

AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday, 2nd June 2014

Present:	CLlr Jeff James (Chairman)	Vale of Glamorgan (Rhoose)
	CLlr Neil Moore	Vale of Glamorgan
	CLlr Dilwar Ali	Cardiff Council
	CLlr Stuart Egan	Vale of Glamorgan
	CLlr Arthur Paulett	Llancarfan Community Council
	CLlr Jane Hanks	Llancarfan Community Council
	Helen Tustin	Regal Travel – ABTA & Advantage
	Jon Horne	Chief Executive, Cardiff Airport
	Spencer Birns	Aviation & Business Development Director Cardiff Airport
	Jason Thomas	Chief of Staff Cardiff Airport
	Deb Barber	Cardiff Airport Operations Director
	Avril Kitchen	Cardiff Airport (Secretariat)
Apologies:		
	CLlr Phil White	Bridgend Council
	CLlr Patel	Cardiff Council

Also in

Attendance: Members of the Public

Item
No:

Action

1.0 Welcome from the Chairman

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed all Members and thanked all for taking time to attend.

2.0 Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

3.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 4th December 2013

The Chairman and Committee agreed that the Minutes of the last ACC held on 4th December 2013 were a true and accurate record of the meeting. There were no Matters Arising.

The Chairman asked Jon Horne to kindly update the Committee and give an overview of news since the last meeting in June.

4.0 Report from the Airport Directors

4.1 Firstly Jon pointed out that at the last meeting it was agreed that Paula Morris would be giving a presentation on Marketing and Communications at the next ACC. Unfortunately however, Paula was unable to attend tonight so this would be undertaken at a later date.

In the meantime, he felt sure that everyone had noticed more activity at the airport and changes since the last meeting. At the last meeting in December last

year, Flybe had just withdrawn some of their services and have removed more since that time. One of the challenges was to replace Flybe by 19th January 2014. Jon was delighted that this happened quickly and that CityJet is now flying out of Cardiff operating the Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paris and Jersey routes.

We have also been very focused on customer service, ensuring that customer service workshops have been delivered right across all service partners at the airport.

In addition the improvements to the infrastructure and facilities had been delivered in time for the summer season.

The response of our customers has been very positive to both the physical changes to facilities and customer service.

Spencer further reinforced Jon's comments. He agreed that the Customer Service Training programme is delivering results.

4.2 Airlines/Commercial

Spencer updated the meeting on the airline situation as follows:

- * Year to date – passenger numbers are up 10%.
- * 17 airlines now make regular use of Cardiff and performance is good.
- * Thomson summer fleet is now in place.
- * P & O Cruise Flights to Caribbean and the Med sell extremely well.
- * CityJet started in January 2014 and now have a complement of four aircraft based at Cardiff – this gives them flexibility as back and to provide capacity for a charter flights.
- * Ryanair is back on Thursdays starting next Winter to Tenerife.
- * Germanwings weekly to Dusseldorf on Saturdays.
- * Pegasus – weekly flights to Dalaman on Fridays.
- * Balkan – weekly Bulgaria flights on Sundays.
- * Flybe – Belfast and Jersey – both routes going well.
- * Eastern to Aberdeen and Newcastle – doing fine.
- * Air Malta to Malta on Tuesdays.

In other news, the airport recently held a Holiday Market in conjunction with Regal Travel and it was a huge success, encouraging travel agents to promote Cardiff.

The £1 drop off charge has been removed at the front of the terminal and a new traffic management system installed, with the aid of ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) and the former yellow cabin has been removed.

4.3 T9 Bus

As a few comments had been mentioned regarding the T9 airport to Cardiff City bus being empty, Jon felt it may be helpful to put the issue into perspective. The T9 is full on a number of occasions. On the majority of journeys it carries passengers and is exceeding expectations.

The important aspect to remember is that if you arrive in any European capital city airport, you are able to connect to the centre of that capital on a high quality public transport link. That is what the T9 represents to the airport. There has been a noticeable increase in visitors using the bus, who feel that they have arrived in a European capital city. The absence of such a service in Cardiff would reflect badly on the airport, the city and Wales.

The T9 is also important in the process of convincing some airlines that they should come to Cardiff, Ryanair being a case in point.

