Airport Consultative Committee

Information Gathering Exercise

2023

Contents

1. About the research

Help identify the common issues for Committees, opportunities for cross-working and any best practices that could benefit others.

To understand the view of ACCs on their relationship and expectations of government and wider stakeholders.

To understand the extent of relationships between aerodromes and ACCs with focus on how this may impact the execution of their perceived role.

To uncover the overarching aims and goals that ACCs hold for their organisation and how they intend to achieve them.

To explore the effectiveness of governments 2014 guidance for ACCs

Purpose

This information gathering exercise aimed to provide government with a better understanding of the views from Airport Consultative Committees (ACCs) and other organisations established to perform a similar consultation process for all UK airports and aerodromes.

It considered a range of issues, such as current government guidance for ACCs, community engagement, funding arrangements, the importance of diversity, impartiality and sharing best practice. Whilst this exercise was primarily focused on ACCs as the typical body established to fulfil an airport and aerodromes consultation function, the questions were designed to be broad enough in scope to recognise the differences in circumstance for individual organisations carrying out these functions. However, whilst noting that arrangements and procedures for one committee may not be appropriate for another, we expected that the basic underlining principles to be similar across all committees.

Why did we do this research?

The aviation sector continues to emerge from the biggest challenge it has faced in its 100-year history. The government considers the UK's network of ACCs are best placed to support and challenge their airports' and aerodromes' ambitions as they build back better and to help them navigate through a fast-changing landscape of progressive and complex government policies towards key agendas such as climate change, decarbonising aviation and levelling-up.

The research is aimed at providing government a better understanding of the challenges faced and key objectives for ACCs. Through this improved understanding, the government will look to work with ACCs to identify opportunities to build on support already provided.

Identifying commonalities and best practice as well as fortifying the existing networks will expand ACC objectives and improve outputs.

The government's relationship with, and approach towards ACCs is one of support through access to relevant information and guidance to aid the effective running of a committee. Any interference on how an individual ACC operates could be seen as an overstep, harming the fundamentals of the ACC itself. As such, this research is not intended to be a performance review of ACCs and any recommendations are shared in the spirit of collaboration and support.

UKACC

The sharing of best practice and information between consultative committees is strongly encouraged. For committees at larger airports, the Liaison Group of UK Airport Consultative Committees (UKACCs) is an ideal way to do this. The government considers UKACCs central supportive role as an important one for ACCs. This research also considers the effectiveness of UKACC from its members and non-members.

Sampling

The DfT already had some contacts for ACCs prior to this exercise, but we proactively approached UKACC as well as airports to identify participants. A general online search was also conducted to obtain accurate contact information for all those operating a Consultative Committee function at UK commercial airports and general aviation airfields. 36 of the 51 aerodromes designated under section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 to provide "facilities for consultation " responded to the exercise. This is not a complete sample of all ACCs in the UK and is only representative of the views of those who completed the exercise. However, we consider that the survey obtained broad coverage with 70% of ACCs responding and a good mix by size of ACC and by location.

Methodology

The DfT produced a draft document detailing the questions that were to be provided to respondents during the fieldwork period. This was to give respondents the opportunity to collect input from their committee members prior to the exercise going live. Some small changes were made between the draft document being sent out and the exercise going live, but the respondents were notified of this. The exercise was composed of a small number of short, closed questions and a large majority of open-ended questions, in order to gather in-depth views. ACCs were asked to submit their responses through the online survey platform smart survey and, the DfT did not accept any responses unless they were submitted via this platform.

Timeline of events

1 – 30 November 2021
The DfT approached UKACC, aerodromes and searched online to obtain contact information for those operating a Consultative Committee function.

18 November 2021
The DfT attends a UKACC conference to talk about the purpose and practicalities of the exercise.

December 2021
ACCs consulted on the draft questionnaire, scope and purpose of the exercise. Feedback resulted in some minor clarification points and changes to text.

10 January -18 February 2022
ACCs invited to submit their responses via online survey platform smart survey.
Airports are also informed of the exercise but will not contribute at this stage.

1 March – 30 May 2022
DfT researchers categorised key themes emerging in the responses of each question. Summaries were developed based on the prominence of key themes in each question and throughout the survey (Thematic analysis)

Analysis:

Thematic analysis was used for open-ended questions with team members coding (pulling out key themes) responses of each question. This coding was also quality assured by other team members. Key themes were pulled out and summarised into short paragraphs in this report.

Other considerations:

Only online survey responses were accepted in this exercise to ensure that fieldwork was efficient, and data could be collected securely. There were some minor issues with some ACCs being uncomfortable responding online. To mitigate this, we provided paper copies of the survey to help them complete a draft offline and responded to various queries to help ACCs where possible. This enabled efficient analysis and secure storage of data, as all responses were collected in the same way.

How to read this report

This report presents a full account of how ACCs responded to each survey question. Particular attention has also been given to what UKACC members said for each question too.

As most of the questions asked were open questions, thematic analysis was carried out. Therefore, the main themes arising from the questions, which were mentioned by several ACCs are outlined in more detail, with smaller themes mentioned by fewer ACCs are discussed in less detail.

The report is designed to be a reference document to support Airport Consultative Committees and similar bodies.

A full list of the questions asked can be found in Annex A.

Timeline of events

11 October 2022
DfT presented a PowerPoint presentation on the findings from the Information gathering exercise to UKACC.

24 November 2022
DfT presented PowerPoint presentation on findings to the UKACC Annual General Meeting

20 December 2022
DfT shares summary report on findings from the Information gathering exercise with responders and airports and aerodromes.

2. Awareness and knowledge on current guidance

Is your organisation aware of the government's 2014 Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees?

1.2   Summary findings: Awareness and knowledge on current guidance

- All Airport Consultative Committees who took part in this exercise were aware of the government's 2014 guidelines for ACCs.
- Most respondents felt the guidance was useful to a certain extent and appeared to utilise the guidance in a variety of ways e.g. induction documents and understanding legal obligations. However, there references to the guidance needing improvement suggesting that the guidance was too out of date or irrelevant.
- Just over half of respondents stated that they needed additional guidance with themes of needing funding, having independent chairs/secretariats/technical advice, better guidance, and resources to help with the running of an ACC.

