

THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

CHRIS GRAYLING'S

*message to UK airports:
"When you succeed,
so does the UK"*

Features

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT
*on track to deliver a 40% growth
in passenger numbers by 2033*

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*transformed terminal
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ABERDEEN AIRPORT
*2019 will be a year of
resurgence for the airport*

THE AIRPORT
OPERATOR

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ED ANDERSON

Introduction to the Airport Operator



A very warm welcome to the spring edition of The Airport Operator, published to coincide with our 2019 Annual Dinner at London's Grosvenor House Hotel.

We are delighted once again to have so many distinguished guests from across the aviation sector at what is now firmly established as the largest networking dinner in the UK aviation calendar and especially pleased to have secured Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, as our keynote speaker.

He joins us at an eventful time for our sector a month before the closing date of his Department's consultation on its Aviation Strategy which will set the regulatory framework for UK aviation for the next 30 years. We look forward to hearing what he has to say about that.

The AOA and its member airports will be responding in detail to the Green Paper and we have been assisted in preparing our responses by a series of discussions with Department for Transport officials on a wide range of issues, including consumer policy, surface access and sustainability.

It is already clear that we will be asking the Government to ensure that the final document sets out a policy framework that clearly supports growth and takes appropriate account of the perspectives of the whole range of our airports, from the largest to the smallest, from passenger to freight and including General Aviation.

We will be re-emphasising that our airports recognise their responsibility to develop sustainably, with appropriate policies in place to deal with both carbon emissions and noise. Our airports know that they will only secure "a licence to grow" if their growth plans deal with our

environmental challenges and place the passenger at the heart of their businesses. They also know just how important aviation growth will be to the success of the UK economy at both national and regional levels.

As well as the discussions with the Transport Secretary's colleagues and officials on the Aviation Strategy we have also been grateful for continuous engagement with his Department on Brexit-related issues. That has helped our airports to plan for the full range of possible outcomes and we have been encouraged by the strong opposition that has emerged to earlier European Commission proposals to place an artificial cap on flights by UK airlines from our airports to the EU.

In this edition of our magazine you will find informative contributions not only from Chris Grayling, but also from Richard Moriarty, Chief Executive of the Civil Aviation Authority, and from Robert Light, Head Commissioner of the new Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise. There are also interviews with three recently-appointed airport CEOs – Steve Szalay at Aberdeen, Nick Barton at Birmingham and Alberto Martin at London Luton.

Finally, as many of you will know, I am retiring this month as AOA Chairman to enable me to spend more time in my new role as Lord-Lieutenant of West Yorkshire. Over the page you will find some of my own reflections on how our industry has changed out of all recognition in recent decades and on what the future holds for UK airports.

Here I should only like to say what an honour it has been to serve as AOA Chairman for over a decade, to thank my AOA Board colleagues and the hard-working AOA team, now ably led by Karen Dee, and to wish my successor well. They will find that they are inheriting an Association in good shape and representing a world-leading industry poised to make an even greater contribution to our country's future success.

Ed Anderson, AOA Chairman

THE AOA IS PLEASED TO WORK WITH ITS CORPORATE PARTNERS, AND GOLD AND SILVER MEMBERS

Corporate Partners








Gold Members








Silver Members








































RETIRING AOA CHAIRMAN PREDICTS BRIGHT FUTURE FOR UK AIRPORTS

*Ed Anderson says the industry has changed
“out of all recognition” since the 1980’s*

Ed Anderson, who retires as Chairman of the AOA this month after over a decade in the post, forecasts “very good prospects” for UK airports, as passenger demand continues to grow.

In a wide-ranging valedictory interview with Airport Operator, he also expressed pride in the contribution that he had made towards establishing the AOA as the primary representative body for UK aviation.

Looking back over a long career in UK airports, Mr Anderson said that the industry had changed out of all recognition since the 1990’s, with the rise of low-cost carriers, increasing emphasis on environmental issues and a new recognition on the part of Government of the benefits that aviation brings to the wider economy.

Ed Anderson’s involvement with UK airports stretches back to the late 1970s, when he provided financial evidence for Leeds Bradford Airport at a public inquiry on plans for a new runway extension. The plans were approved and in the early 1980s the airport created a new post of

Finance Director, which he held for three years.

In the late 1980s he was Finance Director and deputy CEO at East Midlands Airport at a time when it was just starting to become an important base for freight operations. Although it is now 30 years’ ago, he retains vivid memories of the Kegworth air disaster, when a British Midland plane crashed on the M1 while attempting to make an emergency landing at East Midlands. He expresses admiration for the honesty and courage that British Midland owner, Michael Bishop, showed in handling the aftermath of the crash.

Ed Anderson returned to Leeds Bradford as CEO in 1997 and remained in that post for ten years, during which passenger numbers grew from a million to nearly three million. He was involved in the negotiations that led to Jet2.com’s decision to select Leeds Bradford as its headquarters and main UK base and to launch a steadily growing number of routes from there to European city and sunshine destinations.

He traces his involvement with the AOA back to the first annual conference that he attended in 1982, noting that he has attended 26 annual conferences and 31 annual dinners, 12 of them as Chairman. He was AOA Chairman in 2001/2 and then subsequently Chairman since 2008.

Turning to changes in the aviation industry over recent decades, he said one key change was that the balance of power between airports and airlines has changed “out of all recognition” since the 1980s.



*Ed Anderson,
AOA Chairman*

Reflecting on how the AOA has changed, he says that in the 1980s it was primarily a social club for airport directors. It started to get a little more involved in lobbying Government in the 1990's, but the great expansion in its role as the representative body for UK airports has taken place during his spell as Chairman. He takes quiet pride in the part that he has played in "raising the AOA's game", establishing it as the UK's leading aviation representative body, while also paying tribute to AOA CEOs, Darren Caplan and Karen Dee.

Mr Anderson's Chairmanship of the AOA coincided with the establishment of the Airports Commission review into airport capacity in the South East and the subsequent decision by Government and Parliament to back the construction of a new runway at Heathrow. He acknowledges that this process presented challenges in terms of preserving unity on the AOA Board and expresses the belief that "we navigated that pretty well".

Asked what advice he would offer his successor, Mr Anderson said he hoped that there would continue to be a focus on the AOA's role as UK aviation's leading representative body, that the new Chair would provide strong support for the CEO and that they would always remember the importance of unity, both among the airports themselves and, where possible, across the aviation sector as a whole.

Turning to changes in the aviation industry over recent decades, he said one key change was that the balance of power between airports and airlines has changed "out of all recognition" since the 1980s. The time when airports had standardised scales of fees, which they increased annually, had long gone, to be replaced by tough negotiations between airports and airlines.

This was a result of the second key change, the rise of EasyJet, Ryanair and the other low-cost carriers. They had been the primary



Ed Anderson, at the 2018 Annual Conference

drivers of the enormous growth in passenger traffic, but they had also been "absolutely ruthless" in using their market power by shifting or threatening to shift their planes from one airport to another that might be "more accommodating".

A third important change since the 1980's had been the inexorable rise to prominence of environmental issues and challenges. Mr Anderson said he thought that the industry had reacted well to that. The creation of Sustainable Aviation had been "absolutely critical" in enabling UK aviation to be "on the front foot" and to secure recognition from Government that the industry is being proactive in dealing with environmental issues.

A fourth important development was "the recognition that there is now on the part of Government of the benefits that our industry brings to the economy".

Mr Anderson's overall conclusion is that "the prospects for UK airports are very good". He foresaw that more and more people would want to fly and suggested that the Government's Aviation Strategy

would be crucial in setting a framework for the next 30 years that would enable those airports that wished to grow to do so.

Ed Anderson's retirement as AOA Chairman immediately following the AOA's 2019 Annual Dinner will enable him to spend more time on his new role as Lord-Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, the Queen's personal representative in the county. He has been in post since 1 September 2018 and has already arranged two royal visits (including one from Prince Charles), with at least another three in the pipeline.

Mr Anderson relishes a role that was first created by Henry VIII and especially the opportunities that it will give him to support the voluntary sector in West Yorkshire and to present medals and awards on behalf of the sovereign. He may be somewhat relieved that Lord-Lieutenants no longer retain their responsibility for organising a county's militia or their right to call upon able-bodied men to fight when needed. ■

Ed Anderson is AOA Chairman

*Ian Smyth,
Director of UK Power
Networks Services*

SAFE CONTINUITY OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY “KEY TO KEEPING PASSENGERS MOVING”

*Ian Smyth, Director of UK Power Networks Services,
explores the impact of a one-second power interruption.*



UK airports are under enormous pressure to ensure they have the capacity to keep up with demand, which in turn affects the performance of the energy infrastructure that keeps them running around the clock. As they expand to meet these pressures, airports around the country are greeted with an opportunity to reap the benefits of an energy transition where the energy market is decentralising and there is a sharper focus on sustainability.