4.4 Projects

Jason Thomas updated the meeting on various projects that had been completed or were in the final stages of completion as follows:

- * As mentioned by Spencer, the traffic management system in front of the terminal had been improved, with the installation of ANPR, and the removal of the yellow cabin. With improved signage, pedestrian ramps and removal of the £1 drop off charge and the white and red barriers; our customers will have an enhanced process at the start and return from their holidays.
- * The front of the terminal building has been given a face-lift with a deep clean and painting in corporate colours and looks sharper and cleaner now.
- * All of the catering area on the first floor concourse landside has been reconfigured and improvements made to the former Scrum Half Bar, which has been refurbished as Caffi Cwtch and is proving to be a magnet for our customers already., It was opened on time and in time for the Heineken Cup on 24th May..
- * New landside toilets were opened just under a month ago and offer a marked improvement over the former facilities.
- * New Security Search Area – since the last meeting, the whole area for the security process of customers and staff through from landside to airside on the first floor of the terminal building has been considerably enlarged and reconfigured.

Deb added that the main step forward was to introduce new technology, including a new security scanner, which enhances security and enables our customers to pass through the area much faster. Also of interest is the fact that the new tray return system was manufactured by a local Welsh company as a prototype and is performing so well, it is being looked at by the main providers within the industry.

- * Immediately on exiting the new security area, work is about to commence on installing a new walk through duty free shop with improved display and retail areas for Nuance.

- * In preparation for major events and to improve the functionality of the operational department, a new Multi Agency Control Centre is being built on the second floor of the terminal building.
- * A new, high quality Taxi Desk has been installed within the Arrivals Building ensuring a warm welcome is available to all our visitors.

4.5 Operations

Deb Barber briefed the meeting on airport operational matters since the last meeting in December 2013:

- * There has been a big focus on environmental performance recently to make the airport as “green” as possible – we are now recycling about 88% of our waste and by early next year we want to be 100% landfill divert. We are also looking at food recycling from all of our catering units. It is a huge target to achieve and we are well on our way.
- * We have recently undertaken a drainage system survey both on the airfield and around our adjacent land. Working in liaison with National Resource Wales we can ensure that the drainage consents we have in place are the right ones.
- * The airport is working closely with Carbon Trust Wales to see if there is any way we can improve our energy efficiency. One initiative will be to change the airfield lighting to LED which will reduce the cost of operating.
- * Cardiff University is getting involved on a project to look at the bio-diversity on the airfield and how it can be improved, in particular the reed-bed on the airport fire ground.

Several Special Events have taken place recently, really testing some of our new facilities:

- * Six Nations Rugby – some 30 extra flights with an additional 3,000 fans came through the airport.
- * Heineken Cup – French Team Toulon came through the airport, bringing some extra 2,500 fans to see the final at the Millennium Stadium.

More events planned, with an even greater opportunity to showcase the airport:

- * UEFA Supercup – 12th August. Both Spanish teams visited the airport this week to look at the facilities and the processes for both their fans and team members. This event being watched very closely as it could mean Cardiff becoming the host for the Euro 2020 Football Tournament.
- * NATO SUMMIT– 4/5 September – Biggest NATO event to be held in the UK. Summit conference will be held at Celtic Manor, with a large number of Heads of State from NATO countries flying into Cardiff Airport. CWL working very closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth office on the event – details not known yet but it will be very high profile. Some permanent infrastructure improvements will be made including security fencing and CCTV. St Athan site will also be involved.

Deb confirmed that the NATO operation would be held in isolation in a

separate area to the main terminal and would not conflict with any normal airport commercial flying. Although Deb advised that there may be some interruptions to local road networks with the police operation.

5. The Chairman asked members of the Committee if they had any questions for the airport directors:

5.1 Councillor Dilwar Ali enquired as to the possibility of erecting a covered walkway to the car parks from the terminal. A member of the public had recently raised this as an issue.

Jason advised that this facility had been investigated and unfortunately, due to it having to cross several lanes of traffic in the drop off area, there was not a practical solution. The need for maintaining height clearances for busses and lorries meant that little of the foot route would actually be covered.