All 36 organisations who responded were aware of the government's 2014 guidelines for ACCs, and an overwhelming majority of them felt it is useful although this varied to some degree.

How useful, if at all, does your organisation consider the government guidance released in 2014 for the effective running of an Airport Consultative Committee? Please explain.

Most (19 out of 36) felt the guidance was very useful, slightly fewer (14 out of 36) felt it was moderately useful, while a small minority (2 out of 36) felt it was slightly useful and one organisation felt it was not at all useful (although no reason or critical comment was given).

 Most ACCs use the guidance and find the guidance helpful. When asked to give more detail on how useful the government guidance for ACCs was, 30 of the 36 organisations responded to this open question.

The main theme was that the majority of organisations stated they follow and use the guidance, to some extent. Generally, organisations felt the guidance was useful in terms of

helping with the running of an ACC, with examples given of the guidance being sent to new committee members as a form of induction. Other organisations mentioned that the guidance was informative, as it provided a reference for members to use, and that it also gave an understanding of the legal obligations required. There were also references to the guidance being useful for discussing various issues that are pertinent to ACCs and providing a useful framework for ACCs to work according to.

There was also a strong reference to the guidance needing improvement, with several references to it being outdated. Of those that felt this, it was suggested that the guidance could include more on the role of ACCs, more guidance on engagement and helping to ensure ACCs are more joined up. Smaller airfields also tended to mention that the ACC guidance felt particularly focused on larger airfields, and one of these referencing that there is a lack of support for non-UKACC members.

A small number of ACCs had differing views on how prescriptive the guidance should be with those feeling this is the case indicating that the guidance is too general and could be open to interpretation. Another indicated that the guidance does not cover specific objectives or powers that ACCs should use. Those who felt that guidance should not be too prescriptive mentioned that it's important that the guidance should be more flexible to help ACCs tailor to their constitutions.

"In our view the government provides the guidelines which set the framework for the effective operation of the committee and this is important and effective."

(ACC for medium Airport/Aerodrome)

UKACCs

The finding for this question was mirrored by UKACC members who broadly found guidance helpful but had some suggestions such as diversification and requiring additional information in certain areas.

What support, if any, in addition to existing guidance, does your organisation consider is needed to support the effective running of an ACC?

When asked about what support their organisation needed in addition to existing guidance just under half did not answer the question or said that nothing was needed.

There were several themes that emerged for those who responded. A strong theme that emerged was the need for increased funding to enable the effective running of an ACC. (See section 6 'independence' for more information) Examples of why funding was needed included enabling greater resources to be spent on running consultations, paying for meeting facilities and wider administrative costs (e.g. Hosting the UKACC annual liaison meeting).

Another striking theme was the need for greater independence, in terms of the secretariat function, and having an independent chair. (See section 6 'independence' for more information). There were some comments requiring independent technical advice on noise and environmental issues, and one ACC mentioned how it would be helpful to have a DfT or CAA contact to provide technical support when required.

> **"The fact that this survey is taking place at all is a positive sign that the government and specifically the DfT are perhaps understanding the value of the ACCs."**
>
> (ACC for medium Airport/aerodrome)

Finally, there were some comments about having guidance on various areas, such as, what is expected from ACCs, how to facilitate better stakeholder management and guidance for local councils. Linked to this a handful of ACCs said it would be helpful to have some templates or example documents they could use (e.g. meeting minutes, annual reports and welcome packs for new ACC members), a model constitution and a set of Terms of Reference.

Some stated that there was no need for additional guidance reflecting the findings for all respondents. There were some suggestions for improvements such as sharing best practice and meeting templates etc. There were also some references to needing funding.

3. Relationships

How supported, if at all, does your organisation feel by the following?

1.3   Summary findings: Relationships

- There was no agreement about whether ACCs felt supported by the government. With some ACCs expressing disappointment due to a lack of engagement and some ACCs feeling they were supported through guidance and updates.
- Most respondents felt supported by their airport or aerodrome discussing how they had good engagement and practical support.
- Even numbers of ACCs felt neutral or unsupported by other ACCs with a smaller number feeling supported. For the former group this was because of limited contact with other organisations.
- Most respondents felt supported by the UKACC and felt they had a good relationship with them with the UKACC providing information and resources
- Most respondents said they had a positive relationship with the airport/aerodrome, despite these suggestions for improvements were made with some challenging aspects acknowledged by some respondents.

UK government

There is no consensus among respondents about whether they feel supported or not by the government. An equal amount reported feeling neutral, supported, and not supported (12 out of 36 respondents for each group).

Most of those who mentioned the government in the open part of this question, expressed disappointment at the level of support.

"The government seems to have little or no interest in ACCs but they could be used as a major artery for public consultation."

(ACC for medium Airport/Aerodrome)

Some respondents felt that the government is absent and disinterested in the ACC process. Several respondents report that their interactions with the government are limited to guidance/consultations, which some respondents view as helpful, but others feel this is not enough. There is also a sense that the relationship is imbalanced, with the government expecting a higher level of engagement from ACCs than ACCs get in return. For example, several respondents mentioned timescales for survey responses being unreasonable.

However, there were some respondents who said they feel supported by the government, be it through guidance, attendance at meetings and updates on policy developments. One respondent also commented on how this survey is welcomed, and they feel more optimistic about future support from the government because of this.

UKACCs

There was no clear consensus amongst UKACC members about whether they feel supported by the government. 9 out of 21 felt supported and, 4 were neutral and 8 felt not supported.

Airport/Aerodrome

Most respondents (32 out of 36) reported feeling supported by their airport/aerodrome. None of the respondents reported that they do not feel supported.

Most respondents discussed how they felt supported by their airport/aerodrome. Many respondents highlighted good 'active engagement' from the airport/aerodrome, especially from senior management - including regular attendance at meetings, and regular updates. Some respondents also mentioned the practical support given to them by their airport/aerodrome, such as financial, and organising meetings. However, one respondent felt there was room for improvement between their ACC and their airport/aerodrome, specifically mentioning a need for a better provision of information.

Several respondents also commented on the impact the pandemic has had on their relationship with their airports/aerodromes. For example, a reduction in meetings held, or meetings moving online, and reduced engagement from airport officials.

