ANNUAL MEETING 2021
LIAISON GROUP OF UK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES (UKACCs)

MINUTES OF THE 44ᵗʰ ANNUAL MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY
ON THURSDAY 18 & FRIDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2021

ACCs present:

Belfast International	Tom McGrath
Birmingham	Colin Flack (Chair)
	Lee Stephenson
Bristol	Barry Hamblin
	Alicia Fox
Doncaster Sheffield	Alan Tolhurst
	Andrew Shirt
East Midlands	Guido Liguori
Edinburgh	Robert Carr
	Janice Hogarth
Exeter	Richard Bartlett
Farnborough	Philip Riley
Gatwick	Tom Crowley
	Paula Street
Glasgow	David Flint
	Donald Grant
Glasgow Prestwick	Richard Searle
	Nigel Wallace
Heathrow	Mark Izatt
	Rebecca Cox
Inverness	Pat Hayden
Liverpool John Lennon	Bob Swann
	Mike Jones
London City	Duncan Alexander
Luton	Martin Routledge
Manchester	Steve Wilkinson
	Sandra Matlow
	Mike Flynn
Newcastle	Dorothy Craig
	John Scott
Southampton	David Airey
	Janice Asman
	Laura Johnston
Southend	David Osborn
Stansted	Shena Winning
	Frank Evans

Also present:

DfT	Tim Lawton (Session 2)
	Wayne Gasson (Session 2)
	Tim May
	Samantha Moore (Session 3)
	Rachel Pinto (Session 2)
	Jasmin Vincent (Session 2)
CAA	Nic Stevenson (Session 2)
	Stuart Lindsey (Session 3)
	James Fremantle (Session 4)
ACOG	Mark Swan (Session 3)
	Cheryl Monk (Session 3)

SESSION 1 - UKACCS INTERNAL BUSINESS

1.1   Welcome and introduction
*   Colin Flack OBE, gave an introduction and welcomed new attendees. Paula Street outlined the format and etiquette for the meeting.

1.2   Appointment of Chair
*   Nominations had been sought in advance of the meeting. Colin Flack had been nominated for the position of UKACCs Chair.
    Approved: the appointment of Colin Flack as the Chair of UKACCs for a term of three years.

1.3   Appointment of UKACCs Working Group
*   Nominations had been sought in advance of the meeting for Chairs and Secretaries to serve on the Working Group.
    Approved: the appointment of Colin Flack (Chair, Birmingham ACC & Chair of UKACCs), Robert Carr (Chair, Edinburgh ACC), David Flint (Chair, Glasgow ACC), Mike Flynn (Secretary, Manchester ACC), Barry Hamblin (Chair, Bristol ACC), Tom McGrath (Chair, Belfast International ACC), Martin Routledge (Chair, Luton ACC), Shena Winning (Chair, Stansted ACC), Duncan Alexander (Chair, London City ACC) and Guido Liguori (Chair, East Midlands ACC) as members of the Working Group for a term of 2 years.
    Agreed: that the remaining seat should be held open for the new Chair of the Heathrow ACC once they were appointed.

1.4   UKACCs Business Update
*   The meeting considered several matters relating to the internal business of UKACCs, its work over the past year, secretariat support arrangements, its accounts and budget for the ensuing year.

SESSION 2 – AVIATION POLICY UPDATE

2.1   Aviation Policy update
*   The policy framework referred to in the Green Paper Aviation 2050, will not be a single policy document, but rather a suite of polices that put together provided a policy framework enabling a partnership for sustainable growth. Whilst the DfT's priority since March 2020 has been on COVID-19 response efforts, it has progressed several areas such as the review of the Night Flights policy and consultation, Airspace Modernisation, aviation decarbonisation and the Jet Zero consultation which will all form part of the new policy framework. As stated in the letter from the Minister for Aviation, circulated in advance of the meeting, the input of ACCs and their continued working relationship with the DfT would be valuable.
*   The Annual Meeting was shown the video issued by Sustainable Aviation to coincide with the Transport Day at COP26 and ACCs were also advised of the various UK airports' targets for achieving net zero as set out in the Airport Operators' Association's Decarbonisation Report.   ACCs were asked to consider how they could work with their airports on their journey to meet net zero commitments and targets.
*   The Minister's letter and the Government's decarbonisation agenda set the context for discussions over the two days.
*   It was noted that Transport Scotland has also issued a discussion document "To inform the development of an Aviation Strategy" for consultation. The closing date for responses is 21 January 2022.

