

GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY AIRPORT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting No.64

Held on Wednesday, 22nd June 2011 in Conference Room 1 at 7.00pm

Attendees:	Mr. Alan Crowe	Chairman
	Mr. Alan Walker	Deputy Chairman
	Mr. Gordon Wright	Hollywood Residents' Association
	Dr. Daniel V. McCaughan	Cultra Residents' Association
	Dr. Colm McNamee	Park Road and District Residents' Association
	Mr. Terry Hoey	Palmerston Residents' Association
	Mr. Christopher McFerran	Helen's Bay & Crawfordsburn Residents' Association
	Cllr. Adam Newton	Belfast City Council
	Cllr. Tom Haire	Belfast City Council
	Cllr. John Montgomery	North Down Borough Council
	Mrs. Julie Allen	Belfast City Council
	Mrs. Lisa Toland	Belfast City Council
	Capt. Ian Ewer	Base Captain Bmi
	Mr. Mark Doherty	Belfast Harbour Commissioners
	Mr. Scott Kennerley	Northern Ireland Consumer Council
	Mr. Brian Ambrose	George Best Belfast City Airport

Observers:	Mr. David McCullough	Department for Regional Development
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In attendance:	Ms. Laura Duggan	Forum Secretary
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1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Mrs. Laura McCorry	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Mr. Paul Ferguson	Flybe Ground Operations
Mr. John Moore	Belfast Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Scott Symington	Planning Service

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting. The Chairman advised Forum members of the passing of a long standing member of the Forum, Mr. John Prifti of Helen's Bay and Crawfordsburn Residents' Association. The Chairman expressed his sadness on hearing this

news and he extended his thoughts and sympathies to John and his family on behalf of Forum Members.

The Forum Chairman noted the absence of a representative from Flybe at the last number of Forum meetings.

2. MINUTES OF THE FORUM MEETING HELD ON 23RD FEBRUARY 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

A further discussion took place on the need for a greater representation from business interests on the Forum. Mr. Wright proposed extending an invitation to Mr. Andrew Irvine from Belfast City Centre Management. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Mr. Irvine inviting him to join the Forum.

Action: Forum Chairman

Ms. Duggan advised that details of the fines imposed for flights after 21:30 hours were contained in a press release on the Airport's website in the News section. However, they have also been reported in previous Forum minutes which are available for viewing on the Airport's website in the Forum section: <http://www.belfastcityairport.com/Corporate-Social-Responsibility/BCA-Forum/Forum-Minutes.aspx>

Dr. McCaughan queried if the facts about the Airport's Noise & Track Monitoring System had been published in the latest issue of Community News. Ms. Duggan confirmed that they had been published and the latest issue was available for viewing on the Airport's website: www.belfastcityairport.com (click on 'Community News' icon in the bottom left-hand corner).

Dr. McCaughan queried if the upgrade work to the Noise & Track Monitoring System to automatically detect non-compliances with noise abatement procedures had been completed by the May 2011 deadline as reported at the last meeting. Ms. Duggan advised that one aspect remains to be completed due to additional information required by Topsonic and the project deadline has been pushed back to September 2011 as a result.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr. Ambrose delivered an update to members on the following:

4.1 Passenger volumes:

- The Airport has essentially recovered its position since the withdrawal of Ryanair which resulted in the loss of 900,000 passengers.

- 2.7 million passengers were recorded in 2010. 2.5 million passengers are expected in 2011 with a return to 2.7 million passengers estimated for 2012.

4.2 Route Development:

- All routes previously operated by Ryanair have been backfilled with the exception of London Luton.
- New routes: Geneva and Amsterdam will be commencing in November 2011 to be operated by BMI Baby.
- Additional 'sun' routes will be added in 2012 including Faro, Malaga, Alicante, Palma and Ibiza and will also be operated by BMI Baby.

Mr. Ambrose confirmed that BMI Baby would be operating Boeing 737-300 aircraft as used by them currently on domestic routes. It will be possible for these aircraft to serve international destinations because they will be operating at a slightly different thrust setting. Mr. Ambrose explained that following manufacture, aircraft engines are usually de-rated (in terms of thrust capability), in order to increase fuel efficiency and reduce maintenance intervals. The BMI Baby aircraft used to serve international and domestic routes will be de-rated to different levels.

