

ABERDEEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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Chairman's Introduction



Welcome to the annual report of the Aberdeen International Airport Consultative Committee (AIACC) annual report for 2018. The year has been another busy one for the Committee, as you will read in the following pages.

Not least, several important UK Department for Transport (DfT) and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) consultations have engaged us at our quarterly meetings. These consultations, and our responses to them, are in the public domain on our website, and are summarised later in this report.

Closer to home, we considered Aberdeen International Airport's draft revised Noise Action Plan (NAP) for 2018 – 2023. We have consistently recognised the impact that aviation noise can have on those living close to the airport, and under the helicopter approach routes. We were therefore pleased that the new NAP includes a number of improvements, including the extension of the noise insulation scheme to a number of additional properties, within a lower decibel contour than has applied in the past. We have also continued to note from the airport management's quarterly noise reports to the Committee that the number of complaints received about noise is very low, by comparison with many other airports in the UK.

We have continued to monitor the continuing terminal transformation project at the airport. We have congratulated the airport operator on completing the second phase of the project, on time and on budget. This included the opening of the extensive new central security facility, the new British Airways lounge and much of the new retail area. The third phase is now well underway, with a view to the whole project being finished in time for the offshore energy exhibition in September 2019. We believe that, once completed, the people and businesses of the City and Shire will have an airport terminal that we can all be proud of.

We also congratulated the airport operator on achieving the highest ranking ('Very good') in the CAA's annual review of services to passengers requiring special assistance, and on progress made to extend and improve the facilities for them, especially the new 'Changing Place' facility airside, for older children and adults with special needs.

During the year a number of members of the Committee have demitted office. These included Carol Benzie, the former Managing Director of the airport, John Millar, the former General

Manager of NATS Aberdeen, James Bream, former representative of the Chamber of Commerce, and Mike Baker, former representative of the Newhills and Bucksburn Community Council. We said a huge 'thank you' to them for their input in past years. Mike in particular deserves a special mention as a very long-standing member of the Committee, representing the interests of local residents.

We have also welcomed a number of new members. These including Steve Szalay, Carol's successor as Managing Director at the airport, Daryl Heaselgrave, John's replacement at NATS, Helen Gordon, who replaces Gary Hance as the ABTA/SPAA representative on the Committee, Ivor Stuart, who replaces Mike, and Seona Shand, who replaced Jim. Gary remains on the Committee as a passenger representative.

We also extended our membership to include Visit Aberdeenshire (VA), and welcomed Chris Foy, their Chief Executive, to his first meeting in December 2018.

To those who have joined us, we offer a huge 'welcome': we look forward to your input.

Peter Smart
CHAIRMAN

June 2019

Section 1: Why do we have an airport consultative committee?

Aberdeen International Airport has had a consultative committee since 1953, when the then War Department asked the former Aberdeenshire County Council to set one up. Subsequently, the requirement on all the UK's main airports to provide an appropriate mechanism for consultation with local stakeholder interests has been enshrined in civil aviation law. It is the statutory responsibility of the airport operator to set up and maintain the consultative arrangement. There is no specified format that consultation should take, although the UK Department for Transport issues guidelines setting out recommendations of best practice for the conduct of airport consultative committees (ACCs). These were last updated in 2017, following consultation with ACCs and other interested bodies.

The guidelines suggest the types of issues Committees might wish to consider and the range of organisations that might constitute their membership. Ultimately, though, the constitution, membership, frequency of meetings and workload of each ACC is determined by the committee itself: there is no 'one size fits all' approach.

In the case of AIACC, we operate under our Constitution, which was last amended in 2018. Both the AIACC's Constitution and the DfT guidelines are published on our website.

Features of the AIACC

The AIACC has three important features. First, we are, as our name implies, 'consultative'. This means we have no executive powers within the management structure for the operation of the airport. But we expect to be consulted by management on any issues that might impact on the quality of life of local communities or the economic development of the north east of Scotland.

We are also kept up-to-date on the progress of and challenges facing the airport by the Managing Director's quarterly presentation.

Second, we are independent of the airport management, although the Managing Director (MD) has a major role to play in presenting reports and advising on issues under discussion. The Chair sets the agenda for each meeting, in consultation with the MD, and the stakeholder organisations appoint their own representatives. The only members who are directly appointed by the airport management are the Chair and the passenger representatives (including the representative of passengers with special needs).