The PRM Service is a special assistance service offered free to our customers with reduced mobility. It is bookable in advance, so that customers can be dropped off close to the front of the terminal or in short stay car park and be collected by the PRM mini-bus.

In addition, we have invested in new shelters for our customers within the car parks so that they have shelter in inclement weather whilst waiting for the regular car park bus to take them to the terminal.

5.2

Councillor Arthur Paulett advised that members of his local community in Llancadle had made some complaints about aircraft noise in their area.

Deb Barber confirmed that only one complaint had been received recently about aircraft training in the area of Llanbethery but that there were no changes to our procedures and aircraft follow strict noise abatement procedures.

Jon asked that should any members of the public experience excessive aircraft noise, then please contact the airport and report the incident so that it can be logged and followed up. It is important people identify the time of the event and any other details relating to the aircraft as this would assist in identifying what happened.

6. As there were no further questions from members of the Committee, the Chairman closed the meeting and opened up the discussions and questions to members of the public:

6.1 Phil Jones was complimentary about the new toilet facilities and suggested adding a counter within the sink area of the men's toilet to rest laptops etc. Jason agreed this was a good idea and a fixable addition and agreed to look at options available.

Jason

6.2 John Dellarmi wanted to recognize the improvements made at the airport, not just in the building but also in the staff. Before the meeting, he had been sitting in Caffi Cwtch and had been acknowledged by members of staff in a very pleasant way and could see the change was happening and the service by staff was brilliant.

Jon thanked him for his kind comments and added that one of the big plusses of improved facilities is for the staff to feel proud about their workplace.

This was a big challenge in the security area too but they have actively participated in the design of the area and feel immensely proud of their area now.

Jon agreed to pass on his comments to the staff involved at Caffi Cwtch.

Jon

- 6.3** Phil commented that on a plus point the PR is good now but raised some concerns regarding the T9 bus service. He has friends who live along its route and they call it the “ghost bus”.

He was encouraged to hear that Ryanair was coming back to Cardiff but felt that one flight a week in the winter would not break any records but it was a good start. He asked what further representations would the airport make to increase their capacity?

Jon confirmed that discussions are active with Ryanair and the fact that they have given us a flight out to Tenerife is significant. We have convinced them that there are opportunities here sufficiently that they have allocated this flight to us. But people must support it so that it becomes a success and encourages them to do more out of Cardiff. We will spare no effort to make that happen.

Spencer added that all this takes time. With Vueling, it was an unknown brand when it first came to Cardiff but now it is better known and is going from strength to strength. The same with Cityjet. But Ryanair is a well known brand and will speak for itself. The airport would like to see all the airlines do well.

Spencer confirmed that he had already approached Volotea about flights and they are only interested in dedicated charter flights for the UK market, and had in fact visited Cardiff quite a few times already this year.

Following Phil’s comment concerning the numbers of people using the T9 bus service, Jason Thomas advised that when it was introduced, it was recognised it would take time to embed. The numbers have exceeded expectations based on actual ticket sales.

Phil further commented that he had received passenger numbers from Minister Hart that indicated 9 passengers per trip and that is wrong as those were for the winter.

Jon added that he was unaware of the figures Phil had received but that to break even the figure required was between 6 and 8 passengers as an average per journey. During the winter it was only 4. He further commented that one of the challenges of this service was the need to get the capacity and frequency right to make it work. Twenty minute frequency is the optimal time. If you have to wait 30 minutes or longer the attractiveness of the service starts to diminish.

John Dellarmi pointed out that during his last visit to the airport, 15 people came off the Belfast flight and used the airport bus. He agreed that as a European capital city, the airport cannot not have a bus direct to the centre of Cardiff and he would certainly promote it as much as possible.

Jon

Jeff Jones felt that it would help if there were multi-lingual signage for visitors coming into Wales about the airport bus and it was agreed that this would be considered.

- 6.4** Bernard Wright was concerned that he had visited the airport and whilst in the check-in hall he saw something that he wanted to report and there were no staff around to report it to.

Discussions followed on the removal of the Information Desk from the first floor and how its former staff are now utilised more efficiently and are more proactive within the terminal building, giving a much better customer service. Jon pointed out that there are customer courtesy phones available but perhaps they need to be more visible and that is something he agreed to instigate.