2.2   Review of DfT Guidelines for ACCs
*   An update was received from the DfT on its work to improve its view and understanding of the network of ACCs. Its objective is to encourage better working between airports and their ACC, and to ensure airport stakeholders and communities have an effective voice in airport-related matters that affect

them. The DfT believe this objective is more important than ever as the aviation industry recovers from the impact of the pandemic and build back better.

- As part of this work the DfT would shortly commence an information gathering exercise to gain an understanding of the diversity between ACCs and the network of their relationships and reach. A qualitative survey would be circulated to ACCs in January focusing on their awareness and knowledge of section 35; their governance and membership arrangements; anticipated future challenges; and identifying best practices that could be shared. ACCs would have 6 to 8 weeks to respond, after which the DfT would produce a summary of the key themes and organise further discussions and engagement with UKACCs.
- The DfT would write to airports separately to explain the purpose of the survey and that they would have opportunity to contribute views at a later stage in the review.
- ACCs agreed that the timing of the review was right and thanked the DfT for its initiative.
- A number of issues were raised in relation to this review:
  - Reference to the points raised in the morning session were highlighted.
  - Whilst it was clear what expectations by both airports and ACC stakeholders had of ACCs a number of independent community pressure groups have been critical of ACCs. There was a need to clearly define the ACC's role and whether the DfT thought the existing framework was working and how ACCs/UKACCs could better assist the DfT in policy/strategy development. The DfT clarified that it was interested in how ACCs were interpreting the guidelines; how the relationship with their airport is working; and what the DfT could do to help ACCs work more effectively through sharing of best practice.
  - There was a need to assist in promoting ACCs and generate a clear message about their purpose and function and how that could be communicated more widely. ACCs were currently generally not known beyond the airport communities and more effective PR would be helpful.
  - Similarly, if the word 'independent' were included in the name of the ACC it would assist in clarifying that they were separate from the airport.
  - It would not be desirable for ACCs to take on a regulatory role as it would completely change the dynamics of an ACC and make committees less effective. The DfT confirmed that creating a regulatory burden on ACCs was not currently being considered.
  - An example of where updated guidelines was needed was in relation to the expected role of ACCs in helping airports tackle climate change and taking forward decarbonisation initiatives.

2.3   Current practices of member ACCs and potential new ways of working

- The Secretariat's paper provided the context for discussion on current practices of ACCs. UKACCs had surveyed ACCs for views on their existing working practices, structures and engagement in advance of the meeting. The summary of responses was shared which highlighted many areas of effective working but also some areas where there could be greater consistency in approach particularly in respect of achieving greater transparency.
- Mark Izatt, Non-Executive Director of the Heathrow Community Engagement Board (HCEB), gave an update on the review currently being undertaken by both Heathrow Airport and the HCEB as a result of the impact of COVID and the pause in expansion plans. There was a renewed focus on section 35 duties and a streamlining of all stakeholder engagement forums hosted by the airport, which is resulting in a new body being created to coordinate activities across the engagement fora – the Council for the Independent Scrutiny of Heathrow Airport. The aim was to achieve truly representative engagement, removing duplication of activity, with a tangible framework to transparently escalate issues and provide feedback. The process of recruiting a new Chair was about to begin and it was hoped that an appointment would be made in January. The paper "HCEB – The Case for Change" would be circulated with the meeting notes.   **Action: Secretariat**
- A discussion followed in which the importance of managing expectations in relation to the use of the word "scrutiny" in the name of the new body was considered. It was important to carefully draft the terms of reference so there was clear expectation and relationship of scrutiny. It was agreed that ACCs did challenge and scrutinise airports as independent critical friends, and the purpose of the new body could be clarified through the terms of reference and effective methods of communication. It was also noted that section 35 simply required airports to have adequate facilities for consultation, which did not necessarily have to be undertaken by an ACC. It was also felt that "scrutiny" tends to set up an adversarial position and could give a mistaken impression/expectation of the purpose of an ACC.

