**GLASGOW AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the 187th Quarterly Meeting held by Microsoft Teams

on Monday 24 January 2022 at 10.00 am

The Chairman welcomed all to the 187th GACC meeting which he hoped would be the last meeting on Teams.

He advised that the Noise Insulation Scheme has been put back due to problems with suppliers and contractors.  The presentation will now take place at our meeting on 25 April.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2021 were circulated.  The Airspace Change Programme continues and consultation is ongoing.  The Minutes were approved.

**AGS Update**

Mr M Johnston joined the meeting to give an update on AGS.

He advised that we finished last year with a total of 3.5m passengers against a budget of 5.5m.  Omicron and the resultant restrictions introduced towards the end of the year decimated us completely. The past few weeks as well as over Christmas and New Year have proved very difficult.  Consumer confidence was low.  We were pleasantly surprised that restrictions were lifted so soon.  Going forward it appears there will now be a four nations approach and this is a positive.  It is going to take us a long time to get back to where we were pre COVID but the signs are positive and we have to make sure we give the best service to our customers.

The Chairman asked if there was any sign of a coordination in restrictions between countries.  Mr M Johnston replied saying that one of the biggest frustrations last year was that we were out of step with Europe and that Scotland was lagging behind the rest of the UK.

[ ] thanked Mr M Johnston for his report.  He asked if there were any plans on how to manage the rapid level of growth anticipated.  Mr M Johnston said this was a big challenge.  Recruitment is underway so that we can get new people in and trained and make sure we have the right staffing levels and resources in place.  We are acutely aware of the challenges ahead.

Councillor [ ] asked if there were a number of staff who left the company when furlough ended.  Mr M Johnston said we had used furlough across the airport.  We employed 5,000 people pre-pandemic and we had to let over one-third of the workforce go.  It was tragic but we had no choice.

Councillor [ ] referred to the announcement on the proposed Metro project for Glasgow, although there was no reference made to the airport.  Mr M Johnston said this was a positive, the proposed scheme looks good and would work.  As to timescale - we would like this as soon as possible.  However he is hesitant as we have been here before.

The Chairman thanked Mr M Johnston for his report.

**Policy and Sustainability Update**

Mr B McClean said we have had the chance to speak to Westminster regarding the impact COVID has had on us.  There is a long recovery ahead for us.  Apart from dealing with the recovery there are other issues which were on the agenda before the pandemic and we must get them back on.

We have been calling for years for Scotland to have an aviation strategy.  The discussion document covered aviation transition to net-zero, Scotland's international and domestic connectivity and freight.  Aviation for Scotland is a necessity - not a luxury.  We would

like to see a return of a Route Development Fund.  We believe we need this help as our competitors have this advantage over us.

We would like Air Departure Tax implemented.  We would like to see it used to advance Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).  We need the support from government.

Mr B McClean said the STPR2 Clyde Metro came with several recommendations focusing on key areas including reduction of transport in cities, improved connectivity across Scotland and decarbonisation of public transport.  £140m is still ringfenced and in the bank for this.  Cllr [ ] advised that the project is being chaired by Transport Scotland.

Mr [ ] thanked Mr B McClean for his update. He was astonished that the airport was not mentioned by the Minister and he would be expecting the airport to ask the question. Mr B McClean assured Mr [ ] that we would be watching developments in the rail link very carefully. Glasgow City Council has publically committed to building the Metro. It will not be acceptable to have this without the airport being included.

Councillor [ ] said that having spoken to the Cabinet Minister, he felt that Glasgow Airport Rail link was not top of the agenda. It was more to do with sorting out the city centre and roads. We need to keep pursuing this. Mr B McClean agreed that we do need to get this at the top of the agenda.

There was discussion on ADT and APD and whether this would encourage passengers to go to Newcastle and Manchester instead of using Scottish airports – would this be a lever for Scotland? It will be April 2023 before it comes into play.

Mr [ ] disagreed with the car parking charges being increased and thought it would put people off. Mr B McClean stressed that, with our connectivity having gone back 50 years, we are just trying to safeguard what routes we have left and unfortunately we have had to take this step. ADT and APD are not within our control but car parking is.

Mr [ ] said he was glad to see £140m is still there. We need to keep pushing. It is good to see Transport Scotland is part of this.

The Chairman asked if there was anything this committee could do to support this argument and how best it can support the development of the airport and encourage the government to start building the Metro link. Mr B McClean said any support this committee could give would be very welcome. The main aim is to restore to pre-pandemic numbers but without the emissions. We are the only airport of this size that can only be accessed by road. The Chairman agreed that he and Mr B McClean would speak following this meeting to discuss a letter of support.

Councillor [ ] said that it was important not to forget staff – it isn’t just passengers who need to get to the airport. Mr B McClean said this was absolutely right and strengthens our case.