In 2017, UK airports handled more than 285 million passenger journeys. That's an increase of 15 million from 2016 and demand for air travel is set to increase 50 per cent by 2035. Based on government figures, if the number of journeys continue to increase at the current rate without expansion programmes, UK airports will reach capacity by the mid-2030s. European hubs are already charging ahead to react and provide an alternative to the UK's long-haul hubs.

The impact of the required expansion will have significant implications for their energy infrastructure strategy and operation. As a provider of power distribution and energy

infrastructure solutions for Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Stansted, London City and Luton airports, we understand the challenges UK airports are facing.

Our airports provide connectivity between the UK and the rest of the world – any impact to the seamless passenger journey has wide-reaching consequences. Ensuring a safe continuity of electricity supply is key to keeping passengers moving. Maintaining resilience, managing energy costs and reducing the carbon footprint is a delicate and complex balance that all airports are currently facing.

Resilience of supply

A one-second power interruption can affect an airport's operations for hours, if not days. Just one consequence of this is that all the bags on the conveyers need to be rescanned and put through the system again, in addition to an ever-growing backlog of luggage being handled at the airport from departing and arriving passengers. This can mean passengers fly to locations all across the globe without their bags, causing severe reputational issues for the airport, the airline and handling partners.

To ensure maximum network reliability, the most important parts of the airport need to be supplied by the most resilient parts of the electricity network. Unfortunately, this is not always the case as airports have expanded quickly to meet expectations and demands of passengers. Expansion plans provide airport operators with the opportunity to assess and implement an electricity network that will be fit for purpose into the future.

Having an experienced strategic energy infrastructure partner enables airports to outsource the design, build, management, operation and maintenance of their electrical assets. This enables the airport to remove the risk associated with managing these assets themselves and to focus on their day-to-day core business and their customers.

In 2017, UK airports handled more than 285 million passenger journeys.

Sustainability

Airports are under immense pressure to reduce their carbon emissions to offset those caused by the aircraft using the airports across the UK. All airports are committed to sustainability, with opportunities to achieve every-increasing targets through innovative new energy technologies.

The electrification of ground transportation around the airport is progressing with new vehicles and more efficient charging technologies becoming available. We have deployed electric vans at our Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and London City Airport depots. This will assist our airport clients reduce emissions across the airport, and we are working with them to help them electrify their own fleets.

Due to the large carbon footprint that airports occupy, there is opportunity to install renewable generation to reduce the costs of electricity. The introduction of technologies like wind turbines and solar photovoltaic, however, can be difficult due to the distance required for their installation from the main runways for safety. This forces innovative design and planning in order to best utilise the limited land available to help airports achieve their sustainability ambitions.

Safety

Operating high and low voltage electricity networks in the middle



of Europe's busiest runways takes invariable focus, continuous improvement and innovation, and always putting safety before anything else.

The safety of staff, contractors, suppliers and customers in and around the airport is the most important achievement every day. This can only be accomplished through an environment of ongoing, measurable safety enhancements, and a collaborative approach between all airport stakeholders.

We have achieved an exceptional industry-leading safety record while working not only on Europe's busiest runways, but trackside on the UK's fastest mainline railway, at nuclear sites and at military facilities. This is

the direct result of the dedication of our people who ensure that safety is their top priority when they come to work each day. ■

“The safety of staff, contractors, suppliers and customers in and around the airport is the most important achievement every day.”

CASE STUDY:

Enabling Manchester Airport's Transformation Programme

We're undertaking a very complex project at Manchester Airport that will enable them to continue their £1 billion transformation programme. Due to an electricity substation located in the middle of a taxiway, aircraft are only able to move one-in, one-out, which will affect the future expansion and capacity of the terminal.

Our team are moving the substation, which involves

the construction of a brand new substation away from the taxiway, underground directional drilling beneath the taxiway and decommissioning the existing substation. This is all being completed in the middle of the very busy and operational taxiway, requiring the control of foreign object debris and the safety risks that come with working with electricity, construction and in an airside environment.



*Nick Barton, CEO,
Birmingham Airport*

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT'S BOLD PLANS FOR GROWTH

Birmingham Airport has “a tremendous story” to tell and is on track to deliver a 40% growth in passenger numbers by 2033, according to its new Chief Executive, Nick Barton.

Speaking to Airport Operator just weeks after he took on his new role in early January, Barton said: “My expectations have been exceeded”, indicating that he had been impressed by the size of the airport’s catchment area, the quality of its transport links, its ambitious investment plans and the passion and enthusiasm of the airport’s team.

His priority in his early weeks in the job will be to review the strategic plan that will provide guidance to staff and shareholders on the airport’s growth objectives and set out how it will seek to add capacity for airlines, improve the passenger experience, meet environmental targets and take account of the interests of local communities.

A consultation on the airport’s draft Master Plan, which closed at the end of January, has shown, Barton says, broad support for the airport’s plans to grow by making best use of its existing single runway and by offering passengers a greater choice of flights and destinations. That will entail both improvements in the frequency of existing services to key European business destinations and



an ambitious route development plan that will seek to add Lisbon, Nice, Athens and Helsinki to the European route network and hold out the possibility of new routes to New York, Hong Kong and Toronto.

Barton’s vision is to take what he says is already a good airport to another level with a £500 million investment plan that will match the requirements of the airport’s customers and further justify its claim to be one of Europe’s leading regional airports. He is very evidently undaunted by concerns about weakening economic growth prospects or the possibility of a

disorderly Brexit, declaring his confidence that the airport’s recent record of upward growth will continue. He notes that GDP growth is still resilient and that plans are well-developed to enable the airport to deal with a “no deal” Brexit if necessary.

One of the key factors on which he bases his confidence is the quality of the airport’s existing surface access, especially its adjacent mainline railway station and network of motorways, combined with ambitious plans for further dramatic improvement. Most important of these is HS2, the new high-speed



rail link between London and Birmingham, which is scheduled to open in late 2026, with further phases planned northwards to Manchester and Leeds.

The HS2 plans include a brand-new Interchange Station close to the airport in Solihull and linked to it by an automated people-mover. According to HS2, the new station will be “the best-connected place in the UK by rail, road and air”.

He also emphasises the importance of “future-proofing” the road network around Birmingham Airport with the help of a £282 million upgrade to one of the West Midlands’ worst bottlenecks around Junction 6 on the M42. Construction work on a dual carriageway link road is due to start next year, with completion expected in 2023.

Like other UK airports, Birmingham is also focussed on airspace change,

having already made changes in recent years as a direct result of a runway extension which became operational in 2014. Now the attention is on changes to departure routes to the north of the airport to facilitate additional capacity, provide improved efficiencies and reduce both track miles flown and CO2 emissions. Barton stresses that, although the changes are challenging, the airport has sought to develop solutions in partnership with community groups. Dialogue with communities has also been central to the airport’s approach to noise issues. A recent review of night flights has resulted in a policy designed to protect the airport’s night time capacity, while also minimising noise.

For Barton, Government has a key role to play in helping airports to deliver a modern air navigational system, replacing the older, inefficient system that has seen peak

time delays imposed on departures from Birmingham due to capacity constraints. He is optimistic that the Aviation Minister, Baroness Sugg, will be an effective steward of the agencies that deliver airspace change and really drive the process. He declares himself “very impressed” with the Minister, whom he describes as “a really effective player” and says: “she knows that she has a big role to play acting as a catalyst for change to get it delivered”.

As well as “getting airspace sorted out”, he says that the Government must also make sure that “the major role that regional airports play in keeping the national economy balanced” is underlined and supported in the Aviation Strategy, on which Ministers are currently consulting. Barton said that, from a Birmingham perspective, the Green Paper published last December included “really good stuff” and what the airport would be seeking

“The Government must make also make sure that the major role that regional airports play in keeping the national economy balanced is underlined and supported.”

to do would be to ensure that the Green Paper’s supportive approach to regional airport growth is now entrenched in Government thinking.

Closer to home, Barton is also very positive about local government. Birmingham Airport is jointly owned by seven West Midlands Metropolitan Boroughs and a large Canadian pension fund. He describes it “a symbiotic relationship”, with the

pension fund giving the airport access to private finance, while local authority ownership ensures “an alignment of interest”, with the local councils sharing directly in the fruits of the airport’s success.