Third, we have a vital role in reflecting to management the views of stakeholders in relation to everything from noise management to the interests of passengers with special needs.

We met on four occasions during 2018 and copies of our agendas and minutes and other relevant documents are available on our website.

We also held one meeting of our strategy sub-group, to draft our response to the airport's recent consultation on their Noise Action Plan.

Section 2: Who is on the Consultative Committee?

Our membership is set out in our Constitution. There are four main clusters of members: local authority and community representatives, local business, economic development and trade organisations, aviation and travel management interests, and passenger interests.

local authority and community representatives

It is essential that the communities most affected by the operation of the airport are represented on the AIACC and take an active part in our discussions. This representative role is discharged by elected representatives from the City and Shire Councils and a nominee of each of the two community councils whose areas are most affected by the operation of the airport..

Aberdeen City Council has four seats and Aberdeenshire Council has three. The Dyce and Stonywood, and Newhills, and Bucksburn, Community Councils each has one seat.

The local authorities and the community councils appoint their representatives to the Committee.

local business, economic development and trade organisations

It is vital for the Committee to include representatives of organisations involved in economic development, the promotion of trade and commerce and the development of public transport strategy within the region.

These include the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Oil and Gas UK, the North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS), Visit Aberdeenshire and the Scottish Council Development and Industry (SCDI), each of which has one seat on the Committee.

aviation and travel management interests

The Airport Operators' Committee, which represents the ground handling agents, the Association of British Travel Agents/Scottish Passenger Agents' Association (ABTA/SPAA), the Helicopter Operators and NATS bring the professional knowledge of diverse aviation interests and customer preferences in terms of air services from Aberdeen.

passenger interests

Ultimately, the customer for aviation services from the airport is the passenger. We have provision for two passenger representatives along with one representative of passengers with special needs, both apparent and hidden.

Current membership

A full list of members during 2018 is set out on page 6.

Membership of the Consultative Committee during 2018

Chairman – independent of all other stakeholder interests

Dr Peter Smart

Aberdeen City Council

CLlr Barney Crockett
CLlr Avril Mackenzie
CLlr Neil MacGregor
CLlr Gill al-Samarai

Aberdeenshire Council

CLlr Geva Blackett
CLlr John Cox
CLlr Michael Roy

Dyce and Stoneywood Community Council

Dr William Harrison

Newhills and Bucksburn Community Council

Mr Michael Baker (to September 2018)
Mr Ivor Stuart (from December 2018)

Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Mr James Bream (to April 2018)
Ms Seona Shand (June to December 2018)
Mr Shane Taylor (from December 2018)

Association of British Travel Agents/ Scottish Passenger Agents' Association

Mr Gary Hance (to September 2018)
Ms Helen Gordon (from December 2018)

Visit Aberdeenshire

Mr Chris Foy (from December 2018)

Airport Operators' Committee

Ms Phyllis Stuart

British Helicopter Operators' Association

Mr Robert Dyas

National Air Traffic Services (NATS)

Mr John Millar (to March 2018)
Mr Daryl Heaselgrave (from March 2018)

NESTRANS

Mr Eddie Anderson (to December 2018)
Dr Maggie Boechel (from December 2018)

Scottish Council Development and Industry

Mr Ian Armstrong

Oil and Gas UK

Mr Trevor Stapleton (from December 2108)

Passenger Representatives

Mr Jeremy Wood
Mr Gary Hance (from December 2018, Vice Chairman of the Committee)

Representative of passengers requiring special assistance

Ms Andrea Barclay

In attendance

Ms Carol Benzie, Managing Director, Aberdeen International Airport (to June 2018)
Mr Steve Szalay, Managing Director, Aberdeen International Airport (from December 2018)



Part of the new retail area

Section 3: What do we do?

In this Section, we provide an overview of the work of the Committee. In doing so, it is important to stress that we are 'consultative'. We have no executive powers as a Committee, but we know that the airport management has historically gone out of their way to consult with us on major issues and have taken our views into account in their decision-making. We have an excellent record of achieving consensus through amicable discussion on items that require a response.