The Chairman said that the rest of the Scottish transport infrastructure needs to be looked at. There are difficulties in linking up, particularly for staff. He would encourage colleagues who are liaising with SPT to encourage this connectivity service. This is essential not just for the airport but for people working in hospitals and many other places.

Councillor [ ] said SPT are looking at transport strategies but he is unsure just now about how many people will be travelling by public transport. It is very difficult getting buses to make the links.

Mr [ ] said that public transport for disabled and infirm people is poor. After 6:00pm transport to villages has been cut and it is the same throughout Scotland so the only option is to use a car or take a taxi.

**Traffic report and general update**

Mr R Leitch reported the passenger numbers were up one quarter on the previous year. Tests before returning home along with a Day 2 test was a real blow to aviation.

A twice weekly service to Paris Orly started during the quarter; Emerald Airways to replace Aer Lingus to Dublin with better frequency allowing better onward connectivity to North America.

Mr R Leitch advised that there has been a significant shift of habitation of wildlife. There has been an increase over Europe in the number of birdstrikes. Our Active Wildlife Management Plan is still in operation and we participate in culling activities when necessary.

Mr R Leitch was pleased to advise that surprisingly there were no more noise complaints on the back of COP26 and we even received one compliment on the level of noise which was not as bad as anticipated!

There was one runway incursion in the last quarter of 2021 which has been dealt with and followed up on. Mr R Leitch also touched on a couple of Airside developments/work streams.

Winter Operations are going well with no major concerns. There have been two call-outs in this quarter with minimum pact on operations.

There were 236 movements for COP26 with 76 Heads of State in Glasgow. We didn’t receive this information until about a week prior to the event. We were expecting around 30 movements so this was a significant increase. Mr R Leitch spoke about involvement with Police Scotland and military support for this event which had been a great success.

Reporting on Security at the airport Mr R Leitch said we are not exempt from the impact of the pandemic. Things were changing continually on what was required for various countries. We did not recruit any staff as the situation was so unsure. He advised it takes 12 weeks to train someone and get them ready to be on the desk.

The spike from November through to the end of the year meant a number of people were isolating. We had no plans to be in a situation with queuing times of 40 minutes. It is very difficult to try and project what is happening just now and it is a huge challenge for the airport. We are working with ICTS on recruitment plans.

Mr R Leitch apologised that service levels are not what he would like them to be. He didn’t feel at that point in time that recruiting was the answer as we wouldn’t have been unable to keep people on due to the ever-changing rules and restrictions. Other airports are seeing similar challenges. It is very difficult to recruit just now as people are looking for more money than is being offered and again, every airport is the same. We are working very hard to give the high level of customer service.

In response to Councillor [ ]’s question of training existing staff for other activities Mr R Leitch said that we are keen not to dilute performance by people not doing the job day in day out. We have security professionals doing a professional job.

Mr [ ] asked Mr R Leitch and Mr K Welsh how they proposed to deal with the expected increase in the number of passengers. Mr R Leitch outlined the plans.

Airlines have throttled back at Glasgow in January and February. We anticipate from March onwards that numbers will build. Around 50 – 70 will join ICTS staff. Mr R Leitch is confident Mr K Welsh and his team are doing everything they can.

Regarding recruitment, Mr [ ] asked if we are considering any staff who lost their job previously to see if they will return to the airport. Mr R Leitch said this would be a very welcome outcome.

Mr R Leitch advised that Glasgow Airport was accredited with meeting the CAA SeMS Audit (Security Management Systems) phase 2 standard and was identified with areas of best practice regarding the multi-agency security culture support and the planning and execution of COP26. Glasgow Airport is one of seven airports in the UK to achieve this standard.

Mr R Leitch discussed changes in retail. COP26 provided a well needed boost in sales particularly in Duty Free stores and local gift store. Due to Omicron impact in late December retailers have reviewed their Q1 2022 opening times. Some units will not open in Q1 as expected but we are targeting to get them open in early Q2.

Mr R Leitch advised that Glasgow Airport FlightPath Fund was re-launched in September following an 18 month suspension due to the pandemic. The first meeting had over 50 applications with just under £45k being awarded.

**ACC Information Gathering Exercise**

The Chairman referred to a questionnaire he circulated from the Department for Transport in advance of the meeting. The aim of this exercise is to provide Government with a better understanding of the view from ACCs and other organisations established to perform a similar consultation process for all UK airports and aerodromes.

The Consultative Committee is working well but some improvements could be made. The Chairman said he would like more involvement and interaction from the committee. There was discussion on how members reported back from the committee meetings, the name of the committee and how members viewed the effectiveness of the committee.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is on Monday 25 April 2022.

The Chairman thanked all for attending. A number of individuals will be moving on following local elections in May and he encouraged members to attend the meeting in April.

Top of Form