

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
3 DECEMBER 2020 AT 1.30 PM (VIRTUAL)**

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Present: Mr Colin Flack OBE – Chairman

In attendance from Birmingham Airport:

Nick Barton	-	Chief Executive
Kirstin McCarthy	-	Head of Sustainability
Andy Holding	-	Corporate Responsibility Manager
Stuart Haseley- Nerjup	-	Head of Customer Experience
Nikki Bains	-	Head of Planning, Transport and Strategy
Tom Redfern	-	Environment Manager

In attendance from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council:

Mr L Stevenson	-	Representing the ACC Secretariat
Lucy Wood	-	Business Administration Apprentice

ABTA	-	Mrs S Foxall
Balsall Common Village Residents Association	-	Mr D Ellis
Balsall Parish Council	-	Cllr K Tindall
Barston Parish Council	-	Mr D Elliott
Berkswell Parish Council	-	Cllr R Lloyd
Birmingham City Council	-	Cllr M Ward
Birmingham City Council	-	Cllr D Donaldson
Catherine de Barnes Residents Association	-	Mr D Cuthbert
Consumers Association	-	Mr P Orton
Hampton in Arden Parish Council	-	Cllr D Sandells
Hampton Society	-	Mr M Blomer
Knowle Society	-	Mrs E Baker
Marston Green Residents Association	-	Mr J Fox
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	-	Cllr J Taylor
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	-	Cllr R Sleight OBE

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Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Mrs B Hill
Passengers Representative	- Mrs R Tyler
Warwick District Council	- Cllr G Illingworth
Warwickshire County Council (Substitute)	- (Parish) Cllr R Habgood
Wolverhampton City Council	- Cllr C Hibbert

Apologies were received on behalf of: -

Coventry City Council	- Cllr C Miks
Fordbridge Town Council	- Cllr L Sorrell
North Warwickshire Borough Council	- Cllr T Clews
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Cllr T Diccio
Warwickshire County Council	- Cllr D Reilly

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIRMAN**

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

As the meeting got underway, the Airport Company (Nick Barton) congratulated the Chairman on his recent award of OBE in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

**RESOLVED**

That the Chairman's welcome be noted.

**2. DEFERRAL OF THE 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In light of the ongoing virtual meeting arrangements and there being no additional business nor membership matters for the AGM to consider, the Chairman invited the Committee to consider deferring all usual AGM business this year. All Committee appointments, subject to the incumbents being happy to continue in those roles, would carry forward until the next AGM (December 2021). This proposal had been discussed at the Committee's recent Steering Group and also had the support of the Airport Company.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the 2020 AGM be deferred in its entirety; and
- (ii) That all Committee appointments made at the 2019 AGM continue in force until the Committees next scheduled AGM in December 2021.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the last three meetings of the Committee, held on 5 March, 4 June and 17 September 2020, were submitted.

By way of an update that was applicable to the September meeting, the Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the resolution to write to the Secretary of State for Transport; the Government Minister for Aviation; and regional MP's to seek urgent support for the UK

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airport industry. He advised the Committee that a response had now been received from the Minister for Aviation and this had been circulated within the agenda papers.

The Knowle Society (Mrs E Baker) – advised the Committee that the Society had also separately lobbied the MP for Meriden on the same issue.

The remainder of the Minutes were taken as presented.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) The Minutes of the last three meetings be agreed as a correct record; and
- (ii) The response from the Government Minister for Aviation be noted.

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

The Committee was advised that, on this occasion, there were no pre-submitted questions.

**RESOLVED**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**5. AIRPORT ACTIVITIES REPORT**

The Airport Company (Nick Barton) - presented the new format of the Airport Activities report for the period July to September 2020. The report set out 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 current issues pertaining to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 since his last briefing to the Committee in September:

- The impact of the second wave of Covid-19 and the effect of that on air traffic volumes, passenger movements and the financial effect on the business overall.
- A second workforce restructuring plan (Project Sky Phase 2) was considered necessary. This meant that an additional 120 roles would be leaving the Airport Company by the end of December. The first restructuring phase that had been

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announced in July 2020 affected 258 employees. Mr Barton explained the logistical issues that the business faced in terms of the restructure (such as the challenges within Air Traffic Control) and the overall support from staff across the business that had been apparent to him during the two periods of restructure.