All members of the Committee, including substitute members, are required to sign a 'non-disclosure agreement', under which they guarantee not to disclose any matters that have been discussed that are commercially confidential or sensitive, or that would otherwise be embargoed from the press and the public. During the past year, all members have been asked to affirm in writing their contact details, to ensure that we operate under the requirements of the new General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

There is no statutory obligation on ACCs to prepare an annual report, but we felt in 2014 that this would be an important extension of the ways in which we communicate, and raise our profile, with stakeholders and the general public.

Recurring items

There are a number of standard items on our agendas, as follows:

Managing Director's quarterly report

Each quarter, the Managing Director of Aberdeen International Airport Limited provides us with a detailed presentation on the operation of the airport, and any particular challenges facing it. This presentation normally includes such issues as passenger figures; route developments; complaints, compliments and questions raised by passengers; and the extent to which the airport is meeting the strict targets that it has set for itself.

During the past year, the MD has kept us apprised of progress on the redevelopment of the terminal building to cope with anticipated passenger numbers to 2045. This is the single most ambitious capital scheme undertaken in the history of the airport.

We reported last year on the completion of phase 1, which provided much improved facilities for international arrivals, immigration, baggage reclaim and customs; a much enlarged domestic baggage reclaim area; and the new executive lounges.

During 2018, phase 2 was completed, including the vastly improved central search area, new retail facilities and the official opening of the new British Airways lounge by HRH the Duchess of Rothsay in October 2018.

Parts of phase 3 also opened towards the end of 2018, including The Distilling House restaurant and bar airside and new 'one way' security doors for both domestic and international arrivals

Over the past two or three years we have been briefed regularly on the continuing impact that the drop in global oil prices has had on passenger numbers using the airport, affecting both helicopter and fixed wing services.

We were pleased to note that during 2018 there has been a slow but relatively steady increase in numbers of fixed wing passengers, but that helicopter traffic has remained well below its earlier peaks.

The leisure routes offered during the summer holiday season (and some that continue year round) by Ryanair and TUI have continued to show excellent load factors, in response to local demand for the destinations served.

We were upset to learn that easyJet decided in December 2018 to abandon their daily services to London Gatwick from February 2019. We noted from the personal experience of many of the members of the Committee that this service always seemed to be well patronised. We have often expressed the view that, had easyJet been willing to station an aircraft in Aberdeen overnight for an early morning service to Gatwick, support for the route for outbound business travel and for interlining at Gatwick would have been even more buoyant.

We have also noted the fragility of some parts of the aviation business generally and the potential impact this could have on route sustainability, across the UK and not just to and from Aberdeen.

We are aware that the airport management and AGS Airports Ltd, the airport's owners, continue aggressively to seek new routes in response to local demand.

Noise reporting

We continue to receive quarterly reports on noise complaints, which continue to run at an

average of about 3 or 4 a month, well below most other larger airports.

This year, we had the opportunity to comment on the airport's draft Noise Action Plan (NAP) for 2018 – 2023. We were pleased to note that the current insulation scheme will be extended to include properties in the 63 – 66dBLA_{eq} 16 hour contour, and that other improvements to the current NAP are being proposed. We offered our support to the airport operator for the new NAP.

The airport's website has created informative pages about noise management and mitigation including answers to many of the most frequently asked questions about noise-related issues (see

<https://www.aberdeenairport.com/about-us/community-matters/noise>.



The new Distilling House bar and restaurant airside



Camilla, Duchess of Rothesay opens the new BA lounge



A montage of flights departing Aberdeen International Airport



The NATS tower and
CHC helicopter



Another new retail store

Recurring items (continued)

Chairman's quarterly report

The Chairman provides a quarterly briefing on any activities or events that he has attended on behalf of the Committee.

In June 2018, he attended the annual meeting of the Liaison Group of UK ACCs, hosted by Heathrow Airport. The annual meeting offers the chairs of ACCs of the 23 largest airports in the UK a chance to network and discuss issues of common interest.

Items on the agenda of the annual meeting included a presentation by Jenny Willott, the chair of the CAA's Consumer Panel, and Rachel Cerfontyne, the chair of the recently-created Heathrow Engagement Board.