- Important to note that ACCs sit between the community and the airport to facilitate open discussion and to help build awareness and transparency of how effective an airport is in performing within the legislative and regulatory framework. For example, noise, it would be useful to have some definitive expected performance criteria which could be monitored and results fed through the ACC so they can discuss the airport's performance compared with other airports so community groups could easily understand whether their airport's performance was "good", "bad", "needs attention".
- Understanding the economic environment in which the airport sits is important. There needs to be much more engagement in terms of understanding what the airport contributes to the area and how it can improve that contribution to the area and making sure dialogue is genuinely achieved with the right parties which is key for airports in building back better.

2.4 Independent Commission for Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN): transfer of responsibilities

- The DfT presented the reason for the Government's decision to wind down ICCAN following its review of the work and functions after 2 years of ICCAN being established and the next steps in the transfer of ICCAN's functions to the CAA. The DfT is in the process of agreeing the scope of the transfer of the majority of ICCAN's previous work to the CAA. The Government's funding arrangements for ICCAN would also transfer to the CAA which means the new noise functions would remain independent of the aviation industry.
- An update was then given by the CAA, outlining how the CAA proposed to take on the new role and how they fit with its wider remit. The CAA had existing noise functions:
  - o Reform of the airspace and the airspace change process through CAP1616
  - o Research into noise impacts for a wider range of customers delivered by the Environmental Research Consultancy Department (ERCD) within the International Group of the CAA – separate from its regulatory roles of the CAA
  - o Delivering, Calibrating and Reviewing Research into the effects of noise and how those impacts can be reduced and providing advice to Government on those impacts.
- The new roles from ICCAN are an extension of the CAA's advice function and the CAA is looking at how its new functions can help ensure the Government takes informed decisions on noise policy. It will also encourage aviation sector to follow best practice – including balancing the needs of all relevant parties on noise management including engagement with communities.
- The CAA has a much wider remit than just noise. The CAA is developing a new Sustainability Strategy incorporating noise but also looking at how it fits more broadly with the other sustainability aims
- From next April, the CAA would be setting up a new Environmental Sustainability Panel comprised of technical experts who can provide independent challenge as to how the CAA performs its environmental roles, acting as a critical friend. It is not an equivalent or replacement to ICCAN and will not have a community or industry advocacy function or membership group. The recruitment will commence shortly.
- Essential for the CAA to perform new roles with trust and credibility. This will be achieved by not taking on too much by setting the roles being taken in the context of the wider sustainability challenge and focus on those areas where the CAA can have the biggest impact.
- The concerns of the Gatwick ACC about the demise of ICCAN were clearly articulated regarding the loss of an independent body, the resources and funding needed, how ICCAN's projects and research will be transferred across to the CAA and the need to have opportunity to input to the draft terms of reference for the new Panel.
- In the ensuing discussion a number of points were raised, including:
  - the need for ACCs/UKACCs to have continuing engagement on the transfer of the functions and work programme, including the establishment of the new panel.
  - that UKACCs would like the opportunity to feed into the terms of reference for the new Panel.
  - that the priorities set out by ICCAN in their letter to the Minister for Aviation should be followed up to see how they are mapped across.
  - there were serious concerns about the independence, actual and perceived, of the Panel and how the CAA would be able to act simultaneously as regulator and overseer of noise monitoring at airports. It was also questioned whether this would result in a change of role for the CAA's ERCD.
  - that the Panel should develop a set of noise monitoring standards with a reporting system like that on accessibility to enable anyone to view how individual airports were performing and encourage them to improve.

- that clear direction should be given as to what a good noise action plan looked like.
- that the new Panel should be sufficiently resourced to enable it to be available to ACCs and others responsible for monitoring noise action plans.
- that, with the CAA's new role in relation to environmental reporting on the aviation sector as a whole it would be useful to have a diagram setting out the function of and processes involved in the reporting system.
- It was agreed that UKACCs would continue to engage with the DfT and CAA on the transfer of functions and seek input in the draft Terms of Reference for the new Panel.

2.5 Aviation Noise Policy update

- An update was received from Tim May summarising the current focus of the DfT. In addition to that related to the demise of ICCAN, other work was continuing on the review of night flights policy, which would be consulted on again in 2023, and whether the framework for airport designation is appropriate. Work also continues on the broader aviation noise policy following the questions raised and consultation responses to the Aviation Green Paper.
- Despite the UK leaving the EU, airports would continue to be legally required to produce noise mapping and noise action plans. The current downturn in activity will affect the noise mapping in 2021. It was queried whether 2021 was the right year to map and DEFRA would therefore provide new guidance. DEFRA is also looking at the World Health Organisation report 2018 and other newly published evidence on the impacts of noise on health and whether there needed to be a different economic weighting applied. DEFRA's report on this work is due in 2022.
- UKACCs asked the DfT whether there were any other issues being raised by the community campaign groups that UKACCs should be aware of. It was confirmed that the biggest source of complaints being raised with the DfT at the current time related to increased noise from helicopters; and forecourt charging schemes at airports and their wider impacts on communities.
- The noise benefits arising from the newer aircraft fleets, particularly the A321neo, was a topic of debate at some ACCs. The DfT confirmed that the issue had been raised by the community groups at ANEG and it has been questioned whether the aircraft were being flown to optimise the noise benefits. Given the technical nature of optimising noise performance of aircraft, this was a matter that the DfT's ANMAC would consider.
- Paula Street confirmed UKACCs' commitment to continued attendance at DfT groups and boards. It was also noted that it was possible that noise complaints could increase as traffic returns as the perception of noise had changed as a result of quieter skies during the pandemic.

FRIDAY

SESSION 3 – AIRSPACE MODERNISATION

3.1 Our Future Skies – modernising the UK's infrastructure in the sky

- A presentation was received from the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG). This outlined the role and objectives of ACOG in the airspace modernisation programme, a critical national infrastructure project for the UK delivering benefits across the country from increasing efficiencies in the routes aircraft fly to supporting the industry to deliver its net zero targets. ACOG's principal role was to produce the Airspace Change Masterplan, which currently included 21 airports and whose aim was to create a deconflicted, safe airspace change programme. Airports who had recent airspace modernisation changes approved by the CAA were not included as their process was complete. Airports in the programme were at the early stages of the CAP1616 process.
- The Masterplan would undergo a number of iterations as the programme developed. ACOG was currently formulating iteration 2, due to be published early in 2022. Iteration 3 would give a clear picture of the new airspace design as a whole and was expected to be produced later in 2022.
- Cheryl Monk, Head of Communications, ACOG, described their engagement with stakeholders in relation to iteration 2 and their planned public engagement exercise on iteration 3 later in 2022, which would include further presentations to UKACCs. ACOG would not be involved with consultations by individual airports on their proposed airspace changes as this would be more effectively undertaken locally.
- In response to questions, a number of issues were clarified, including:

- that any airport not in the programme had either completed their airspace change, were not in conflict for airspace with any other airport or were not currently planning any change. Should any in the latter category commence the CAP1616 process in the future they would need to fit in with the newly created airspace design.
- that ACOG did not have sufficient resources to present to individual ACCs, but would work with larger groups such as UKACCs to ensure that their members were kept informed
- that it was ACOG's responsibility to resolve conflict between airports' design options where there was overlap/shared airspace through mediation. Iteration 2 of the Masterplan would highlight any geographical areas where conflicts could arise. A transparent framework for benefits and trade-offs would be constructed to show how the conflict resolution would be managed, including an escalation process right up to the Secretary of State.
- that ACOG was not able to compel those airports in the programme who were behind in the CAP1616 process to catch up, though all involved had a vested interest in completing the process as quickly as possible and to date had been highly collaborative.

3.2   Review of CAA's Airspace Modernisation Strategy (AMS)

- A presentation was received from the CAA. In line with statutory requirements, the AMS was currently being refreshed and a 12-week consultation would commence in January 2022. The presentation outlined the steps involved in the refresh and the stakeholder engagement undertaken by the CAA since November 2020 to gather evidence and identify overarching principles. The new AMS would align with the ICAO Global Air Navigation Plan but also incorporates UK specific elements. The current AMS had 15 strands and ongoing work on these would not be lost as they would be included in the refreshed version. The revised AMS would be published in Q2 of 2022.
- In response to questions, the following were clarified:
    - that when taking airspace change decisions, the evidence from all stakeholders was considered, though safety issues were paramount
    - that the AMS was separate from the CAP 1616 process.

