

THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION



UK AVIATION HEADS FOR NET ZERO BY 2050

Features

UK AVIATION LEADERS
*commit to net zero carbon
emissions by 2050*

EDINBURGH AIRPORT
*Chief Executive says aviation
is deadly serious about cutting
emissions*

**NEWCASTLE
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT** *plans to become
a net zero airport by 2035*

**LEEDS BRADFORD
AIRPORT** *announces plans for
new eco-friendly terminal building*

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KAREN DEE

Introduction to The Airport Operator



I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to this edition of The Airport Operator, published to coincide with our 2020 Annual Dinner.

Our dinner, at which I look forward to meeting many of you, follows a very eventful year for the UK, with the General Election last December followed by our departure from the European Union at the end of January, the emergence of coronavirus, which has presented UK airports with significant operational and business challenges and, most recently, the collapse of Flybe.

We took the opportunity of the election to remind politicians of our top five priorities. We said that the new Government should deliver a national aviation policy that supports sustainable aviation growth, prioritise a new legal framework for the UK's aviation connectivity after Brexit, support industry in modernising UK airspace, ensure that the UK's border is secure and welcoming and review, and reform Air Passenger Duty to boost the UK's international competitiveness.

The meetings that I have had with Ministers and officials at the Department for Transport since the election have given me some optimism about progress on a number of these issues. We were encouraged by the Government's decision to launch a review of regional air connectivity and of Air Passenger Duty, but have heard nothing more, and we await with greater than usual interest the first Budget from the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak.

Meanwhile officials at the Department for Transport have continued to work on the development of the Government's Aviation Strategy. In our discussions on this we have emphasised the importance of the Government setting a clear strategic overall direction. We would like to see a very clear statement from Ministers that they believe aviation growth can and should be accommodated, providing that it is

achieved in line with the commitments that the UK has made on sustainability. This is brought into sharp focus by the Court of Appeal judgement on Heathrow's expansion plans.

The AOA and its member airports are strong supporters of the commitment that Sustainable Aviation made last month to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 through a combination of smarter flight operations, new aircraft and engine technology, airspace modernisation, sustainable fuels and market-based measures. The roadmap demonstrates clearly that growth across the UK can be accommodated whilst also achieving that target.

We have a big job to do to convince a sceptical public and local authorities that this dramatic commitment is achievable, but I am encouraged by the Transport Secretary's description of our sector's commitment as "a huge step forward in creating a greener future". You can read more about the detail that lies behind the commitment in an article that I have written for this edition of our magazine.

Every part of the aviation sector is working hard to deliver a sustainable future and I know from discussions with our members that airports across the country are prioritising action to ensure that their own operations will achieve the net zero goal. A good example was the announcement in January that Leeds Bradford Airport plans to tear down its existing terminal building to replace it with a new one that will meet the highest international standards for environmental efficiency. We have an interview with Chief Executive, Hywel Rees, that explains the "profound change" that the new terminal will deliver for passengers and airlines alike. Elsewhere in the magazine you can read about growth plans at both Teesside International Airport and Edinburgh Airport.

Here at the AOA we know that we have a huge job to do to represent the interests of all of our airports to Government and to Parliament. We will continue to make the case that a flourishing and environmentally responsible aviation sector will be a vital and essential enabler of prosperity for global Britain and for businesses and communities across the country. ■

Karen Dee, Chief Executive



AOA CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KAREN DEE, DESCRIBES HOW UK AVIATION LEADERS MADE A WORLD-FIRST COMMITMENT TO NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS BY 2050

On 4 February, leaders of the UK aviation industry, including many airport CEOs, came together to commit our industry to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

This is a world-first: nowhere else has the whole of the industry – airlines, aerospace manufacturers, airports and air navigation service providers – come together to make such a clear commitment. Not only is there a commitment, but there is also the latest Decarbonisation Road-Map that was launched at the event, organised by Sustainable Aviation (SA), which sets out how the industry will realise this commitment.

As the world changes, so have expectations of aviation around our ability to meet global carbon targets. Aviation must play its full part in helping the UK deliver a net zero future, while at the same time enabling aviation to continue to deliver the benefits of global connectivity that have been such a catalyst for prosperity. The enemy is carbon, not air travel.