UKACCs

Most UKACC members felt supported by their airport/aerodrome. 19 out of 21 felt supported and 2 were neutral.

Other ACCs

Many respondents (13 out of 34) reported feeling neutral regarding support from other ACCs, whilst a similar amount (12 out of 34) reported that they do not feel supported. Only a small number of respondents (9 out of 34) reported feeling supported.

Most respondents who expanded on their answers reported that they had limited or no contact with other ACCs. For some respondents this is an issue, and for others it is not – with some even reporting that they have 'never required support from other ACCs' or that they are not even aware of support available from other ACCs. Several respondents commented on the fact that the main way to contact or receive information about other ACCs is through the UKACC. With one respondent report that 'information about the activities of other ACCs and the annual conference have proved useful'.

"The airport is in a period of recovery. There is a tension between the business needs of the airport and the impact that its operations may have on communities close to the airport or under/near flight paths."

(ACC for Medium Airport/Aerodrome)

A handful of respondents say they do receive practical support from other ACCs. This comes in the form of meetings, working groups and advice. However, the pandemic has impacted the access to other ACCs.

There was no clear consensus amongst UKACC members about whether they feel supported by other ACCs with the majority either feeling supported or neutral. 9 out of 21 felt supported, 7 were neutral and 3 disagreed.

UKACC

Many respondents (21 out of 36) reported feeling supported by the UKACC, whilst a small number (10 out of 36) reported that they do not feel supported by the UKACC. Fewer still (5 out of 36) say they feel neutral about the level of UKACC support.

Most respondents who expanded on their answers reported that they felt supported by UKACC and had a good relationship with them. The support comes in many forms, such as being a useful source of information – via weekly bulletins and at the Annual Meeting - and providing 'practical and legal advice'. Further, the UKACC acts as a go-between with other ACCs, the DfT and other national bodies – which several respondents highlight as being 'very useful'. One respondent did, however, suggest that the UKACC requires further resourcing to improve.

"…The UKACC organisation does much to help committees to progress with these agendas and gives valuable advice as to how to move these matters forward and to contribute to national consultations."

(UKACC Member)

There are a handful of respondents who said they were either unaware of the UKACC or had not been contacted by them. One respondent wondered if this was due to their airport being small, whilst UKACC members 'are predominantly larger airports'.
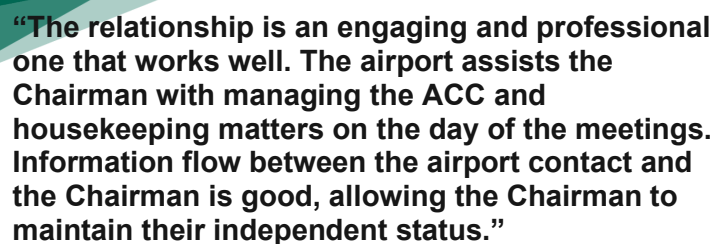
UKACCs

Almost all UKACC members indicated that they feel supported by the UKACC. 20 out of 21 felt supported and, 1 was neutral.

Please describe the relationship your organisation has with your airport/aerodrome.

Most respondents said that their ACC had a positive relationship with their airport/aerodrome. These relationships were often described as 'constructive', 'supportive', 'professional', 'respectful' and 'collaborative'. Many respondents also mentioned that their airport/aerodrome considers them to be a 'critical friend', so the views of the ACC are respected and considered. However, several respondents made a point that they want to remain independent from their airport/aerodrome, so their relationship is good but at 'arm's length'.

Despite these positive relationships, several respondents noted that the pandemic has negatively impacted these relationships, citing reduced contact and less support. Further, several respondents suggested some improvements to their relationships, such as being consulted earlier in the development process and when decisions are being finalised.

However, some respondents noted that their relationship with their airport/aerodrome is challenging. These challenges included airports/aerodromes having high staff turnover making it hard to 'establish a good working relationship', not 'delivering any meaningful change', despite saying the right things, a less open relationship following a takeover from the government of one airport. Not being sure the airport/aerodrome owners understand the role of ACCs and tensions arising from the business needs of the airport, and the impact these needs may have on the community – specifically when it comes to noise.

"**The relationship is an engaging and professional one that works well. The airport assists the Chairman with managing the ACC and housekeeping matters on the day of the meetings. Information flow between the airport contact and the Chairman is good, allowing the Chairman to maintain their independent status.**"

(ACC for Small Airport/Aerodrome)

UKACCs

The findings for this question were similar to findings for non-UKACC members, the majority of UKACC members has a positive relationship with their airport/aerodrome. A small few explained some challenges and room for improvement in their relationships

4. Governance and transparency

1.4   Summary findings: Governance and transparency

- Most of the organisations who responded made advance meeting schedules or meeting minutes publicly available. About half of the organisations who responded made discussion papers or presentations publicly available.
- Most organisations who responded had an external website and for most of those which had an external website, this website was not managed independently to the airport/aerodrome.

Which, if any, of the following does your organisation make publicly available (noting potential commercial sensitivities):

Most of the organisations who responded made advance meeting schedules or meeting minutes publicly available. About half of the organisations who responded made discussion papers or presentations publicly available.

Just over half (19 of 33) of organisations who respondents stated that they make all of these materials (advance meeting schedules, meeting minutes, or discussion papers) publicly available.

A small minority (4 of 33) of organisations who responded stated that did not make any of these materials (advance meeting schedules, meeting minutes, or discussion papers) publicly available.

Does your organisation have an external website?

Most organisations who responded had an external website. 21 of the 36 organisations who responded said they had an external website. 14 organisations said they did not have an external website, and only 1 organisation said they didn't know.

Is the website managed independently to the airport/aerodrome?

For most of those which had an external website, this website was not managed independently to the airport/aerodrome. Of the 21 organisations with an external website, 13 of these said their website was managed independently to the airport/aerodrome, while 8 said it was managed independently.

UKACCs

The majority of UKACC members had advance meeting schedules (17 out of 21). A majority (18 out of 20) had meeting minutes available and just over half (13 out of 21) had discussion papers and presentations available. About 6 out of 13 UKACC members has a website managed independently from the airport.

