

**Aberdeen International
Airport**

**Climate Change Adaptation
Report - ARP4**

December 2024



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1. AMENDMENTS, DISTRIBUTION, REPLACEMENTS AND ENDORSEMENT

1.1. Amendments

Version No.	Issue Date	Comments Changes
V1.0	31.10.2022	First Copy
V2.0	31.12.2024	ARP4 Review. Final Document Issued with 2024 personnel and progress revisions

1.2. Distribution

Controlled Master Copy: Sustainability Manager
 General Distribution: Managing Responsibly System

1.3. Replacement

Replaces version 1.0 dated 31.10.2022.

1.4. Endorsement

Document Sponsor: Sustainability Director
 Document Owner: Sustainability Manager
 Revision Period: 1 year
 Retention Period: 5 years
 Date Approved: 31/12/2024.

2. BACKGROUND

Under the Climate Change Act 2008, section 63(5) the Secretary of State will direct certain Reporting Authorities to produce reports on the current and future predicted effects of climate change and on their proposals for adapting to climate change. The first round of reporting in 2011 focused upon major public infrastructure providers from the energy, transport, and water sectors. This was mandatory for businesses to complete.

Aberdeen Airport is owned by AGS Airports Limited which was established in 2014 to invest in Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Southampton airports. Glasgow Airport was one of the organisations involved in the mandatory reporting process in 2011. Glasgow was subsequently formally requested to complete this process in both the second and third rounds. Although not formally requested, AGS understands the potential risk of climate change to both its infrastructure and operational performance and as such, Aberdeen and Southampton airports are to complete a voluntary Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment (CCARA). This round of reporting is the first time Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Southampton will all be aligned as a group.

2.1. Structure of report

This report follows the standard AGS Risk Assessment process in which climate change risks were identified and assessed. This starts with an understanding of the current climate in and around Aberdeen Airport, followed by a study into the projected climate change impacts on the area. This was completed in 2022 during the first voluntary report, there were no change in the weather predictions between then and now. Risks were then identified, and key risks with actions have been highlighted. This report can be built upon and adapted with future climate prediction updates.

2.2. Aberdeen International Airport

Aberdeen Airport has around 12 commercial airlines serving multiple UK and international destinations, including Norway, Denmark, Turkey, and Spain, as well as to the Highlands and Islands. Aberdeen Airport is home to one of Europe's busiest commercial heliports, with four companies operating in and out of the airport supporting the offshore industry in Scotland.

Aberdeen Airport is acutely aware of the responsibility we have, to respond to the climate emergency. Aberdeen Airport looks to grow our connectivity and help drive economic prosperity, but we must do so in a sustainable way if we are to address the climate emergency.

2.3. Sustainability strategy

At Aberdeen airport we have always been acutely aware that operating such important pieces of infrastructure comes with responsibilities, to our people, to our communities and to the environment.

It is an undeniable fact that we must act now to reverse climate change. To do so will require partnerships across all levels of government and society and it is these partnerships that underpin the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

As a group (AGS), we have set ourselves the target of achieving net zero carbon for our direct emissions by the mid-2030s. This is a positive and important first step, however, we recognise our airports have a wider impact over and above our direct emissions. That is why we are committed to working with the wider aviation industry to support our sector achieve net zero carbon emissions (Scope 1 to 3) by 2045.

This purpose is underpinned by a commitment to growing sustainably. If we are to truly embed sustainability at the core of AGS, we need to set ambitious and stretching targets across all areas of the business, which demonstrate an absolute willingness to balance the clear economic and social benefits of aviation with our climate change responsibilities. It is important we make firm commitments to ensure our people view us as an employer of choice, the communities we serve can share in our success and we set out how we will grow in a responsible manner.

Our full sustainability strategy can be viewed [here](#)¹. AGS is currently developing a new ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) Strategy, which will replace the Sustainability Strategy. Once complete, this will be published on the Sustainability pages of our website.

