

**BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT - AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
3 JUNE 2021 AT 1.30 PM (VIRTUAL)**

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Present: Mr Colin Flack OBE – Chairman

In attendance from Birmingham Airport Company:

Nick Barton	-	Chief Executive
Kirstin McCarthy	-	Head of Sustainability
Andy Holding	-	Corporate Responsibility Manager
Nikki Bains	-	Head of Planning, Transport and Strategy
Tom Redfern	-	Environment Manager
Chris Wilson	-	Head of Terminal & Capacity

In attendance from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council:

Mr L Stevenson	-	Representing the ACC Secretariat
Daniel Patel	-	Solihull MBC Business Admin 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
Chelmsley Wood Town Council	-	Cllr S Macdonald
Consumers Association	-	Mr P Orton
Hampton in Arden Parish Council	-	Cllr D Sandells
Hampton Society	-	Mr M Blomer
Kingshurst Parish Council	-	Cllr D Cole
Knowle Society	-	Mrs E Baker
North Warwickshire Borough Council	-	Mr R Habgood (substitute)
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	-	Cllr J Taylor

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Shard End Communities	- Mrs M Ball
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Cllr Mrs A Rolf
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Mrs B Hill
Passengers Representative	- Mrs R Tyler
Warwick District Council	- Cllr G Illingworth
Wolverhampton City Council	- Cllr C Hibbert
Wychwood Club	- Mr G Heaps

Apologies were received on behalf of: -

Bickenhill & Marston Green Parish Council	- Cllr J Horton
Bromford and Hodge Hill Housing Liaison Board	- Mrs E Tarpey
Castle Bromwich Parish Council	- Cllr J Macdonald
Coventry City Council	- Cllr C Miks
Fordbridge Town Council	- Cllr L Sorrell
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	- Mr M Lyons
North Warwickshire Borough Council	- Cllr D Reilly
Sheldon Residents Association	- Mrs M Kennett
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	- Cllr T Diccio
Staffordshire County Council	- Cllr M Deaville

1. KIRSTIN MCCARTHY

Prior to the formal business of the meeting commencing, the Committee was advised that Kirstin McCarthy would shortly be leaving the Airport Company to begin a new career role elsewhere. The Committee thanked Kirstin for her support and contributions to the work of the Committee over many years and wished her well for the future in her new role.

Mrs Rosemary Tyler had very kindly coordinated a card and some flowers to be sent to Kirstin on behalf of the Committee prior to the meeting.

The Chairman also advised the Committee that the Airport Company had appointed Tom Redfern as Kirstin's successor.

RESOLVED

That the Committees unanimous appreciation and good wishes be placed on record.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Committee and representatives from the Airport Company. Attendance, new membership appointments for 2021/22 and apologies were as noted by the Secretary and the Airport Company.

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RESOLVED

That the Chairman's welcome be noted.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held virtually on 4 March 2021, were submitted. There were no matter arising.

RESOLVED

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

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 January to March 2021. 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 additional headline issues pertaining to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 since his last detailed briefing to the Committee in March this year. In summary, this included:

- Airport operations, to date, albeit still minimal.
- Current government restrictions and the ongoing impact on the Airport.
- The ongoing financial effect of losing commercial passenger volumes on the business.
- Staff update following the two business restructuring exercises together with the ongoing use of furlough.

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- Green, Amber and Red list destination countries and an appraisal of the risk-based system and its associated testing requirements.
- The imminent possibility that Birmingham Airport could handle Red list arrivals. A Government announcement was expected that would designate the Airport's south terminal exclusively for those operations.
- Passenger travel from Red list countries and the ongoing quarantine hotel requirements.
- Anticipation of the Governments review of the current restrictions on 21 June and the implications from a scenario of options.
- Permitted travel into the UK and requirements to do so (testing and quarantine).
- Banking and shareholder support.

Discussion Points

The Chairman – having considered Mr Barton's current update, he asked if a major UK airport could now fail. Mr Barton advised that, mathematically, yes such a scenario was feasible as it was impossible for airport companies to carry on indefinitely with significant and ongoing funding losses. All airports had massive operating costs even when they were closed or just serving minimal air traffic such as the case with Birmingham. Mr Barton also outlined a theoretical scenario for a financial business model looking ahead at a further 12 months from an asset and investment perspective. In the long term, the outlook for the industry still remained positive in his view.