5. Membership

1.5   Summary findings: Membership

- Most respondents stated that having a diverse committee membership with a variety of stakeholders, was appropriate in order to ensure an appropriate range of views however there were some challenges associated with maintaining a diverse membership.
- Most respondents ensured their members had the authority to represent the views of their group by ensuring these members were nominated or elected, there was some reference to screening process requiring evidence from potential members.
- Most respondents reported that their ACC does offer advice on technical issues, however some respondents stated that limited technical knowledge reduced their capacity to provide advice.
- Most respondents stated that they do not have responsibility to run any specialist technical subgroups however a smaller proportion say they do
- Respondents mentioned they had subgroups for various topics such as environmental issues, noise, airspace change etc. Whilst most respondents didn't elaborate on how these groups were managed, those who did respond stated that the ACC would manage the group with internal members and external members from the airport/aerodrome

---

Do you consider that having a diverse committee membership is important to ensuring an appropriate range of views?

Most respondents (34 out of 36) answered this question, and the main theme was that having diverse committee membership was deemed to be appropriate, with some giving examples of how their ACC manages diverse committee membership and others providing general views on this area.

"[Committee membership] should be broadly representative of the full range of stakeholders in the development and operation of the airport. Although this has not always been easy [we] see this as essential to be able to speak to and represent the views of the Committee to external parties and the general public"

(ACC for small Airport/Aerodrome)

Around half of respondents to this question noted that they had broad or at least some diverse committee membership in order to ensure an appropriate range of views. Of those who stated they did have diverse committee membership this tended to cover a mix of stakeholders such as local authorities, local communities, businesses, airport/freight operations and experts and local interest groups. For some, this spanned various geographical areas, due to the location of their airport/aerodrome.

There was also a general theme among respondents who stated that they have diverse membership and some who did not explicitly mention this, that it is important to have diverse committee membership. However, this required a concerted effort to maintain and involved a

regular review of committee membership to reflect the changing focus of ACCs and if some committee members failed to attend meetings or were unable to participate fully.

Linked to this theme, some respondents also mentioned the challenges associated with diverse committee membership as it can be hard keeping members engaged and difficult to get new members on board. One noted, for example, that some councils are located far from the airport/aerodrome site and therefore chose not to attend meetings. While another noting that careful vetting processes are required for new local resident groups.

How, if at all, does your organisation ensure members (such as community groups or local authorities) have the authority to represent the views of their group or organisation at meetings?

Overall, most organisations (33 out of 36) responded to this question. The majority of them detailed that members have authority to represent the views of their group or organisation through only focusing on those who were either nominated or elected to represent these groups. Those in senior positions were also noted to have more authority. There was also some focus on ensuring members provide evidence of their group or organisation's credentials, with community groups being more likely to be screened carefully first. Individuals tended to be less likely to be accepted. One ACC noted that individual membership was only decided on by other members and there was some level of scrutiny over this.

There were also some organisations that struggled to specifically answer the question but discussed the importance of focusing on getting the right members. While a handful of organisations made clear that they follow the constitution on this and rely on what has been done previously.

UKACCs

The thoughts of UKACC members were broadly reflective of the views of all respondents with most agreeing that diverse membership is important to the functions of an ACC. There were various methods for ensuring authority of representation reflected in the responses of all respondents

Does your organisation offer advice to your relevant airport/aerodrome on technical issues (e.g., noise or sustainability)?

Most respondents (23 out of 35) report that their ACC does offer advice to their airport/aerodrome. Many respondents feel that their ACC lacks the technical expertise required to offer full advice, so the advice that is given is often limited and dependent on members' level of expertise. Any advice given typically comes from an ACC sub-group that looks at specific issues, such as noise, environment and passengers. Some respondents feel that their ACC would benefit from having external expertise on specific topics to give advice to airports. A handful of respondents mentioned that they already have this.

Many respondents said that their ACC can raise specific technical concerns with the airport to discuss, even if the advice they are able to give on the matter is limited. Often these issues have been raised by someone in the community - for example, common concerns are about noise and flight paths.

Does your organisation have responsibility for any specialist or technical sub-groups?

Most respondents (20 out of 36) report that they do not have responsibility for any specialist or technical sub-groups, whilst a smaller proportion of respondents (15 out of 36) say they do. One respondent said they do not know.

Please give details about these specialist sub-groups, including how these are managed.

Types of sub-groups

Most sub-groups mentioned (by 15 respondents) focused on environmental issues, noise, passengers, local community, and airspace change. Many respondents reported that their ACC had more than one sub-group. Two respondents mentioned that their ACC was able to create specific sub-groups on an ad-hoc basis depending on the issue.

How the sub-groups are managed

Most respondents did not go into detail on how their sub-groups are managed, but the majority of those that did, said that their ACC manages the sub-group/s, with both airport representatives and external individuals sitting on the sub-group. One respondent mentioned that their airport/aerodrome organises the sub-group and provides practical support, such as external expert advice. Several respondents explained how covid-19 had affected their sub-groups, such as reducing frequency of meetings or preventing them from taking place entirely.

"...Committee members are volunteers and cannot be expected to be technical experts".

(ACC for Medium Airport/Aerodrome)

A higher proportion of UKACC members offer technical advice compared to non-UKACC members. In addition, a higher proportion of UKACC members have responsibility for technical subgroups compared to non-UKACC groups. UKACC groups also covered a wider range of technical issues in subgroups compared to non-UKACC groups.

6. Independence

1.6   Summary findings: Independence

- Most respondents stated that their chair and secretariat were independent from the relevant airport/aerodrome.
- A large proportion of respondents stated that having an independent chair and secretariat was essential and worked well to ensure ACCs could retain their critical capabilities. Some respondents linked this to needing independent funding for these roles. However, some respondents stated that having independent leadership did not impact the critical capabilities of the ACC. There was some emphasis on the importance of a good relationship with their airport/aerodrome.
- Most respondents did not have a neutral funding source.
- In terms of how feasible neutral funding was some respondents' ACCs did not have official funding. Of those who did have funding many stated that it came from an airport/aerodrome which was not considered independent, but achieving neutral funding was seen as a goal to work towards despite some practical limitations.
- For those who did have access to funding for that ACC some argued that neutral funding was irrelevant to the critical capabilities of the ACC. However, there was conflicting sentiment that having an independent source of funding was very important in facilitating critical capabilities, there was some emphasis on the practical constraints of achieving neutral funding.

