

GEORGE BEST BELFAST CITY AIRPORT FORUM

Minutes of Meeting No.65

Held on Wednesday, 23rd November in Conference Room 1 at 7.00pm

Attendees:	Mr Alan Crowe	Chairman
	Mr Gordon Wright	Hollywood Residents' Association
	Dr Daniel V. McCaughan	Cultra Residents' Association
	Dr Colm McNamee	Park Road and District Residents' Association
	Mr Terry Hoey	Palmerston Residents' Association
	Mr Christopher McFerran	Helen's Bay & Crawfordsburn Residents' Association
	Mr Jack Storey	Marmont & District Residents' Association
	Cllr Adam Newton	Belfast City Council
	Cllr Tom Haire	Belfast City Council
	Cllr John Montgomery	North Down Borough Council
	Mrs Julie Allen	Belfast City Council
	Mrs Lisa Toland	Belfast City Council
	Capt. Ian Ewer	Base Captain Bmi
	Mr Mark Doherty	Belfast Harbour Commissioners
	Mr Scott Kennerley	Northern Ireland Consumer Council
	Mr John Moore	Belfast Chamber of Commerce
	Mr Andrew Irvine	Belfast City Centre Management
	Mr Brian Ambrose	George Best Belfast City Airport

Observers:	Mr David McCullough	Department for Regional Development
------------	---------------------	-------------------------------------

In attendance:	Ms Laura Duggan	Forum Secretary
----------------	-----------------	-----------------

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Mrs Laura McCorry	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Mr Paul Ferguson	Flybe Ground Operations
Mr Scott Symington	Planning Service
Mr Alan Walker	Deputy Chairman
Cllr James McKerrow	North Down Borough Council

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, in particular, Mr Jack Storey, chairman of Marmont and District Residents' Association who has agreed to represent his organisation on the Forum moving forward, and Mr Andrew Irvine from Belfast City Centre Management who was invited to join following agreement by Members at the last Forum meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE FORUM MEETING HELD ON 22nd June 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Ms Duggan advised that a copy of the information from the ICAO noise website provided by Dr McCaughan had been circulated to Members with previous meeting minutes.

3.2 Ms Duggan advised that in response to the concern raised by Mr Wright that the Community Fund didn't appear accessible to projects focused on the elderly and community relations, the Community Fund criteria was reviewed by the Community Fund Committee. On review of the criteria, however, the Committee felt that while it does state that the Airport gives priority to educational / youth projects, it states that it will also give priority to projects based in close proximity to the airport – in particular those that benefit all members of the community – provided that they fit into the categories of community, social and/or environmental. The Community Fund has supported a range of projects for all age groups, although some perhaps may not be as well publicised as others.

A discussion took place on whether the Community Fund is being publicised sufficiently. Mr Ambrose responded to say that an indication that the Fund is well publicised is the fact that it is receiving more applications than there is funding for and the Airport has had to turn projects down as a result.

Mr Wright noted that the Community Fund is well communicated in the Community News.

It was agreed that a year-end report on the Community Fund would be circulated with the meeting minutes.

Action: Forum Secretary

Mr Hoey queried if the criteria from other Airports could be reviewed and possibly adopted – for example some Airport funds provide funding for the development of green spaces. Mr Ambrose replied that the Fund criteria had been devised with its own community in mind and with the aim of having a lasting impact. For that reason the Airport chose to make young people, in particular the economically disadvantaged, for example, those out of work, its focus.

In addition, the Airport is seeking to develop an apprenticeship programme in 2012 that would allow young people to gain some type of skills certification.

Dr McCaughan expressed his approval at this approach and queried if the airport was doing anything to promote aeronautical engineering to young people as a worthwhile career option.

Post meeting note: GBBCA has hosted Engineers Week for the past two years. During the week the Airport takes visits from second level students and engineering managers on site deliver presentations and raise awareness of the opportunities for career development in the engineering and aviation sectors. The Airport also provides work placements linked with the STEM (Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programme with the aim of promoting careers in these disciplines.

