

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Exeter Airport Consultative Committee held online via Zoom on 12 May 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.54 am

43 Election of Chairman

Richard Bartlett was proposed as Chair by Chris Daly, seconded by Gary Collier.

Richard Bartlett was duly elected as Chair of the Consultative Committee.

44 Election of Vice Chairman

Chris Daly was proposed as Vice Chair, proposed by Leslie Bayliss, seconded by Gary Collier.

Chris Daly was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Consultative Committee.

45 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

46 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 were confirmed as a true record.

47 Chair's proposal

The Chair proposed that the next meeting, scheduled on the 14 July 2021, be held at the Airport in a venue that complies with both Government Covid-19 restrictions and advice published at the time.

The Committee were in agreement to operate on the basis of winter meetings being held virtually, with the remainder in person at the airport, subject to government advice at the time.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to the airport team, particularly Stephen Wiltshire, for their work during the pandemic and the flexibility they had shown throughout the pandemic

He reminded the Committee that the Treasury Consultation on Airport Passenger Duty (APD) had been circulated, the existing banding having an adverse impact on domestic flights.

48 Verbal Report from Andrew Bell, CEO, Regional and City Airports

The CEO, Regional and City Airports thanked the Committee for their appreciation, which he would pass onto the team. The team's handling of the disruption to business had been exceptional.

He outlined to the Committee the implications of the traffic light system in place by the Government to travel, explaining that the system related to the risk to public health in England of importing Covid-19 from overseas, but did not mean that those countries currently listed as green would not have their own quarantine requirements or indeed permit access across their borders.

He recommended the FCO website, which set out the rules for each country. The airport has to adapt as and when specific country status changes happen. There were contingency plans being developed for potential delays at border control for returning flights because of the additional checks that were required.

He reported that almost all domestic network connections left vacant when Flybe collapsed had been picked up by another airline and these services were now coming online and would continue to do so over the summer. Work continued at the airport to prepare for facilitating those flights under Covid-19 safe conditions. At the time of the meeting it was unclear when and to where international flights would resume, but the team were preparing for those to start in June.

He welcomed the Air Passenger Duty consultation currently underway, and explained to the Committee how currently the duty was applied. One of the proposed changes being consulted on was to halve the current rate for domestic flights, which would help ensure their sustainability. Securing this outcome is considered of vital importance for the Airport and the sustainability of its future network and the group would be submitting a response accordingly to the Treasury. He asked if the Committee would also support that proposal.

Whilst there was some support, Henry Gent voiced his reluctance to support it, because it was a reduction in carbon tax. The Chair would submit a response from the Committee and include that concern.

In response, the CEO outlined the other measures being undertaken, as was the requirement for all businesses across the country, to investigate and implement carbon reduction measures – an example being the work on alternative propulsion for aircraft.

Individual members of the committee retained the right to respond directly to the consultation if they wished.

49 **Verbal Report from Stephen Wiltshire, Operations Director, Exeter Airport**

The Operations Director reported that flights were down 98% for February; 93% down for March. SW advised that 181 staff were currently on furlough and working on a rotational basis to keep their skills refreshed to prepare for flights coming back online (200 FTE staff).

He also reported on the flights that were currently operating, with an expectation of international flights resuming in June; TUI and Ryanair flights were confirmed cancelled for May. Royal Mail continued to operate, with good rates due to increase demand for online goods; and military flights has also continued, which provided welcome additional revenue.

Operational hours would increase once more flights came online in June.

On site, there had been no positive Covid-19 test results for staff. Staff were working closely with Border Force for preparing for flights to resume, including improving the WIFI bandwidth and increasing capacity to cope with the increase in dwell time that the additional checks would bring. Testing on site for passengers was also being mobilised.

Airspace change proposal update - funding confirmed from DFT to remobilise the project, with funding running until 2022. A further briefing will be provided to the Committee in due course.

The airport continued to support Newquay airport in relation to the G7 summit, including the possibility of security, aircraft handling and fire crew cover.

50 **Verbal Report from Will Campbell, General Manager, Exeter Aerospace**

The General Manager reported Exeter Aerospace now had their first aircraft on check, with a second due in, and others in the pipeline. The staffing levels had been increased accordingly. Work continued with Exeter College in setting up a practical training facility for engineering students.

He also reported that there had been interest in leasing companies parking their aircraft at the airport.

51 **Verbal Report from Anne McLaird, Director, Southwest Aviation**

The Director from Southwest Aviation was unable to attend the meeting.

