

Aviation Council
09:15 – 10:30, Thursday 25th May 2023
The Department for Transport, Great Minster House, London

Attendees

Chairs

- Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Aviation, Maritime and Security), Aviation Council Chair, (*Hereafter* ‘Minister for Aviation’).
- Stewart Wingate, CEO Gatwick Airport, Aviation Council Co-Chair (*Hereafter*, Co-Chair)

Aviation Council Membership

- Alberto Martin, CEO, London Luton Airport.
- Amanda Francis, CEO, Association of International Courier & Express Services (AICES).
- Andy Cliffe, CEO, AGS Airports.
- Chris Gadsden (*deputising for Johan Lundgren*), Director of Government Affairs, EasyJet.
- Dale Keller, Chief Executive, Board of Airline Representatives UK (BAR UK).
- David Leighton, Aviation Services UK.
- Jonathan Bailey (*deputising for Michael O’Leary*), Head of Public Affairs, Ryanair.
- Juliette Kennedy (*deputising for Martin Rolfe*), Operations Director, NATS.
- Karen Dee, Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association (AOA).
- Ken O’Toole, Deputy Chief Executive, Manchester Airports Group (MAG).
- Kevin Craven, Chief Executive, ADS Group.
- Mark Tanzer, Chief Executive, ABTA.
- Mike Pearson, General Aviation Advocate, Department for Transport.
- Nigel Milton (*deputising for John Holland-Kaye*), Chief of Staff and Carbon, Heathrow Airport.
- Paul Smith, Interim Co-CEO, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).
- Sean Doyle, Chairman and CEO, British Airways.
- Shai Weiss, CEO, Virgin Atlantic.
- Simon McNamara, Area Manager for UK and Ireland, International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- Steve Heapy, CEO, Jet2.com.
- Tim Alderslade, CEO, Airlines UK (AUK).

Council Participants

- Sir Timo Anderson, Chair, Airspace Change Organising Committee Steering Committee (ACOG SC).
- Tim Johnson, Policy Director, CAA.

Associate Members

- Duncan Walker, Co-Chair, Future of Flight Industry Group (FFIG).
- Emma Gilthorpe, Chair of the Jet Zero Council, Jet Zero Council.

Department for Transport (DfT) Officials

- Director General, Aviation, Maritime and Security Group.

- Director of Aviation.
- Deputy Director Airspace, Noise, and Resilience.
- Aviation Council Secretariat.

Other Government Department Representatives

- Director General, Border Force.
- Director, Art, Heritage and Tourism, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.
- Director, Business and People Planning, Border Force.
- Head of Aerospace and Defence Team, Business Sectors Group, Department for Business and Trade.
- Head of Aerospace, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Representatives of Devolved Administrations

- Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland Executive.
- Deputy Director, National & International Connectivity, Welsh Government.
- Director of Aviation, Maritime, Freight and Canals, Transport Scotland.

Apologies

- Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Airport.
- Johan Lundgren, CEO, EasyJet.
- John Holland-Kaye, CEO, Heathrow Airport.
- Martin Rolfe, Chair, NATS.
- Michael O'Leary, Ryanair.
- Neil Pakey, Chairman, Regional Airports Business Association (RABA).

Actions

- **Action (AC002-001):** DfT and CAA would produce a paper for the next meeting, working with, NATS, ACOG and industry. The paper would include a plan on how to progress the four recommendations at 3.4.
- **Action (AC002-002):** The Aviation Council Secretariat would contact members with details of the next Aviation Council, to be held on 11th July 2023.

Summary of Meeting

- The Minister for Aviation welcomed members to the second meeting and invited the membership to share any reflections on service delivery covering the spring period and/or updates on Summer 2023 preparedness.
- Paul Smith (Director, CAA), Timo Anderson (Chair, ACOG SC) and Karen Dee (Chief Executive, AOA) provided updates on Airspace Modernisation. Membership was invited to share views on airspace modernisation.
- David Leighton (Chief Executive, Aviation Services UK) outlined outcomes and next steps following the successful completion of the Ground Handling Review.

Minutes

1. Introductions

- 1.1. The Minister for Aviation welcomed David Leighton (Chief Executive, Aviation Services UK) and Duncan Walker (Co-Chair, FFIG) as a new member and associate member, respectively, to the Aviation Council.

2. Easter Reflections & Summer Preparedness

- 2.1. The Co-Chair led the discussion and invited updates from members.
- 2.2. The Minister for Aviation recognised the smooth service delivery across Spring and the busier Easter period. As Summer 2023 approaches, she said that she would be keen to hear from industry on preparedness, recognising the expected increase in passenger numbers.