3.3 Regarding the concern about the length of the queuing lane on the A2 to turn into the Airport, Mr Ambrose advised that the Airport made contact with the Roads Service. According to Roads Service there is an induction loop (termed the 'hurry up loop') at the end of the filter lane that detects if there is a tail back of cars queuing to make a right hand turn into the airport. If there are sufficient cars then the lights will change.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr. Ambrose delivered an update to Members on the following:

4.1 Passenger volumes:

2.7 million passengers were recorded in 2010. 2.4 million passengers are expected in 2011 with a growth forecast for 2012 of 2.7 million passengers.

4.2 Aircraft Movements

While passenger numbers have decreased slightly in 2011, there has been an increase in the number of aircraft movements from 40,000 to 42,000.

4.3 Capital Investment:

- Works are currently underway to reconfigure the terminal forecourt in line with DfT requirements. The executive car park is being removed and replaced with a protected area directly in front of the terminal. The taxi rank and bus set down are being moved to behind this area and the executive car park is being moved to the corner of the long stay car park.
- Facilities for UK Border Agency (customs and immigration) to meet their additional requirements. This will necessitate the extension of the terminal building towards Hollywood in the current baggage reclaim area.
- Other investments have been made in new navigational aids and snow clearing equipment in preparation for the winter period.

4.4 Route Development:

A number of routes have been lost in 2011 the including Luton, Cardiff, Cork and Liverpool. However the Geneva and Amsterdam routes have commenced by Bmi Baby with a further 6 additional 'sun' routes to commence operating in 2012 including Faro, Malaga, Alicante, Palma and Ibiza.

BMI are in the process of changing ownership to IAG. The deal is expected to close by Q1 2012. Concern has been expressed by the Secretary of State and others about the impact on the Belfast City Airport / London Heathrow slot being lost given its importance to the NI economy. Whilst the implications of this change in ownership is not yet clear, the company is keeping the Airport well informed with any developments and until such time as decisions are made, the Airport will assume business as usual.

Mr Hoey queried what the Airport is doing to help improve visitor numbers to North Down. Mr Ambrose responded to say that the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment have earmarked an additional 5 million in funding to promote Northern Ireland tourism focusing on a number of key events including the Titanic centennial event, the Causeway Coast Visitor Centre, the World Police and Fire Games and the City of Culture in 2013. These events are being championed by a number of tourism partnerships and although GBBCA are not directly involved, do fully support their efforts.

Mr Hoey queried if someone from the North Down Tourist Board could be asked to sit on the Forum. Mr Irvine commented that Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau also has responsibility to promote tourism in the greater Belfast Area which reaches into North Down.

Mr Montgomery queried if Mr Ambrose had made contact with Translink with regards to a direct bus service between the Airport and Bangor as requested in correspondence with the Forum Secretary earlier in the month. Ms Duggan advised that the Landside Operations Manager (Mrs Judith Davis) had been tasked with making contact with Translink and this had happened. Mr Ambrose advised that the Airport will update on this matter at the next meeting.

Action: Mr Ambrose

Dr McCaughan queried if the Airport could use social media to promote tourism. Mr Ambrose responded to say that GBBCA are being proactive in this respect and as well as its website, it has a presence on Facebook and Twitter and has developed an App for the iPhone.

Post meeting note: links to GBBCA social media pages are as follows:

Website: www.belfastcityairport.com

Twitter: http://twitter.com/#!/BELFASTCITY_AIR

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Belfast/George-Best-Belfast-City-Airport/120008798034080?ref=search>

Dr McNamee queried what had happened on 9th August 2011 that resulted in the Sydenham Bypass being closed for a period. Mr Ambrose that it was most likely a precautionary measure that was taken if the pilot had declared an issue with an inbound or outbound aircraft but he was not aware of the specific details at this time (as the incident was most likely 'stood down') but that it could be given with the meeting minutes.

Action: Mr Ambrose

Post meeting note: on 9th August 2011, Flybe East Midlands flight BE366 had a landing gear warning and requested emergency response standby. The PSNI took the decision to close the A2 Sydenham Bypass to allow easier access by the emergency services.

