

GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY AIRPORT FORUM
Minutes of Meeting No. 87
Held on Wednesday 21st November 2018 in at 7.00pm
VENUE: Airport Conference Centre

Attendees:

Mr. Alan Walker	Forum Chair
Mrs. Carol Edwards	Forum Deputy Chair
Mrs. Julie Allen	Belfast City Council, Environmental Health
Mr. Brian Ambrose	George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA)
Mr. Alan Andrews	Hollywood Residents' Association
Mr. Kyle Crutchley	Department for Infrastructure (DfI)
Mr. Jonny Currie	East Belfast Community Development Agency
Mr. Mark Doherty	Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Mr. Terry Hoey	Palmerston Residents' Association
Ms. Amy Holmes	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Dr. Daniel V. McCaughan	Cultra Residents' Association
Mrs. Jenny Redman	Consumer Council Northern Ireland

In attendance:

Ms. Laura Duggan	Forum Secretary
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1. APOLOGIES, WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Apologies:

Ms. Karen Boutros	Helen's Bay & Crawfordsburn Residents' Association
Cllr. George Dorrian	Belfast City Council
Cllr. Tom Haire	Belfast City Council
Alderman W.D. Keery	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Mr. Scott Kennerley	Consumer Council Northern Ireland
Mr. Raymond McNair	GBBCA
Ms. Edel Mullan	Belfast City Council, Economic Development
Capt. Chris Robb	Flybe Base Captain, Belfast City
Alderman Marion Smith	Ards & North Down Borough Council

2. MINUTES OF THE FORUM MEETING HELD ON 20th JUNE 2018

Members agreed that the minutes represented an accurate record of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

None

4. AIRPORT DIRECTOR REPORT

4.1 Business Performance

The business has performed well this year with airlines experiencing record load factors. Passenger numbers in 2018 to year end are expected to be on par with 2017.

4.2 Route Development

Following a recent profit warning, Flybe has confirmed that it is in discussions with a number of operators about a potential sale of the company. It is also reviewing other strategic options, including reducing more flights. The airport has been in touch with Flybe's senior team and will remain in close contact with them as they review these options. GBBCA is uniquely located

with first class facilities and an excellent customer service record. There is currently very strong demand across the airport's route network including those routes offered by Flybe.

4.3 Corporate Responsibility

GBBCA continues to engage in a range of CR activity as detailed in the CR Summary for the period June to November 2018 included with the Forum papers, already circulated.

4.4 Capital Expenditure

GBBCA has officially opened its upgraded terminal facilities following a £15 million infrastructure investment. The significant upgrade of the departures lounge includes a 30% increase in retail space, a 25% increase in food and beverage facilities, 100% additional seating and a new security search area along with upgraded x-ray equipment.

In September, the Airport Fire Service received the delivery of the first of three new fire tenders, each representing an investment in the region of £1 million.

The airport's investors, 3i Infrastructure, have also committed to upgrading the car park facilities which will commence with the installation of a covered walkway out to the long stay car park later this year. In the longer term, there is a planned reconfiguration of the car park including the increase in the size of the pick-up and drop-off area, subject to budget approval.

Mr. Ambrose accepted questions from Members on the Director Report.

Mr. Walker thanked the airport for the tour of the new facilities for Forum Members earlier that evening. He noted that in response to a query by Mr. Hoey at the last meeting, they observed that the security tray loading area would be low enough for wheelchair users and that a member of staff was available to assist.

Mr. Crutchley queried when the Stobart Air connection to Carlisle Lake District Airport is likely to commence. Mr. Ambrose responded that the delay is owing to issues with the airport itself in terms of air traffic control and airspace integration, and these issues have yet to be resolved.

Mr. Hoey commended the airport for its plans to extend the covered walkway and for the airport's investment in its High Flyers Apprenticeship Scheme.

Mr. Doherty noted his positive experience with the airport's upgraded security facilities where he had been processed in under six minutes and the entire journey from Belfast Harbour office to the airport's departure lounge had taken approximately 15 minutes.

Noting the issue with aircraft turning early after departure, Dr. McCaughan queried the status of the airport's investigation into the introduction of Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs). Mr. Walker noted that this question could bring the discussion on to the subject of the Environmental Noise Directive and the airport's draft Noise Action Plan, and for this reason, Ms. Holmes from DAERA would like to excuse herself from the meeting.

Ms. Holmes left the meeting at this point.

Ms. Duggan advised that as per the update at the last Environmental Sub Group (ESG) meeting, NATS had submitted a report to the airport on the feasibility of introducing SIDs. This report sets out the legal requirements, the potential costs involved and some high-level advantages and disadvantages. The airport has several technical queries on this report for NATS and for this reason it cannot report back at this time. The airport will update again at the next ESG meeting.

Dr. McCaughan advised Members that Cultra Residents Association had written to the Forum Secretary to ask the airport the following: i) how many consultation submissions did the airport receive on its Draft Noise Action Plan; ii) does the airport intend to make any revisions to the draft plan in light of comments made by respondents; iii) whether the Forum could be provided with a summary of the key points emerging from the consultation responses and details of any revisions made; and iv) whether the Forum could be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions, in advance of the final submission.