¹ <https://www.aberdeenairport.com/media/rudls1ea/ags-sustainability-strategy-2021.pdf>

3. CLIMATE RISK AND RESILIENCE

3.1. Aberdeen Airports Approach to Risk Management

Risk management is about the identification, evaluation, and effective management of anticipated events that will affect the achievement of our business objectives. It is a core skill, which must be integral to every business process and to every management decision. The risks that are presented to our shareholders must be within tolerable limits and the mitigating controls must also be at a correspondingly proportionate cost. Risk management must form part of Aberdeen Airport culture, with the opportunities presented being exploited and the downside treated, terminated, tolerated, or transferred.

Risk management within AGS Airports seeks to enable the identification, evaluation, and continuous management of the threats to the achievement of the individual airports' purpose, vision, objectives, and strategy. One of the intentions of this process, is to ensure closer alignments of Risk Management to Business Continuity and operational Contingency Planning requirements.

The strategy of the process for risk management is to:

- Optimise the control of risk in the context of business priorities and resource constraints.
- Meet the AGS Airports Limited Executive Committee requirements for a simplified risk register format.
- Establish a system that is reliable and consistent for risk and control assessment across the business.
- Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency across the business.
- Align risk management with the key performance areas for our core business.
- Focus risk management on actions and clear accountability
- Reduce complexity.

3.2. Understanding of Climate Risks

To understand the climate risks associated with Aberdeen Airports operations, people and infrastructure, the following climate variables were analysed:

- Temperature
- Rainfall
- Snow
- Storms
- Wind

Any resulting risks were fed into the DEFRA risk register template. This was used to ensure consistency across AGS airports in reporting climate risks. A 5 x 5 risk matrix was used in analysing climatic risk, assessing the likelihood and consequence of the variable in question. A red, amber, green (RAG) status is provided as a result of the scoring (Fig. 1).

Horizons: 2025, 2050, 2080		Impact					Score
		Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic	
Likelihood	Almost Certain	5 / moderate	10 / major	15 / major	20 / severe	25 / severe	1 - 3
	Likely	4 / moderate	8 / moderate	12 / major	16 / major	20 / severe	4 - 9
	Possible	3 / minor	6 / moderate	9 / moderate	12 / major	15 / major	10 - 19
	Unlikely	2 / minor	4 / moderate	6 / moderate	8 / moderate	10 / major	20+
	Highly Unlikely	1 / minor	2 / minor	3 / minor	4 / moderate	5 / moderate	

Figure 1 The 5x5 matrix used when analysing the climate change risks

The methodology for understanding the climate risks was as follows:

- A baseline assessment of the current climate surrounding Aberdeen Airport
- Future climatic projections assessed to three different horizon periods, 2040-2059, 2060-2079, and 2080-2099
- Risks to infrastructure, operations and people were identified
- Mitigations for the risks identified.

In order to complete the above steps a workshop was carried out with departmental leads identifying risks associated with the projected climatic changes identified during the desktop study by the Aberdeen Airport Sustainability Coordinator.

To understand future climatic changes with a relative degree of certainty, the UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18)² were reviewed. This uses cutting-edge climate science to provide updated observations and projects change out to 2100 in the UK and globally.

Along with the UKCP18 projections, the SEPA Flood Projections were used to assess various forms of flood risk to the area. This was used in conjunction with the UKCP18 when assessing rainfall risks.

3.2.1. Current Climate

The climate of Eastern Scotland has significant variations in temperature arising from the combined effects of proximity to the coast, topography and, to a lesser extent, urban development. Across the region the annual mean temperature varies from 9°C close to the Firth of Forth to 6°C over the higher ground of the Grampians. Extreme minimum temperatures usually occur in January or February. Examples include the UK record low temperature of -27.2°C in Braemar. Conversely, to the lee of high ground (where Aberdeen Airport is located) temperatures can occasionally reach up to 15°C in winter when a south or SW airstream warm up after crossing upland. July is the warmest month, with mean daily temperatures of around 17°C along the coast of the Grampian area. Extreme maximum temperatures can occur in July or August and are usually associated with heatwaves. The variation of mean daily temperatures is shown for Braemar, (Fig. 2), this is the closest temperature graph to Aberdeen, note that this location is further inland and upland than Aberdeen Airport, which is only 65 metres above mean sea level (amsl).