2.3. Member Updates

- 2.3.1. Mike Pearson (General Aviation Advocate) reflected on improved collaboration across the sector with airlines, airports and ground handlers working closely together to provide a strong level of service. This collaboration has resulted in improved operational performance.
- 2.3.2. Dale Keller (Chief Executive, BAR UK) outlined the improved performance however, he recognised that resilience challenges may arise again in the future and that they would not necessarily be as a result of the pandemic.
- 2.3.3. Ken O'Toole (Deputy Chief Executive, MAG) said that he has seen an improved performance but wanted assurance that Border Force resource was prepared for the higher passenger levels across the summer.
 - 2.3.3.1. In response, Border Force confirmed their preparedness, with the forecast model that had supported operations over the past 12 months playing a key role in these preparations. It was recognised that challenges may continue, for example connected to industrial action and resource directed towards other priorities.
- 2.3.4. Emma Gilthorpe (Chair, Jet Zero Council) said that the Heathrow local team were doing a positive job, however, non-EEA customers may be a group that were at particular risk of a less good service, because of lengthy queues, impacting 'brand Britain'. This issue may be exacerbated as passenger numbers rise.
- 2.3.5. Border Force were aware of this challenge and confirmed that Electronic Travel Authorisation would start to be issued in October, supporting improvements.
- 2.3.6. Alberto Martin (CEO, London Luton Airport) said that some closures at night may be expected due to a lack of resources, citing long-term absences as a factor, however they would continue to work closely with NATS to ensure minimal impacts on operations.

3. Airspace Modernisation Update

- 3.1. The Minister for Aviation said that airspace modernisation is a priority area that the Aviation Council could drive forward. She said that the benefits are clear, however, it was critical that they continue to be communicated. She also stated that this forum would be an opportunity to discuss the area in more detail.
- 3.2. Paul Smith (interim Co-CEO, CAA) outlined some of the benefits that would be delivered from the Airspace Modernisation Strategy, such as reducing emissions and fuel costs, whilst also highlighting some of the challenges that would be considered. CAA would want to work closely with the sector to ensure that stakeholders successfully move through the gateways. He reflected that there is a need to think about going further, building on the working-group paper, and developing different options in collaboration with the Government.
- 3.3. Sir Timo Anderson (Chair, ACOG SC) said that his views aligned with the CAA and identified four challenges to successful airspace modernisation. These were:

resource (funding and skillset); process implementation; planning for success, and; fragmentation of planning.

- 3.4. Karen Dee (Chief Executive, AOA) presented recommendations made by the Aviation Council working group on Airspace Modernisation; they were:
 - 3.4.1. The Aviation Council should agree that options for funding should be looked at, with DfT reverting back to industry on options.
 - 3.4.2. The Aviation Council should agree that the process for the next stages of airspace change, in particular for the London Terminal Manoeuvring Area (LTMA), should be reviewed.
 - 3.4.3. Aviation Council should agree that governance of the programme be strengthened towards delivery.
 - 3.4.4. Aviation Council should ask CAA to set out how it will put in place the necessary policy and regulatory capacity and capability to facilitate delivery of the programme.
- 3.5. Ken O'Toole (Deputy Chief Executive, MAG) said that, having worked on this paper, he recognised the challenges in LTMA and that there were benefits to exploring options. He stated that it would be critical that ownership of any change and, in particular the consultation, were led on by sponsors.
- 3.6. Sean Doyle (Chairman and CEO, British Airways) said it was important to address the skills gap, and outline parameters and Key Performance Indicators (KPI).
- 3.7. Steve Heapy (CEO, Jet2.com) said that milestones for when KPIs needed to be agreed would be important and KPIs could be presented at the next meeting.
- 3.8. Sir Timo Anderson (Chair, ACOG SC) said that ACOG would look to develop an approach for the LTMA that would allow stakeholders to work collaboratively.
- 3.9. The Co-Chair said that it would be important not to lose the momentum already created in this area, noted a degree of support for proposals, and acknowledged a scarcity of skills in the area.
- 3.10. The Aviation Council agreed to further work on the four recommendations set out at 3.4 and that a paper would be brought to the next Council.
 - 3.10.1. **Action (AC002-001):** DfT and CAA would produce a paper for the next meeting, working with, NATS, ACOG, and industry. The paper would include a plan on how to progress the four recommendations at 3.4.

4. Ground Handling Review Outcomes

- 4.1. David Leighton (Chief Executive, Aviation Services UK) outlined the outcomes of the Ground Handling Review. He said that the recommendations were being progressed and that a new trade association representing Ground Handlers had been established. Work with AOA would continue on the areas of security and vetting processes to achieve both short- and long-term opportunities. He said that it was important to focus on medium- and longer-term resilience challenges.
- 4.2. The Council noted that the structures were already in place for resilience and should continue to be utilised.

5. Any Other Business and Next Meeting

- 5.1. The Minister for Aviation thanked the membership for their contributions and said that the next meeting would return to Airspace Modernisation and that Aviation Skills may be discussed, time permitting.
- 5.2. **Action (AC002-002):** The Aviation Council Secretariat would contact members with details of the next Aviation Council, to be held on 11th July 2023.