

Consultative Committee

JOINT MEETING OF THE DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND NOISE MONITORING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-COMMITTEE

30 NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT: A Tolhurst OBE (Chair)

Councillor S Cox (Doncaster MBC), D Grant (Doncaster Sheffield Airport), Councillor Greenhalgh (Doncaster MBC), R Hough CBE DL (Chairman - Peel Airports Group), Councillor B Johnson (Doncaster MBC), Councillor M Jones (Sheffield City Council), N McCarron (Ex-Officio), Councillor Councillor J Milne (West Lindsey District Council), K Moran (Doncaster Sheffield Airport), M Di Salvatore (West Lindsey District Council), A Shirt (Committee Secretary, Barnsley MBC) and Y Woodcock BEM (Ex-Officio)

Noise Monitoring & Environmental Sub-Committee representatives:-
Town Councillor A Copley (Bawtry Town Council), S Knowles (Doncaster MBC), Parish Councillor A Martin (Finningley Parish Council), Parish Councillor J Scutt (Substitute for Blaxton Parish Council), Town Councillor I Smith (Substitute for Tickhill Town Council) and Parish Councillor I Swainston (Auckley Parish Council)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Blackham (Doncaster MBC), A Bosmans (FODSA), Councillor L Curran (Doncaster MBC), Councillor Councillor R Franklin (Barnsley MBC), Councillor Councillor G Jones (Doncaster MBC), Councillor D Lelliott (Rotherham MBC), G Levett (Doncaster MBC) and Parish Councillor N Williams (Cantley with Branton Parish Council)

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

A Tolhurst welcomed everyone to the joint Airport Consultative Committee and Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee meeting.

An extended welcome went to Robert Hough CBE DL, Chairman of Peel Airports Group and to David Grant, Managing Director of Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) to the meeting.

Introductions were made and apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Tolhurst opened the meeting and said that the past 5 months had been stressful for so many, not least for the airport employees and those of partner organisations. It has also been a worrying time for local people who have taken great pride in their airport.

It was unclear whether today's meeting would be the Committee's last as there was much going on regarding the site's future.

The Committee were aware that airline activity had ceased and some businesses had already deployed elsewhere. Apart from that the Members were only aware of what is reported in the media. So, Robert's and David's update today on developments is welcome.

However, before coming to that discussion, Members were reminded how the airport had got to the current position.

Tourism is a great economic driver and like so many A Tolhurst was delighted when Peel Airports Ltd decided to develop RAF Finningley as a commercial airport. It was a bold decision but a well found one, given the circumstances at the time.

Around the Millennium there was rapid growth in start-up low-cost airlines. Ryanair started operations in 1984, and in the early 2000s at least 10 new low-cost airlines were formed. Also at the time, major airports, like Heathrow, were running short of available slots and airlines were considering alternative operating options.

Just a year after it opened TUI, Ryanair, EasyJet, and Thomas Cook started using DSA, joined later by Wizz Air and Flybe. And in 2018 a new Masterplan was produced.

For a couple of years, the Vantage Airports Group had a stake in DSA (or Robin Hood as it was titled) and the Quebec Government opened a maintenance and overhaul business in Hangar 2. BAE systems also had an engineering training facility at the airport. Even plans for a railway station at DSA were being developed. And the Royal opening of the Terminal was a significant milestone in the airport's story.

DSA provided excellent support to DHL when East Midlands Airport was out of commission and had been an ideal destination for flights by heavy cargo aircraft such as Antonov 125 and 225 and B747s.

Furthermore, gaining the best regional airport award four years running from the Which? Magazine underscored the quality of service provided at DSA.

So, the outlook was good. But, as Members had noted before, change is the only constant. Over the past decade or so, the travel and tourism industries have seen considerable turmoil which has had a huge impact on airports such as DSA.

A Tolhurst went on to say that life is often filled with "if only" moments:

- If only bids in 2020 for external equity support for DSA from local authorities had been agreed.
- If only local leaders had responded to the Committee's plea in October 2020 to support DSA let alone taken action. Members will recall that, in short, the Committee had said that DSA was at risk and its case was being lost in comparison to the support given in other regions.

- If only Thomas Cook and Flybe had not ceased trading.
- If only Wizzair had honoured its agreement to base three aircraft at DSA.
- If only more passengers in the local catchment area had not taken the Manchester and alternative airport options and had used DSA more.
- If only there had not been a pandemic which had and continues to have a major detrimental impact on aviation and tourism.

A Tolhurst said that he could go on, but it was the cumulative effect of all the above and other reasons which had brought us to where we are today.

A Tolhurst was delighted that Robert and David had agreed to bring the Committee up to date with the next chapter in the DSA story.