5. AIRPORT STATISTICS

Mr. Ambrose gave an update on the Forum Reports:

- Historical summary of movements post 21:30 hrs
- Analysis of delays post 21:30 hrs
- Bias of flights over Belfast Lough
- Analysis of movements post 23:00 hrs local
- Movements by aircraft type
- Analysis of noise related complaints 2010-2011

To follow up on a comment made at the last Forum meeting with regards to the number of BMI Heathrow flights delayed beyond 21:30 hours, Mr Ambrose advised Forum members that BMI are shortly to bring back the time of their last arrival into GBBCA from 21:05 hours to 20:55 hours. This should have a positive impact on the number of flights delayed after 21:30 hours.

While noting the drop in noise complaints recently, Mr Hoey queried if it would be beneficial for the Airport to publish the noise complaint statistics on its website. Mr Ambrose responded to say that the Airport would need to consider the pros and cons of doing this but it would do so and report back at the next meeting.

Action: Mr Ambrose

6. REPORT FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUB GROUP

The Chairperson of the Environmental Sub Group, Mrs Allen, gave a summary report to Members on the points of interest and actions from the last ESG meeting on 10th October 2011.

- GBBCA has been successful in achieving re-accreditation to Level 3 Environmental Management System (Green Dragon) in July 2011.
- GBBCA has almost completed a utilities metering and monitoring system (Energy Bureau).

- GBBCA continue to be involved in the AOA Aircraft on the Ground CO₂ Reduction data collection project.
- GBBCA have submitted its response to the 2011 Arena Network Environmental Benchmarking Survey and results will be announced on 29th November 2011.
- Noise & Track Monitoring System: the system has now been configured to automatically detect violations in noise abatement procedures and is currently in the testing phase. The system now generates an email 30 minutes after a violation takes place with the flight details and a kml file which opens in Google Earth to show the flight path and point of violation.
- Environmental Noise Directive: AMEC have been awarded the 2nd Round Noise Mapping project and GBBCA are working with them to supply the data required to produce their updated noise maps as required under the Directive.

Agreed Actions:

1. Community Representation to be added to the agenda for this Forum meeting
2. GBBCA's response to the UK Aviation Framework consultation to be circulated at this Forum meeting

Mr Irvine queried if there was much benefit for aircraft to employ Single Engine Taxiing at GBBCA given the relatively short taxi length. Capt. Ewer confirmed that BMI do employ SET for taxi-in but that it is not that easy to do on taxi out as the aircraft engines must be running at idle power for 5 minutes before departure.

Ms. Duggan added that the project with the AOA is geared towards agreeing a methodology for quantifying emissions savings from initiatives such as SET but it may be the case that it is not beneficial to use at GBBCA. Having engaged in the process, we will be able to pass on our experiences to other similar sized airports in the UK.

Mr Hoey queried what is being done to control drugs entering the Airport. Mr Ambrose advised that this is the responsibility of the Borders Agency and PSNI and that they have a permanent presence on site although this may not always be apparent to passengers.

Forum members queried when is there likely to be agreement on the noise control contour. Mr Ambrose gave a background to the noise contour for the benefit of new Forum members. In 1997 an Indicative Contour was created by Planning Service which was deemed to be an acceptable noise footprint for the airport. Yet it did not have any 'control' measures attached to it unlike a noise control contour (in place at a number of UK airports) which sets an area limit beyond which the airport cannot grow. The 2006 Examination in Public recommended that a noise contour be agreed between the Airport and Planning Service. Mr Ambrose advised that GBBCA are engaged in a process with Planning Service to replace the seats for sale restriction (which is not an effective means to control noise) with a noise control contour and hopes this process to be concluded by early summer 2012.