² [UKCP18-Overview-report.pdf \(metoffice.gov.uk\)](#)

Much of Eastern Scotland is sheltered from the rain-bearing westerly winds. The areas that feel the effects of this shelter the most are coastal areas of East Lothian, Fife, and the Moray Firth where they receive less than 700mm of rainfall in an average year. This can be compared to the wettest area in the east, the southern Grampians, where the average annual rainfall is over 1500mm.

Rainfall is generally well-distributed throughout the year. The frequency of Atlantic depressions is normally greatest during the autumn and winter, but unlike other parts of the UK, Scotland tends to remain under their influence for much of the summer too. Late winter and spring are normally the driest part of the year, with the wettest months being in autumn and early winter. For Dyce (located next to the airport) October and November are the wettest months (Fig. 2).

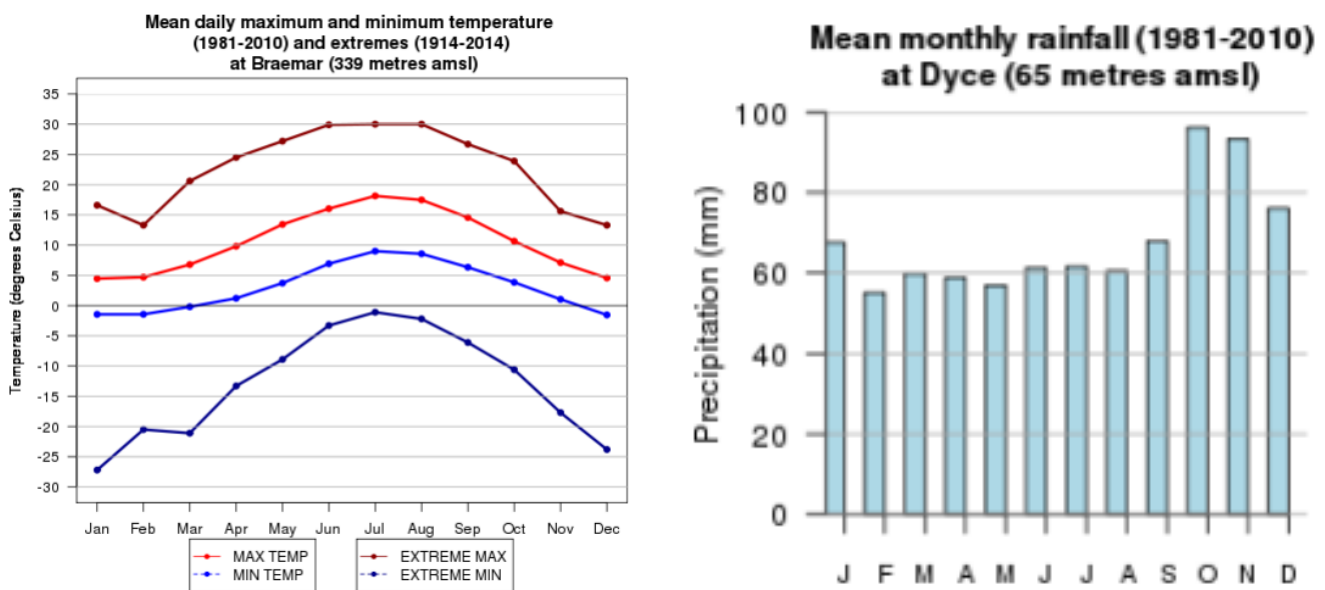


Figure 2 *Left* - Mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures from Braemar - closest example to Aberdeen Airport. *Right* - Mean monthly rainfall at Dyce using data from 1981-2010.

The occurrence of snow is linked closely with temperature, with falls rarely occurring if the temperature is higher than 4°C. For snow to lie for any length of time, the temperature normally must be lower than this. Over most of the area, snowfall is normally confined to the months from November to April. Snow rarely lies at lower levels outside of the period November to April.