- Car Park 6 had recently been leased for two years to HMRC for an inland border point facility (1 of 8 new inland border points to ease potential pressure at Dover). 80 staff affected by Project Sky Phase 2 had been seconded into those HMRC roles (Mitie) for two years with the provision that they would return to the Airport once a month to work a 10-hour shift in Security to keep their security clearances current; thus allowing the Airport Company to draw back those staff when passenger volumes recovered.
- Mr Barton commended the Committee's letter to the Secretary of State for Transport; the Government Minister for Aviation; and regional MP's to seek urgent support for the UK airport industry. By way of an update, the Committee was advised that the Airport Company had recently received confirmation of a grant that would refund their business rates (£5.9M per annum). This was extremely welcome.
- The regime of 14 day quarantine for passengers arriving from an overseas destination had been very restrictive on business overall. From 15 December, those rules had been moderated – at day 5 following arrival, passengers now had the option to take an approved (privately funded) test, which if proved negative, the period of quarantine would end at that point. The industry had welcomed this.
- The Airport Company was ready to fully restart the business when passenger numbers returned. In light of the business safeguards built into the restructuring project at Phase 2, Mr Barton advised the Committee that the Airport could open up to significant passenger capacity within a 4-week period of notice.

### **Discussion Points**

Consumers Association (Mr P Orton) – with the introduction of HS2, Mr Orton asked if any land owned by the Airport Company had been sold to HS2 to help raise revenue for the Airport. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that no land had been sold to HS2 to date. For clarity, Mr Barton advised the Committee that some small areas of land would go to HS2 in the future for the route of the train track and the station, together with some access rights in the long term for maintenance. Construction works land would also be made available on a temporary basis. In context, acquisition of BAL land was perceived as limited and the amount of money involved would be tiny.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – highlighted the update regarding the employees that would be seconded to Mitie for the HMRC inland border point roles and asked if their continuation of service with the Airport Company was affected. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) reiterated the benefits of the initiative in that those employees would have continuity of service throughout the period of their secondment.

ABTA (Mrs S Foxall) – highlighted the recent media reports of Covid-19 testing at East Midlands, London Stansted and Manchester airports and asked if this would be introduced at Birmingham. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) advised that all three of those airports were owned by the same group and it was their own commercial decision to introduce testing, rather than a mandatory industry initiative. Mr Barton explained further that testing immediately upon arrival was perceived as inaccurate and that manner of testing would still not allow you out of UK quarantine any sooner. The Committee was advised that the availability of testing at airports may have some benefits to departing passengers where the destination countries had required it.

Warwick District Council (Cllr G Illingworth) – asked what would happen to the employees seconded to Mitie for the HMRC inland border point roles if that facility was not needed. Cllr

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Illingworth also asked if anything was known regarding other UK airports and how the pandemic had impacted on their businesses in comparison with Birmingham. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) explained that if there was a Brexit agreement in place that resolved the border issues, then the HMRC facility would close and that scenario would pose the Airport Company a challenge for those employees. However, it was envisaged that the facility would have a purpose in the short-term and, in parallel, the Airport would be coming back to life in terms of passenger numbers so the Airport Company would be able to mitigate some of the risk to those employees. Mr Barton also highlighted to the Committee that a number of the Airport workforce had gone across to University Hospital Birmingham to support them with their challenges. In terms of the effect of the pandemic on other UK airports, Mr Barton advised the Committee that all airports were experiencing the same impact on their businesses as Birmingham.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Cllr J Taylor) – highlighted the impact of the reported redundancies on the individuals concerned and asked for further clarification as to what roles had been effected by the two restructure phases and also the decision process to make those roles redundant as opposed to furlough. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) explained that the Airport Company found itself in an emergency financial situation and there was a need to look at the minimum criteria for a corporate structure. Furlough had been utilised as far as possible although this scheme was not feasible for all roles. Mr Barton also reiterated the positive feedback that he had received from affected staff which had been a testament to the way the restructure had been consulted upon and implemented. A number of affected staff had already found new employment and, in some cases, better jobs than their previous roles at the Airport. The affected roles spanned across all sectors of the business with the exception of air traffic control and fire. In terms of the Airport Fire Service, Mr Barton advised the Committee of additional security duties now being undertaken by them which had yielded contractual savings for the Airport Company.

Balsall Parish Council (Cllr K Tindall) – asked the Airport Company for a further update on their business recovery plan. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) highlighted the effect of the pandemic on the Airport's capital plan and the amount of time envisaged to get that back on course. Mr Barton advised that only essential compliance works had been completed since the start of the pandemic such as the holds baggage screening system. The terminal extension (TE18 Project) had also been cancelled in its entirety. Glide-path 33 ILS had also been completed to resolve a problem on the airfield with ponding water that could affect the ILS. Mr Barton highlighted the two examples above as tactical investments to aid the recovery of the business. Furthermore, the Committee was advised as to how the Airport Company proposed to bring skilled staff back into the business once demand returned. Mr Barton also reiterated that key staff, such as air traffic control, fire and security were retained due to the difficulties in getting those roles returned quickly once the business showed signs of improvement.

The Chairman – acknowledged the work undertaken by the Airport Company in safeguarding as many jobs as possible and, on behalf of the Committee, wished them good luck in their business recovery phase. The Airport Company (Nick Barton) thanked the Committee for their continued support.

### **Planning Updates**

The Airport Company (Nikki Bains) reported on the following headline issues:

- The Solihull Local Plan and associated consultation.
- HS2 and their current development programme.
- Castle Hills Farm and the current situation in regards to the recent fire.

### **Discussion Points**

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Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked for additional clarification in terms of the Castle Hills Farm location and its boundary with JLR development land. The Airport Company (Nikki Bains) explained the two sites adjoined each other and updated the Committee as to the heritage status of the Castle Hills Farm site.

Berkswell Parish Council (Cllr R Lloyd) – asked if the Castle Hills Farm building was insured and was advised that this was the case. In terms of future repairs to the fire damaged building, the Airport Company (Nikki Bains) highlighted that Castle Hills Farm was Grade II Listed. Future considerations were to make the building safe to allow surveys to be undertaken in parallel with detailed discussions with Solihull MBC's Heritage Officer regarding the feasibility of a future sympathetic repair. Cllr Lloyd also highlighted his concerns regarding the manner in which HS2 linked into the terminal building at the Airport and asked if it would be possible to use the route of the existing people mover. The Airport Company (Nikki Bains) advised the Committee of the planning constraints that HS2 had to work to and their outline basis for development.

### **Customer Service Updates**

As part of the report, the Airport Company (Stuart Haseley-Nerjup) also delivered a PowerPoint presentation which updated the Committee on the Covid-19 safety measures for passengers in place within the Airport. This included:

- Bus capacity and mandatory face covering information at car park bus stops.
- Advisory social distancing information at car park lifts.
- Advisory notices on the doors in operation for car park walkways.
- Advisory notices that Air Rail link is out-of-service and replacement bus service.
- No-entry and exit-only signage within the terminal entrance for arrivals.
- Thermal screening and additional mandatory information at the departures entrance.
- Advisory social distancing and mandatory face covering information signage and announcements etc. at Check-in, PRM, Security/Immigration and Baggage Hall areas.
- Advisory social distancing and face covering signage at terminal lifts, departure lounges and toilets.
- Hand sanitizer stations throughout the terminal.
- Customer journey video and other supporting digital messages.
- Website/email/social media updates with key safety messages for passengers.