The chair of the Consumer Panel indicated her intention to work with the CAA on the development of a range of new objective measures on which different parts of the civil aviation industry may be compared on a like-for-like basis. Two examples were given by UKACC's members as to why objective measures are critical: one is the annual *Which?* survey of UK airports, which is based on the subjective judgements of passengers, and the other is the summary of CAA's own timekeeping of airlines by airports served.

The latter gave rise to headlines in the *Press and Journal* in spring 2018, suggesting that Aberdeen International Airport had one of the worst timekeeping records of any UK airport. When the statistics on which this headline were analysed, it was clear that Aberdeen's average delay in departure was just 3 seconds more than Glasgow's, and 63 seconds more than Edinburgh's: hardly a record to convince passengers to drive 120 miles or more to catch a flight!

The Heathrow Engagement Board is a new consultative structure set up for Heathrow as it continues its plans for a third runway, and absorbs the previous ACC. The DfT and CAA have both given assurances that this type of structure will not be required for other airports, and that the ACC legislation will continue.

Brexit

It's not surprising that Brexit was on every agenda over the past year, as AIACC sought clarification of the possible impact on Aberdeen airport. The only certain outcome was an assurance given by the EU and the UK government that legislation will ensure that flights to and from Europe will continue 'seamlessly' between the date of Brexit and the following day.

Government and related consultations

Hardly a quarter has gone past without one or more consultations issued by the DfT or the CAA. The AIACC monitors all such consultations and makes submissions in response where the topics under consideration appear to be relevant to Aberdeen and are within the technical and constitutional competence of the Committee.

During 2018 we made submissions to the following consultations.

DfT consultation 'A new aviation strategy for the UK'.

Early in the year, the Committee noted that the proposed timescale for the DfT consultation on a new aviation strategy for the UK had slipped by several months, and that the consultation process was to be modified.

The consultation was eventually launched as a Green Paper entitled *Aviation 2050 – the future of UK aviation* in December 2018.

Government and related consultations (continued)

CAA airspace change process

AIACC had made submissions to the CAA during 2017 on their proposed new airspace design guidance. We noted that the substantive document had been issued in January 2018.

This included several references to a perceived role for ACCs in the airspace change process as a way of engaging with communities and being used as a focus group in the development of proposals to change air space on an airport by airport basis. We noted that Aberdeen International Airport currently has no plans to change current airspace usage and therefore this new process has no foreseeable impact for AIACC.



‘Strictly come dancing’ star Anton du Beke in Aberdeen to support the BA Flying Start charity

CAA consultation ‘Aviation noise impacts’:

We had taken part in this public consultation during 2017. We noted that the results were published during 2018, showing that a small proportion (about 1%) of the population in the Aberdeen area had responded to the questionnaire. In fact most responses to the questionnaire related to the main London airports, Edinburgh and one or two other provincial airports.

Passengers requiring special assistance at airports

Publication by the CAA of their third annual *Airport Accessibility Report*

Each year, the CAA ranks the performance of airports in the provision of services to passengers requiring special assistance. We were pleased to note that, for 2017 – 2018, AIA was ranked as ‘very good’ (the highest level of performance) along with 15 other major airports, up from ‘good’ last year. This met AIA’s target of being ranked as ‘very good’.

publication by the CAA of their report *Supporting people with hidden disabilities at UK airports*

The CAA has given particular emphasis to the interests of passengers with hidden disabilities over the past year or so. This CAA report sets out recommendations and examples of good practice, many of which AIA had already put in place. One example is the recent opening of *Changing Places*, a toilet facility equipped with a full-size changing platform and hoist, for older children and adults, in the airside departure area.

Our representative of passengers with special needs gave us a presentation at our September meeting on further actions that could, in her opinion, be taken, including additional training.

We have been kept apprised of plans to relocate the special needs reception area closer to the main entrance to the airport, and improved waiting facilities for hospital discharge patients awaiting flights to the islands. We expressed our compliments to the management and team for their dedication to the needs of special assistance passengers.

The misuse of lasers

We continue to take an interest in measures being taken to tackle the misuse of lasers against aircraft and air traffic control operators. We noted the issue in May 2018 of the UK government's latest proposals to combat misuse.