Eastern Scotland is one of the windier parts of the UK, being relatively close to the track of Atlantic depressions. The frequency and strength of these depressions is greatest in the winter half of the year, especially from December to February, and this is when mean speeds and gusts are high. The direction of the wind is defined as the direction from which the wind is blowing. As Atlantic depressions pass the UK the wind typically starts to blow from the south or south-west, but later comes from the west or north-west as the depression moves away. Places further north of Eastern Scotland, to the lee of the Grampian Mountains, experience diminished south-westerlies as air is deflected by the high ground to the west (Fig. 3).

WIND ROSE FOR DYCE
N.G.R: 3878E 8128N

ALTITUDE: 65 metres a.m.s.l.

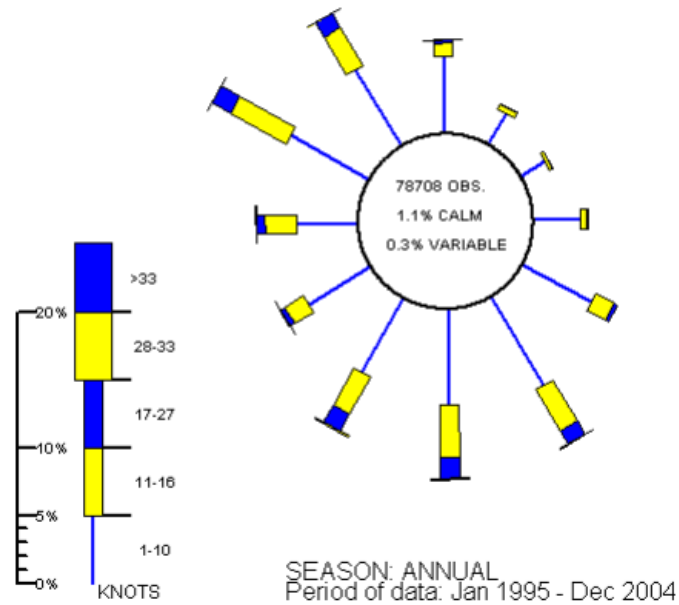


Figure 3 Wind rose for Dyce, Aberdeen, indicating the wind speed and direction.

3.2.2. Future Climate Projections

UKCP18 was used to analyse future climate situations likely to be experienced and have influence on Aberdeen Airport and its operations. Various Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) were used to analyse the extent of change that could be experienced.

- RCP 8.5 – Business as usual – No reduction in emissions (worst case scenario)
- RCP 4.5 – Intermediate Scenario (emissions peak around 2040 and then decline)
- RCP 2.6 – Global Temperature rise is kept below 2°C. This would see carbon emissions start declining in 2020 and go to zero by 2100.
- RCP 1.9 – Would keep global temperature rise to below 1.5°C as noted in the Paris Agreement.

For this report, the high emissions and low emission scenarios were reviewed with the assumption that climate change would fall somewhere in this scale.

In eastern Scotland, by the 2080s summers are likely to be warmer by anywhere between +2°C and +7°C under the high emission scenario. Looking at a low emission scenario there is a predicted summer temperature increase of 0°C to +2°C. The winter follows a similar pattern as the summer, with a +3°C to +5°C increase in a high emission scenario and 0°C to +2°C under low emission scenario.

Rainfall is projected to decrease in summer months by up to 40% in a high emission scenario and up to 30% in low emission scenario. Although summer rain is likely to decrease, when rainfall does occur, the intensity is predicted to increase. Meaning large volumes of water will have to be dealt with in

short spaces of time. Winter months are likely to see an increase of rain by up to 60% in high emission scenario, and up to 10% in low emissions scenario.

Snowfall is likely to decrease over time in both low and high emission scenarios due to increasing temperatures. It should be considered that although snowfall may decrease, when individual events do occur, they could become more severe.

Another fact to consider is that Aberdeen has a bedrock of granite³. This has a poor permeability meaning that rainwater from the surface will lie in this bedrock. This could adversely impact on surface integrity during heavy rainfalls and has been highlighted as a risk for Aberdeen airport. This factor should be considered in all risks pertaining to rainfall and flooding.