Jon

However, taking his bigger concerns into consideration, Jon felt that Bernard indeed did have a point and that having a presence on the ground floor would be a matter to be looked at further.

Deb added that since the customer service training has been undertaken, all staff working at the airport – from security, handling agents to catering staff – have been encouraged to work as an “Airport Team”, so that should any member of staff be questioned by one of our customers, they can play their part and help that customer and be part of the overall customer service “team”.

Since the last meeting, Jon advised that the cleaning and PRM contract formerly run by Mitie, has been taken in-house so that both sections of staff have now become part of the airport “family”.

- 6.5** Jeff Jones enquired about the provenance of new airline Cityjet.

Jon advised that the airport could not say whether they would replace their F50's but that the airport has a very good relationship with Cityjet – right from their CEO downwards.

Now developing regional airlines into significant operations. The Cityjet team are very enthused about the airline going forward without Air France. All the feedback we are getting from them is that the future is very positive for Cardiff.

- 6.6** Laurence Evans of Fly Cardiff asked whether Vueling would be staying at Cardiff through the winter and whether they would be back next summer?

Spencer confirmed that the airport was pushing them very hard to get their sales up now. Last winter, only 5% of their flights were booked for winter at this stage. However, he felt confident that Vueling would be here throughout the winter and next summer.

The Vueling operation is very successful. We also encouraged them to provide four special charter aircraft to bring Toulon fans into Cardiff for the Heineken cup recently. So we have a good relationship with the airline and it is quite evident that they will be here for the future. We continue to encourage them to provide more routes and flights year.

Jason Thomas added that at the last Routes Conference, an Executive of Vueling had given a speech extolling Cardiff Airport - which was a huge compliment at such a prestige event.

Spencer agreed to speak to Vueling concerning their on-line booking system.

Spencer

- 6.7** Harrison Sharp commented that there is lots of airport marketing around Cardiff

and areas but nothing in Pembrokeshire. He believed that many people in the Tenby area have a mindset to use Bristol airport and asked what could be done to encourage the relatively affluent area of Pembrokeshire to fly from Cardiff.

Spencer advised that when carrying out a major marketing campaign, the airport will aim to saturate the market and we have done that recently through ITV weather, Real Radio, Heart Radio, Capital, ticket barriers at all main railway stations.

6.8 Phil Jones asked whether the ski flights will continue this winter?

Spencer confirmed that he was in active discussions regarding next winter.

6.9 Geraint Marsh of Wales Air Forum discussed the General Aviation fly in last year which was extremely successful in promoting GA and asked whether the airport would consider making this an annual event?

Spencer advised that the recent focus has been on re-jigging GA charges to encourage them to come to Cardiff.

As far as another GA rally is concerned, unfortunately this year we have too many major events and it will not be possible. Another thing that must be kept in mind is that we are a commercial airport and we cannot hold up commercial flights for GA aircraft during a fly-in.

However Jon advised that although it cannot be undertaken this year, that does not mean it would not be considered in the future.

All proceeds from the GA Fly In went to Wales Air Ambulance a very worthy cause.

Staying in the area of GA, Deb agreed to speak to NATS to check on GA clearance from the Devon area which was delayed as the Controller could not deal with Bristol and Cardiff GA traffic at the same time. It would be difficult to explain at this stage, as the circumstances at the time of the incident were not known.

Jon reminded everyone that should they have any problems at all and if people are not getting the service they should please let the airport know as soon as possible. There is also a feedback portal on the airports web page that can be used for comments.

Harrison felt that as a pilot himself and regularly having flown in and out of Cardiff, he found the controllers to be very pleasant, flexible and as accommodating as they could be.

Deb agreed and knew that all Vueling pilots felt the same way

6.10 Laurence Evans drew attention to the fact that when having to go through the telephone system you have to press "0" first for reception and just wanted the airport to be aware of it.

6.11 Several members of the public were very complimentary about the improvements and all the work that had been done since the last meeting.

7. As there were no further questions, the Chairman closed the meeting. He thanked everyone for their valuable feedback and he was please that everyone had noticed such a difference at the airport.

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

To be advised and circulated to Members. It will also be placed on airport website for members of the public.

Distribution:

All ACC Members
Airport Web page for information

June 2014