3.2.   Discussion on experience and issues for ACCs

- The discussion was opened up for ACC members to raise any issues experienced by their ACCs in relation to airspace change:
    - Exeter Airport was one of a group of four airports owned by RCA. Exeter and Norwich shared the same problem with the airport departure routes flying over their city. It was important that the other smaller airports in the Group, particularly Bournemouth and Norwich airports were alive to airspace change proposals and possibly engage with UKACCs. The Chair and Secretariat were aware of the situation and would continue to raise issues with the RCA group.
    - UKACCs would explore the possibility of securing a presentation from ACOG to clusters of ACCs when iteration 2 of the Masterplan was published. Of particular interest would be the framework for conflict resolution and the associated escalation process.
    - Members were reminded that the CAA's consultation on the review of CAP1616 would close on 30 November and if any ACCs had experienced issues with the process they were urged to respond.
- Some wider issues experienced by ACCs in relation to holding public meetings and the publication of minutes were raised. The UKACCs Secretariat would explore whether, given the GDPR requirements, it could be possible for all members to exchange email addresses to enable communication between them.   **Action: Secretariat**

SESSION 4 – ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

4.1   Accessible travel

- A presentation was received from the CAA, providing an update on accessible travel, the impact of COVID on service performance, and monitoring. The results of the accessibility monitoring in 2019/20 were the best since the framework was introduced in 2015 and the CAA was pleased with the way in which it had driven improvements by airports. As a result of COVID, the next report would be published in Summer 2023, with rolling accessibility audits being undertaken from April 2022. There

was some concern about this gap in reporting, although the possible risks previously identified about the way in which the pandemic may disproportionately effect PRMs had not materialised. Further risks had now been identified by the CAA accessibility team related to the restart and recovery and would be closely monitored.

- In response to questions a number of issues were clarified, including:
  - the CAA tracker survey showed confidence in flying increasing for all passengers, including PRMs.
  - the CAA was aware of the problem of increased waiting times for assistance for PRMs on arrival. Data was collected on this twice a year, though those airports identified as having performance issues in relation to this were being asked to submit data weekly.
  - the CAA was committed to putting in place a similar accessibility monitoring and reporting system for airlines in 2022. This would include monitoring of any passengers being left waiting alone on aircraft after landing.
  - the CAA was similarly aware of a growing problem at some airports of PRMs missing flights due to these increased waiting times. Airports were required to report every such incidence to the CAA even when it was not their fault and if the numbers continued to increase a solution would be sought. In the first instance the monitoring framework could be adjusted, and penalties put in place. In addition, the CAA was working with airports encouraging them to voluntarily pay compensation to affected passengers rather than simply paying for a replacement flight and/or hotel.
  - the CAA did not possess any additional monitoring data over and above that provided by the airports, who did publish this on their websites but sometimes not in a way that enabled it to be easily accessed. ACCs were advised to request the CAA survey data and their airport's own survey data. The CAA would explore further how transparency of airports' performance data sharing with ACCs, airlines and others could be included in the CAA guidance.
  - the CAA recognised the issues relating to passengers not giving pre-notification of the need for assistance and had different standards in place for those who had pre-notified and those who had not. Heathrow was the exception due to the number of connecting passengers and were asked to provide additional data on those transiting and those landing.
  - that the CAA was committed to putting an enhanced category in the reporting to sit above 'very good', though this had been delayed due to COVID.
  - that the CAA were committed to producing separate guidance relating to those travelling with assistance dogs.
  - that the systems in place for circulating wheelchairs were often inefficient, creating delays in assisting passengers off the aircraft. ACCs were asked to explore this locally to determine whether it was an issue at their airport.
  - the CAA would share with UKACCs the draft copy of the revised guidance to airports.

SESSION 5 – CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

5.1 Chair's closing remarks

- The Chair thanked members for joining the meeting and summarised some of the key highlights. The Secretariat would explore the possibility of holding some virtual sessions on specific issues in the new year. The Chair encouraged individual ACCs to get in touch with UKACCs if they had any ideas on possible areas of focus or to give any feedback on the issues they were currently facing.

5.2 Farewells

- The Chair said goodbye to Rachel Cerfontyne, Chair of HCEB, from whom he had learnt a lot personally, wishing her well for the future. He also said goodbye to Dorothy Craig and John Scott who were stepping down from Newcastle ACC in September 2022 after many years, thanking them for both for their considerable contributions.

Rebecca Cox
UKACCs Secretariat