3.2.3. Future Climate Risks

A summary of the prioritised climate change risks associated with each climate variable is shown below for the short, medium, and long term at Aberdeen Airport. The risks have been prioritised based on:

- The identified effects, its likelihood of occurring and its consequence on airport operations, infrastructure and/or people
- The likelihood of critical thresholds being exceeded.
- The robustness of existing controls and measures managing the risk

A total of 24 climate risks were identified and reviewed and noted as either green (low risk), amber (medium risk) or red (high risk).

All risks have been allocated to a specific airport business unit and assigned a specific business owner responsible for managing that risk. The risks have been uploaded to the AGS risk register for Aberdeen Airport.

Short Term (2040+)

With current mitigations in place, 21 risks were noted as green, and 3 risks noted as amber for the short term. There were no risks marked as red. The three amber risks were as follows:

- Short, intense rainfall events causing flood risk to terminal.
- Bird migration patterns changing as temperatures increase – they follow food resources.
- Potential change to distribution to pests and diseases – especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Medium Term (2060+)

In the medium-term climate change is predicted to get worse, because of this, 5 green risks moved to amber. One risk moved from amber to green, and there are no red risks. Meaning we have 17 green risks, and 7 amber risks. Changes are noted below.

³ [BGS Geology Viewer \(BETA\)](#)

- Risk of disease and pests has decreased from amber to green following the learnings and procedures from the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increased rainfall causing hazardous conditions for aircraft and operational vehicles.
- Increased rainfall overflowing drainage systems causing surface flooding.
- Increased risk of storms causing damage to assets, standing aircraft, vehicles, increased FOD and increased injuries to staff.
- Increased storm events leading to power loss because of disconnection to network.
- Increased storm events causing schedule interruptions and decreased ATMs.

Long Term (2080+)

The long-term outlook shows a further worsening of climate change conditions. Out of the 24 risks, a further one has gone from green to amber, and one has gone from amber to red – no risks have decreased in severity. There are 16 green risks, 7 amber risks and 1 red risk. The changes to risks are summarised below:

- Further risk from drainage systems not coping with volumes of rainfall.
- Increased risk of freeze/thaw damage to surfaces as winter temperatures vary more often, with increased precipitation.

3.2.4. Climate Risks and Actions

Aberdeen Airport first completed a Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment in 2022. To help protect Aberdeen Airports infrastructure, operations, and people a list of key climate change risks and actions were identified. As part of ARP4 these actions were reviewed, and comments added on the progress of these (Table 1). Some risks that were identified in the workshop and covered by actions within the risk register, are still in this situation, e.g. air quality, the monitoring of this is already completed at Aberdeen Airport and will also address potential climate change associated risks.

Table 1 - Key Climate Risks, with previous action identified, and update comments for ARP4

Risk	Action - Previous Report 2022	Update Comments
Temperature: Increased freeze/thaw effects, increasing temperatures causing damage to surface of runway, taxiways, and roads.	Review materials for future resurfacing – runway, aprons, roads – ensure to withstand increased temperatures. Consider ground source heating options when resurfacing runway.	Airside Operations – Runway renewal project within the next few years. Constant monitoring of runway for any defects and repairs completed to prevent defects.
Increased rainfall causing flooding risk to various Airport infrastructure. Due to drains unable to cope with volume of water and the granite bedrock reducing the flow of water underground.	Review of drainage system to ensure it can withstand increased volumes of rainfall. Install additional drains at strategic points. Elevate substation to prevent damage from potential floodwater. Periodically review integrity of surface and repair where necessary.	Terminal Operations - Slot drains were introduced in lower forecourt (area where flooding typically would be likely in heavy rain). Constant monitoring of drains uphill of airport, to check for blockages from leaves/debris. Emergency sandbags available should other measures fail. Duty Management team monitoring weather forecasts and weather alerts, ready to act should it be required. Airside Operations – Constant monitoring of substations during wet weather. Ability to open penstocks to alleviate flood risk. Operations continually monitor for standing water. Culvert survey complete – with ongoing maintenance.
Network loss as a result of Storm damage due to increased extreme weather.	Review onsite energy generation – renewable energy onsite could mitigate network loss.	Projects - Solar power being investigated for Aberdeen Airport. Back up generators available should loss of network occur.
Bird migration patterns changing as a result of food sources changing because of warming climate.	Bird hazard management plan in place. Ensure this is adapted and reviewed when necessary.	Airside Operations – Bird hazard management plan in place, this is continually monitored. Bird activity monitored in the local area, and onsite bird scarring techniques continually deployed.
Staff welfare and recruitment due to higher frequency of extreme weather conditions making working conditions undesirable.	Ensure shift rotation of staff already employed so that they have a break from extreme weather. Review recruitment opportunities to make it attractive.	Airside Operations - Staff work on a rotational basis. Prevents too much exposure in any one area.
Risk of change in distribution of pests and diseases.	Learnings from COVID-19 pandemic should be applied to all areas of operations, infrastructure, and people. This provides a valuable lesson to base any potential future outbreaks.	Risk is not known at this stage, but is continually monitored. Control measures are ready to be implemented should they be required.