Mr. Ambrose responded that in line with the approach taken in Round 2, the airport has conducted a public consultation exercise which provided all interested parties the opportunity to put forward their views on the draft plan. An extraordinary meeting of the Forum was also convened, and a presentation delivered to Members on the key points of the consultation and Q&A session. The airport will include details of the consultation process, including the number of responses received, a summary of the key points, and details of any revisions made in the final draft that is submitted to the Department.

Ms. Holmes re-joined the meeting at this point.

5. AIRPORT STATISTICS

The Airport Statistics reports for the period June-October 2018 circulated to Members in advance of the meeting were as follows: Report 1: Historical summary of movements post 21:30 hours; Report 2: Delayed flights after 21:30 hours by time-band; Report 3: Delayed flights after 21:30 hours by airline; Report 4: Delayed flights after 23:00 hours; Report 5: Flights over Belfast Lough; Report 6: Flights by aircraft type; Report 7: 2018 noise concerns by type and area; Report 8: 2017 vs. 2018 noise concerns by month; Appendix 1: GBBCA Corporate Responsibility Report.

Mr. Ambrose accepted questions from Members on these reports.

Regarding Report 2, Mr. Walker noted the greater than average number of delays after 21:30 hours on the Birmingham route in the reporting period. Mr. Ambrose acknowledged this point and said that while it is to be expected given that it is the airport's busiest route, the airport's Operations Director had raised the matter with Flybe and asked them to look at whether improvements can be made.

Regarding Report 7, Mr. Hoey queried why there was a greater number of complainants from Seahill/Cultra/Marino areas than from Sydenham/Inverary, despite the latter areas being closer to the airport and experiencing a higher level of noise. Mr. Walker pointed out that while there were 31 complaints received from the Seahill/Cultra/Marino areas, these complaints came from 3 individuals. Ms. Holmes also highlighted that what prompts an individual to make a complaint is not only dependent on the noise level, but on a range of factors including the individual's sensitivity to noise, what activity they are undertaking at the time of the noise and the knowledge of who they should complain to.

Regarding Appendix 1, Mr. Currie noted that the funding awarded to the Best Kept Awards was £15k and queried whether the airport would be seeking to support other projects to this amount. Mr. Ambrose responded that the funding was related to the scale of the project and its impact. He added that he has tasked the Director responsible for CR to identify at least one project of this scale to support in 2019.

Mr. Andrews noted that the communities of Bangor and Holywood benefited from the Best Kept Awards, winning the Best Large Town category and achieving runner-up in the Medium Town category respectively.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL SUB GROUP

The minutes from the Environmental Sub Group (ESG) meeting on 24th October circulated with the Forum papers, were noted by Members.

In response to a query from Mr. Crutchley, Mr. Ambrose advised that JetsGo would not be operating from GBBCA in the summer 2019 season.

7. AIRPORT ACCESSIBILITY REPORT

Mr. Walker drew Members attention to the recent report issued by the Civil Aviation Authority on airport accessibility (CAP 1679 2017/2018). In this report, Belfast City Airport was ranked as Very Good in terms of service to disabled passengers and those with mobility restrictions.

Mrs. Redman noted that the Consumer Council works closely with the airport on accessibility, and the establishment of a new Airport Accessibility Forum. The Forum will be comprising representatives from a range of organisations, including the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC), Autism NI, Guide Dogs NI, and will be meeting for the first time next week.

8. COMMUNITY GROUPS

8.1 Membership review proposals

Mr. Walker advised that following the presentation to Members summarising the Chair and Deputy Chair considerations on Community Group membership, Members were asked to consider the proposals set out and respond to the Chair and Deputy Chair with their views through the Forum Secretary by end September 2018. To date, no feedback has been received. Therefore, Mr. Walker suggested that the deadline be extended to the end of 2018.

Action: All Forum Members

8.2 Paperwork required

The Chair reminded those Members representing Community Groups to provide the information requested in the Forum Constitution s7.3.1 to the Forum Secretary for 2018:

- Minutes of the last AGM and the number in attendance at the AGM;
- Number of registered members in the group;
- Names and contact details of the office bearers of the group elected at the AGM; and
- Number of occasions the group has met during the previous year.

Action: Community Group Members

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Crutchley provided Members with an update on the development of a new Aviation Strategy. Following a number of stakeholder sessions on various aspects of policy over the summer months, it is expected that the government will issue a green paper for consultation in Dec this year.

Mr. Crutchley also advised that earlier this year, the Department for Infrastructure had received an Investigation Report from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman into a complaint regarding delayed flights after 21:30 hours at GBBCA. The Department had been working to implement the recommendations of the report and has now compiled and issued guidance on the meaning of exceptional circumstances for use by its staff. The guidance will be used as part of the Department's administrative framework to monitor the 2008 Planning

Agreement. This framework includes operating procedures for analysing data, record keeping and recording reasons for decisions and can be viewed on the Planning NI website.

10. DATES FOR 2019 MEETINGS

- 20th March 2019
- Tbc
- Tbc

Signed:
Mr. Walker (Forum Chair) AW/ld

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Alan Walker
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Date: 15-04-2019 | 17:05 BST