Ms. Duggan advised that aircraft operating on domestic routes have been de-rated to 20,000lbs (thrust setting) while aircraft operating on international routes are de-rated to a slighter lesser degree to 22,000lbs.

Dr. McCaughan advised Members that a useful summary on Chapter certification was available on the ICAO website. Dr. McCaughan supplied Ms. Duggan with a copy of this information to circulate with the meeting minutes.

Action: Forum Secretary

Dr. McCaughan queried what the noise impact is likely to be under flight paths due to the change in thrust setting on the Boeing 737-300 aircraft. Mr. Ambrose stated that he understood that there would be no discernable difference in terms of noise experienced on the ground.

4.3 Capital Investment:

- Upgrade to the airfield fuel farm which will include additional fuel storage and tank replacement. The facility is being designed to fully comply with the new Oil Storage Regulations in Northern Ireland. The project is expected to cost £400K.
- Terminal forecourt reconfiguration: the executive car park will be removed and replaced with a protected area directly in front of the terminal. The taxi rank and bus set down will be moved to behind this area and the executive car park will move to the corner of the long stay car park.
- Additional facilities for UK Border Agency (customs and immigration) to meet their additional requirements. This will necessitate the extension of the terminal building towards Holywood in the current baggage reclaim area.

Mr. Kennerley queried if there would be any disruptions to accessibility for People with Reduced Mobility (PRM) while the forecourt reconfiguration work was in progress. Mr. Ambrose confirmed that PRM arrangements would not be affected.

4.4 Planning Issues:

- Noise Control Contour: this matter is still outstanding with Planning Service. Mr. Ambrose gave a background to the noise contour for the benefit of new Forum members. In 1997 an Indicative Contour was created by Planning Service which was deemed to be an acceptable noise footprint for the airport. Yet it did not have any 'control' measures attached to it unlike a noise control contour (in place at a number of UK airports) which sets an area limit beyond which the airport cannot grow. The 2006 Examination in Public recommended that a noise control contour be agreed between the Airport and Planning Service. The Airport submitted a proposed contour to Planning Service in 2010 but they have not made any formal engagement on this. A meeting is forthcoming with Planning Service to try to close this issue.
- Seats for Sale: the decision by the previous Minister for the Environment, Edwin Poots to remove the Seats for Sale limit at George Best Belfast City Airport has been judicially challenged. A meeting which was due to be held in mid June was postponed because of recent changes to the NI Government and GBBCA is waiting to hear when it is to be rescheduled.
- Runway Extension: due to the recent changes in operations, GBBCA will be submitting a fourth Addendum to reflect new schedules and aircraft. This is likely to push back the Public Inquiry until 2012.

4.5 Community Fund:

- GBBCA is forecasting to spend approximately £50K on Community Fund projects in 2011.

Mr. Wright stated that while the support for local school projects by the Community Fund to date had been great, he would also like to see support for projects focused on the elderly and community relations. Mr. Ambrose said that the Community Fund Committee will be reviewing the criteria in the coming months and can certainly take this into consideration.

Action: Community Fund Committee

4.6 Airport Passenger Duty:

- HM Treasury issued for consultation proposed reforms to air passenger duty (APD). This consultation is now closed. The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee is holding an investigation into the impact of APD on Northern Ireland and both Mr. Ambrose and the Chief Executive of Belfast International Airport were asked to give evidence along with other stakeholders including DETI and airline operators in Northern Ireland. The general consensus appears to be that Northern Ireland should be treated as a special case as it is competing for air

services with the Republic of Ireland where the Air Travel Tax is just €3 per person (which may be abolished shortly) and due to the unavailability of alternative means of transport such as high speed rail.

- Passenger numbers in Northern Ireland doubled between 1997 and 2007 to 8 million but since then 1 million passengers have been lost, no doubt impacting on the tourism industry in Northern Ireland.
- The viability of George Best Belfast City Airport is not at risk due to Air Passenger Duty as was reported in local media and other sources.

Mr. Kennerley advised Members that the Consumer Council were also giving evidence to the NI Affairs Committee and that they were opposed to the proposed increases in APD. It is the Consumer Council's view that Air Passenger Duty should be reduced or removed in line with the Republic of Ireland equivalent Air Travel Tax.

