

## Aviation Forum Meeting Wednesday 19 September 2018

<b>Location:</b>	ICIBI, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PN
<b>Chair:</b>	(ICI) David Bolt – Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p>(AS) Andy Smith – SITA  (AP) Andy Palmer – Gatwick Airport  (DK) Dale Keller – Board of Airline Representatives in the UK  (JE) Justine Everett – EasyJet  (PO) Peter O'Broin - Airport Operators Association  (AV) Alexandra Varlyakova – London City Airport</p> <p>(CT) Chris Thompson – ICIBI  (LA) Lamees Abu-Hayyeh – ICIBI  (PH) Phil Hallwood - ICIBI</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>Deb Barber – Cardiff Airport  David Joseph – TUI Travel</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Welcome and introduction from the Chief Inspector	ICI welcomed the group and reminded members that should they have any points or issues they wished to raise with him they could do so by phone or email at any time, rather than waiting for a forum meeting.
Update on relevant ICIBI inspections since last meeting	<p>Since the last meeting (in February 2018) two reports of particular interest to the group had been published (both in March 2018):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Border Force (BF) operations at Stansted Airport</li> <li>• Exit checks</li> </ul> <p>Meanwhile, a report on BF operations at South Coast Seaports was with the Home Secretary awaiting publication. Though focused on seaports, the report raised issues about BF resourcing which were also relevant to airports.</p>
General discussion points	<p><u>Queue times &amp; measurements</u></p> <p>ICI informed the group that, in light of the extensive media coverage, he had written to the BF DG, Paul Lincoln, on 13 August 2018 requesting an update on BF's management of queues at Heathrow Airport. DG BF's referred to the steps BF had taken/was taking to alleviate the problems e.g. the deployment of 200+ additional staff. ICI had decided that there was nothing to be gained from a further inspection of Heathrow at this point as the problems were familiar and the arguments well-rehearsed.</p> <p>In discussion, members said that there were frequent queue breaches at Manchester and Heathrow involving non-EU passengers. The perception was that this was caused by BF resourcing and workforce planning issues.</p>

Concerns were expressed that BF was increasingly using “national security” as the excuse for more frequent excessive queuing times.

#### Resources and workforce planning

Members felt that BF became “defensive” whenever the subject of resourcing and deployment was raised with them.

ICI reiterated that he was keen to inspect BF’s wider approach to workforce planning, including ‘seasonal’ and mobile (or brigading) staff. Despite use of the latter, it was not apparent from the inspections that had been done that BF manoeuvred available resources in an agile way.

The group discussed BF’s planning assumptions and the basis for these. The industry had detailed forecasts looking a year ahead, including likely delays to particular flights, but BF did not make use of these. BF had been offered access to information from Gatwick’s long-term passenger forecasting system but had not taken the offer up.

#### E-gates

There was a discussion around the ratio of BF monitoring officers to egates, which the ICI had raised in the context of BF’s safeguarding responsibilities. It was noted that BF’s move towards a 1:10 ratio was not in line with European standards (1:6). However, some members felt the ratio should be increased, as egates were not being used to their full potential.

There was also some debate about the prospect of non-EU arrivals being permitted to use the egates in order to alleviate queuing times.

The group suggested an inspection focusing on the utilisation of existing egates, which might include a look at whether SLAs should reflect a ‘return on investment’ consideration.

It was pointed out that there was still no procurement process in place for future egates, and it was the Border Futures team (part of HMRC) that was setting the future border technology agenda.

#### Ports/BF relationship

Overall, there was a feeling that transparency between Border Force and the ports could be improved in many areas: arrivals resource planning, egates usage, continued use of landing cards etc.

#### Brexit

ICI said he understood that BF planned to recruit an additional 300 ‘Brexit’ staff, plus 1,000 staff to fill vacancies and departures (last year’s attrition rate was 400-500 staff. The first recruits had been due to join BF in May 2018.

Members expressed concern that Channel ports in the SE would drain staff resources from elsewhere in BF in summer 2019 due to exceptionally heavy demands post-Brexit.

Also, members felt there was a particular risk that the processing of freight/cargo movements at airports would cause problems and delays.

	<p>ICI said that the National Audit Office had been looking at Brexit preparedness and were due to report around the end of 2018. He had briefed the NAO on ICIBI's findings.</p> <p><u>Vulnerable adults</u> ICI told the group that a report about the Home Office's identification and safeguarding of vulnerable adults was currently with the Home Secretary awaiting publication. He asked what guidance about identifying and reporting vulnerable individuals, if any, had been given to airlines and airports by BF, including any expectations in terms of responsibilities, actions and 'hand offs' for arriving passengers. None of the members present was aware of any. With regard to outbound passengers, members felt that this would be a matter for the airport police or Immigration Enforcement rather than BF.</p> <p><u>Misdirected Passengers</u> The public consultation ended on 19 January 2018.</p> <p>At the time of the meeting, the GOV.UK website stated: 'We are analysing your feedback. Visit this page again soon to download the outcome to this public feedback'. Members had no inside knowledge of what was likely to emerge or when.</p> <p><u>Suggestions for future inspections</u> In response to ICI's invitation to suggest possible future inspection topics, members mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BF resourcing/staffing, including the use non-warranted officers and apprentices</li> <li>• BF data collection and usage</li> <li>• egates</li> <li>• charging for premium services</li> </ul>
Any other business	Members were asked to make suggestions by email of who else might usefully be invited to attend the Aviation forum.
Date of Next Meeting	Wednesday 27 February 2019 @ 14.00