7. UK AVIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

Mr McCullough gave Members a background to process underway to develop a revised framework for aviation policy in the UK. The Department for Transport (DfT) is committed to developing a sustainable framework for aviation in the UK to replace the “Future of Air Transport” White Paper published in 2003. The first step in this initiative was a public consultation on a scoping document published in March 2011 on the issues to be addressed by the Aviation Policy Framework. This consultation ended on 20 October 2011. DRD hosted a workshop in Belfast on 29 June 2011 to stimulate and facilitate discussion between NI aviation stakeholders, DRD and lead officials from DfT. The DRD agreed at the workshop to coordinate a single Northern Ireland stakeholder response to DfT. There were 11 responses from Northern Ireland stakeholders received by DRD. Comments were received from diverse groups and included, all the NI airports, DETI, DOE, several local councils and the Institute of Directors. All responses have now been shared in full with DfT officials. A letter from the DRD Minister to Secretary of State for Transport, Justine Greening, will be issued shortly

The proposed timetable for developing the framework is:

- March 2012: Publish draft policy framework
- March – June 2012: Consult on draft framework
- March 2013: Adopt framework

Mr Ambrose advised that the Airport had submitted a response to both DRD and DfT. If any Forum Member wishes to review this response then they can request a copy from the Forum Secretary.

Post meeting note: GBBCA’s response to the DfT Aviation Framework scoping document in summary:

If the Northern Ireland economy is to grow and we are to achieve targets for foreign direct investment and tourist visitor numbers, air transport needs to grow. Northern Ireland has already seen a substantial drop off in passenger numbers, down 1 million over the past 3 years, which will have had a significant impact on the local and regional economy. As an airport, GBBCA will seek to grow passenger numbers to 4 million by 2030. GBBCA believe that this can be achieved in a way that seeks to limit the environmental and noise impacts on local communities and the wider environment. A new policy framework for aviation is required, which fundamentally supports aviation growth but addresses the environmental and noise challenges that aviation brings in a structured, challenging and achievable manner. The new policy framework must recognise the unique challenges and opportunities that air travel presents for Northern Ireland and ensure that vital air connectivity is maintained and developed in a competitive manner that benefits the Northern Ireland consumer.

Mr Kennerley advised that the Consumer Council also responded to the Aviation Framework to highlight the unique status for Northern Ireland. NI consumers travel 14% more than the UK

average and 75% of those journeys are to other UK airports compared with 15% in mainland UK. APD and slots at Heathrow are key concerns for NI consumers.

8. CAA CONSULTATION ON PASSENGER REPRESENTATION AND COMPLAINT HANDLING

Mr Kennerley outlined some recent changes in relation to passenger representation and complaint handling for Forum Members. The Air Transport Users Council (AUC) has been abolished and the AUC's complaints handling function is now part of the Civil Aviation Authority's remit. Consumer representation will be undertaken by a new body, the Aviation Consumer Advocacy Panel. CAA are consulting on various options for the Consumer Panel but envisage that it would be inward-facing, acting as a "critical friend" to the CAA, providing independent advice on the consumer issues and help set the CAA agenda and priorities.

9. DFT REVIEW OF GUIDANCE FOR AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

The Chairman advised Members that the DfT have indicated in the Aviation Framework scoping document their intention to review the Guidance for Airport Consultative Committees. Initially the main purpose of committees was on local environmental issues. Whilst this remains a key issue, Committees now are involved in a wide range of issues affecting airports including passenger interests and it is expected the committees may need to open up to passenger representation.

10. SUB GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Ms Duggan advised that there is a vacancy on the Environmental Sub Group for a community group representative. Community Group representatives are asked to advise the Forum Secretary if they wish to take up this place.

Action: Forum Members

11. 2011 NOISE CONTOUR REPORT

The 2011 Noise Contour Report was circulated to Forum Members for review. The report will be scrutinised by the Environmental Sub Group at their next meeting in January 2012.

12. AOB

Mr Wright proposed that a review of the Forum and its administration be undertaken to check how it is performing and what can be done better. Some questions to ask would be:

- whether or not the Forum is keeping pace with change; should it be looking at new or alternative areas of interest
- are there things the Forum should stop doing (or do better)
- can the Forum be more economical with its time and reporting procedures

It was agreed that the Forum Secretary would circulate a questionnaire to Forum members to seek their views which will then be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Forum Secretary

13. DATE FOR 2012 MEETINGS

Proposed dates:

- Wednesday 14th March
- Wednesday 20th June
- Wednesday 14th November

Signed:

ALAN WALKER (Deputy Chairman)
AW/ld

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Walker". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light yellow rectangular background.

Date: 14th March 2012