5. AIRPORT STATISTICS

Mr. Ambrose gave an update on the Forum Reports:

- Historical summary of movements post 21:30 hrs
- Analysis of delays post 21:30 hrs
- Bias of flights over Belfast Lough
- Analysis of movements post 23:00 hrs local
- Movements by aircraft type
- Analysis of noise related complaints 2010-2011

Mr. Ambrose highlighted the increase in the number of extensions in 2010 which were attributed to the severe and adverse weather conditions in the winters of 2009/10 and 2010/11 that disrupted operations at GBBCA and other UK airports as well as volcanic ash.

Mr. Ambrose drew Members attention to the fact that while there had been a drop in passenger numbers in 2010 vs. 2009, ATMs have increased because there is a greater number of smaller aircraft operating on the routes previously operated by Ryanair.

Mr. Crowe noted that flights after 21:30 hours were just 0.54% of total flights in May 2011. Dr. McNamee refuted this statement on the grounds that GBBCA shouldn't be 'congratulated' for flights after 21:30 hours.

Mr. Ambrose stated that it is not feasible to have zero delays because of the multitude of factors that can affect scheduled operations including weather, technical problems, late passengers, missing baggage, etc. People living near airports are likely to be affected by noise but that local residents in Belfast enjoy greater protection than at many other airports because of the restrictions in place at GBBCA.

Mr. Hoey made the point that he is often disturbed by helicopter noise during night time.

Mr. Walker stated that there appeared to be a trend in the number of BMI flights delayed on the Heathrow sector and queried if anything in particular was causing these delays.

Members noted the significant drop in noise complaints in 2011 to date. Mr. Wright drew Forum Members' attention to the fact that the procedure for making a noise complaint to the Airport was outlined in the most recent issue of Community News.

6. REPORT FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUB GROUP

The Chairperson of the Environmental Sub Group, Mrs. Allen, gave a summary report to Members on the points of interest and actions from the last ESG meeting on 16th May 2011:

Runway Bias: members of the sub group were supplied copies of a paper produced by Mr. Alan Young (Air Traffic Control) "Change in Runway Utilisation Bias" June 2006. The group discussed whether the bias could be better employed to reduce the noise impact of the airport.

Environmental Noise Directive (END): GBBCA have been contacted by DoE to advise that the Airport must now commence with data gathering for the 2nd round of END noise mapping. Maps must be published in June 2012 based on 2011 data (which means some estimating will be required). The data will then be used to inform the next round of Noise Action Plans by each of the Competent Authorities in 2013.

Environmental Update:

- GBBCA are to be assessed for re-accreditation to Level 3 Green Dragon Environmental Management System in July 2011.
- A climate week "mini challenge" for staff took place on 21st March 2011 to raise awareness about climate change and to demonstrate GBBCA's support for Climate Week.
- GBBCA's electricity contract was up for renewal in 1st April 2011. Following a tender process, GBBCA managed to secure 20% electricity from renewable sources as part of its new contract with ESB Independent Energy.
- GBBCA have installed recycling bins in the terminal as of Jan 2011.

Managing Aircraft Noise Course: Professor Callum Thomas from the Centre for Air Transport and the Environment at Manchester Metropolitan University was engaged jointly by GBBCA and Belfast City Council to deliver a two day course on Managing Aircraft Noise at the Airport at the end of March 2011.

Meeting agenda: Mr. Hoey expressed concern that the majority of the meeting was dominated by the topic of noise and items in the Environmental Update were not given enough weighting.

Agreed Actions:

- Mr. Hooke agreed to report back to the group on when the track keeping system became operational.

- Mr. Hooke agreed to query with the Airport's acoustic consultants Bickerdike Allen Partners if it was acoustically more beneficial to the neighbours of the Airport for aircraft to arrive or take off over Belfast Lough.
- Mr. Crowe agreed to raise membership of the sub group at the full Forum meeting.
- Ms. Duggan agreed to move the Environmental Update further up the meeting agenda.

Mrs. Allen advised that further information regarding END was available on the DOE website http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/protect_the_environment/local_environmental_issues/noise.htm and the NoiseNI website: www.noiseni.co.uk

Dr. McCaughan queried if aircraft are affected by side winds at the Airport. Capt. Ewer confirmed that side winds tend not to be an issue.