Storms and rainfall causing hazardous conditions for aircraft and interruptions to schedules.	Regular inspections of surfaces and ensure ATC procedures are maintained for wet weather.	Airside Operations - Inspections continue on all surfaces airside, repairs carried out to prevent any defects. Runway is grooved, new runway will also be grooved. Engineering - SWQ system managed and penstocks monitored to deal with increased rainfall and prevent flooding of surface areas.
Storm events and associated risks – high uncertainty over future impacts of these	Monitor climate change predictions and review any changes on storm projections. Other actions to prevent effects from increased rainfall should mitigate some effects of storms.	Airside Operations - Winter considered higher risk. Daily StormGeo reports are monitored for storm risk, snow, and rainfall. Monitoring allows to prepare for adverse weather.

3.2.5. Potential Opportunities

During the climate change risk assessment process opportunities were also identified. These opportunities are dependent on the extent of climate changes in the region.

Opportunity	Action
Climate becomes warmer and drier, especially over the summer period. This has potential to increase inbound tourism. This could be further enhanced as traditional holiday destinations become too hot and less desirable.	Extent of this opportunity is still unclear. This will be monitored with potential increasing summer temperatures.
Increase demand for routes to southern coastal destinations within the UK. Aberdeen is suited well to domestic travel with many routes already established across the UK. Demand for this could increase for summer holiday periods.	Extent of this opportunity is still unclear. Ongoing monitoring of demand to southern coastal destinations.

3.3. Assumptions and uncertainty

Various assumptions and uncertainties were identified during the project. One of the biggest uncertainties is the accuracy of climate modelling – the risks and mitigations of this project were identified as a result of current climate modelling. Should the accuracy of climate modelling change, the future climate risks would need to be reviewed in line with this. There is an uncertainty on the prediction of storm events, with this being generally unknown. The main risks facing Aberdeen Airport are related to heavy rain and surface flooding, which are associated with storm events. Further understanding of future storm events would aid future climate change resilience planning.

Aberdeen Airport, like all businesses, acts within financial constraints. The airport must balance the need to invest in climate change mitigation measures with other business investment priorities. The uncertainty surrounding longer-term climate impacts generated via UKCP18 makes the production of a sound business case for capital investment in infrastructure and/or technology difficult to achieve.

3.4. Interdependencies

Aberdeen Airport is acutely aware of the interdependencies there is to ensure climate change resilient infrastructure and operations.

Key interdependencies are listed in Table 2, along with comments on each interdependency.

Interdependency	Comments
Utility supply – electricity, gas, and water.	Aberdeen Airport is exploring onsite renewable energy solutions. This will reduce the reliance on grid electricity. There are Business Continuity Plans in place for managing the loss of utilities. Further investigation into understanding measures taken by external parties to manage the loss of utilities.
Transport Network. Aberdeen Airport is only accessible by road, for both passenger access and goods into the airport (fuel, de-icer etc.)	Further investigation required on this.
Airlines and Handling Agents – without these organisations there would not be a viable business.	Ensuring our infrastructure is suitable for use by airline and handling agents. Further investigation required on this.
Air Traffic Control – Managing Aberdeen Airspace	Reliant on ATC for operation of airport. Understanding the back-up options to ATC building should services be stopped for any reason. Further investigation required.
SEPA – Flood Risk Management, flood warnings, and licence consents	Suitable notice of flood warnings is key to prevention. To mitigate this, StormGeo reports are monitored internally throughout winter months where risk is highest. Monitoring of licences to ensure compliance, as these are necessary for floodwater discharge.
UK/Scottish Government – Compliance with legislation, policy changes and targets.	Monitor changes as they come up and prepare as best we can.
Local Authority – Managing local developments impacting operation of business	Understanding the access network, land use changes. Further investigation is required on this.

