

EDINBURGH AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE.

Minutes of the 202nd EACC meeting held on Monday 7th November 2022 at the Edinburgh Marriott Hotel

Present

Robert Carr (Chair)
Janice Hogarth (Secretary)
Gordon Dewar (Chief Executive EAL)
Gordon Robertson (Communications Director EAL)
Jessica Briggs (EAL Head of Sustainability)
Kate Watt Ratho & District Community Council
Kate Nowakowska Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (ECOC)
John Howison Cramond & Barnton Community Council
Adam Cumming Edinburgh Airport Amenities Group
Jimmy Martin ABTA
David Dunphy Frequent Flyer Representative
Pamela Hull Kirkliston Community Council
Cllr Carol Hamilton Scottish Borders Council
Clare Johnston Passenger PRM Representative
Cllr Colin Cassidy Midlothian Council
Cllr Tom Conn West Lothian Council
Cllr Dave Dempsey Fife Council
Alan Mitchell Fife Chamber of Commerce

Apologies

Lindsay Cole Edinburgh Airport Noise Advisory Board
Derek McWhinnie Police Services Scotland
Ken McNab SPAA
Cllr Kevin Lang City of Edinburgh Council
Anna Herriman Sestran
Sandy Leggett Air Traffic Services
Sandy Smart STUC
Donald Spencer The Consumers Association
Cllr John McMillan East Lothian Council

1. Welcome

Robert Carr opened the meeting by welcoming everyone including some observers to the meeting. Robert also welcomed two new members to the committee Pamela Hull from Kirkliston Council and also Cllr Colin Cassidy from Midlothian Council and he added that Derek McWhinnie would be replacing Gary Harrison representing Police Scotland.

AOC Scotland would now be represented by Fiona Black from Jet2.com with Yvonne Irvine as the substitute from Swissport.

Robert then advised the meeting of the dates for meetings for 2023 which would be held at the Doubletree by Hilton at the Airport as the Marriott was undergoing refurbishment.

The dates would be : Monday 6th February
Monday 15th May
Monday 7th August
Monday 6th November

2. The minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the Meeting on 8th August 2022 were approved

3. Other matters arising from the Minutes

Robert reviewed the items requiring actions from the last meeting.

The issue raised by Brian Yates relating to the shelter on the forecourt had been answered by Gordon Robertson and Myles Grima directly with Donald Spencer and this item was now closed.

Clare Johnston confirmed that she had managed to meet up with Jade McAlpine regarding PRM issues and this had been a good meeting. The issue regarding wheelchair users at Gate 19 reported by David Dunphy was also now resolved and Cllr Colin Cassidy praised the airport for the recent experience he had encountered.

The expected CAA report on accessibility had not yet been published. Gordon Robertson advised that the indications about the PRM service which was now being delivered directly in-house by EAL were very positive. He understood that Edinburgh Airport was now one of the best performing airports in the UK based on the same PRM volumes.

EANAB were still working through their review as per the report from Lindsay Cole already circulated.

4. Chief Executive's Report (EAL)

Traffic figures

Gordon Dewar advised the meeting that 85% of routes had now resumed from 2019 and that only domestic figures were down and this was due to the collapse of Flybe. British Airways were operating on a lower frequency to London but there was good news that Ryanair would return to Stansted in 2023.

International figures were now only -5% but both EasyJet and Ryanair were expanding the routes they were offering to bolster flights to Europe and outbound leisure figures were looking good.

Transatlantic was performing really well with some US carriers using larger aircraft such as Delta and United and with Virgin Atlantic moving their Florida flights to Edinburgh things were very positive.

With the financial markets being so strong and combined with inbound demand, Edinburgh was currently the second highest airport in the UK.

Mail figures were down but this was mainly linked to the change in the way that it was measured as contained weight was now not included in the calculation.