Mr. Hoey stated that he would like to hear more about environmental issues other than noise at the Forum such as bird and tree management in Victoria Park.

Cllr. Montgomery queried the status with a hotel on the GBBCA site. Mr. Ambrose responded to say that while planning permission had been obtained for a hotel, there were no immediate plans to move ahead with this project in the current economic climate.

7. UKACCS ANNUAL LIAISON MEETING 2011

The Chairman gave Forum Members a summary of discussions at the UKACCS Annual Liaison Meeting which took place in Aberdeen on 8th and 9th June 2011.

Mr. Crowe advised Members that the matter of APD was discussed and it was the general consensus that APD should be halved for domestic point to point flights where the surface transport journey time is greater than 4 hours. UKACCS representatives also expressed concern about the potential for double taxing when UK aviation enters the EU ETS in 2012 and the associated financial burden with this.

The CAA consultation on Passenger Representation and Complaints Handling was discussed and it was agreed that UKACCS would submit a formal response. The CAA is proposing to separate consumer representation from complaints handling and to set up an Aviation Consumer Advocate Panel (ACAP). The purpose of the ACAP is to provide a forum for consumer advocacy in the aviation market. The CAA sees the Panel acting as a "critical friend" to the CAA, providing independent advice on the consumer issues that need to be considered.

The UK Government believe that Airport Consultative Committees, particularly those with passenger service committees, can play an important role in helping to take forward the work on enhancing passenger representation and the Government was considering how to make better use of existing arrangements and the future role of Airport Consultative Committees in liaison with the national consumer representation body. The DfT is currently reviewing what might be

included in updated guidelines and are expected to issue a consultation on these guidelines in late 2011.

The Members debated how passengers might be involved in the Forum but it was agreed to wait until further guidance is available from Government. It was noted that the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland presently provides consumer advocacy and a complaint handling service in Northern Ireland and it is a statutory member of the Airport Forum.

8. UK AVIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

Mr. McCullough gave Members a background to process underway to develop a revised framework for aviation policy in the UK. The Department for Transport (DfT) is committed to developing a sustainable framework for aviation in the UK to replace the 2003 'Future of Air Transport' White Paper. As a first step, the DfT have commenced a period of public consultation on a Scoping Document recommending issues to be addressed by the new policy framework. The key themes identified are: i) the economy; ii) climate change; and iii) the local environment. The consultation is due to close on 30th September 2011. Following this, DfT plans to publish the draft Aviation Policy Framework by March 2012.

The Department for Regional Development is responsible for co-ordinating a Northern Ireland response to the consultation. To enable this, local stakeholders have been asked to participate in a workshop to discuss with officials from DfT, Northern Ireland interests and perspectives in the developing Aviation Policy Framework. This is to take place on 29th June 2011. Mr. McCullough advised that the Forum Chairman had been invited to attend this workshop and it was agreed by Members that Mr. Crowe should attend to represent its interests.

Action: Forum Chairman

9. FORUM MEMBERSHIP

The Forum Secretary advised Members that an email had been received from the Chairman of Marmont and District Residents Association to say that their Association wished to withdraw from the Forum because they could not see that they could gain anything from future involvement.

The matter of the non-attendance by the representative from Inverary Community Centre Committee at the Forum was also discussed. It was agreed that the Forum Secretary would write to both Inverary Community Centre Committee and Marmont and District Residents' Association to confirm their position and if no response was received, or if they confirmed that they wish to withdraw from the Forum, then their seats would be made available for other community groups from East Belfast to apply for.

Forum Members were requested by the Chairman to forward details to the Forum Secretary of any groups from East Belfast that they believe would be eligible for Forum membership.

Action: Forum Members

10. AOB

The Chairman welcomed the new representatives from Belfast City Council and North Down Borough Council to the Forum. It was noted that both Councils have the option to send up to two representatives to sit on the Forum at any one time.

The issue of safety was raised with regards to the insufficient length of the queuing lane on the Sydenham Bypass from the Holywood direction to turn into the Airport. It was agreed that Mr. Ambrose would write to the Roads Service to highlight this issue.

Action: Mr. Ambrose

11. DATE FOR 2011 MEETINGS

Proposed dates:

- Wednesday 16th November 2011

Signed:

Date:

ALAN CROWE (Forum Chairman)

AC/ld