**GLASGOW AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the 188th Quarterly Meeting held in the Sanderling, Glasgow Airport

on Monday 25 April 2022 at 10.00 am

The Chairman welcomed all to the 188th GACC meeting which was the first ‘in person’ meeting for over two years. He also advised that this was Councillor [ ] last meeting as he has decided to retire.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were circulated*.* It was agreed that the Minutes be amended to record comments from the Vice-Chairman that in his opinion “*any voluntary increase in PUDO charges by the airport is surely counterproductive when pushing the government to reduce their charges.*”

The Chairman referred to a report in this morning’s FT and Guardian by the Commons transport select committee, a copy of which is circulated with these Minutes. Mr R Leitch advised that the airport has received several letters from Government Ministers over the last three weeks. We have not seen sector specific support and it has been extremely difficult with several ‘false starts’ with restrictions being lifted and then reinstated. As an industry we are still trying to recover.

**Traffic Report and General Update**

Mr R Leitch advised we had a good start to the year with passenger numbers up since 2021 and load factors are increasing month on month. During the Easter break we had 10k passengers departing and arriving each day. There are route developments and new routes.

Mr R Leitch outlined the various routes which had resumed service and new ones which have been launched or will shortly, including a series of leisure routes by Jet2 which have not operated since 2020. It is great to see new routes with returning airlines and new ones. We are still some way away from 2019 passenger numbers but it is looking like numbers could progress to 6 – 6.2m this year, looking to rise to 8m in 2023. It could take until 2024/25 for numbers to return to what they were pre pandemic.

Mr R Leitch said that as Europe opened earlier than the UK, there is not a plethora of aircraft around at the moment.

The Chairman asked if Canada had lifted their restrictions and Mr R Leitch confirmed that as of 1 April vaccination only was required but no test. The Glasgow Airport guidance is to check with the carrier you are going with.

Responding to Councillor [ ]’s question as to where we are in terms of other airports, Mr R Leitch said Edinburgh is ahead of us in terms of passenger numbers but they are facing some of the same issues as we are. Edinburgh will always be seen as the hub as it is the capital. Glasgow has a bigger leisure market.

Mr [ ] had asked why Glasgow Airport didn’t include Paris Orly, only Charles de Gaulle? He also thought the number of disruptive passengers seemed high in comparison to 2020 and wondered why this was. Mr R Leitch advised that the majority of disruptive passengers stemmed from mask wearing. Everyone will be monitored.

The Test Centre is now in domestic arrivals as there is a much smaller footfall.

**Airside**

Mr R Leitch advised that birds and wildlife are continuing to be a challenge along with their change of habitat – it is the same across Europe. There was one high/medium bird strike in January.

A CAA certification audit was carried out which we passed with flying colours and with no major concerns around our wildlife management.

In 2020 we saw a significant increase in wildlife vermin but through the pandemic we continued to monitor and work on this. We work closely with Nature Scotland.

**Noise**

We have not had as many complaints on noise as we expected and there are no major concerns around noise.

We continue to support the UK Ministry of Defence, particularly within the hours of 7:00am – 10:00pm. We are seeing a few more helicopters coming in and some complaints have been received but this was due to emergency ambulance service flying for the purpose of medical assistance.

**Runway Incursions and Safety Events**

There have been no runway incursions or runway safety events for the first quarter of 2022.

**Airside Developments/Works Streams**

There have been no significant airside works or projects in the first quarter of 2022.

**Winter Operations 2021/22**

There have been three winter call outs for the winter operation team to date.

**Airspace Change Programme**

Mr R Leitch advised that we are continuing to work through this with very successful consultation groups. We are looking at various options – around 400 just now – but looking to get this down to 50. Feedback has been taken from previous consultations and the information passed on to TRACS.

**Security**

Mr R Leitch advised that we are seeing a challenge around retention and recruitment in security. We would normally start recruitment in December but it was delayed until January this year as we were still in the pandemic in December. It is a major challenge to recruit staff for security and it can be a lengthy process.

The main issue with disruptive passengers has been alcohol and compliance with COVID masks. Campus Watch remains in place.

**Terminal Update**

Mr R Leitch introduced the new Terminal Operations Manager.

