

**Aberdeen International
Airport**

**ABERDEEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



ABERDEEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman's message

This year has again been a challenging year for aviation in general, the ongoing pandemic and travel restrictions at the early part of the year were challenges for all airlines and airport. With the easing of travel restrictions, flight numbers and passengers have started to return.

The Government's Traffic Light System that was introduced aided the ability to travel, however situations arose resulting in countries changing status often at short notice. The testing requirements before and on return to the UK also changed within this period.

Like many other businesses, the AIACC hosted the quarterly meeting online. Although not ideal for all members, it did allow three of the four meetings to take place with the June meeting cancelled.

Alan Stewart
CHAIRMAN

December 2021

Section 1: Why do we have an airport consultative committee?

Aberdeen International Airport has had a consultative committee since 1953, when the then War Department asked the Clerk of the former Aberdeenshire County Council to set one up. Looking back through past minute books, there was no strict pattern of minutes in the early days; and from December 1959 to January 1972 there were no meetings “because of lack of business”. The same certainly not be said these days.

There is now a statutory requirement on all the UK’s main airports to provide “an appropriate mechanism for consultation with local stakeholder interests”. It is the statutory responsibility of the airport operator to set up and maintain the consultative arrangement. There is no specified format that consultation should take, although the UK Department for Transport issues guidelines setting out recommendations of best practice for the conduct of airport consultative committees (ACCs).

The guidelines suggest the types of issues Committees might wish to consider and the range of organisations that might constitute their membership. Ultimately, though, the constitution, membership, frequency of meetings and workload of each ACC is determined by the committee itself: there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach.

In the case of AIACC, we operate under our Constitution, which was last amended in 2018. Both the AIACC’s Constitution and the DfT guidelines are published on our website.

Features of the AIACC

The AIACC has three important features. First, we are, as our name implies, ‘consultative’. This means we have no executive powers within the management structure for the operation of the airport. But we expect to be consulted by management on any issues that might impact on the quality of life of local communities or the economic development of the north east of Scotland.

Second, we are independent of the airport management, although the Managing Director (MD) has a major role to play in presenting reports and advising on issues under discussion. The Chair sets the agenda for each meeting, in consultation with the MD, and the stakeholder organisations appoint their own representatives. The only members who are directly appointed by the airport management are the Chair and the passenger representatives (including the representative of passengers with special needs).

Third, we have a vital role in reflecting to management the views of stakeholders in relation to everything from noise management to the interests of passengers with special needs.

We met on four occasions during 2021 and copies of our agendas and minutes and other relevant documents are available on our website.

Section 2: Who is on the Consultative Committee?

Our membership is set out in our Constitution. There are four main clusters of members: local authority and community representatives, local business, economic development and trade organisations, aviation and travel management interests, and passenger interests.

local authority and community representatives

It is essential that the communities most affected by the operation of the airport are represented on the AIACC and take an active part in our discussions. This representative role is discharged by elected representatives from the City and Shire Councils and a nominee of each of the two community councils whose areas are most affected by the operation of the airport.

The local authorities and the community councils appoint their representatives to the Committee.

local business, economic development and trade organisations

It is vital for the Committee to include representatives of organisations involved in economic development, the promotion of trade and commerce and the development of public transport strategy within the region.

These include the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, OGUK, the North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS), Visit Aberdeenshire and the Scottish Council Development and Industry (SCDI), each of which has one seat on the Committee.

aviation and travel management interests

The Airport Operators' Committee, which represents the ground handling agents, the Association of British Travel Agents/Scottish Passenger Agents' Association (ABTA/SPAA), the OGUK and NATS bring the professional knowledge of diverse aviation interests and customer preferences in terms of air services from Aberdeen.

passenger interests

Ultimately, the customer for aviation services from the airport is the passenger. We have provision for two passenger representatives along with one representative of passengers with special needs, both apparent and hidden.

Current membership

A full list of members during 2021 is set out on page 5.

Membership of the Consultative Committee during 2021

Chairman

independent of all other stakeholder interests

Alan Stewart

Aberdeen City Council

Cllr Barney Crockett

Cllr Avril Mackenzie

Cllr Neil MacGregor

Cllr Gill Al-Samarai

Aberdeenshire Council

Cllr Geva Blackett

Cllr John Cox

Cllr Michael Roy

Dyce and Stoneywood Community Council

Dr William Harrison

Newhills and Bucksburn Community Council

Mr Iain Elrick

**Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of
Commerce**

Mr Shane Taylor

**Association of British Travel Agents/ Scottish
Passenger Agents' Association**

Ms Helen Gordon / William McPherson

Visit Aberdeenshire

Mr Chris Foy

Airport Operator Committee

Vacant

OGUK (representing helicopter operators)

Mr Trevor Stapleton

National Air Traffic Services (NATS)

Mr Ross McDonald

NESTRANS

Dr Maggie Boechel / R Dickson

Scottish Council Development and Industry

Gail Cleaver

Passenger Representatives

Mr Jeremy Wood

Mr Gary Hance (Joint Vice Chairman of the
Committee)

Mr Dan McFarlane (Joint Vice Chairman of the
Committee)

**Representative of passengers requiring special
assistance**

Ms Andrea Barclay

In attendance

Mr Mark Beveridge, Managing Director, Aberdeen International Airport and Lee McCann, Acting Secretary to the Committee

Section 3: What do we do?