Does your organisation have a chair or secretariat independent from your relevant airport/aerodrome?

Most respondents (31 out of 36) stated that their ACC chair was independent from their relevant airport/aerodrome. Most respondents (23 out of 36) stated that their ACC secretariat was independent from their relevant airport/aerodrome.

How well, if at all, does having a chair and/or secretariat independent from your airport/aerodrome work in practice? How important, if at all, is it to have a chair and/or secretariat independent from your airport/aerodrome?

A large proportion of respondents stated that independent chairs and secretariats were essential and worked well to ensure that the airport can fulfil its critical role alongside the airport. This ensured that the agenda of ACCs was independent.

"[an independent chair is] Very important. Without an independent Chair the credibility of the ACC could be called into question by the membership."

(ACC for small Airport/Aerodrome)

In a few cases the either one of chairs or secretariats were likely to be independent and funded independently than their counterparts. To achieve independence in these roles there was feeling that funding needed to be independent of the airports. Funding source suggestions included DfT and or local councils. It was stated that this independence would improve perception of the efficacy of an ACC's critical role.

There was some sentiment that not having independent individuals in these roles would not impact the critical capability of the ACCs and that the organisations held independence, sometimes highlighted through control over finances.

In addition to this it was important that ACCs had a good relationship with airports and aerodromes and worked together to fulfil their role as a 'critical friend'. Whilst independence was important, independent funding was seen as hard to get. Some committees were content of the level of independence that they had in the moment and did not look to make both roles independent.

In both UKACC and non-UKACC groups, ACCs had a larger proportion of independent chairs than secretariats but in the UKACC member group all had an independent chair. Both UKACC and non-UKACC members supported the concept of having independent core members with mirrored concerns and opposing views to having core members.

Neutral funding sources

Does your organisation have a neutral funding source? Please note: This could be where a committee has majority/full control over their spending with a forward agreed budget, possibly with a longer-term funding agreement in place.

Most respondents (27 out of 35) said they did not have a neutral funding source. A small proportion (7 out of 35) of respondents did have a neutral funding source and 1 respondent did not know.

How feasible, if at all, is it to have a neutral funding source for your organisation?

Respondents were asked to consider the feasibility of having a neutral funding source.
Some respondents stated that they had no official funding and that members acted like volunteers and the airport provided non-monetary support in the form of meeting rooms and refreshments, postage and copying for meetings. For other respondents ad-hoc funding came from the sponsors of committee members.

Of those who indicated they had funding, many stated that their funding came from their airport/ aerodrome and whilst this was not considered an independent source some ACCs maintained that they had complete independent control of the funding and felt recognised by their airport/airfield counterpart that they had to act as a critical partner. Many respondents did not see an issue with being funded/having any costs met by their own airport therefore it was argued that ACCs did not need independent funding.

In some cases, working towards neutral funding was seen as feasible and something to work towards. Some respondents argued that independent funding would have to come from either local authorities or the Department for Transport. This was noted to be difficult given the constraints around local authority budgets however a move towards this source of funding was seen to improve the perception of the independence of ACCs from their airport.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that a neutral funding source helps demonstrate independence from the airport/aerodrome?

Respondents were asked whether a neutral funding source indicated independence. As stated in the previous question some ACCs did not have access to funding.

For those who did have funding some argued that funding sources were irrelevant to how their organisation undertook their role and stated that it did not impact the independence of their ACC. This was because of a mutual respect from airports about the critical role of ACCs.

"The funding source is irrelevant, as how and where it is used would be the role of the committee".

(ACC for medium Airport/Aerodrome)

However, there was other sentiment that having an independent funding source was incredibly important in facilitating the critical capabilities of ACCs. It was noted by respondents that having a funding source independent from both airports and airlines would greatly improve public perception and confidence in their independence. Based on the desire for a neutral funding there were speculations of where this funding could come from including the Department for Transport, UKACC and local authorities. Despite this there was an appreciation about the difficulties of acquiring an alternative funding source especially considering financial constraints on local councils.

"[Neutral funding] provides independence from the Airport enabling its "critical friend" role to be strengthened and for the committee not to be seen as a mouthpiece for the Airport."

(ACC for small Airport/Aerodrome)

In both UKACC and non-UKACC groups, the majority of ACCs did not have neutral funding. A higher proportion of UKACC members had funding from the airport in comparison to non-UKACC members who were less likely to have monetary support. UKACC members were more likely to agree that having a neutral funding source was helpful to demonstrate independence compared to non-UKACC members.

7. Naming conventions

1.7   Summary findings: Naming conventions

- Most respondents felt that the term Airport Consultative Committee was an appropriate term for their organisation and their objectives, but there were some suggestions for improvements.

How well, if at all, does the term 'Consultative Committee' describe the role of your organisation in support of its objectives?

Many of the respondents felt that the term 'Consultative Committee' was an appropriate moniker for their organisation and reflected how it supports the organisation's objectives.

The minority who did not feel it was appropriate, or not fully appropriate, mentioned that it does not fulfil the challenge and scrutiny aspect; that it appears as an arm of government (local or national) or seen as part of the airport business, or that the ACC was informed about current topics, rather than being consulted about upcoming issues.

"**The term Consultative Committee, very accurately describes the way the meetings work and the way that "matters arising" are dealt with."**

(ACC for small Airport/Aerodrome)

Even amongst those who felt the term appropriately describes the role, some offered suggestions for improvement or other comments on the term. Some respondents reflected that their ACC undertook a broad range of activities (including beyond consultation) and this was not reflected in the name. The specific examples varied but included acting as a 'critical friend' to the airport and receiving presentations on a wider range of topics such as airspace modernisation. Some offered concerns with the name. These included that the name does not encourage public understanding; that the term does not cover challenge; and the full name could be cumbersome. One respondent who felt that the name did not encourage public understanding highlighted the need to engage the younger generation who were seen to primarily communicate through social media. For some, the naming should also reflect how an ACC is independent – this was felt to be an important feature for several ACCs. Some reflected that the name should reflect the stakeholders that the ACC represents, either to be called a 'users forum'.

UKACC members had a lower proportion of individuals that thought the term 'consultative committee' compared to no- UKACC members.