With the airport recently named “best UK airport with more than 10 million passengers” (at the AOA

awards, in a category judged by Airlines UK), both sets of owners should have much to celebrate this July when Birmingham will mark 80 years since the first flights took off from the airport. ■



UK AIRPORTS SEEK PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AMBITIOUS GROWTH PLANS

Eight of the UK's top 20 airports have outlined ambitious master plans for expansion between now and the 2030's.

Leading the pack is the country's second largest airport, **Gatwick**, whose consultation on its 2018 draft master plan closed in January, claiming support for its growth plans from three quarters of residents surveyed in Sussex, Surrey and Kent and from 29 business organisations, representing over 25,000 regional companies.

The 15-year plan considers how **Gatwick** could grow by the early 2030's to accommodate 70 million passengers a year (compared to 46.1 million in 2018) by using new technology to maximise the airport's main runway and potentially bringing its standby runway into routine use for departing flights. The airport will be publishing a consultation summary report and its final master plan later this year.

Elsewhere in the South East, **Luton** has set out a 30-year "vision for sustainable growth" for the period 2020 to 2050, forecasting that annual passenger numbers could more than double from the current 16.6 million to 38 million. The vision document from airport owner, Luton Council, formed the basis for a draft master plan on which a consultation was held

last summer. The airport's project team is currently reviewing responses and expects to launch a further statutory consultation on a preferred scheme by the middle of this year.

Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, officially opened Luton's newly-upgraded terminal building

in December and work has started on a £225 million rail passenger transit service to replace the existing shuttle bus service. When the new 2.1-kilometre rail-airport link opens in 2021 it will cut the station to terminal journey time to just three minutes and the overall journey time to central London to under 30 minutes.



Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, officially opened Luton's newly-upgraded terminal building in December and work has started on a £225 million rail passenger transit service to replace the existing shuttle bus service.

Birmingham set out how it plans to achieve its ambition of becoming “one of Europe’s leading regional airports” in its 2018 draft master plan, with a consultation that closed at the end of January, leading to a final master plan to be published in early summer this year. It expects to see annual passenger numbers grow by 40% from the current 8.6 million to 18 million by 2033, with a focus on long-haul routes to high growth economies such as India and China. A £500 million 15-year investment plan will help it to deliver its growth strategy.

Bristol’s draft master plan, expected soon, will outline a vision for the period between now and 2050. It foresees passenger numbers growing from the current 8.6 million a year to up to 20 million by the mid-2040’s. Meanwhile, the airport has submitted a planning application seeking approval for development to handle up to 12 million passengers a year by 2026 – Bristol’s annual passenger numbers are currently capped at 10 million.

Newcastle’s master plan sets out it plans for the period up to its centenary year, 2035, when it expects to see passenger numbers grow from over 5 million a year to up to 9.4 million. With a view to ensuring that it will be able to secure more long-haul air routes in the future, the plan provides for the safeguarding of the eastern end of the current runway to enable the construction of a 700-metre runway extension, should that prove necessary.

Following a consultation on its draft master plan at the end of last year, **Southampton** hopes to submit a planning application this year for a 170-metre extension to the northern end of its runway. That would mean that existing aircraft could fly further, bringing Mediterranean destinations such as Madrid and Rome, within reach, and, for the first time, allow larger narrow-bodied aircraft to use the airport without weight restrictions. Passenger numbers could climb from the current two million to five million by 2037.

Cardiff’s draft master plan explains how the airport will grow from its current 1.5 million passengers per year to three million and beyond in the period to 2040. A new terminal building will be key to achieving the airport’s aspiration to be “an outstanding capital city airport connecting Wales to the world and the world to Wales”, while delivering “an exceptional customer experience”.

Finally, **Doncaster Sheffield’s** draft master plan, covering the period up to 2037, sets out plans for a major terminal enhancement and forecasts growth in annual passenger numbers from 1.3 million today to up to 4.7 million by 2037. A key goal will be to deliver growth while retaining

the airport’s “easy, friendly, relaxed” passenger experience reputation, which helped it to top the UK league table for customer service at the end of 2018 and saw it named by Which? as the UK’s best small airport. ■

Cardiff’s draft master plan explains how the airport will grow from its current 1.5 million passengers per year to three million and beyond in the period to 2040.





AOA ANNUAL AWARDS SHOWCASE UK SUCCESS STORIES

Four English airports were named Best Airport in their category at the AOA's annual awards ceremony, with Cardiff picking up the award for Best Airport campaign in UK Airports Safety Week.

The awards were presented on 29 October at a dinner in London's County Hall hosted by The Independent's Senior Travel Editor, Simon Calder.

The three winners in the Best Airport category, selected by Airlines UK, were Birmingham (Best Airport over 10 million passengers), East Midlands (Best Airport, 3 to 10 million passengers) and London Southend (Best Airport, under 3 million passengers).

Carlisle Lake District was the winner in the Best General Aviation category, selected by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

At Birmingham, Simon Richards, then the airport's acting Managing Director, said: "We are delighted to be presented with this accolade, beating off stiff competition from other major UK airports in our category. Credit must go to our employees and partner companies for the huge amount of hard work that has gone into improving our processes and customer experience over the last year".

For East Midlands the award came in a year when records were broken for the volume and value of the cargo that it handles. Managing Director, Karen Smart, said: "I am delighted

that the aviation industry recognises what has been achieved and the important role that our airport plays both regionally and nationally. I am very positive about our future. We will play an increasingly important role in shaping the East Midlands economy, creating new jobs and connecting people and products to other parts of the world".

"Aviation is a UK success story and our vibrant and innovative work is globally leading."

London Southend showcase their AOA award on the airport's website, along with the fact that they have been rated best airport in London by the Which? airport passenger survey for the last six years. CEO, Glyn Jones, said the awards were a testament to all the hard work that the airport team had put in and recognition of a raft of new routes and exceptional customer service.

Cardiff's safety award was based on partnership with airlines, police, NATs and St John's Ambulance. CEO, Deb Barber, said: "We are so proud to have won this award. It recognises Cardiff Airport's commitment to safety and security as our number one priority. UK Airports Safety Week provides a fantastic opportunity for staff, passengers and the community to engage with the airport and promote our strong safety culture".

Five leading suppliers to UK airports also picked up awards. Dallmeier won the award for Best AOA Annual

"The AOA annual awards showcased just a sample of that best-in-kind work, including around improving efficiency, reducing the impact of aviation on the environment and delivering an ever-improving passenger experience".

Conference Exhibition Stand, Vanderlande for Best Innovator, the Met Office for Best Business Partner, Wilson James for Best Environmental Initiative and Rohde & Schwarz for Best Solution Provider.

Congratulating all the winners, AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, said: "Aviation is a UK success story and

our vibrant and innovative work is globally leading. The AOA annual awards showcased just a sample of that best-in-kind work, including around improving efficiency, reducing the impact of aviation on the environment and delivering an ever-improving passenger experience". ■



LEONARDO HIGHLIGHTS CAPABILITIES OF UK-DESIGNED COUNTER-DRONE SYSTEM

Falcon Shield system detects, tracks, identifies and defeats drones.

Italian-headquartered high-tech giant, Leonardo, is launching a new marketing campaign to promote Falcon Shield, its state-of-the-art counter-drone system, to UK airports, following the recent drone attacks which disrupted flight operations.

As was widely reported at the time, the RAF-tested system was deployed to ensure the safety of flights following drone sightings.

Now the company is keen to explain to other UK airports how its system, based on world-beating technology designed, developed and manufactured at Basildon and Southampton, could help them to detect, track, identify and defeat malicious or dangerous drone incursions.

Leonardo Vice President of Sales, Paul Burt, showed Airport Operator

on a visit to the company's Basildon plant, how the different components of the system work together to counter drone attacks, emphasising that Falcon Shield can be tailored to meet the requirements of airports of any size.

The company, an AOA corporate partner, is one of the biggest suppliers of defence equipment to the Ministry of Defence and the largest Italian inward investor in the UK. Its operations in Basildon (formerly Marconi) and Southampton have been established since the 1950's. Basildon produced the UK's first military standard production thermal imager and Southampton is a centre of excellence for infra-red detectors.