52 **Verbal Report from Ian Payne, Operations Director, Devon Air Ambulance Trust**

The Operations Director reported that the air ambulance continued flying full time, and that work was currently underway to de-escalate the level of PPE. He gave his thanks to Stephen Wiltshire and the team for their flexibility on training requirements.

At present the team were preparing for a busy summer, as they expected a higher level of local tourism as less people would be travelling abroad. As such, planning maintenance to match that increase in demand was difficult.

53 **Verbal Report from Philip Knowles, Manager, National Police Air Service**

The Manager advised the Committee that changes to the service meant that he was now part of the National Police Air Service, which operated 15 bases around the country. These changes meant that some bases had fewer operating hours, meaning that locally, this was reduced to 12 hours of operational time and that meant losing staff through a de-selection process.

The delivery of the service was now a borderless tasking model, potentially to Wales, Bournemouth and Bristol. Outside of operational hours, aircraft from other airports could be mobilised.

He outlined the work still undertaken relating to crimes and missing people, which had continued despite the pandemic. The team were also involved in the G7 summit.

54 **Talk by Andy Wood, Director, New Growth Point Team, EDDC**

The Director of the New Growth Point Team gave a presentation to the Committee on the growth in the area, including:

- Benefit of strategic location at nexus of A30 and M5
- Planning to accommodate 12,000 homes and circa 4m sq ft of commercial space
- Enterprise Zone designation in place, covering four sites
- Substantial investment in enabling investment

The presentation included aerial photographs of the sites surrounding the airport on how various sites were developing, including the Logistics Park, which includes the Lidl distribution centre. There was high demand for distribution space – some sectors seeing five years' worth of growth in a three month period.

He highlighted the work on improving Long Lane, which included unlocking land adjacent to car park 4 at the airport. Works were already underway, and amendments to the scheme included the widening of Silverton Lane. Short term diversion work would lead to longer term improvements including a cycle path and pedestrian route, with delivery scheduled for March 2022.

The number 56 bus service from Exeter St David's had been subsidised, with the intention of it becoming a fully commercial service, but the pandemic had of course hit that route, and the subsidy will cease from September 2021.

Whilst there had been considerable impact to business in the area as a result of the pandemic, including the airport, there were also signs of optimism in the uptick of demand for distribution space. In the coming months, there was expected to be a reduction in office space demand as more business switch focus to homeworking. However demand for development at Cranbrook and the Science Park remained.

A question was raised about alleviating traffic problems around the peripheral areas to the growth point, such as Clyst St Mary; and routes between the A30 and A3052 that were only expected to increase in traffic volume. In response, the Director outlined that a transport strategy designed to mitigate the increase in traffic was in place, but he agreed that the routes needed to be reviewed to ensure that the strategy was working effectively. He offered to take this point up directly with Devon County Council on behalf of the committee member.

The Chair thanked Mr Wood for his informative presentation. The presentation would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting for their information.

55 **Noise report for the Airport - Stephen Wiltshire and EDDC
Environmental Health**

The noise report outlined six complaints made directly to the airport since the last meeting of the Committee, three of which related to Royal Mail flights. No complaints had been made to Environmental Health services at EDDC.

The Chair re-iterated points made at previous meetings whereby crew should be reminded to start their turn at 1,000 ft and avoid flight over the city. In response, the Operations Director for the airport informed the committee that they were monitoring this issue, and re-iterated the noise abatement procedure (ICCAN report) to crews.

56 **Complaints handling**

There were no complaints reported.

57 **Any other business**

There was no other business raised by the committee.

58 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 14 July 2021 with time and location to be announced.

Attendance List

Richard Bartlett (Chair)	Independent
Chris Daly (Vice Chair)	Aylesbeare PC
Leslie Bayliss	Cranbrook TC
Gary Collier	Clyst Honiton PC
Chris Scanes	Bishops Clyst PC
Henry Gent	Broadclyst PC
Margaret Hall	West Hill PC
Jane Chantot	Farringdon PC
Andrew Bell	Regional & City Airports
Stephen Wiltshire	Exeter Airport
Will Campbell	Exeter Aerospace
Ian Payne	DAAT
Philip Knowles	National Police Air Service
Andrew Wood	Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity EDDC
Andrew Ennis	Service Lead – Environmental Health EDDC

Apologies:

Cllr Paul Hayward EDDC
Cllr Phil Twiss Devon County Council
Robert Parkinson
Naomi Harnett EDDC
Andy Carmichael EDDC
Victoria Hatfield
Rose Bates Exeter City Council
Dean Steward OSM Town Council

Chairman

Date: