION UPDATE

22. Delegates received and noted the paper providing an update on current EU activity in respect of aviation matters.

VENUES FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

23. It was noted that offers had been received from the following Consultative Committees to host the annual meeting:

- 2005 - Liverpool
- 2006 - Aberdeen
- 2007 - East Midlands
24. The Secretariat would write to all delegates inviting offers to host future Conference beyond 2007.

VOTE OF THANKS

25. The meeting passed a vote of thanks to Andrew Skipp and his team at Bristol International Airport and Gp. Capt. Peter Hutchings for the generous hospitality and splendid visit to Bristol.

26. The meeting also expressed their thanks and best wishes to Patrick Welch, Deputy Conference Secretary, who after 18 years of serving the Conference had taken up a new position as Deputy Clerk to Sussex Police Authority.

27. Delegates also said farewell to Sam Milliken and Bill Ritchie who had represented Glasgow Prestwick Airport Consultative Committee for a good many years. Their contribution to the work of the Liaison Group would be greatly missed.

Conference Secretary