The Falcon Shield Counter-Unmanned Air Vehicle system, launched in 2015, brings together



*Paul Burt,
Leonardo
Vice President
of Sales*



Falcon Shield can be tailored to meet the requirements of airports of any size.



cutting-edge technology designed and developed in the UK by Leonardo with other world-leading technology to offer airports a seamless and user-friendly counter-drone package.

The detect element of the system includes both active and passive components. The active surveillance component is a radar system comparable to systems used daily by air traffic controllers. The passive component, drone signal monitoring, involves listening to radio frequency emissions from the drone and drone controller and can help law enforcement agencies to identify the source of an incursion.

At the heart of the track and identify elements is Leonardo's Nerio ultra-long-range high definition

thermal imaging tracker, designed and manufactured in Basildon and Southampton, whose cameras deliver exceptionally high-quality images at any time of the day or night. The cameras enable airport operators to track drone incursions and help to identify the type of drone involved.

The defeat element of Falcon Shield is graphically described by Burt as "an electronic sniper rifle", which uses battle-proven technology to jam a drone's electronic signals. Crucially, from an airport's perspective, the "rifle" is precisely-targeted to disable the drone without interfering with the electronic systems that are vital to the safety of aircraft and airfields. The technology was originally developed for the military to deal

with improvised explosive devices of the kind frequently used in Iraq – where, in a former role during the Iraq war, Burt was RAF base commander in Basra.

Burt, now Leonardo's Vice President Sales & Marketing, Land & Naval Defence Electronics, stresses that the company is keen to offer tailored solutions to airports of all sizes and that the price of buying and operating the system will reflect this. Recognising the cost constraints faced by airports, he says that in normal circumstances the Falcon Shield system can be incorporated into routine activities and effectively operated by one individual, a "sentry on watch" for the airport, whose primary responsibilities will lie elsewhere. ■



*Alberto Martin, CEO,
Luton Airport*

CONVINCING PEOPLE OF THE BENEFITS OF TRAVELLING THROUGH A TRANSFORMED LUTON AIRPORT

Alberto Martin has come a long way from the days when he ran the smallest airport in the Canary Islands with just two destinations – but the new CEO of London Luton Airport says that his experience as Managing Director of tiny El Hierro Airport will stand him in good stead now that he runs the UK’s fifth busiest airport.

For a start it made him aware of the benefits that an airport provides for its surrounding community and today, as CEO of an airport owned by the local council, Martin emphasises that Luton Airport is proud to be part of its local community and always looking for ways to ensure that it “gives back” to that community.

Then there is the knowledge that his time at El Hierro and later at

Fuerteventura and Gran Canaria airports gave him of the workings of Spain’s airport operator, Aena, which also operates Luton Airport, in partnership with Australia’s AMP Capital, under a concession agreement with Luton Borough Council. Martin has spent a total of 20 years working for Aena.

Before becoming Luton’s CEO last December, he was the airport’s Planning and Investment Director,

with responsibility for delivering its £160 million terminal transformation project, which was officially opened by Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, four days before Martin stepped up to his new role. Grayling said that the investment “firmly puts passengers at the heart of development and will improve the experience of those using the airport for business or holidays”.

The terminal upgrade was the biggest



redevelopment in the airport's 80-year history and focused on making passengers' journeys easier, quicker and more enjoyable, with 48 new shops (including Chanel) and restaurants, 3,000 new seats, a new boarding pier, an expanded security search area and a new dual carriageway, bus interchange and multi-storey car park.

Martin said he was really proud of what his team had achieved and a big part of his new job would be increasing public awareness of the transformation of Luton, to convince more and more of the travelling public to fly from the airport. He is convinced that a combination of the physical improvements to the airport and a relentless focus on the quality of the passenger experience will transform Luton's reputation and make Which? passenger satisfaction surveys which once rated Luton as

the worst airport in the UK a distant memory.

The early signs are encouraging, with some customers reporting that they have been pleasantly surprised with what they can now expect at the airport. More than 73% of passengers say that they are happy with their experience at the airport and 82% express satisfaction with their experience at security - where CAA reports say that Luton has a perceived security waiting time of just five minutes.

The airport's reputation looks set to improve further in two years' time when building work, which began last year, is scheduled to be completed on a new £225 million light rail link. That will replace an existing shuttle bus service and connect the terminal to Luton Airport Parkway station in just three minutes. It will cut the total journey time from the airport to London's St Pancras station to under 30 minutes and Martin hopes to see the frequency of fast trains to St Pancras increased to four an hour. Meanwhile, this year will see

Last year Luton had 16.6 million passengers, which was a 5% increase on the previous year. The airport introduced 36 new routes last year, with airlines now flying to 150 destinations in 40 countries.

the extension of the Oyster and contactless card system to train services between London and the airport.

Last year Luton had 16.6 million passengers, which was a 5% increase on the previous year. The airport introduced 36 new routes last year, with airlines now flying to 150 destinations in 40 countries. This year in January alone Luton had 1.1 million passengers, a 13% increase on January 2018. Martin expects growth to continue in 2019, despite Brexit-related uncertainty, though probably not at the same rate as earlier. There will be a new route to Finland and, while nothing seems to be imminent, Martin doesn't rule out the possibility of new long-haul routes. He says that continuing growth will help to support a stronger local economy and deliver much-needed additional

capacity in the South East of England. Competition with other airports in the South East will be complemented by collaboration with them to ensure harmonised improvements in the use of the region's airspace.

Martin acknowledges that dealing with noise issues will continue to be "an unavoidable part of operating a busy and ever-growing airport". He promises that he will continue to focus on working with the local community to minimise the noise impacts of growth and notes that Luton already has some of the most stringent noise control measures of any UK airport. He says that the number of complaints about noise fell by 45% in the third quarter of last year.

Asked if anything had surprised him about the CEO role at Luton, Martin says his early weeks had been much as he had expected, including a substantial rise in the number of e-mails that he receives each day and a busy daily agenda. The scale of the operation at Luton is dramatically different to his first job at El Hierro, he says, but the role remains the same: protecting the interests of the shareholders by focusing on delivering the targets that are most relevant to the airport's passenger and airline customers and to its local community. ■



CHRIS GRAYLING'S MESSAGE TO UK AIRPORTS: “WHEN YOU SUCCEED, SO DOES THE UK”

THIS year the UK will celebrate the centenary of a remarkable moment in aviation history – the start of the world's first daily, international, commercial air service.



In August 1919, a tiny de Havilland biplane carried a modest cargo, consisting of a single passenger, a supply of Devonshire cream and some grouse, on a two-hour flight between Hounslow Heath and Paris.

It was a journey that marked the beginning of modern air travel, forging the vital international connections that our country required to flourish.

Today AOA members play a more important role than ever in linking the UK with vibrant economies across the globe, while strengthening our oldest international friendships. A record breaking 284 million passengers passed through our airports in 2017 – while £85 billion of air freight shipped around the world from the UK.

And with demand forecast to surge further, this is an industry that is not standing still. I've been deeply impressed by the sector's ambition to seize new opportunities.

In the last 12 months alone we've seen a host of new routes launched from UK airports, for instance direct flights between Manchester and Mumbai. And many other airports have reported soaring traveller numbers, such as Edinburgh, which served 14 million passengers in 2018 – an all time high.

AOA members are also showing great commitment to growth and improving the passenger experience.

In August I opened phase one of Leeds Bradford's departure lounge redevelopment, while Luton has recently unveiled a new terminal building, and Birmingham has announced a £500 million expansion plan to boost capacity and passenger facilities.

All these projects will of course aid the entire UK. A thriving aviation sector is real evidence of economic confidence, growing tourism, increased trade and business investment. Our regional airports and the connections, jobs and

investment they provide, spread these benefits across the country.

However, to maintain our place in such a fiercely competitive global sector we cannot take the UK's future success for granted. We must continue to help airlines and airports prepare for the big challenges they face in the coming decades. That is why last June, we made important progress towards providing greater capacity in the South East – with Parliament's vote for the Airports National Policy Statement providing an important step towards creating a third runway at Heathrow.

And to ensure a thriving future for the industry we must keep asking fundamental questions. How can we enable aviation to grow but live up to its responsibilities to the environment and communities? How can we best harness technology and ensure a diverse and motivated workforce? How can we meet the needs of passengers, including those with disabilities?

In December the Department for Transport made a major advance towards finding a solution to these issues with the launch of our Aviation Strategy consultation. This document, named Aviation 2050, lays out a comprehensive plan for sustainable growth to ensure the industry's success over the next

“Aviation 2050 also tackles the crucial question of how we can take full advantage of our skies by modernising use of our airspace to make flights quicker, quieter and cleaner.”

three decades and beyond. But to earn the right to grow, communities must be supported, passenger voices heard, and the environment protected.

