

LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT

Minutes of meeting No. 81 of the Consultative Committee held on Wednesday, 26 February 2014
At 2.10pm at the Terminal Building, Southend Airport

Present: Stuart Greengrass	Chairman
David Osborn	Deputy Chairman
Roger Clements	Chief Executive, Stobart Aviation
David Lister	Operations Director, Southend Airport (AOD)
Jo Marchetti	Community Affairs Co-ordinator, Southend Airport
Councillor Peter Elliott	Maldon District Council
Richard Evans	Rochford District Council (Officer)
Councillor Heather Glynn	Rochford District Council
Nora Goodman	Eastwood & St. Laurence Residents Association
Councillor Ray Howard	Essex County Council
Martin Howlett	Rochford District Council (Officer)
Councillor Vic Leach	Rochford Hundred Association of Parish Councils
Councillor Joan Mockford	Rochford District Council
Councillor Alf Partridge	Castle Point Borough Council
Les Sawyer	West Leigh Residents Association
Ron Smithson	Flying Clubs
Councillor Mike Steptoe	Rochford District Council
Councillor Martin Terry	Southend on Sea Borough Council
Derry Thorpe	Southend Trades Council
Neil Vann	Southend on Sea Borough Council (Officer)
George Crowe	Secretary

1. TERMINAL BUILDING

The meeting was preceded at 1pm by a tour of the extended terminal building.

At the start of the meeting, the Chairman thanked Roger Clements, David Lister, Jo Marchetti and Nikky Charles for the arrangements and conduct of the tour. He added that it was good to see the results of this further investment by Stobartair in the local area.

Councillor Howard added that he had been delighted with what he had seen and referred to the Government's Aviation Strategy having recently been discussed at County Hall.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Iain Campbell (Ipeco Holdings) and Councillor Pam Challis (Thames Gateway).

3. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman, in welcoming members to the meeting, due to the late start and the amount of business on the agenda, requested members to be concise in their comments.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Referring to minute 3 (20 November 2013), Councillor Howard advised that he had sent an e-mail to the leader of Essex County Council about the filling of the two member vacancies on the Committee. He added that Councillor Terry Cutmore was unable to fill one of the vacancies. He thought that Councillor Colin Seagers had been appointed and added that officer attendance also needed to be decided. The Secretary advised that he had received no formal notification that Councillor Seagers had been appointed. Councillor Howard undertook to pursue the matter further. **Action: Councillor Howard**

The Secretary confirmed that he had written to James Lees of the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) to inform him that, pending the review of the Committee's Constitution and the issue of attendance at meetings, it would not be possible for representatives of AEF to attend any of its meetings at present.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 that had previously been circulated were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Harp House roundabout (minute 5(a) refers)

Councillor Howard referred to Councillor Rodney Bass, the Essex County Council Cabinet member responsible for Highways, having mentioned earlier on the day of the meeting that discussions were taking place with Southend Council on infrastructure improvements. In response to comments about this news, Councillor Howard suggested that the Airport should write to Essex County Council enquiring about the discussions and he asked that he be sent a copy of the letter.

Reference was made to the possibility of infrastructure improvement funding from the South-east Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillor Terry mentioned that Southend Council had received funding from the Government to enable it to improve the roundabout on the A127 by the Tesco superstore. He also referred to plans for improving the Airport Business Park.

Councillor Partridge said that improvements to the A13 were being paid for by Dubai Ports.

Councillor Mrs Glynn said that she had been at a parishes meeting where, with reference to a question about Baltic Wharf, Councillor Bass had said that the County Council was looking at infrastructure improvements in the area.

(b) Revisions to Public Safety Zone (minute 8 refers)

The AOD confirmed that the meeting with local councillors had taken place and that the CAA had been asked to use the Kent Elms and Rochford libraries to advertise the notification period.

(c) Taxis (minute 16(b) refers)

The AOD reported that a meeting had been held with Andrews Taxis. The company had confirmed that its operating arrangements are in line with Rochford District Council licensing conditions and fares have to be identical to those of any other taxi operator. The Committee was also informed that the Airport Transport Forum had discussed taxi services and was dealing with any issues.