Warwick District Council (Cllr G Illingworth) – asked that if the Government were to confirm that Birmingham Airport was to handle Red list passengers exclusively through its south terminal, would there be any financial implications for the Airport Company. Mr Barton advised that the Airport Company would be able to recover the costs from the Government. As an aside, Mr Barton advised that any air traffic movements were welcome as it allowed Birmingham's operational services, such as air traffic control and ground handling operations, to have "live" work-to-do. Mr Barton also advised the Committee with regards to the comprehensive testing for aircraft crews undertaking Red list flights who were exempt from the normal quarantine arrangements.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Cllr J Taylor) – asked the Airport Company for a more detailed update on staff in terms of their welfare and morale. Mr Barton advised that a staff wellbeing survey had recently been undertaken with all staff which had resulted in a 50% return. The results of that survey were now awaited. In addition, Mr Barton explained that he had also been presenting a fortnightly staff broadcast to give all staff a business update. Feedback from those broadcasts was that they were very well received and welcomed. In terms of the working environment, all current Government guidance was followed for Covid-secure work places and staff testing was still also available on site.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (Mrs B Hill) – asked if arriving passengers from the Red list countries could circumnavigate their return route to avoid the restrictions. In response and to give assurances, Mr Barton advised the Committee of the comprehensive boarder checking that was in place which examined the passenger journey in its entirety.

Balsall Parish Council (Cllr K Tindall) – highlighted the ongoing difficulties for both the Airport Company and passengers, citing the current situation being very challenging to plan ahead with any certainty. Cllr Tindall also expressed his disappointment at the apparent lack of Government support given to the UK airport industry to date. In response, Mr Barton gave the Committee an update on the minimal support measures that were in place and explained how some of them had now been revised and updated (such as the new flexi-furlough arrangements and the Airport and Ground Operators Support scheme).

Wolverhampton City Council (Cllr C Hibbert) – stated that the current travel restrictions appeared overly confusing to the travelling public. Cllr Hibbert also asked how the decision

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was made to potentially designate Birmingham Airport to receive passengers from Red list countries. Mr Barton advised that the criteria were based around the need to have a physically separated boarder via a second arrivals terminal. That primary requirement, in itself, discounted several UK airports.

Planning Updates

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

- Solihull Local Plan.
- Airport Surface Access Strategy.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked how the surface access strategy performed in 2018/2019 and was advised that there was an increase in passenger numbers overall and an increase, therefore, in public transport usage during that period. The Airport Company was currently considering their approach for surface access targets for the period coming out of lockdown and beyond. Mr Cuthbert also asked for an update on Castle Hills Farm and was advised that the Airport Company was presently in dialogue with Solihull Council regarding the future of the site in consultation with Historic England. Mr Cuthbert asked that updates on Castle Hills Farm be brought back to each meeting. Furthermore, the Airport Company invited Mr Cuthbert to attend the Surface Access Strategy Group meetings if he wished to do so. It was suggested that ACC representation on the Group be considered at the Committee's 2021 AGM in any event.

The Consumers Association (Mr P Orton) – asked the Airport Company if the ownership of the land used for the site acquired by JLR for their new operations centre was known. In response, the Airport Company advised that a number of land owners were involved, none of which were Birmingham Airport. A list of land owners was available and could be circulated to the Committee if required and by individual request.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the contents of the Airport Activities Report for the period January to March 2021 be received and noted;
- (ii) That ACC representation on the Surface Access Strategy Group be considered at the Committee's 2021 AGM; and
- (iii) That updates on Castle Hills Farm be brought back to each meeting.

6. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Airport Company (Tom Redfern) presented the Sustainability Report for the period January to March 2021. 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).
- Energy.

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In addition to the report, the Airport Company presented the 2019 Noise Contour Summary Report and highlighted a number of key points from that paper to the Committee.