The consultation contains a wide array of innovative proposals exploring how we can achieve these goals. That might be through a Passenger Charter to improve the experience of those with disabilities, or by considering how airports can make best use of their existing runways.

Aviation 2050 also tackles the crucial question of how we can take full advantage of our skies by modernising use of our airspace to make flights quicker, quieter and cleaner. Most of this infrastructure hasn't been updated since the 1950s and, without action, one in three flights will be delayed by half an hour or more by 2030. Managing our airspace with better technology will provide more capacity and reduce delays. In addition, airspace modernisation will help airports minimise their environmental impact by reducing carbon and noise, and there will be less of a need for plane stacking.

The consultation underlines the Government and the Civil Aviation Authority's belief that airspace modernisation is necessary and highlights our commitment towards providing leadership.

It goes without saying, however, that collaboration between airports, particularly in the busy South East, will be key. So, I urge airports and the wider aviation industry to come together to deliver the benefits of modernisation through a coordinated programme. I know AOA members are also playing their part in this process, as well as providing a valuable contribution to Aviation 2050 as a whole.

While Aviation 2050 prepares the sector for many of the issues that will emerge over the coming decades – I am conscious that airports have faced some new challenges in recent

months. The recent disruption at Gatwick highlighted how we must work together to tackle the threat of malicious drone use.

In the aftermath of these utterly irresponsible and illegal incidents, my Department held a number of very constructive meetings with AOA members which have helped us take clear action as a government. This month we have further increased our restriction on drone use to cover the aerodrome traffic zone with additional extensions at runway ends. A step that builds on the Government's changes to the law last year which made it illegal to fly a drone above 400 feet and within a kilometre of an airport.

We have also passed legislation that means that from November all operators of drones, weighing between 250 grams and 20 kilogrammes, must register and pilots complete a competency test. Our forthcoming Drones Bill will also set out new measures, including giving police drone misuse stop and search powers.

But as well as passing laws it's crucial that we continue to educate the public about the safe use of drones. I'm very grateful to AOA members for their work on promoting the Civil Aviation Authority's Drone Code to highlight the rules to the public. The Government has also recently announced a partnership with retailer Jessops which will further raise awareness of the rules among customers.

We are taking a similar collaborative approach towards EU withdrawal.

The Government is determined to leave the EU with a deal. The UK and the EU have a mutual interest in maintaining closely integrated aviation markets with liberal market access - to the benefit of businesses and customers alike.

As I am sure AOA members are aware, we have agreed new bilateral flight arrangements with 11 third

countries, including the US and Canada - ensuring flights to those countries will continue after March 29.

And the EU has provisionally agreed legislation that will ensure flights to and from the EU will continue in the event of no deal so passengers can continue to book flights with confidence.

The UK will reciprocate by providing equivalent rights to airlines from those European States enabling flights to carry on in any scenario.

But regardless of the outcome of negotiations, my Department is seeking post Brexit arrangements that maximise operational and commercial flexibility for airlines and airports.

I greatly value our work with AOA members on these issues. It has been incredibly beneficial understanding your positions and concerns. And you can rest assured that on this matter - as on others facing AOA members - my Department is listening to your voice.

That's because this Government recognises the enormous value of airports and the wider aviation sector to our country and economy. When you succeed, so does the UK. So, let's continue to work in partnership, and look forward to the future with optimism. ■

Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport

“this Government recognises the enormous value of airports and the wider aviation sector to our country and economy. When you succeed, so does the UK. So, let's continue to work in partnership, and look forward to the future with optimism.”





NEW ABERDEEN AIRPORT MANAGING DIRECTOR SEES “GREEN SHOOTS” AFTER THREE TOUGH YEARS

Aberdeen Airport’s Managing Director, Steve Szalay, who started in the role last November, is predicting that 2019 will be a year of resurgence for the airport which was badly hit by the oil and gas industry slump in the last three years.



*Steve Szalay, CEO,
Aberdeen Airport
Managing Director*

As oil prices fell to \$30 a barrel, Aberdeen's passenger numbers, which peaked at 3.7 million in 2014, fell to 3.1 million in 2017 and 2018. Now, with oil prices back up to \$62 a barrel, Szalay suggests that the airport, which is the main heliport for the Scottish offshore oil industry, might hit 3.2 million passengers this year, despite last month's axing of an EasyJet route to London Gatwick Airport.

His optimism is based not just on an improving oil market, but also on a combination of already announced capacity increases by existing airlines, the opening of a new motorway expanding the airport's catchment area and this summer's opening of Scotland's state-of-the-art exhibition and conference centre "100 metres from the end of the runway".



Szalay says that a key part of his job will be to reduce the airport's reliance on the oil and gas industry, so that: "when the Aberdeen oil and gas industry catches a cold, the airport doesn't catch pneumonia".

Several of the airlines already operating out of Aberdeen have announced capacity increases for the summer, led by KLM, with an extra 20,000 seats adding 10% to capacity on its route to Amsterdam. Following the collapse of Flybmi last month, Loganair has begun operating on three former Flybmi routes from the airport to Bristol, Oslo and Esbjerg. There is also now competition on the Esbjerg route, with Danish Air Transport adding the route to its schedules.

Szalay expresses confidence too that the recent opening of Aberdeen's new western bypass will be a game-changer for the airport, as it opens a bigger catchment area to the north and south of the airport, including Dundee, which is now just an hour away. The new bypass is also good news for many airport staff, who

have seen their journey times cut from 45 to 12 minutes.

Perhaps the most important piece of good news will be this summer's opening of the £333 million exhibition and conference centre, The Event Complex Aberdeen. One of its first events in early September will be the Offshore Europe 2019 conference, which is set to attract over 36,000 attendees. Summer 2020 is the scheduled completion date for a £350 million project to expand Aberdeen harbour, which will enable large cruise ships to visit Aberdeen for the first time.

Meanwhile, the airport itself is in the third and final phase of its comprehensive terminal transformation programme, on time and on budget. April will see the opening of new shops and the

whole of the concourse and Szalay says that "it will just look and feel like a new airport. It is going to be phenomenal".

He is also keen to improve the airport experience for people arriving at the airport from the oil rigs, who may have to wait several hours landside for a connecting commercial flight. He is exploring new arrangements for early bag drops that could enable these passengers to take advantage of all the airport's airside facilities, including the new Northern Lights lounge.

Szalay says that a key part of his job will be to reduce the airport's reliance on the oil and gas industry, so that: "when the Aberdeen oil and gas industry catches a cold, the airport doesn't catch pneumonia". He will seek to do this by attracting more routes to holiday destinations such as Malaga and Palma de Mallorca. To do that he aims to bring potential new airline customers up to Aberdeen to see for themselves what he describes as the "tangible excitement that is felt around our city as we herald a bold new chapter and a bright future". ■



*Mark Johnston,
Glasgow Airport's
Managing Director*

GLASGOW AIRPORT CONTRIBUTES £1.44 BILLION TO SCOTLAND'S ECONOMY AND SUPPORTS OVER 30,000 JOBS

A new economic impact study by economists York Aviation has underlined the scale of Glasgow Airport's contribution to the economy and outlined the prospects for an even greater contribution by 2040.

The study shows that the airport, which welcomed 9.7 million passengers last year, generates more than £1.44 billion in gross value added annually and supports more than 30,000 jobs across Scotland. It also confirms the airport's key role as a gateway for global trade, with Glasgow handling more than £3.5 billion in goods in 2017.

York Aviation say that if Glasgow Airport continues to grow as forecast in its Master Plan it would contribute £2.54 billion, support over 43,000 jobs and welcome 17 million passengers annually by 2040.

Mark Johnston, Glasgow Airport's Managing Director, said: "The findings are very encouraging and show that when Glasgow Airport succeeds Scotland shares the benefit. We want to continue to grow in a sustainable and

"The findings are very encouraging and show that when Glasgow Airport succeeds Scotland shares the benefit. We want to continue to grow in a sustainable and responsible manner."