Due to disruption some flights were arriving after 2230 – midnight and it was recognised that there had been some handling issues with these flights. This resulted in penalties being levied against airlines for arrivals after midnight with higher fees in operation and this also was resulting in compensation for passengers. Clare asked whether this compensation applied due to weather delays and added that it was often unclear what and when compensation was due and how to claim it and from whom. There was a discussion on the experience of members in claiming compensation and that experience varied from being efficient and timely to being cumbersome and often depended on the airline concerned.

Surface Access

The bus and tram connections to the airport were working well and only the 300 buses had been discontinued due to lack of support. Taxi figures were reported as being down but this was due to the lack of capacity from the shortage of drivers. There was a tender out at the moment and hopefully this issue would improve once the tender process was completed.

Capital Investment

Gordon Dewar advised there were no new projects but that investment was continuing to be ramped up and it should be back to the 2019 level by 2023.

Clare enquired whether the projects had included accessibility assessments as she had no visibility on that. EAL confirmed that all projects included accessibility assessments were that was appropriate.

Gordon Dewar commented that the current focus was on sustainability on projects such as the solar farm and he added that a low carbon heat network would hopefully be available for the new housing near the airport. He added that the airport was working on other projects as well in relation to heating.

When asked if projects were running on time Gordon Dewar commented that any delays were down to delays in the supply chain but generally things were basically on schedule.

Community Investment

A new person has been appointed as a Community Officer and it is hoped that this will lead to better engagement with communities. The nominated charities will now be *in situ* for two years and the relationship with the current charity “The Larder” was working well.

EANAB and EAL would be jointly communicating on noise early next year in January/February.

It was suggested that an update on the ‘Greater Good’ strategy would be a positive Agenda item for the May meeting to review what EAL has done under each of the four pillars.

Action : JH/EAL to create an Agenda item for the May Meeting

Surface Access

The market share of over 32% of passengers arriving by public transport was an excellent statistic and was higher than many airports who have a direct rail link.

Taxis continue to be in short supply but will hopefully improve when the tender process is completed.

Noise

Gordon Robertson talked about the level of complaints adding that 1 person accounted for 103 out of 112 complaints. He added that many people were now working from home and so were affected by noise. The Air Space Change programme continues, and the next phase will start soon.

Route Development

It was taking some airlines longer to get their aircraft back into full operation due to the outsourcing of maintenance and it had taken a year to catch up. Airlines were also retiring older aircraft but not always replacing them and many airlines were awaiting new deliveries. Emirates were constrained with fleet capacity and American Airlines were struggling with deliveries of new aircraft till 2024.

Transatlantic were doing really well and Delta had been very pleased with their flights over the summer especially to Boston and they are due to add a service to Atlanta next summer.

Air Canada were committing to flying from Edinburgh in 2023 with a larger aircraft and Westjet were currently reviewing what they were going to do for next year.

Qatar Airways were now up to 10 x flights a week and they were looking at increasing this to double daily and the same would be likely to follow with Turkish Airlines as well.

EasyJet & Ryanair were also continuing to add new routes and Gordon Dewar commented that Edinburgh hoped to reach 14 million passengers this year.

Passenger satisfaction

After the issues back in the summer, the call centre had resumed taking calls and it was currently working well. Passengers really wanted accurate information and the level of communication regarding security times had been successful based on the fact that it was accurate real time information.

It was commented that people were spending more in the airport which was in theory leading to increased spend in the airport.

The issue with baggage provoked a discussion on who was responsible as the airport was a facilitator not responsible for the problems although passengers did not think that and often blamed the airport. The comment was that surely the airport should be able to control the airlines ? whose fault, was it ? Edinburgh Airport had forced the ground handlers to step up and the airport had created a blog on the website to let passengers know what to do and who to speak to regarding their missing baggage.

There was a comment that prams and car seats should be separated due to their essential usage.

5. Sustainability Update

As Andy Jefferson had been unable to attend the meeting, an update had been circulated to EACC members in relation to an update on Sustainable Aviation Fuel production.