Discussion Points

Balsall Common Village Residents Association (Mr D Ellis) – requested clarification as for which period was being used for the Post Implementation Review for Runway 33 SID's and what impact would Covid have on the data being used. The Airport Company advised that data taken from a 9-month period prior to the initial impact of Covid would be used. The CAA had also issued updated guidance to take account of the pandemic.

The Chairman - highlighted that if there were any further subsequent questions arising from the report, particularly the Noise Contour Summary, the Airport Company (Tom Redfern) could be contacted outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the Sustainability Report for the period January to March 2021 be received and noted.

7. AIR PASSENGER DUTY – GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION UPDATE

Mrs Rosemary Tyler advised the Committee that the Government was running a consultation on Air Passenger Duty (APD). The proposals were to reduce the amount of APD charged in domestic airline tickets, and introduce new 'bands' of taxation for international flights. Mrs Tyler asked if the Committee wanted to reply separately to the consultation given the very short timescale for response of 14 June 2021, and given that APD directly affected passengers rather than the aviation industry itself.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-aviation-tax-reform>

Discussion Points

The Chairman – highlighted that from the UKACC's perspective, most ACC's overseeing major airports would not be commenting on the consultation for the reasons outlined above and also because opinion was so divided on APD in general.

Catherine de Barnes Residents Association (Mr D Cuthbert) – asked if the Airport Company had/was going to respond to the consultation and was advised of the Airport Company's summary views and confirmation that they had now submitted their response.

Balsall Parish Council (Cllr K Tindall) – stated that he felt that APD was an inappropriate tax on passengers, especially at the present time, and that taxation should be levied towards the airlines themselves to incentivise cleaner and more sustainable aviation.

The Consumers Association (Mr P Orton) – highlighted that the consultation was of great interest to his organisation and the Committee should be encouraged to respond, collectively or its individual member bodies.

Passengers Representative and Vice-Chairman (Mrs R Tyler) – reiterated the very short time constraints in which responses to the consultation had to be submitted by (14 June 2021).

The Knowle Society (Mrs E Baker) – stated that she felt, on balance, taxation matters were not issues that ACC's should be directly involved in.

Berkswell Parish Council (Cllr R Lloyd) – highlighted that the member bodies of the ACC had no time to consult with the communities which they represented (which would then have typically been discussed and debated at ACC to form an informed view for a potential response to the consultation if the Committee saw fit to do so).

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- (i) That the contents of the consultation update be received and noted; and
- (ii) That any response by the ACC to the APD consultation be dependent on any views being submitted subsequent to this meeting (and in consultation with the Chairman and the Airport Company).

8. NOISE SUB-GROUP UPDATE

Since the last meeting, the Committee's Noise Sub-Group had met with the Airport Company on a further occasion and the Committee was provided with a full update on that work-stream. The Minutes of the Sub-Group were also included within the agenda for their meeting that had been held on 15 April 2021.

In presenting the update, Mrs Rosemary Tyler gave a summary update on the recent work of the Group themed around the DfT's ongoing consultation which had now been extended to 3 September 2021, allowing more time for matters to be considered and a response made.

Discussion Points

Warwick District Council (Cllr G Illingworth) – highlighted the rotation of flights to and from the Mediterranean (perception that airlines aimed to average 3 rotations per day to make routes commercially viable) and expressed caution at future Birmingham policies being too prohibitive to airlines and potentially losing business to other airports.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the update on the recent work undertaken by the Committee's Noise Sub-Group be received and noted; and
- (ii) That the Airport Company establish a further meeting of the Group in due course to continue its business.

9. PRESENTATION – TERMINAL RESTART PLANS

The Committee received a presentation on the restart plans for the airport terminal. Chris Wilson, Head of Terminal & Capacity advised the Committee of a number of current issues which, in summary, included:

- Impact on travel.
- Risk assessment and control.
- External ACI accreditation.
- Measures in place, such as hygiene, protection and messaging.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the presentation be noted.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business on this occasion.

RESOLVED

That the agenda item noted.

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11. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 02 September 2021 at 13.30hrs. The venue and format of the meeting would be confirmed nearer the time.

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting be noted.