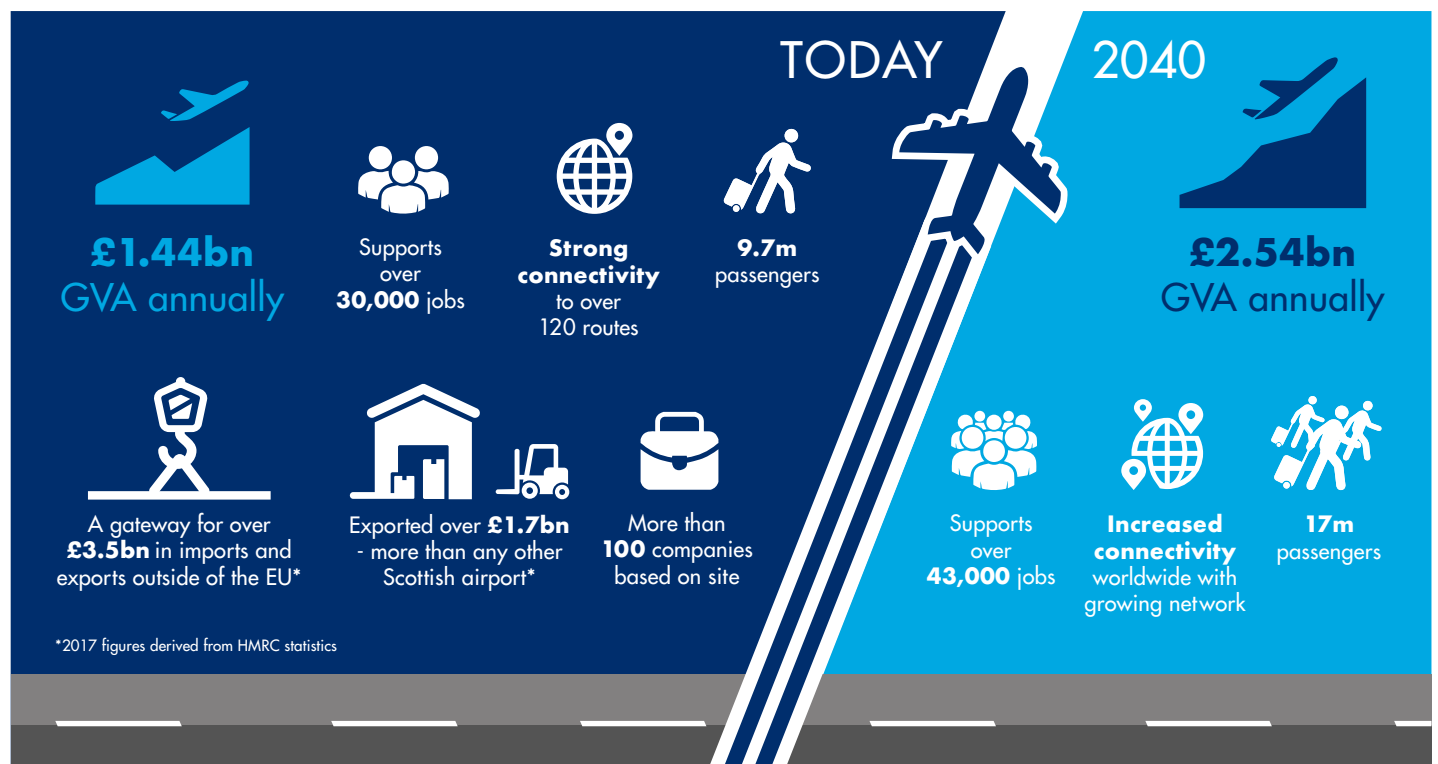
responsible manner. We can't do this on our own and it is imperative that through the ongoing support of our city and national partners we ensure Glasgow Airport continues to thrive and deliver for Scotland. To do this we also need to address the current constraints such as motorway congestion and delivering the planned rail link".

The York Aviation study has been produced to inform Glasgow

Airport's 2040 Master Plan, which will be published for public consultation later this year.

With 30 airlines serving 120 destinations worldwide, including Canada, the US, the Caribbean, Europe and the Gulf, Glasgow is Scotland's main long-haul airport and Scotland's largest charter hub and serves more Scottish destinations than any other airport. ■

GLASGOW AIRPORT - DELIVERING HUGE ECONOMIC VALUE FOR SCOTLAND





WORLD-LEADING AIRPORT SUPPLIERS JOIN AOA

The AOA has added eight new members with expertise in aviation security, airport design, recruitment and training, air traffic management, engineering and passenger information to its growing list of members.

GOLD MEMBERS:



Certis is a world leader in aviation security services, helping to keep passengers and aviation safe and helping airports to provide a first-class passenger experience. Services include access control checks, pre-boarding passenger screening and check-in baggage screening. The company provides over 3,000 armed and unarmed security officers at Singapore's Changi Airport and lists Sydney, Canberra and Hamad International Airport, Qatar among its airport clients.



Proactive, whose vision is "making passengers smile - everywhere, every day", recruits and trains people for some of the busiest transport companies in the UK. Working in partnership with companies like Heathrow Express, it collaborates to deliver "an exceptional passenger experience".

ARUP

SILVER MEMBERS:

Arup has over 50 years of experience in the physical design of airport structures from control towers to passenger terminals and cargo and maintenance facilities. It describes itself as “a trusted partner to many of the world’s leading and emerging airports – advising on investment and planning, design and implementation, as well as operational and efficiency improvement”. Arup says that it designs development programmes “where physical design is precisely aligned to passenger behaviour and changing market needs”. Its UK clients have included Birmingham, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Heathrow and Manchester.



EB Airside provides employers of airside staff with security screening for passes intended for individuals working in any area after passing through customs. The Winchester-based company says it has over 20 years’ experience in the area and can offer a service which is comprehensive, accurate and speedy. It says that airside employers need passes as quickly as possible with the peace of mind that the screening process is as through as possible.



HRGO recruitment are specialist recruitment consultants with branches in Cardiff, Crawley, Heathrow, Luton and Stockport and with 10 years’ experience in recruiting for airport and aviation roles across UK airports – including passenger service agents, ramp agents, customer service agents, flight dispatchers and aircraft de-icers. It has recruited for roles at Birmingham, Cardiff, Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton, Manchester and Stansted airports.



Think Research is an independent air traffic management and airports consultancy which works with airports, ATM service and systems providers and aircraft manufacturers to deliver performance improvement. It says that it has helped to deliver extra capacity to the world’s busiest airports. As well as increasing runway throughput, it says that it can help airports to optimise airspace, implement new ATM systems and reduce ATM costs.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:



CHS Engineering has been providing independent services to airports around the world since 1985, with a focus on cost-saving solutions and return on investment. The company has developed a range of test baggage for use in airport baggage handling systems, specialist hold baggage screening and explosive detection system trials. It also delivers electrical health and safety audits for airport retail units. CHS Engineering’s wide range of UK airport clients have included Gatwick, Heathrow, London City, Newcastle, Southampton, Southend and Stansted.



R2P provides products, technology and solutions for integrated network audio and emergency communication systems at airports. Its passenger information systems encompass public address and digital voice announcement features with built-in integration into many of the leading Flight Information Displays Systems. It provides emergency help point and emergency warning and intercommunication features, as well as systems for mobile communication and staff security.

UK AIRPORTS NEED TO SECURE THE TRUST OF THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES SAYS ICCAN CHIEF

The UK's airports will need to work with their local communities as they develop their growth plans, according to Robert Light, the Head Commissioner of the new Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN).

Asked by Airport Operator to summarise his key messages for those who run the UK's airports, he said: "We recognise that you are expecting to grow. If you want to grow, you can't do it in the way you have done it in the past. You need to take communities with you and start doing it with communities, not to them. Noise is an issue that is going to get bigger. If you don't engage effectively with your communities then it will stop or inhibit your growth plans".

Light said his view was that "at the moment the pace of airport growth is outstripping the benefits to the community" and the Commission

would be looking at what levers could be used to "drive noise down". He suggested that one question to consider would be "how can we get the quietest aircraft flying into UK airports?"

After nearly fourth months in the role and early discussions with community groups and airports, he said: "My strong first impression is that trust is the biggest problem and that mostly it isn't there. In

"If you want to grow, you can't do it in the way you have done it in the past. You need to take communities with you and start doing it with communities, not to them. Noise is an issue that is going to get bigger. If you don't engage effectively with your communities then it will stop or inhibit your growth plans".

many areas it is broken. If you can't get a baseline of trust, you can't communicate on the key issues and even some simple stuff gets difficult. When people talk there is not a lot of dialogue. I see a lot of speaking by different sides, but I don't see a lot of discussion on how to resolve issues". He said he had observed that in some areas "relationships are a little bit tired" and people were "weary after being in conflict over a long time. There is evidence that some of the relationships are possibly broken and that trust is low".

Light said that it would be a real challenge to rebuild that trust and would mean compromise on all sides. He hoped that the Commission could play a role in "bringing people out from the barricades" and said that his experience as a councillor and as a Board member of the Consumer Council for Water had given him "an understanding of what good community engagement looks like. Where there is common ground between the parties, if you can build on that you can start to deal with some of the difficult issues".

He has already attended one of Heathrow Airport's engagement meetings, being held as part of a consultation on its plans for a new runway. He has also spoken at a meeting of the airport's Community Engagement Board Question Time, which has been "set up to increase community and stakeholder participation in Heathrow's planning and decision-making processes". He said that the engagement meeting had been well set up, with plenty of information and plenty of informed people present with time to engage. He was certain that Heathrow was trying to engage with people and is clear that all airports must listen to their communities when considering airspace changes.

Light suggested that the Department for Transport's Aviation Strategy would support growth at UK airports on condition that communities were able to "share the benefits of aviation growth. If communities are going to take the pain of more, then they

should actually see benefits in their community". Asked what he meant by benefits, he said that would depend on local circumstances, but it was more than just home insulation schemes. One example he gave was that airports might invest in local traffic infrastructure.

Another area of focus for the future will be airspace change. Light said that it would be important to ensure that the airspace change process includes a very clear noise agenda. He saw it as a huge opportunity, for example, to reduce the numbers of aircraft stacking near airports. However, he acknowledged that the issues were very complex, particularly in the South East, where it would be important to develop a comprehensive plan involving every

The Department for Transport's Aviation Strategy would support growth at UK airports on condition that communities were able to "share the benefits of aviation growth. If communities are going to take the pain of more, then they should actually see benefits in their community".

affected airport, from the biggest to the smallest.

Light said that the Commission would aim to be challenging towards all its stakeholders, including the Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority, and would be fierce in defending its independence. Given its small size and limited powers, the Commission would seek to effect change by "using the power of influence. We are not going to rush into this. We will have a careful look over the next two years at how regulation can be used to drive the outcomes that society wants to see".

Reflecting on the Commission's early days, he said that good progress was being made in recruiting both Commissioners and staff and the Commission was considering whether to appoint an expert panel to advise on technical issues. It would ensure that it engages with airports and community groups from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Commission would be considering a broad range of issues. These would include best practice guidelines for community engagement, the balance between national and local decision-making on airport growth, the impact on long-term health of aviation noise, technological innovation and the need for aviation noise data that could be understood by everyone. ■



FACING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

*Richard Moriarty, Chief Executive,
UK Civil Aviation Authority*



The strength of the UK's aviation industry lies in its diversity. As well as having the busiest airport and the second biggest airline - by passenger numbers - in Europe, we also have some of the best facilities in the world for business jets. We have over 120 general aviation airfields and more than 100 flight training schools - as well as world-leading aerospace research and development institutions. It has been my privilege to see, first hand, some of this diversity during my first ten months in the role as Chief Executive of the UK Civil Aviation Authority.

There can be no doubt that the global aviation industry faces some challenging times, economically, environmentally and technologically, as well as some geo-political issues. Our intention as the regulator is to

“Our intention as the regulator is to work with the industry, not against it, to understand and navigate these challenges with the aim of ultimately serving the interests of passengers. Challenges also bring opportunities and aviation is an industry that has innovated and prospered over the years despite being buffeted by external events.”

work with the industry, not against it, to understand and navigate these challenges with the aim of ultimately serving the interests of passengers. Challenges also bring opportunities and aviation is an industry that has innovated and prospered over the years despite being buffeted by external events.

It is vital we place the passenger

at the heart of everything we do. Commercial air transport is a complex industry but with a simple goal: to get more passengers from A to B in a commercially and environmentally sustainable way, while meeting their expectations for service, and upholding their rights when things occasionally go wrong. Above all else, however, it is about making sure aviation operations have a very high level of safety and security and a culture that pushes for continuous enhancement of safety and security management.

So, as you face the future challenges and opportunities, four themes from the Civil Aviation Authority's strategy are relevant to supporting your industry: enhancing risk-based safety management; modernising aviation infrastructure capacity; upholding passenger rights; and embracing innovation and new technologies.

Enhancing safety

We must all be tireless in seeking out how we enhance risk-based safety regulation. The public tends to take safety for granted, because we, and many professionals working in the industry, do not. We can never be complacent. The ability for competitors to work together for the common good, for example, has been a shining example for other safety critical sectors. We are now raising our safety collaboration up to the next level through performance-based regulation. Overseeing organisations' compliance with regulations is no longer enough; together with industry, we strive to manage future risks by looking at safety systems, management



“We cannot ignore Brexit. Our position has always been clear: aviation and air travel are, by definition, international businesses. The UK is one of the leading global aviation players and London is one of the best-connected cities in the world.”

and culture. We cannot eliminate all risks, but we can contain those risks through a proactive and collaborative approach.

Modernising infrastructure

To cope with the growing demand for air travel, capacity needs to increase, both on the ground and in the air. We support an increase in the UK’s aviation capacity to meet future consumer demand, provided that it meets planning conditions and takes into account needs of local communities. We are developing an economic regulatory framework for Heathrow expansion which aims to ensure this nationally significant project is delivered in an affordable

and commercially financeable way. Just before Christmas we also published our new airspace modernisation strategy to set the direction for restructuring this vital national resource. For too long people have focused on physical infrastructure on the ground; but reform of the invisible infrastructure in the sky cannot be ignored and we are pleased the Government has made it a priority for its Aviation Strategy.

Upholding passenger rights

We are committed to ensuring access to air travel for all. Many UK airports have done some incredible

work over the last few years to better assist passengers with both physical and hidden disabilities, introducing innovative procedures to improve the passenger experience. We also insist that passengers have recourse to an efficient complaints process to address any concerns they have about their journey, and are working hard to make this the reality. The majority of UK airports and airlines are now signed up to the alternative dispute resolution process which sets out to deal with complaints fairly and independently, and we are encouraging all those that haven’t signed up to do so. Passengers are more aware than ever of their legal rights, and fully expect value for money for goods and services they purchase, including air travel. The aviation industry must demonstrate best-practice when it comes to upholding the rights of its passengers.

Embracing new technology

The development of new airborne technology, such as unmanned aircraft systems (drones), vertical take-off and landing air taxis, flying



cars and space planes present major regulatory challenges. We have already established a new regulation team for drones and later this year we will open a new registration scheme for drone users. Although new technologies offer potential benefits; we are mindful that there are risks as we have seen with the recent drone sightings at various airports in the last few months. Once again, we must work together to ensure these risks are identified and managed appropriately.

On a more immediate level, we cannot ignore Brexit. Our position has always been clear: aviation and air travel are, by definition, international businesses. The UK is one of the leading global aviation players and London is one of the best-connected cities in the world. We therefore want to see an outcome that continues to allow aviation and travel to flourish, which means the existence of a liberal and open market for businesses to trade within.

Passengers have benefitted enormously from the choice that has resulted from the liberalisation of aviation in Europe. Brexit should not, in our view, be used as an opportunity to restrict competition.

We also want to continue to be influential beyond our borders in ensuring safety of our citizens. The Government and the Civil Aviation Authority have been clear that our preference is to remain part of the European Aviation Safety Agency. As a responsible technical regulator, we continue to undertake the preparatory work for a range of potential outcomes of the EU exit negotiations, including the possibility of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

I have no doubt that the UK's commercial aviation sector will continue to thrive in the years ahead. The journey ahead will be far easier if we make it together with the shared aim of putting passengers at the heart of what we do. ■

“We also want to continue to be influential beyond our borders in ensuring safety of our citizens. The Government and the Civil Aviation Authority have been clear that our preference is to remain part of the European Aviation Safety Agency.”

VANDERLANDE

Reliable partner for value-added logistic process automation



Vanderlande is the global market leader for value-added logistic process automation at airports. Vanderlande's baggage handling systems move 3.7 billion pieces of luggage around the world per year, in other words 10.1 million per day. Its systems are active in 600 airports including 13 of the world's top 20. For a positive passenger experience, airport operators must find the perfect balance between offering travellers stress-free and relaxing journeys, with expedient and swift movement through checkpoints. Vanderlande's PAX CHECKPOINT solutions have been designed with state-of-the-art ASLs and configurable screening software to increase security, reduce costs and offer an improved passenger experience. Meet us at stand 5050, Passenger Terminal Expo 2019, London.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TRIAL AT HEATHROW COULD CUT DELAYS



NATS has carried out a trial at Heathrow Airport to understand whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be used to help cut flight delays.

A project nearing completion within NATS' digital tower laboratory at Heathrow has been testing whether a combination of ultra HD 4K cameras and AI and machine learning technology could improve the airport's landing capacity in times of low visibility. The trial is part of a £2.5 million investment NATS has made in a 'digital tower laboratory' inside the Heathrow control tower.

Heathrow's 87-metre tall control tower is the highest in the UK and its height can mean that it disappears into low cloud, even when the runways below are clear. In those conditions, where the controllers must rely on radar to know if an arriving aircraft has left the runway, extra time is given between each landing to ensure its safety, resulting

in a 20% loss of landing capacity.

NATS has been deploying 20 ultrahigh-definition cameras and feeding the views into an AI platform developed by Canada-based Searidge Technologies. The platform interprets the images, tracks the aircraft and informs the controller when it has left the runway, allowing the controller to decide to clear the next arrival.

The non-operational trials are designed to test the feasibility of introducing the technology into service later this year, subject to approval by the Civil Aviation Authority. The same technology might also be used in the future to control the airport's third runway.

Andy Taylor, NATS Chief Solution Officer, said: "Safety is always our top priority and Artificial Intelligence is about supporting air traffic controllers. While they remain the decision makers at the heart

of the operation, we can use it to provide new tools that help them make the best possible decisions and improve efficiency and safety. Right now we're focusing on when the control tower is in low cloud, where I'm confident we can make a very positive difference, but I am convinced that this technology can totally revolutionise how air traffic is managed at airports around the world".

Kathryn Leahy, Heathrow's Director of Operations, said: "Our capacity challenges are unique and we're always exploring new and innovative techniques to help us overcome these constraints and improve the passenger experience in a safe and resilient manner. We'll be keeping a close eye on this trial, as the technology could have a major role as we prepare for the expanded airport. We will watch how AI and digital towers could be used to monitor all of the expanded airport's runways in the future". ■



STANSTED AND CARDIFF WERE UK'S FASTEST GROWING AIRPORTS IN 2018

London Stansted Airport has retained its position as the fastest growing major airport in the UK, with passenger numbers up 8.1% in 2018, its busiest ever year.

The airport welcomed over 28 million passengers, an increase of 2.1 million passengers compared to 2017, making it one of the top five fastest growing large airports in Europe. Stansted offers more scheduled services to Europe than any other airport, apart from Munich.

Cardiff Airport was close behind in the passenger growth league table, with 8% growth in passenger numbers in 2018. Passenger growth at Cardiff has now reached 60% overall since the airport came under public ownership in 2013.

Other UK airports recording above average growth in passenger numbers in 2018 included Edinburgh (up 6.5%), London City (up 6.4%) and Bristol (up 6.2%).

Capacity-constrained Heathrow Airport recorded growth of 2.7% and passed the 80 million passenger mark for the first time. It remains the busiest airport in Europe.

According to ACI Europe figures, air passenger traffic across Europe's airports grew 6.1% in 2018. The weakest results came from airports

in Sweden, where passenger traffic stalled in the wake of the introduction of an aviation tax and the UK, which ACI Europe attributes to "mounting Brexit fears on the economy". ■

"According to ACI Europe figures, air passenger traffic across Europe's airports grew 6.1% in 2018."

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NEW DRONE RESTRICTIONS TAKE EFFECT THIS MONTH

The Government's new "no-fly" zone banning drones from flying within 5 kilometres of UK airport runways comes into force on 13 March.

The Department for Transport has written to airports asking them to publicise the new rules. Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, said that extending the zone would "help keep our airports secure and our skies safe", adding "Anyone flying their drone within the vicinity of an airport should know they are not only acting irresponsibly, but criminally, and could face imprisonment".

A new Drones Bill will give police officers powers to stop and search people suspected of using drones maliciously above 500 feet or within 5 kilometres of an airport, helping them to tackle disruption such as that seen at Gatwick last December.

Aviation Minister, Baroness Sugg, told Parliament: "The highly irresponsible and dangerous

disruption caused by drones to flights at Gatwick and Heathrow recently highlighted the risks. While the use of drones at Gatwick and Heathrow was already illegal, it is extremely important that regulation provides protection which reduces, as much as possible, the airspace where drones and manned aircraft can come into close proximity with each other. The new restriction zone will include an airport's aerodrome traffic zone as well as 5 kilometre by 1 kilometre extensions from the end of runways to protect take-off and landing paths. All drones will be restricted from flying within this zone unless appropriate permission is granted".

The Government and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have also launched a national campaign to increase public awareness of the rules around flying drones. The CAA's updated drone code provides advice on how to fly drones safely and follow the rules "to help ensure that while drone users are having

fun, they are not posing a risk to any other aircraft or people". Information about the code can be found at www.dronesafe.uk, a website developed by NATS and supported by the AOA.

The awareness campaign has been launched in partnership with the UK photographic retailing company, Jessops, who sell drones ranging in price from £99 to over £3,000. Ian Savage, Head of Retail and Academy Training at the company, said: "Drones are one of the most exciting ways of capturing stunning aerial photos and videos, and with prices more affordable than ever they are within reach of any budding photographer and videographer. Along with the pleasure drones bring comes a responsibility for the user to ensure they are flying their drone safely and legally. As one of the leading drone retailers, Jessops is committed to ensuring it communicates the new laws to all its customers". ■



HEATHROW SIGNS DEAL WITH AIRLINES TO SUPPORT GROWTH AND CURB CHARGES

Heathrow Airport has signed its first-ever commercial agreement with the major airlines that use the airport to boost passenger growth and keep airport charges down.

The deal, signed last month by the main alliance airlines, is worth “several hundred million pounds” and, according to Heathrow, “heralds a new phase of airport and airline commercial cooperation supporting growth at Heathrow”.

Subject to final approval by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the new arrangement would extend the current regulatory settlement to the end of 2021. The CAA has supported the negotiation of the commercial arrangement and is expected to launch a consultation on it shortly. The deal, which took several months to negotiate, would release funds to drive investment and growth.

Under the terms of the agreement, Heathrow will establish a new growth incentive that will encourage airlines to increase passenger numbers at the airport ahead of expansion. Airlines at Heathrow currently operate with loads below the global average. Heathrow said that: “If airlines at Heathrow reached global averages for filling aircraft there is an opportunity to reduce passenger charges by 10-20% against what they might otherwise be. With more passengers on each existing flight, Heathrow would be able to spread the development costs of expansion across a larger passenger base – helping to keep airport charges close to 2016 levels in real terms throughout the expansion project”.

Heathrow said that CAA approval would “allow all parties to focus their resources on agreeing the regulatory settlement that will be in place during the main expansion works from 2022”. The airport

emphasised that the agreement was not intended to provide an alternative framework for future regulatory settlements, which would continue to be determined by the CAA. It was: “based on commercial rebates supplementing existing regulation, securing the protection that regulation currently provides to investors and representing an additional offer to airlines reflecting Heathrow’s continued commitment to growing the airport and delivering for passengers”.

John Holland-Kaye, Heathrow’s CEO, said: “We have been working hard with our airline partners to agree a deal on airport charges to 2021. We are delighted that the result is the first-ever commercial agreement at Heathrow which will unlock hundreds of millions of pounds of potential investment for our passengers. We have shown that we can achieve more by working together and we will continue working to build on this momentum as we expand”. ■

LOGANAIR COMES TO THE RESCUE AFTER FLYBMI COLLAPSE

Loganair has stepped in to take over six routes from collapsed airline, flybmi, at Aberdeen, Newcastle and Derry airports.

The Scottish airline resumed flights from Aberdeen to Bristol, Esbjerg and Oslo from 4 March and will face competition on the route to Esbjerg in Denmark from Danish Air Transport, who opened a new service on the route on 25 February.

Loganair will establish a new operating base at Newcastle Airport and resume flights from Newcastle to Brussels and Stavanger from 25 March.

The airline has also taken over the London Stansted route from City of Derry Airport. Flights resumed on the route, which is supported by Government funding through a public service obligation, on 27 February. Transport Secretary, Chris

Grayling, said: “This route is vital because it strengthens the Union, protects choice and boosts trade and travel opportunities, enabling business trips to and from Derry-Londonderry within a day”.

Jonathan Hinkles, Loganair’s Managing Director, said: “There is no doubt that trading is tough, but Loganair is, we believe, in the strongest position of any UK regional airline”. ■



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