8. Future challenges

What are the main priorities for your organisation, both now and looking forward to the next 5 years?

1.8   Summary findings: Future challenges

- For most respondents one of the main priorities for an ACC is acting as a representative for the local community to ensure that the need of the community was balanced with the commercial needs of the airport.
- To do this some ACCs had organisational goals to improve their capacity to do this e.g. increasing representation, making connections with other ACCs.
- When discussing critical issues, the most cited including decarbonisation, airspace change and modernisation and noise issues.
- Whilst there are some conflicting interests that communities and airports have, some ACCs saw their role as supporting expansions and helping improve the service that the airport/aerodrome would provide.

General Priorities for ACCs

When considering the general priorities of ACCs there were several general functions identified by respondents. Most mentioned was the responsibility to ensure that the commercial needs of airports were balanced with the subsequent impact on the local community. It must be noted that whilst there is some conflict in the best interests of the local community versus the needs of airports, there are some areas where these interests align (please see section 'supporting the expansion of airports').

According to some respondents, this balancing of needs can be done by ensuring transparency between the community and the airport by ACCs facilitating the conversation between both groups and monitoring airport operations. ACCs act to represent the community and its viewpoint on key issues. Some look to influence airport responses to key consultations and ensure any choices made and their impacts are assessed by the airport. Furthermore, if any issues do arise from the airport or aerodrome, ACCs consider their role to ensure that issues raised by the local community are addressed. Since the covid-19 pandemic, many respondents have an appreciation that the aviation sector was entering into a state of recovery which would increase the activity of relevant airports and aerodromes compared to activity levels during the pandemic.

Specific priorities of ACCs

There were some specific improvements which could be made within ACCs to ensure they can fulfil their general priorities. To provide representative views, which was stated as important, some respondents from these groups looked to broaden their appeal and relevance to attract a diverse membership. When new members joined the ACC there was some desire to provide training to new members on prominent issues. In addition to this, they looked to provide information about how local communities can raise issues within the group. Finally, some expressed an interest in liaising with other ACCs across the country.

Explore the following specific issues

Many respondents detailed the specific technical issues they were looking to prioritise. The specific issue that received the most attention was decarbonisation and a focus on supporting the move to net zero, environmental and health issues such as air pollution were linked to this. A commonly mentioned issue was noise, with some indicating they expected to create a specialist sub-group for important reoccurring issues. Many expressed interests in airspace modernisation and change, some also considered responding to local planning issues was a priority.

Supporting the expansion and service in airports

There are some issues with conflicting interests between local communities and ACCs as few respondents take a positive supportive role towards airports and aerodromes. This is because they are often seen as an important local employer whose growth and expansion after the covid-19 pandemic is something to support, especially when the airport/aerodrome is under operational pressures.

Some ACCs are looking to support the improvement of service provided by airports and their carriers. This included improving accessibility to customers increasing focus on the wellbeing of commuters and staff, and improving access to the airport through local infrastructure and transport such as trains and buses.

UKACCs

In both UKACC and non-UKACC groups, similar priorities for the next 5 years were described.

9. Government policy developments

1.9   Summary findings: government policy developments

- Some respondents felt engaged with government policy through being updated from various sources such as DfT or UKACC. Despite being updated, some ACCs expressed a desire to be engaged with policy to a greater depth. It was also mentioned that the extent of engagement depended on the specific policy and the technical knowledge available on the policy.
- Most respondents did not express a desire to respond alongside the airport or aerodrome. Some respondents stated they did not have any involvement in their relevant aerodrome or airport's response to consultations, despite wanting to. Others found conflict within their own ACC's response, with their membership experiencing conflicting opinions.

How engaged, if at all, is your organisation with key government policy developments, such as Jet (net) Zero agenda and airspace modernisation?

Some ACCs felt engaged with key government policy though being updated on key government policies through various sources. There was some feeling that ACCs were only aware of key policy but did not feel meaningfully engaged, this was a result of feeling uninformed or unequipped to consult on technical policy.

Some ACCs felt engaged with key government policy. At a high level, they felt engaged by being updated on key policy developments. This was sometimes done independently, through UKACC informing their members, or through interacting with DfT itself or from interactions with their airport.

Other ACCs felt aware and informed of key government policy but did not feel engaged in depth. Some cited that this was because they were prioritising the recovery of the airport, whereas others felt that even though their ACC had generated engagement there was a sense that their perceptions were not being taken into account. They were also some concerns that GA airfields, as smaller organisations, were left out of consultations and were keen to be involved.

Some respondents stated that they felt more engaged in some policies than others. There was a sense that some policies and consultations were hard to grasp by all members, some of which were not familiar with the policy limiting their ability to provide comments. Some respondents expressed the need for impartial technical knowledge to ensure they could meaningfully participate in policy discussions.

Some ACCs did not feel engaged at all. Respondents cited reasons such as focusing on post-pandemic recovery. However, others argued that information and access to these developments

and consultations was not easy. Some ACCs had to rely on personal reading and interest and expressed a need for formal briefings from the central government.

UKACCs

All ACCs that felt engaged with government policy consultations were UKACC members. The majority of non-UKACC members did not feel engaged with government policy to a meaningful extent.

Does your organisation have a say in how your airport/aerodrome responds to government consultations?

Following on from asking views on engagement by ACCs in key government policy development, ACCs were asked whether they had a say on how their airport or aerodrome responded to key consultations.

The most common response cited response was that ACCs and their aerodromes often responded separately to consultations. This was because ACCs felt did not represent the views of the airport and required separation.

Some ACCs stated that they did not have any influence on how airports responded to consultations, despite desiring to contribute. In some cases ACCs did contribute to the airport's response and had some influence. In other cases, individuals were offered summaries from the airport retrospectively. In cases where ACCs did respond, there was some conflict between members on how they should respond to consultations and therefore some members responded separately from their relevant ACC. For devolved matters consultations sometimes felt irrelevant.

"Different members of [of the ACC], will hold different views on aircraft noise, flight environmental and sustainability issues. Experience has shown that [the ACC] rarely holds a consensus view on government consultation.

The current approach has been that the Airport will make its own response… the [ACC] would not respond – as there would be no consensus… the airport would encourage member organisations to make their own individual response."