### **Discussion Points**

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Cllr J Taylor) – congratulated the Airport Company on all the measures in place to ensure passenger safety. Cllr Taylor asked for some further updates on exemptions from PPE, thermal imaging where passengers may naturally have high temperatures, support for the visually impaired and cultural issues that needed to be taken into account. The Airport Company (Stuart Haseley-Nerjup) advised that a high fever would trigger an alert and how those passengers would be sympathetically questioned to understand if any genuine underlying health issues existed. Recently, a decision had been taken to remove the thermal imaging from the Airport. The Committee were also reassured regarding the ongoing work around passenger disabilities and hidden disabilities. Prayer and wash rooms had also been maintained with additional safety measures in place. In terms of the staff restructure, Mr Haseley-Nerjup highlighted that 92 staff from his department had been put at risk and he reiterated the feedback that had been received from staff as to how sensitively the restructure proposals had been handled.

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**RESOLVED**

That the contents of the Airport Activities Report for the period July to September 2020 be received.

**6. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**

The Airport Company (Tom Redfern) presented the Sustainability Report for the period July to September 2020. The report set out updates on the following matters:

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

**Discussion Points**

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – highlighted the ICCAN consultation on the future of aviation noise management (which had now been extended until 18 December 2020) and asked if the ACC should submit a formal response in parallel with the response being made by the Airport Company. Mr Cuthbert highlighted his concerns regarding national noise policies in the context of the local agreements in place at Birmingham. The Airport Company (Tom Redfern) acknowledged the value of local noise restrictions that had been implemented in consultation with the community. Mr Redfern and Mr Cuthbert also highlighted their forthcoming participation in the ICAAN noise workshops. In terms of a consultation response from the ACC, the Airport Company (Kirstin McCarthy) highlighted that the Airport's proposed consultation response had been discussed at the Noise Sub-Group which favoured a local approach to noise management. Mrs McCarthy added that the Airport Company would endorse the ACC responding to the consultation although time constraints were now evident. Mr Cuthbert asked if the Airport Company would be willing to share their consultation submission to allow the Committee to potentially associate itself to the Airport Company's response. The Airport Company (Kirstin McCarthy) confirmed that this would be possible once their response had been completed. Given the time constraints it was suggested that the Committee's Noise Sub-Group could oversee the Committee's consultation response.

Passengers Representative and Vice-Chairman (Mrs R Tyler) – supported to the proposed approach as set out above and echoed the concerns regarding national noise policies.

Balsall Common Village Residents Association (Mr D Ellis) – highlighted the effectiveness of the local noise management measures currently in place at Birmingham and stated that it was essential that local control was maintained. Mr Ellis stated that it was important to respond to the consultation to safeguard our local interests and welcomed the proposed approach utilising the Committee's Noise Sub-Group.

The Knowle Society (Mrs E Baker) – supported the suggested approach as set out above and highlighted the value of the Airport Company and the community in working together to manage aviation noise.

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**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the contents of the Sustainability Report for the period July to September 2020 be noted; and
- (ii) That the Committee's response to the ICCAN consultation on the future of aviation noise management be delegated to the Committee's Noise Sub-Group in consultation with the Airport Company.

**7. NOISE SUB-GROUP UPDATE**

The Airport Company (Kirstin McCarthy) advised the Committee that their Sub-Group had recently considered a number of items which included a review of the Noise Action Plan; and a review of the Night Flying Policy and the Daytime Noise Limit. A brief verbal summary of the work undertaken for each item was submitted. In addition, the Committee was also updated on the DfT consultation for a potential national night flying policy and also the consultation for the designated London Airports and their night flying policy review.

**Discussion Points**

Passengers Representative and Vice-Chairman (Mrs R Tyler) – highlighted the Sub-Groups deliberations pertaining to the review of the Night Flying Policy and the ACC's ongoing overview role for the policy itself.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – endorsed what had been said by Mrs Tyler.

**RESOLVED**

That the update on the Committee's Noise Sub-Group be received and noted.

**8. HIGH VOLUME COMPLAINANTS**

The Airport Company (Andy Holding) advised that BAL's Complaints Policy provided for the Company to cease investigating complaints about aircraft activity from individuals where it was felt that no further progress could be made. In a small number of cases, individuals continued to submit large numbers of complaints without engaging with the Company. This led to a situation where complaints figures were distorted to such an extent that meaningful interpretation of reported numbers and trends was difficult. The report set out a proposal to resolve this issue going forwards.