Cleaning stations and hand sanitisers are still in place with some of the COVID signage having been removed.

**Retail**

There has been progress in the first quarter and units landside and airside are slowly getting back up and running.

Travelex are in the final stages of talks to allow them to operate in the stores of Domestic Arrivals, Departure Lounge and International Arrivals as well as the ATM machines.

Mr R Leitch advised that the airport is working with First Bus to see if we can reduce the number of buses during the day in order that we can operate a night service. Taxis are also a challenge.

Mr R Leitch referred to Mr [ ]’s comments suggesting that the retail units should be open all the time. He has spoken to Mr [ ] and explained that we cannot expect all the shops to be opened with reduced passenger numbers passing through. There was also a problem with supplies to some of the shops as they did not have the choice of goods to offer people.

Mr [ ] had also suggested that improving waiting time at security would allow passengers more time to spend money in the shops. Mr R Leitch would like nothing more than for this to be the case but unfortunately it is not this simple.

The Chairman referred to a report in the press by Evans Halshaw on how much it costs for parking at major UK airports. From 23 airports reviewed, Glasgow was 22nd on the cost for long stay. On short stay parking costs, Glasgow was 18th out of 23. For drop off costs, Glasgow was somewhere in the middle. In short, Glasgow’s parking costs are no worse than any others and, to put things in perspective, this report states Glasgow is doing pretty well. The report is circulated with these Minutes.

The Chairman thanked Mr R Leitch for his informative update.

**ACC Information Gathering Exercise**

The Chairman advised that a submission was made to the Department of Transport. The response from members of the committee was disappointing with only two received. The Chairman feels the committee doesn’t engage as much as he would have hoped. Perhaps new blood will bring an improvement.

**The Metro, NPF4 and Free Ports**

Mr R Nimmo joined the meeting to report on the above.

Mr R Nimmo advised that there will be two designated Green Free Ports in Scotland with 6 or 7 potential bids. Bids need to be submitted by 20 June and while it will be competitive, we believe we are in with a good chance. We are working with local councils. We would be building on established locations and it is about helping to protect and create new employment, build on net zero ambitions, strengthen connectivity and enhance competitiveness.

Mr R Nimmo advised that the airport could decide whether it is to be a custom or tax site or both. This would ensure policing of the site would work.

**NPF4**

Mr R Nimmo updated the committee on NPF4 which sets out long term national spatial development strategy for Scotland’s future.  The consultation on Draft NPF4 closed on 31 March 2022.  It must be approved by Parliament and conveys nationally important infrastructure for air connectivity.  A full 25% of exports pass through Glasgow airport.  We have no other international connectivity other than by air.  Mr R Nimmo was hopeful the outcomes of from this project would be known by the end of the summer.

Mr R Nimmo updated the committee on the Clyde Metro.  He advised that we have taken comfort that this is a priority for the Scottish government.  We are taking it as positive they have given support to this and it is also a national development.  It is envisaged this will cost £16 bn and could take 30 years to complete.  It is imperative the first line is the airport corridor.  It is a very ambitious infrastructure proposal and some of it will be underground.

Mr R Leitch said we are one of the only major airports which doesn’t have this connectivity.  Michael Matheson MSP gave Clyde Metro significant prominence in his speech.

The Chairman said this is essential to the airport and is to be encouraged.

Mr R Nimmo said traffic is now back to pre-pandemic level.  There are some really compelling reasons why we need this.  SPT are on board.

The Chairman thanked Mr R Nimmo for his informative update on these projects.

As regards passenger representation, the committee needs a wider representation from passengers.  The Chairman agreed to speak to Mr B McClean about this.

**Any other business**

Mr [ ] referred to a report that Border Force staff are being encouraged to move south to Heathrow for jobs. Mr R Leitch advised that we have not lost any of our Border Force staff.

The Chairman thanked all those who attended the meeting.  It was the last meeting which Councillor [ ] will attend.  He has been on this committee for some considerable time and the Chairman thanked him very much for his helpful and insightful comments over the years.  On behalf of everyone on the committee he wished him a very long and happy retirement.

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**Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is on Monday 18 July 2022.