In this Section, we provide an overview of the work of the Committee. In doing so, it is important to stress that we are 'consultative'. We have no executive powers as a Committee, but we know that the airport management has historically gone out of their way to consult with us on major issues and have taken our views into account in their decision-making. We have an excellent record of achieving consensus through amicable discussion on items that require a response.

All members of the Committee, including substitute members, are required to sign a 'non-disclosure agreement', under which they guarantee not to disclose any matters that have been discussed that are commercially confidential or sensitive, or that would otherwise be embargoed from the press and the public. All members are also asked to affirm in writing their contact details, to ensure that we operate under the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

There is no statutory obligation on ACCs to prepare an annual report, but we felt in 2014 that this would be an important extension of the ways in which we communicate, and raise our profile, with stakeholders and the general public.

Recurring items

There are a number of standard items on our agendas, as follows:

Managing Director's quarterly report

Each quarter, the Managing Director of Aberdeen International Airport Limited provided us with a detailed presentation on the operation of the airport, and any particular challenges facing it. This presentation normally includes such issues as passenger figures; route developments; complaints, compliments and questions raised by passengers; and the extent to which the airport is meeting the strict targets that it has set for itself.

Quarterly noise report

Noise continues to be an issue for the airport. Reports of noise are investigated to establish the complaint and where possible see if any avoidance action can be implemented. Throughout the pandemic, with people working from home and reduced flights. Comparing the data from previous years does not always give a true representation of the scale of the problem.

The airport website has the ability to report noise issues electronically which allows submissions to be made at any time removing the need for contacting the airport in working hours. <https://www.aberdeenairport.com/about-us/community-matters/noise/>

Recurring items

We continued to monitor and respond as we felt appropriate to UK and Scottish government, CAA and other consultations.

Sustainability Strategy

AGS stated the environmental commitments in a presentation to the committee. AGS also attended COP26, held in Glasgow.

NATS Airspace Change

To Committee received presentations and discussions on the Airspace Change proposal for the P18 airway. A summary of the proposal is Aircraft arriving/departing Aberdeen to the south currently can use Air Traffic Services routes P600 (From/ to the West) or P18 (From/ to the South). P18 offers a more direct route between Newcastle and Aberdeen but is not available all the time. It is a **Conditional Route**. As part of the Operational Service Enhancement Project, the project is looking to extend the availability of this route so that it can be better utilised.

CAA consultation: Passengers with special assistance needs

We considered a consultation from the CAA on passengers with special assistance needs and were advised by the airport management that there was nothing contained in the proposals that the airport could not meet.

CAA consultation: Airspace modernisation strategy

We discussed a number of issues relating to the modernisation of UK airspace, to facilitate more direct flights, operation using GPS rather than the decades' old system of beacons, and the impact that proposed changes might have on the operation of Aberdeen airport. We noted that any changes are likely to be minimal, but that public consultation would take place once the extent of any changes are defined.

OGUK Fare changes

One area which gave concern to passengers working in the oil and gas industry were the costs applied when changing tickets due to delays getting onshore due to weather etc.

Over the years it deemed to be the norm that when a Vantage Card (POB card used to track a person's training and movements offshore) was presented, flight change costs may be waived or a change fee applied. This appears to be the case with several of the operators with the exception of one major airline. The cost to change a flight appears to be down to a Passenger Services Agent's knowledge of the system.

It was reported by several passengers that often when arriving hours or even days late for their flight, the PSA had no knowledge of the change and would apply a full fare. This then gave the passenger a dilemma where they had already bought a ticket, and in turn would need to buy another often costing several hundred pounds.

AIA and the Airline's agent looked into the issue, and reported back the following *"effective 1st January 2022, BA will no longer offer the Vantage change as we currently know it (£40 flat fee to change flights within 48hr period). Instead by showing a vantage card at*

the check-in desk changes can be made to flights where the change fee will be waived, but any difference in fare will be charged.” The airline agent has briefed all Front Of House staff and have put signs on the BA desks.”

Section 4: Further information about the Committee and requests to attend meetings

Our website provides a wide range of background information to the Committee, dates of upcoming meetings and the agendas and minutes for meetings. The website includes a copy of the DfT Guidelines for ACCs, under which we operate; a copy of our Constitution; and a list of members.

We do not operate an ‘open door’ to meetings, but we are always willing to welcome members of the public and the media on prior request. In the past, members of the public with a specific interest in an agenda item have been permitted to attend and have been invited to speak on the issue of special interest to them. They have also been welcome to attend the whole of the meeting, although we would reserve the right to ask them to leave if a matter under consideration is of a commercially confidential or sensitive nature.

If you wish to attend a meeting, please contact the Acting Secretary lee.mccann@aairport.com ideally at least a week before the meeting you wish to attend, indicating whether you wish to speak on a particular issue, or simply want to see what goes on at meetings of the Committee.