DfT consultation *Taking flight: the future of drones in the UK*

We noted the publication of a CAA consultation on the misuse of drones. We issued a response supporting the proposed measures, having previously lobbied the DfT for clarification on the safe operation of drones around airports.



The NATS air traffic control tower at sunset

Section 4: The internal affairs of the Committee

From time to time we are also required to consider matters related to the internal affairs of the Committee.

Membership of the Committee

We said farewell to five members of the Committee, and the previous Managing Director of the airport, during the year. In addition, one member transferred roles during the year.

Those to whom we said 'farewell' were

- Michael Baker, who had represented the Newhills and Bucksburn Community Council for well over 20 years, as he retired from the Community Council;
- James Bream, the former Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce representative, and Seona Shand, his temporary replacement;
- John Millar, the former General Manager of NATS Aberdeen, on his retirement from NATS; and
- Eddie Anderson, who had represented NESTRANS for at least a decade, when he left the Board of NESTRANS towards the end of 2018.

In addition, we said farewell to Carol Benzie, former Managing Director of Aberdeen International Airport, who had acted as our principal adviser for several years.

We send all of them our best wishes for whatever they have gone on to do, or a long and happy retirement, as appropriate.

We also welcomed five new members to the Committee:

- Ivor Stuart, representing the Newhills and Bucksburn Community Council, who had acted as substitute for Mike Baker on a number of occasions;
- Helen Gordon, who joins the Committee as the ABTA/SPAA representative;
- Chris Foy, the Chief Executive of Visit Aberdeenshire;
- Daryl Heaselgrave, the new General Manager of NATS Aberdeen; and
- Trevor Stapleton, filling the vacancy for Oil and Gas UK.

In addition, Gary Hance, the former ABTA/SPAA representative, demitted office on his retirement from ATPI travel management company, but immediately agreed to fill the vacancy for a passenger representative. Gary remains the Vice Chairman of the Committee.

Finally, as the year ended, we were informed that Shane Taylor would become the new AGCC representative in 2019.

We welcome them all and look forward to their contribution to our work over the coming years.

Schedule of meetings

We normally meet four times a year, in March, June, September and December, usually on the first Friday of the month. Our schedule of meetings for the following year is posted on our website.

Agendas and minutes of the AIACC

The agenda for each meeting of the AIACC is posted to our website about one week before the meeting. The minutes of our meetings are also posted to our website, as an Annex to the agenda for the meeting after the one to which the minutes relate.

Our website

Our website may be accessed at <https://www.aberdeenairport.com/aiacc> (short address) or <https://www.aberdeenairport.com/about-us/community-matters/airport-consultative-committee/> (long address, to which the short address is automatically directed).

Costs of running the Committee

The direct costs of running the Committee are modest. The main item is the honorarium of £3000 paid to the Chairman, together with his approved travelling expenses for meetings and events that he attends. Other items include a sandwich lunch after each meeting and reimbursement of parking charges for members attending the Committee.

Other news for 2018

Proposed retirement of Peter Smart, as our Chairman, at the end of 2019

During 2018, Peter Smart, our current Chairman, indicated his intention to retire at the end of 2019, after 13 years in post. In December, the Committee approved a procedure for the appointment of his successor, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer of AGS Airports Ltd (the airport's owners) and Steve Szalay, MD of AIACC.

Section 5: Further information about the Committee and requests to attend meetings

Our website provides a wide range of background information to the Committee, dates of upcoming meetings and the agendas and minutes for meetings. The website includes a copy of the DfT Guidelines for ACCs, under which we operate; a copy of our Constitution; and a list of members.

We do not operate an 'open door' to meetings, but we are always willing to welcome members of the public and the media on prior request. In the past, members of the public with a specific interest in an agenda item have been permitted to attend and have been invited to speak on the issue of special interest to them. They have also been welcome to attend the whole of the meeting, although we would reserve the right to ask them to leave if a matter under consideration is of a commercially confidential or sensitive nature.

If you wish to attend a meeting, please contact the Secretary at Margaret.mackenzie@aairport.com, ideally at least a week before the meeting you wish to attend, indicating whether you wish to speak on a particular issue, or simply want to see what goes on at meetings of the Committee.

*The photographs used in this annual report
courtesy of Aberdeen International Airport*