(ACC for Medium Airport/Aerodrome)

UKACCs

Both UKACC members and non-UKACC members were more likely to not have a say in the way their airport/aerodrome responds to government consultations.

10. Best practice and further support

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

1.10 Summary findings: Best practice and further support

- When asked to share one recommendation for a newly established ACC there were recommendations to establish independent core members, efficient meeting practices and organisation, utilising UKACC resources for best practice, being knowledgeable and having a good relationship with local stakeholders (including the airport/aerodrome) and members.
- When asked about a significant change they would make to their organisation or an aspect of work, various topics were mentioned including achieving independence through funding, developing relationships with other ACCs, maintaining diversity of membership of the ACC and enhancing collaborative practices with local stakeholders.

</div>

If you were to share ONE best practice or recommendation with a newly established ACC or similar organisation what would it be?

When asked to share a best practice or recommendation for a newly established ACC, respondents focused on one of the following four core themes: efficient meeting practices, membership of UKACC, membership of the ACC, or level of information about issues.

Those who directed their recommendation towards the membership of the ACC referenced a wide range of potential issues.

These included suggestions that the core members (e.g., chair and secretariat) should be independent and ensuring that the membership of the ACC is representative of stakeholders. The need to ensure that a particular group is not left out of the ACC was deemed important by some respondents as a way to ensure that the feedback to the airport was an overall view, rather than that of an individual. One ACC mentioned the importance of having a balanced membership as well.

Those who focused on efficient meeting practices mentioned the importance of being organised, having meetings arranged in advance, publishing meeting documents, such as agendas and minutes, in good time, and standardising the reporting of published documents. A few also mentioned that UKACC could help with these practices. Some ACCs also mentioned the need to publish documents to reach a wide audience (for example a newsletter). Some ACCs mentioned the importance of having a code of conduct or setting out the expectations of new members too.

Those who mentioned UKACC membership referred to how best practice guidance could be sought from UKACC, through joining UKACC or attending the UKACC conference. One ACC mentioned how it could be beneficial to look at specialist guidance already produced, for example GBBCA's guidance for passengers with special needs.

Some ACCs also advised that a new ACC should seek to build a good foundational knowledge of the ACC and local stakeholders. In terms of famiarisation with airport operations, some ACCs suggested a tour of the airport or attending meetings with senior airport staff. This knowledge of airport operations (e.g. frequency of flights, why are flight paths the way they are) was felt by one ACC to be beneficial in terms of helping the groups the ACC represents to reach agreement between the airport and the local stakeholders.

Related to building knowledge of the airport, some ACCs also mentioned the importance of building good relationships with stakeholders, specifically including those at the airport. This relationship building could be summarised as building trust between stakeholders including the airport, sharing information between the ACC and the airport, following through on commitments, and creating a dialogue.

If you were able to make ONE significant change to your organisation or to any aspect of the work of Airport Consultative Committees or similar organisations what would it be?

When asked what, if any, significant change to your organisation would the responding ACC make, many said they would make no changes.

Some ACCs mentioned ensuring independence, particularly through funding. Independence was also mentioned in the context of having a technical advisor or having sufficient resources to do the work of an ACC. For one, it was also mentioned that they would like to see their statutory powers increased.

Some ACCs mentioned they could seek or receive more information from other ACCs, either to see how they work, or work with directly.

Some ACCs mentioned the diversity of membership of the ACC. Some felt that the membership needed to change (either through a lower average age, or getting the right membership, including the right balance of councillors or MPs). One ACC also mentioned that attendance of some councillors has been sporadic, so would like to see greater participation by such attendees.

Some ACCs mentioned that they would like to see better engagement or collaboration with local stakeholders, for example with airport users, communities that have been negatively affected by the airport operations, or with the airport itself. However, the specific user group mentioned varied between each ACC, reflecting the individual circumstances of each ACC.

Greater publication of the role and expertise of ACCs was also mentioned by two ACCs. This was felt to be important by these respondents in order to appropriately ensure the ACC fed back to the local representatives, and to promote the wide range of expertise that ACCs have (e.g., disability and passenger experience) which they felt was under-utilised by the government and CAA at present.

One ACC mentioned that they would like to see a real-time tracking of each flight in order to validate complaints about the specific flight path. Another ACC mentioned that government consultations were difficult to respond to as the dates required for input fell in-between their existing meeting date, and that any new guidance must allow for best practices but also local flexibility.

11. Annex A - Survey given to respondents

Information gathering exercise with Airport Consultative Committees and similar organisations

1. Key Information
Purpose of this information gathering exercise

This information gathering exercise aims to provide government with a better understanding of the views from Airport Consultative Committees (ACC) and other organisations established to perform a similar consultation process for all UK airports and aerodromes.

It considers a range of issues, such as current government guidance for ACCs, community engagement, funding arrangements, importance of diversity, impartiality and sharing best practice.

Whilst this exercise is primarily focused on ACCs as the typical body established to fulfil an airport and aerodromes consultation function, the questions are designed to be broad enough in scope to recognise the differences in circumstance for individual organisations. However, whilst noting that arrangements and procedures for one committee may not be appropriate for another, we expect that the basic underlining principles to be similar across all committees.

We estimate the exercise will take around 20-25 minutes to complete and only ONE response per ACC or similar organisation will be accepted.

Who should respond to this information gathering exercise?

The person responding should have a good working knowledge of requirements of Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act (1982) of government guidance in support of the operations of an ACC or similar organisation, as well as on the broader issues affecting their organisations. We recommend speaking to other colleagues before completing these questions, so that a collective response can be made from your organisation.

Anonymised qualitative findings and any proposed next steps will be shared with all those who complete the exercise.

The deadline for completing this exercise is **Friday 18th February 2022.**

You may 'save and continue' your response at any time before this date. If you do, you will be sent a link via email allowing you to continue. It is vital you enter your correct email address when asked as a mistake means you will not receive the link.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All responses are voluntary, will be kept confidential and will be stored securely.

In this exercise we're asking for your email, you do not have to give us this personal information, but if you do provide it, we will use it only for the purpose of sharing findings with you. This research, and the processing of personal data that it entails are necessary for the exercise of Department for Transport's (DfT) functions as a government department. DfT is the controller of this information.