3 STRATEGIC REVIEW UPDATE

Robert Hough CBE DL, Chairman of Peel Airports Group informed the Committee that he had been involved with the formation of Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) since the very beginning back in 1998. He said that he had a sentimental and emotional attachment to the airport. Peel Airports Group viewed the closure of DSA as a dramatic end of a journey of an outstanding airport, despite the best efforts to make it work as a group.

Members were reminded of the sequence of events which had led to the strategic review of DSA being commissioned by the Board of DSA and the decision made in September 2022 to close the airport.

Over the last 17 years, Peel had invested over £250m in the project/airport.

It was highlighted that DSA had never handled more than 1.3m passengers in any given year. To breakeven the airport would need 2.5m passengers travelling through the airport every year.

Members were informed that 1,800 people still travel across the Pennines daily to Manchester airport.

In relation to the future use of the airport site, it was envisaged that the site could be utilised for high paid skilled jobs in advanced manufacturing, light-weight engineering and aeronautical engineering.

Members were informed that the Leeds Administrative Court had heard a claim brought by Doncaster MBC on 22 November 2022 seeking permission to commence judicial review proceedings against the decision of Doncaster Sheffield Airport Ltd to close DSA, and an interim injunction seeking to restrain DSA Ltd from undertaking certain activities associated with that closure.

It was noted that the decision of the Court would be announced at a later date. (Post meeting note: the Court rejected the application on 1 December 2022).

In relation to employees, it was noted that there were 800 people involved in aviation operations at DSA. Of this, 300 people were still seeking work. The vast majority of all other employees had found alternative jobs.

On behalf of DSA and the wider Peel Airports Group, R Hough thanked ACC Members and Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee Members for their time and valuable contributions, which had been very much appreciated. His heartfelt thanks were expressed to A Tolhurst who had led the Airport Consultative Committee and supported the airport throughout its journey, which was very much appreciated.

A Tolhurst thanked R Hough for his update and expressed his best wishes to him and to the Peel Group for the future and for Christmas 2022.

At this point in the meeting, D Grant, Managing Director of DSA, provided the Committee with an update on current operational activities.

Members were informed that, operationally, when the decision had been made to close DSA on 26 September 2022, airport management had commenced the process of drawing down the facility. It had been agreed with government that the airport would try to minimise the impact to passengers during this process.

On 7 October 2022 the airport had closed its freight operations to focus on passenger services. It was highlighted that this had been successfully achieved with no disruption to passengers experienced.

The last Wizz Air passenger flight had been on 29 October 2022 and the last TUI inbound flight to DSA had been on 4 November 2022. The TUI aircraft was later repositioned on the evening of 4 November 2022 to Manchester Airport.

The Committee were informed that Multiflight Aviation had now relocated to Leeds Bradford Airport, 2Excel (Oil Spill) had now relocated to Teesside Airport and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency had now relocated to Humberside Airport. The Flying Club had also relocated to Leeds East Airport Church Fenton.

The National Police Air Service (NPAS) had temporarily relocated to Leeds Bradford Airport.

Hummingbird Helicopters Ltd were still located the airport but would shortly be relocating to Humberside Airport.

It was confirmed that all security operations had now been removed from the Terminal Building. Stripping out of the concessions within the Terminal Building was currently ongoing.

Following the closure, all passenger car parking onsite had now ceased. It was confirmed that the 3rd party handling agent for the airport 'Swissport' had also left the airport. The fuel company P66 was still onsite.

The Committee were informed that all current employees were still on the payroll. Several employees were now on paid leave at home. Some operational staff were still onsite working reduced hours.

As of 18 November 2022, the airport had withdrawn from the requirements provided in the certification of approvals issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), withdrawing the use of designated airspace. The CAA were now responsible for the airspace around the airport.

The CAA had issued a consultation in relation to an airspace change proposal around the airport. The consultation would close on 17 February 2023. It was highlighted that any changes to the airspace around DSA would not come into effect until May 2023. Airport management had made representation to the consultation and would continue consultation with the CAA.

It was noted that Airfield Rescue and Fire Fighting cover was now at 'Category 0' following the last airliner movement.

Members noted that talks continued between Peel Airports Ltd and an interested party in relation to acquiring the airport site. It was currently unknown what the outcome maybe.

A Tolhurst thanked D Grant for the briefing and invited questions from Members.