Jessica Briggs – Head of Sustainability for Edinburgh Airport then gave a presentation updating the committee on EAL's current progress.

Clare asked Jessica to make sure that there was consultation on accessibility projects.

6. Update on roads access

Gordon Dewar advised that there was not much progress and that although the planning application was in, he had no idea when there would be any movement. He did confirm that they were trying to convince stakeholders and the Council of the benefits of the new road and things appeared to be getting better with the new administration at Edinburgh Council. Gordon Dewar added that the houses being built now cannot be fully delivered without road improvements.

The earliest that the road would be completed would be late 2024 even if the planning permission was granted now

Action : Roads Access to be a standing Agenda item

7. PRM Update

With this now being insourced Gordon Robertson said that it was working well and that things were back to 2019 levels with good liaison with handling agents and airlines, but he added that they must keep working on this to maintain and improve the levels of care.

Clare confirmed that she had had a good meeting with Jade McAlpine in relation to the requirement of passengers with wheelchairs and also damage to wheelchairs and the consequences that ensued. Clare went on to advise the meeting that there was a rail App which meant that she only had to enter her wheelchair details on the app once and this could be used for all rail companies whenever she travelled by rail. Could the airline/airports not come up with something similar ?

Action : EAL to take away and look at the feasibility of creating an App for passengers travelling with wheelchairs.

8. UKACC Update

Robert advised the committee that there would be an annual meeting held on the 24th November in Birmingham in person but that unfortunately he would be on holiday but Janice Hogarth would hopefully be able to join virtually and report back to EACC.

Updates from UKACC continue to be circulated to the Committee.

9. Quarterly Report from EANAB Report and EANRP review after mediation

Lindsay Cole had submitted a report prior to the meeting as he was unable to be present commenting that the changes in EANAB were going well and in the meantime, they were also conducting business as usual. Lindsay advised that there would be a follow up report after the mediation was concluded.

Gordon Robertson advised the meeting that EANAB were looking for a new Chair which it was hoped would be completed by the end of November but it could extend beyond then. A process to appoint a new chair was being reviewed.

There would be engagement with the committee and a draft plan needing to be approved between EAL and EANAB explaining what would follow.

Adam Cumming commented that the subgroups were working very well and he added that Simon Rhodes had been a really good addition to the discussion as EAL.

Adam also added that there were still some items of governance that required some changes and some of these had been an issue but it was critical to get these agreed to enable things to move on.

EANAB meetings were still being conducted virtually.

Lindsay and Gordon Robertson will do a full report at the next meeting.

Robert Carr reported that he understood that a number of complaints remained unresolved within EANAB. One recommendation of the EANRP Report referred to the possibility of members of the EACC having a role in relation to the resolution of complaints within EANAB in certain circumstances. Robert stated that it was possible that before the next meeting of the EACC in February 2023 a request might be made from EANAB for a number of members of the EACC to have a role in resolving complaints from within EANAB. Robert commented on the skills and experience within the EACC membership, given that a number had quasi-judicial roles.

Robert also stated that it was his opinion that neither he, nor Kevin Lang, should have any role in resolving complaints from within EANAB given the information they had received confidentially as part of the EANRP information gathering. Robert said nothing about the nature of the complaints, the complainants or the persons against whom the complaints were directed. Adam and Gordon Robertson confirmed that it was correct that a number of complaints remained unresolved and that such a request might come from EANAB to the EACC.

10. Review of Rolling Action Plan

Air Space Change – Gordon Robertson confirmed that EAL were still working on completing Stage 2 before moving on to Stage 3 which would probably be completed in November 2023. Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports have been working together on ACP and have won some UK Government funding to help them make progress.

It was suggested that the EACC try to get Andy Jefferson along to the May 2023 meeting and that we invite Police Scotland to present at the February 2023 meeting on managing security at the airport and the role of Police Scotland there.

11. AOCB

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1230.