Your personal information will only be kept for information gathering purposes and all the responses to the survey will only be accessed by the DfT project team who will use this information for analytical purposes.

DfT's privacy policy has more information about your rights in relation to your personal data, how to complain and how to contact the Data Protection Officer.

UKACC and its members, ACCs and similar organisations and UK Airports and Airfields who respond to the survey, will receive a summary of the results from DfT. This data will be aggregated, and no individuals or organisations will be able to be identified through this summary of results.

Your information will be kept securely within DfT and destroyed within 18 months of being completed.

If you have any questions, please contact us here: ACC Exercise INBOX (AirportsPolicy@dft.gov.uk)

2. About your organisation
This information is only collected for analytical purposes to identify duplicate responses. It will not be used to identify specific responses, and all results will be anonymised.

1. Please state who you are responding on behalf of: *

- [ ] An Airport Consultative Committee
- [ ] Another organisation set up to provide a consultation facility for an airport/ aerodrome
- [ ] Other

2. What is the name of your organisation? *

[   ]

3. Please provide the name for the current chair at your ACC or similar organisation If your ACC or similar organisation does not have a consistent chair please state not applicable. *

[   ]

[ ]

4. What is the name of your relevant airport or aerodrome? *

[ ]

3. About your organisation

5. What is your email address?
Note: this is so we can contact you if we have any queries regarding your response and if you would like to receive the summary findings. *

[ ]

6. Which region is your organisation located in? *

☐ South West (England)

☐ South East (England)

☐ East of England

☐ London

☐ North West (England)

☐ North East (England)

☐ East Midlands (England)

☐ West Midlands (England)

☐ Yorkshire and the Humber

☐ Scotland

☐ Wales

☐ Northern Ireland

☐ Other (please specify):
[ ]

4. Awareness and knowledge on current guidance

7. Is your organisation aware of the government's 2014 Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Awareness and knowledge of current guidance

8. How useful, if at all, does your organisation consider the government guidance released in 2014 for the effective running of an Airport Consultative Committee?

☐ Very useful

☐ Moderately useful

☐ Slightly useful

☐ Not at all useful

Please explain your answer: (Max 500 Word count)

```



```

6. Awareness and knowledge of current guidance

9. What support, if any, in addition to existing guidance, does your organisation consider is needed to support the effective running of an ACC? (Max 500 Word count)

```



```

7. Relationships

10. How supported, if at all, does your organisation feel by the following?

	Very supported	Slightly supported	Neutral	Not very supported	Not at all supported
UK government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your airport/aerodrome	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
By other ACCs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
UKACC- liaison group of UK airport consultative committees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please explain your answer: (MAX 500 Word count)

11. Please describe the relationship your organisation has with your airport/aerodrome ([question(15360190,121842430)]) (Max 500 Word count):

8. Governance and Transparency

12. Which, if any, of the following does your organisation make publicly available (noting potential commercial sensitivities):

	Yes	No	Don't know
Advance meeting schedules	☐	☐	☐
Meeting minutes	☐	☐	☐
Discussion papers/ presentations	☐	☐	☐

Any other publicly available information - please specify (MAX 500 Word count):

9. Governance and Transparency

13. Does your organisation have an external website?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

10. Governance and Transparency

14. Please can you provide a link to your external website for our records:

[   ]

11. Governance and Transparency

15. Is the website managed independently to the airport/aerodrome?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

12. Membership

16. Do you consider that having a diverse committee membership is important to ensuring an appropriate range of views? Please note: By 'diverse' we mean that committee members represent the views of the wider airport community (Max 500 Word count):

17. How, if at all, does your organisation ensure members (such as community groups or local authorities) have the authority to represent the views of their group or organisation at meetings (Max 500 Word count)

18. Does your organisation offer advice to your relevant airport/aerodrome ([question(15360190,121842430)]) on technical issues e.g. noise or sustainability?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please give details below, if applicable (Max 500 Word count):

19. Does your organisation have responsibility for any specialist or technical sub-groups?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

13. Membership

20. Please give details about these specialist sub-groups, including how these are managed. (Max 500 Word count)

14. Independence

21. Does your organisation have a chair or secretariat independent from your relevant airport/aerodrome?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Chair	☐	☐	☐
Secretariat	☐	☐	☐

22. How well, if at all, does having a chair and/or secretariat independent from your airport/aerodrome ([question(15360190,121842430)]) work in practice? (Max 500 Word count)

23. How important, if at all, is it to have a chair and/or secretariat independent from your airport/aerodrome ([question(15360190,121842430)])? (Max 500 Word count)

24. Does your organisation have a neutral funding source? Please note: This could be where a committee has majority/full control over their spending with a forward agreed budget, possibly with a longer-term funding agreement in place.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

25. How feasible, if at all, is it to have a neutral funding source for your organisation ? (Max 500 Word count)

26. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that a neutral funding source helps demonstrate independence from the airport/aerodrome?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer:(Max 500 Word count)

15. Naming conventions

27. How well, if at all, does the term 'Consultative Committee' describe the role of your organisation in support of its objectives? (Max 500 Word count)

16. Future Challenges

2022 will see further challenges for the industry to work with government as we look to develop new aviation policy to aid recovery, as well returning to key areas of work started before the pandemic, such as Jet (net) Zero agenda and Airspace Modernisation.

government considers ACCs and similar organisations to have a key role in challenging the aviation industries ambitions and influencing their responses to government to ensure the views of those most impacted are represented.

The following section considers the challenge this poses for ACCs and similar bodies.

28. What are the main priorities for your organisation, both now and looking forward to the next 5 years? (Max 500 Word count)

29. How engaged, if at all, is your organisation with key government policy developments, such as Jet (net) Zero agenda and Airspace Modernisation? (Max 500 Word count)

30. Does your organisation have a say in how your airport/aerodrome ([question(15360190,121842430)]) responds to government consultations?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

Please explain your answer: (Max 500 Word count)

17. Best Practice and further support

31. If you were to share ONE best practice or recommendation with a newly established ACC or similar organisation what would it be? (Max 500 Word count)

32. If you were able to make ONE significant change to your organisation or to any aspect of the work of Airport Consultative Committees or similar organisations what would it be? (Max 500 Word count)