The Chairman highlighted that London Southend, London Stansted and Luton Airports had a similar issue so Birmingham was not unique with this particular challenge.

**Discussion Points**

Berkswell Parish Council (Cllr R Lloyd) – sought further clarification on the proposed method of reporting complaints from the high volume complainants. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) advised the Committee that they would be recorded in their entirety but detached from the main body of the report to allow for the accurate interpretation of the normal complaints data by the Committee.

Warwickshire County Council (Parish Cllr R Habgood) – asked the Airport Company for their view as to what was deemed a reasonable threshold to be regarded as a high volume complainant. The Airport Company (Tom Redfern and Andy Holding) advised that in these two unique particular cases, the individual complainants had not engaged with the Airport



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Company at all despite many attempts to open a dialogue and they continued to lodge complaints.

The Knowle Society (Mrs E Baker) – noted the proposed reporting arrangements and that each case would be dealt with on its own merits. Mrs Baker invited the Airport Company to formalise a threshold to be regarded as a high volume or vexatious complainant.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked if, in these two particular cases, there was a role for the ACC to either act as an independent mediator or for the Airport Company to highlight to the complainants that their concerns have been considered by the ACC. The Airport Company (Andy Holding) highlighted that the difficulty in these two cases were that the complainants were not responding. Mr Holding undertook to consider how and if the ACC could add any value to the resolution of the two high volume complaints.

Consumers Association (Mr P Orton) – supported the Airport Company's proposed approach as set out in the report with the potential referral of any high volume complaints to the ACC on a quarterly basis for final review.

Balsall Common Village Residents Association (Mr D Ellis) – supported the separate reporting of high volume complaints and urged caution over expending too much time and resources in administering this process if those complainants failed to engage.

Passengers Representative and Vice-Chairman (Mrs R Tyler) – supported the potential referral of any high volume complaints to the ACC on a quarterly basis for final review. Mrs Tyler added that she would not wish to see the ACC undertaking any sort of complaints mediation role.

### **RESOLVED**

That Committee agreed the proposal as set out in the report that complaints from high-volume callers be recorded separately from quarterly and annual complaints figures.

## **9. PRESENTATION – SUSTAINABLE AVIATION UPDATE**

The Airport Company (Tom Redfern) delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the above subject. In summary, the presentation updated the Committee on the following key headlines:

- Coalition arrangements.
- BAL's vision, role and approach.
- Net zero aviation carbon emissions by 2050.
- UK Climate Change Committee report findings.
- UK aviation's CO2 record to date.
- Decarbonisation road-map 2020.
- CO2 savings from improved operations and airspace management.
- Move to cleaner aircraft.
- Sustainable fuel criteria.
- Use of sustainable aviation fuels.
- Addressing residual aviation emissions.
- Cleaner 2021 work.
- Noise goals and road-map 2013.
- Noise opportunities.

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- Quieter Group priorities for 2021.

**Discussion Points**

Hampton in Arden Parish Council (Cllr D Sandells) – asked if the Airport Company were looking at steeper approaches as part on their ongoing work towards sustainable aviation. The Airport Company (Tom Redfern) advised that they were not currently and highlighted the need for a regulatory change to initiate any such revisions.

**RESOLVED**

That the contents of the presentation and update on Sustainable Aviation be noted.

**10. AIRPORT BYLAWS UPDATE**

The Airport Company (Andy Holding) updated the Committee with regards to a current work stream to review and update the Airport Bylaws which dated from 2004 originally. Mr Holding advised that the Bylaws would benefit from a refresh to align them with a number of modern 2020 provisions that had not existed when they were originally introduced.

DfT approval was currently awaited on the proposed revisions and the Airport Company would issue a further update to the Committee (email) at an appropriate point in the near future allowing for comment.

**Discussion Points**

There were no discussion arising from the report and update given by the Airport Company.

**RESOLVED**

That the contents of the Airport Bylaws update be received and noted.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was raised on this occasion.

**RESOLVED**

That the agenda item noted.

**12. DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 04 March 2021 at 13.30hrs. The format of the meeting would be confirmed nearer the time.

**RESOLVED**

That the date of the next meeting be noted.