

Minutes of Cross Party Group on Aviation

Date: Wednesday, 04 February 2015

Location: Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament

MSP Attendees:

Colin Keir (CK) (Convener)
Chic Brodie (CB) (Deputy Convener)
Derek Mackay (DMcK) (Minister for Transport and Islands)

Non-MSP Attendees:

Stuart Young (SY)	Secretary
Gordon Dewar (GD)	Edinburgh Airport
Luke Law (LL)	NATS
David Brash (DB)	NATS
William Wilson (WW)	William Wilson Research
Iain Cochrane (IC)	Glasgow Prestwick Airport
Brian McClean (BMc)	Glasgow Airport
Nicola Macnaughton (NMc)	Glasgow Airport
Derick Murray (DM)	NESTRANS
Denny Macgee (DM)	British Airways
Gary Cox (GC)	Transport Scotland
David Hodges (DH)	Virgin Atlantic
Janice Hogarth (JH)	SPAA
Tim Alderslade (TA)	Airport Operators Association (AOA)
Rebecca Roberts-Hughes (RRH)	Airport Operators Association (AOA)

Apologies:

Mark Ramsden	easyJet
Ali Gayward	easyJet
Phil Preston	Loganair
Malcolm Robertson	Charlotte Street Partners
Ranald Robertson	HITRANS
David Birrell	Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
Andrew McConnell	Flybe
Gareth Williams	SCDI
Bob Schumacher	United
Gordon Robertson	Edinburgh Airport
Amanda McMillan	Glasgow Airport
John Scott MSP	

<i>Description</i>	<i>Discussion points</i>	<i>Action</i>
ITEM 1: Welcome and apologies		
ITEM 2: Approval of draft minutes from October meeting		AGREED by Cross Party Group
ITEM 3: Matters arising		None
ITEM 4: Introduction from Derek Mackay MSP, Minister for Transport and Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister recognised importance of Scotland's airports for improved international relations, employment and a global connector. - Stated his impartiality and highlighted this is a massive time of change for Scotland's airports and the importance of the 'Team Scotland' approach. - APD is at the forefront of the Scottish Government's aviation and transport plans and stated the Scotland would be at a competitive advantage if power over APD was devolved. - Minister has spoken to LHR CEO on London airspace and slots. He wants to ensure that London slots and Scotland's position is protected. - Airports are critical to Scotland's growth. - GD welcomed Minister's comments on APD but reiterated the importance of timescales and the planning process. - Minister emphasised that having proper financing and planning in place is crucial but stated that the UK General Election will be a 'game changer'. - However, Minister highlighted a tactical problem that the UK Government would not transfer power to Holyrood unless they can protect the rest of the UK – specifically mentioned the Northern England issue, e.g. Newcastle. - BMc reinforced Scotland's reliance on aviation sector and that Scotland's airports aren't competing with those in England but rather their equivalents in Europe. - TA asked the group how long it would be before the Scottish Government had the systems necessary in place for the devolution of the power? Minister agreed that infrastructure required and this is under discussion. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister also made reference to the Air Discount Scheme and said that the Scottish Government was minded to keep this in place for another four years. - Minister agreed with Convener that a letter should be sent to LHR and GWK to make case for protection of slots between London and Scotland. - DB highlighted importance of air traffic infrastructure and that NATS would be able to reorganise this if changes were made to Scotland-London slots. - Reference made to importance of airport development and that these are now part of National Planning Framework. - Minister confirmed that there is overarching Scottish Government support for airport development and that there is absolute engagement. 	
<p>ITEM 5: Review of 2014 from member airports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates on 2014 performance from EDI, GLA, PIK and ABZ. - Convener acknowledges success of 2014 but asked group how we can match this success and continue to grow Scottish aviation industry. 	
<p>ITEM 6: Presentation from Rebecca Roberts-Hughes on AOA's Sustainable Aviation report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full presentation circulated with draft minutes. - Report measured carbon emissions at 18 UK airports and even with increases in flights and passengers, emissions have been reduced. - Issues of building new homes within airport noise contours raised. - Findings of study into carbon emissions by National Connectivity Taskforce expected in March. - Big challenges to airlines now as they have more responsibility to be environmentally sustainable. - Issue of APD brought up again. TA said that the AOA has advised UK Government they must have a uniform tax across the country. He suggests that the Treasury are unsure of what to do about this issue. - In his opinion, TA thinks that primary legislation on APD is 12-18 months away. - GD stated that the battle for Scottish airports to be competitive with those in Europe should be the priority and referred to the success of Dublin airport following the abolition of APD in Ireland. - CPG agreed that the group should write to both UK and Scottish governments, the Chancellor, Danny Alexander and Priti Patel MP calling a timescale for 	

	devolution of APD to be stated and reasons for why it can't be devolved ahead of the General Election. - Report and presentation from AOA to be sent to Minister for Transport and Islands and Scottish Local Authorities.	
ITEM 7: The next CPG meeting will be held on 27 May 2015		

Please see here below for the dates for the CPG on Aviation for the 2015 session.

All meetings start at 18.00

27th May 2015