Councillor Mrs Glynn said that she had been at a meeting the previous day at which she had been advised that the taxi's meter must be used in the local area but that prior negotiation can take place regarding fares to other places such as Luton Airport.

Councillor Partridge said that drivers for ABC Taxis claim that there is discrimination against them regarding dropping off and picking up passengers and he added that a covered area for these activities to take place was needed.

The AOD responded that the Airport had an arrangement with Andrews and their drivers had a particular waiting area. Discussions were taking place with Andrews about the possibility of a covered area for delivering and collecting passengers being provided. Other companies do not have such an area and have 5 minutes in which to collect and drop off passengers using the short-term car park. The arrangements were being reviewed with a view to making them safer and more customer-friendly. However, plans had not yet been finalised.

7. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE

Referring to minutes 6 (21 August 2013) and 6 (20 November 2013), the Chairman of the sub-committee reported that it had worked on the revisions to the Constitution and had taken the new draft guidelines from the DfT into account.

The Committee received:

- draft revised Constitution;
- DfE Cover Note for draft Airport Consultative Committee (ACC) Guidelines;
- DfE draft ACC Guidelines.

As background, the sub-committee wanted to improve openness and transparency but did not want to inhibit free and forthright discussion during ACC meetings. Sections 6.4 and 8 which relate to public attendance and participation in the Committee's meetings were particularly discussed. Among the comments made on these issues were the following:

- it was important for the Committee not to be regarded as a secretive cabal and any organisation that had relevance to the ACC could request, or be invited to attend either to participate or observe;
- should there be a major incident at the Airport a special meeting could be convened and minuted in the usual way;
- the public was well represented through elected representatives and community organisation and members should report on the proceedings of meetings to their organisations;

- any member of the public would be able to raise appropriate and relevant issues with the ACC in writing. The Committee would, however, expect such issues to have been previously raised with their community or elected representatives and/or the Airport management;
- DfT Guidelines make it clear the business of ACC meetings should be allowed to proceed without disruption or domination by individuals or groups and unfettered access by non-members or campaigning/single issue organisations would make it difficult or even impossible to as achieve this vital objective;
- an annual public meeting was discussed but a majority of the ACC members were concerned it could be “hijacked” by anti-Airport or single issue groups;
- the representation and membership of the Committee should be reviewed more regularly;

A proposal was made and voted on and it was agreed that:

- the final paragraph of section 6.4 be amended to read as follows –
“Members of the public may be allowed by invitation to attend the section scheduled at the start of each meeting to ask and receive answers to questions. The questions must be submitted in writing to the Airport at least 2 weeks in advance of the date of the meeting. The questioners will only attend for the part of the section of the meeting at during which their question is being considered.”
- paragraph 8 relating to an annual public meeting shall be deleted.

Action: Secretary

The list of members of the Committee was also reviewed in the light of the DfT Guidelines in order to broaden and strengthen membership. It was agreed that:

- “residents associations” should be amended to “community associations” and any such organisations shall be required to have a written constitution;
- the Secretary be asked to write to the South Essex office of the Essex Chamber of Commerce to enquire whether it would wish to be added to the representation of regional businesses and business organisations on the Committee;
- should the Chamber of Commerce not be interested in being represented, the Southend Business Improvement District (BID) would be invited;
- the AOD be asked to invite easyJet and/or Aer Lingus to represent airside users of the Airport;
- the AOD should be asked to consider and arrange for passenger representation.

Action: Secretary

Action: AOD

Action: AOD

It was further agreed that the following would be placed in the public domain via of the Committee’s section of the Airport website -

- Minutes of the ACC meetings;
- Agenda for the ACC meetings;
- Constitution of the ACC.

Action: Secretary

The Chairman thanked the members of the Sub-committee for their work and preparation on this Action.

8. INVITATION TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES (UKACCS)

The Committee noted that it had been invited to join UKACCS and a paper setting out current membership was received. The Chairman advised that Stobartair had agreed to pay the annual subscription which was based on passenger numbers. It would currently be £325. The Committee agreed that it would accept the invitation to become a member of UKACCS.

Action: Secretary

9. AIRPORT MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Committee received the report for November to January that had been previously circulated with the agenda. It was presented by the AOD.

(a) Overview

The report advised that 2013 had been the busiest year ever and, with 970,000 passengers passing through the terminal, it had been the fastest growing European airport for the second year running.

The launch of the easyJet service to Tenerife in December was popular and demonstrated the extended range which can be reached using the A320 aircraft. Flybe was to return to Southend with their 3-times weekly service to Newquay.

(b) Performance

Total aviation movements	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total
2013/14	2,514	2,164	1,976	6,654
2012/13	2,202	2,224	1,844	6,270
Commercial movements 2013/2014	930	1,081	863	2,874
Commercial movements 2012/2013	670	724	628	2,022
Passengers 2013/14	66,084	79,738	59,912	205,734
Passengers 2012/13	50,033	55,122	44,374	149,529

10. HARP HOUSE ROUNDABOUT

Following the problems the previously reported by ACC members, the AOD reported that Southend and Rochford councils, the retail Park owners and the Airport were looking at ways of improving traffic flow on the roundabout. The traffic engineers had carried out investigations and various options were being considered. The intention was that the roundabout would have two lanes. Councillor Terry responded that it appeared that the problem was caused by gridlock inside the retail park. The AOD responded that the owners were proposing to change the arrangements for accessing the car park to improve the traffic flow in it.

Councillor Steptoe suggested that access to the retail park should be via a new slip road to the rear of McDonald's restaurant and the car park.

Councillor Mrs Glynn said that she had proposed that the retail park and the Airport should have separate entrances and the Airport access could be from Eastwoodbury Crescent.

Councillor Terry undertook to discuss the matter with the Chief Executive of Southend Borough Council and reminded the Committee that the Airport's preferred route was the use of the A127 and Manners Way via Cuckoo Corner.

11. PLANNING ISSUES

The AMD's report updated members on progress with the Airport development programme.

(a) Terminal extension

The AOD's report outlined the programme for the opening of the various components of the extended building. It was noted that the extended departures lounge was four times the size of the original. The report advised that the completion of the terminal extension would ensure that the standard of customer service would be maintained as passenger numbers continue to grow

(b) Future projects

Options to improve the fire station and fire training ground continued to be explored. The Airport's forecourt arrangements were being reviewed.

(c) Footpath

A planning hearing into the diversion of the footpath that crossed a taxiway was scheduled for July 2014. In the meantime, a further extension of the temporary closure of the footpath had been secured.

(d) Approach lights – runway 24

Having failed to reach agreement with the landowner, application had been made to the Secretary of State to secure consent to replace three old runway approach light masts with three new ones. Replacement would significantly improve safety and reduce the number of occasions on which aircraft would need to divert elsewhere in poor weather.

(e) Davies Commission

The report informed members that the Airports Commission had published its report in December. The majority of the publicity was in relation to the recommendations for future runway capacity at Heathrow and Gatwick and a review of the Estuary Airport proposals to determine if they justify being added to the shortlist. Another aspect put forward by the Commission was improved rail links to the existing London Airports.

The AOD's report expressed disappointment that, despite evidence submitted by London Southend Airport and that, in excess of £120m of private sector investment made by the Stobart group, including the construction and operation of a rail station linking to London, it had received scant mention in the report. Further representations had been made asking for recognition of the part that Southend Airport can play in the 10 to 15 years before any new runway would be constructed. Advances in technology would provide scope for increased movements with little or no increases in overall noise.

12. INWARD INVESTMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Included in the AOD's report was the following information relating to inward investment, employment and training.

(a) Inward investment

It was noted that:

- talks continued to take place with a number of operators about potential new routes and services;
- discussions with various investors who would like to secure use of additional hangar space at the Airport were continuing;
- the public consultation period relating to the reinstatement of controlled airspace had closed in December and responses were now being reviewed prior to a formal application being made to the Civil Aviation Authority. Subject to the review of feedback from the consultation and the assessment of the Airport's submission by the CAA, the target date for re-instatement was January 2015.

(b) Employment and training

The Airport was commencing recruitment activity for the summer season and numbers were increasing in passenger services, retail and air traffic control as expansion continued.

In answer to questions, the Committee was informed that:

- dozens of summer jobs were to be advertised including those for the new retail facilities in the extended terminal building;
- two air traffic controllers were being recruited;
- the Airport did not currently employ any apprentices but this was being reviewed.

13. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 106 AGREEMENT

The Quarterly Section 106 Return for the three-month period to the end of January 2014 was received. It set out the statistics relating to the requirements of the Section 106 agreement entered into in relation to the planning permission for the extension of the runway.

The Committee noted that there had been 9 departure movements that had been identified by the Airport as not following the Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs). Two papers were attached to the Return that:

- provided more details on the 7 of the 9 movements that had departed from the NPR without instruction to do so by air traffic control (ATC) for safety reasons;
- advised that infringement notices had been issued in respect of these 7 movements.

In answer to questions, the Committee was informed that:

- the issue with one of the movements relating to communication was the result of the Air Pilot Entry being recently updated as outlined at the last meeting of the Committee (minute 13 refers). However, the Airport did not accept that there was a problem since the entry in the UK Aeronautical Information Publication contained instructions which were reiterated by ATC when the aircraft was given clearance;
- the Airport did not accept the argument by the operator of the C550 aircraft that it was not capable of being able to operate within the NPRs;

- although there was a further reduction in the number of complaints, this was to be expected at this time of year. They were likely to increase when the summer schedule starts at the end of March. Some serial complainers had been resolved through meetings with those concerned by positive and balanced discussion.
- the number of complainants identified as vexatious (those who submitted large numbers of complaints against legitimate operations without expectation that the complaints may be resolved or accepting the explanations in response) and, as a result, have correspondence suspended continues to reduce (see 14(b) below).

The Chairman informed the Committee that not one of the movements that had taken place outside the Airport's normal operating hours had triggered complaints.

14. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

(a) Public Safety Zone (PSZ)

Referring to minute 7 (21 August 2013) and minute 5(b) above, the Committee noted that the meeting was taking place during the six-week notification period and that the notification period would close on Friday, 28 February. To date, only one enquiry had been received.

(b) Noise

The AOD's report advised that the total number of noise complaints continued to reduce and the total complaints for the quarter, was 48 compared with 318 and 137 for the previous 2 quarters. This represented a 65% drop from the previous quarter.

Referring to minute 9 (20 November 2013), the Committee noted that the Noise Action Plan for the Airport had been submitted according to the requirements of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs (DEFRA).

(c) Visits to the Airport

David Lister advised that visits had been made by James Duddridge, MP and Vicky Ford, MEP. He would refer to these in his report to the next meeting of the Committee.

15. PRESS PACK

The pack of newspaper cuttings relating to the Airport was received and noted.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Former Control Tower

In response to a question from Derry Thorpe, the AOD advised that there were currently no plans for the use of the disused control tower which, he advised, contained asbestos.

(b) New services

Councillor Terry asked whether information could be provided about possible new services and expressed surprise that the Edinburgh route had ceased. He added that services to Naples or Rome would be useful.

The AOD replied that talks were taking place with operators and that they anticipated some positive news shortly. easyJet operated established and well-used Edinburgh services from other London airports. He was trying to encourage another operator to operate an Edinburgh service.

17. DATES OF MEETINGS

Members were reminded that it had been agreed that meetings during 2014 should be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, 7 May 2014;
- Wednesday, 20 August 2014;
- Wednesday, 19 November 2014.

The meeting ended at 4.30pm.