As a member of the Airports UK Sustainability Working Group, collaboration remains a cornerstone of our approach to addressing interdependencies. Aberdeen Airport is a member of the Local Resilience Group, this further strengthens our capacity to navigate interdependencies within the sector. Recognising the need for deeper research into how these interdependencies interact, we are committed to prioritising this area in the upcoming reporting period. A structured review of incidents, documentation of key learnings, and systematic tracking of progress will ensure that insights are effectively integrated into our strategies for enhanced resilience and sustainability.

4. BARRIERS

There are barriers to climate change adaptation improvement measures, these are summarized below:

Environmental Taxes

The environmental tax framework is complex and ever-changing and as such creates uncertainty around any medium to long-term planning. The lack of clarity surrounding long-term funding for renewables remains a potential barrier to the implementation of potential climate change adaptation solutions.

Financial Investment

Securing internal investment for measures to mitigate potential long-term climate change impacts, like any other investment, requires the presentation of a robust business case; one of the key determinants will relate to the projected IRR. Uncertainty surrounding the potential fiscal returns associated with 'green investments' is a barrier to potential investment. The lack of certainty regarding some potential long-term adverse climate impacts being realised provides a weak basis for making investment decisions.

Regulatory Constraints

The aviation sector is subject to scrutiny with respect to its environmental impacts and specifically its contribution to climate change. The evolution of new/tighter financial controls may potentially restrict the Airport's ability to invest in additional measures/infrastructure that are not integral to meeting compliance requirements.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRESS

Aberdeen Airport operates an integral management system, the Managing Responsibly System (MRS). The MRS is certified to ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), ISO 22301 (Business Continuity), ISO 55001 (Asset Management) and ISO 45001 (health and Safety Management). The MRS is a mature system which has been effective in managing the business and driving continual improvement across the business for many years.

A crucial part of the MRS is the risk register which tracks departmental risks and provides an overall view of the most significant business risks. Impacts arising from climate-related events such as flooding, storms and extreme weather are continually tracked on the system. In addition to ongoing monitoring of risks, specific actions arising from internal or external audits or those generated from internal committees are tracked via the organisations Corrective Action Required Tracker (CART). The CART is a highly effective tool for ensuring that key actions underpinning each of the areas covered by the MRS are tracked and closed out within an agreed timescale.

AGS commits to reviewing the climate adaptation report annually. This review will consist of ensuring climate data is up to date, risks are accurate and updated to reflect any advancement of climate data.

5.1. Embedding Climate Risks Within the Organisation

The MRS will be the tool used to ensure climate risks identified as part of this process will be included within the company risk register as noted above. Once these risks are in the risk register, they will be regularly reviewed and amended in line with the risk review process.

In addition to these measures Aberdeen Airport has comprehensive contingency plans in place which are regularly reviewed and tested and an integral element of Aberdeen Airport's risk management function. This suite of contingency plans cover a wide range of meteorological events and other natural 'disasters' including snowfall, flooding, high winds, fog, offsite problems at destination airports, disruption to surface access and extended flight bans.

Furthermore, Aberdeen Airports governance structure ensures that climate change issues are firmly on the agenda up to board level. Managers meet monthly at the Managing Responsibly Governance Group (MRGG) where significant risks and opportunities are raised, discussed and actioned. Aberdeen Airport also has a Health Safety Security and Sustainability Committee (HSSSC). The HSSSC purpose is to provide assurance to the board regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the companies Health, Safety, Security and Sustainability systems and their application.