Key points arising from Members' discussions are summarised below:

- Councillor Cox commented that there was a lot of miss-information circulating at the moment. Residents had observed aircrafts in the airspace around the airport. He asked if there were any plans in place to keep the airport open for now.
- R Hough replied that Peel Airports Ltd were currently in very early-stage negotiations with an international party who had shown interest in the airport. If Peel Airports Ltd choose not to proceed, then they would look at alternative uses for the site which would require negotiation with Doncaster MBC. If aviation was not viable on the site, then alternative job creation schemes (high paid skilled jobs in advanced manufacturing, light-weight engineering and aeronautical) would be considered in negotiation with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.
- On behalf of Doncaster MBC, Councillor Knowles said that she wished to place on record her understanding that, in terms of the failure to provide a £20m loan to the airport, the Council could not provide a loan unless permission was granted by the Court for judicial review proceedings to commence. In addition, the offer of a £10m loan from the Council to Peel Airports Ltd was not a subsidy but was to enable negotiations to take place and keep the airport running for a further 13 months.
- R Hough replied that this was a complex matter. He did not agree with Councillor Knowles' analysis but noted her comments.
- In response to a question from Y Woodcock, R Hough said that he could not recall the actual purchase price when Peel Holdings had bought the RAF Finningley site from the Ministry of Defence in 1999.
- Town Councillor Smith noted that Peel Airports were looking at future options for the site. He noted that several of the options highlighted at today's meeting involved aviation. He asked if the airfield and airspace would be retained.

- R Hough replied that this would specifically depend on the level of interest and capacity of the site. He did not anticipate that there would be a continuation of aviation use. There would need to be economic benefits and contributions made to the wider area.
- A Tolhurst asked if the outcome of the judicial review and potential acquisition of the airport were holding up the other.
- D Grant confirmed that they were both going ahead at the same time and that there were no hold-ups.
- In response to a question from A Tolhurst, R Hough said that he anticipated that negotiations with the interested party may take around 2-3 months to reach a possible conclusion, but stressed this was no more than a guess.
- In response to a query from Councillor Jones, A Tolhurst and R Hough provided information and background details regarding the relocation of BAE System from DSA to Humberside Airport approximately 10 years ago.

A Tolhurst thanked R Hough for answering Members questions. He commented that the options outlined for aviation related activity were encouraging.

In response, R Hough highlighted that the most economic and viable solution would be required for the future of the site.

RESOLVED – That the updates be noted.

4 MINUTES OF THE AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Airport Consultative Committee held on 7 April 2022 be noted and agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

5 MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 JULY 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the special Airport Consultative Committee meeting held on 26 July 2022 be noted and agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

6 MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the special Airport Consultative Committee meeting held on 22 September 2022 be noted and agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

7 MINUTES OF THE NOISE MONITORING & ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee meeting held on 22 September 2022 be noted and agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

8 AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE'S FINAL REPORT

A Tolhurst presented a report which set out details of the Airport Consultative Committee's main achievements made over the last 17 years.

Members' attention was drawn to the following key achievements of the Committee:

- Members had managed the development of a memorial to RAF heritage, including the design and erection of "Aviator" and Monument Stone.
- Members had supported the Memorial's formal opening event.
- Members had hosted consultation meetings of local representatives and stakeholders on Airport Masterplans, including a major event at Mount Pleasant Hotel.
- Several Members had led on a DSA Timeline Exhibition project, depicting history of the site from 1916 to present.
- Members had commented on several Government, DfT proposals and CAA consultations.
- The Committee had designed and introduced a Community Investment Fund process and administration.
- The Committee had also designed the application process and advised on Defibrillator installations in the local communities.
- Members had received technical presentations on aircraft performance.
- The Committee had produced a quarterly Newsletter for publication in the local media.

A Tolhurst said that he was very proud of all the Committee's achievements.

N McCarron asked if there were any plans to relocate the Robin Hood monument currently situated in the Terminal Building. The Committee suggested that the monument could be re-located alongside the Aviator and Monument Stone.

D Grant agreed to ascertain with Peel colleagues and provide an update following today's meeting. Furthermore, D Grant agreed to pass on the Committee suggestion for the relocation of the Robin Hood monument. **ACTION: D Grant**

On behalf of all Members, Y Woodcock wished to place on record her sincere thanks to A Tolhurst for his dedication and for all his hard work over the last 17 years.

Thanks were also given to longstanding Member N McCarron who had been involved with Committee since its formation.

On behalf of the Committee, A Tolhurst expressed his sincere thanks to DSA's management team and airport staff for all their support and readiness to work closely with the Committee over the past two decades.

Thanks were also given to Andrew Dutton and to Colin Barnes from Liverpool John Lennon Airport who had deal with DSA's environmental and noise monitoring complaints in a sensitive and professional manner over several years.

Grateful thanks were given to current and previous Members of the ACC and Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee for their support and contributions to the role of providing a link between the airport and local communities.

On behalf of all Members, A Tolhurst thanked Andrew Shirt and his predecessors, Martin McCarthy and the late Len Cooksey for their unstinting support to him and to Members. He said that no Committee could have been more professionally served and the Joint Authorities Governance Unit should be very proud of the work they had done on behalf of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No further items of business were discussed.

CHAIR