The three main ways of reducing emissions are focused on new engine and aircraft technology (including hybrid and electric propulsion), the use of sustainable fuels and airspace modernisation. Alongside that will sit carbon offsetting of the remaining emissions by 2050, through market-based measures. Emerging technologies, such as carbon capture and storage may also have a role to play.

UK aviation has already made great strides– for example, between 2010 and 2016 passenger numbers in the UK grew by more than 25%, while total emissions only grew by under 5%. Overall, emissions continue to be below 2005 levels, thanks to cleaner-burning aircraft, improved operations and improved air traffic management.

But we must go further and faster to achieve net zero by 2050, while meeting the expected growth in demand from passengers. SA's Decarbonisation Road-Map sets out how we can achieve this: through a combination of measures and in collaboration with Government.

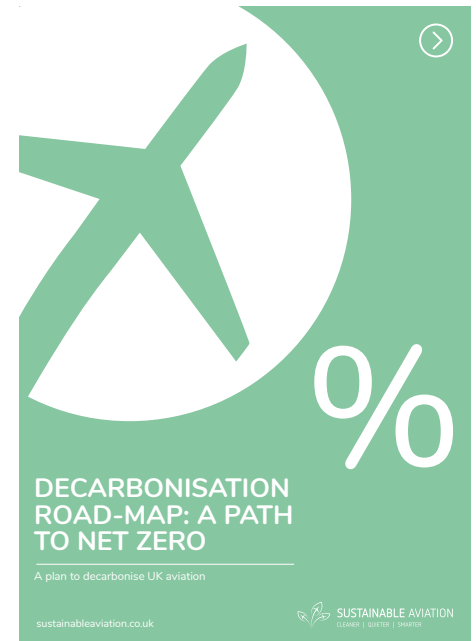
In the short to medium term, sustainable aviation fuels will be

Aviation must play its full part in helping the UK deliver a net zero future, while at the same time enabling aviation to continue to deliver the benefits of global connectivity that have been such a catalyst for prosperity.

crucial to reduce emissions from existing fleets. In the longer-term, as hybrid and electric aircraft start operating on shorter routes, these fuels will play a crucial role in reducing emissions for long-haul flights. These fuels exist today, work in existing gas-turbine engines and could reduce UK aviation emissions in 2050 by at least 30%. Achieving this will require a positive policy environment, but if we get this right, the UK could be a world leader in sustainable aviation fuels.

Alongside support for sustainable fuels, we must continue to focus on the future technologies. Through the Aerospace Growth Partnership (AGP) and the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI), the aerospace manufacturers are already investing in innovation and research, including the hybrid electric and fully electric aircraft. Alongside upgrades to aircraft already in operation, the Road-Map shows that we can achieve further emissions reductions of 24% through this. The Government needs to continue to support this aerospace R&D, through the AGP and increased investment through the ATI.

Lastly, upgrading our airspace will have an important role to play, including through the potential it has to reduce noise impacts for communities near airports.



Airspace modernisation will offer benefits through more direct routes, limiting or even eliminating airborne holding of aircraft and create opportunities for respite from noise for communities. To achieve this, Government must take a leadership role and provide the right policy and regulatory framework to enable the industry to deliver modernisation.

Net zero aviation will not happen overnight, but we have set out our commitment as an industry to achieving it. It is a credible and realistic target and if we work together as an industry, in partnership with Government, we can create a thriving aviation sector compatible with our global climate ambitions. ■

UK aviation has already made great strides– for example, between 2010 and 2016 passenger numbers in the UK grew by more than 25%, while total emissions only grew by under 5%.

BRISTOL AND STANSTED PASSENGER GROWTH PLANS BLOCKED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Planning applications by Bristol and Stansted airports to allow them to serve more passengers have been blocked by their local authorities.

Meeting last month, North Somerset Council's Planning and Regulatory Committee voted to recommend refusal of Bristol Airport's application to increase its capacity from 10 to 12 million passengers a year, contrary to the recommendation of its planning officers.

The vote came a month after Uttlesford District Council's Planning Committee also voted to ignore the advice of its officers and reject Stansted's application to increase the number of passengers it can serve from 35 to 43 million passengers a year.

Commenting on the North Somerset vote, council leader, Don Davies, said: "I know some people will be upset by this decision and I am sure that we can reconsider it in future when the airline industry has decarbonised and the public transport links to the airport are far stronger".

Bristol Airport said it was "disappointed" by the decision,

which it said: "risks putting the brakes on the region's economy by turning away airlines who want to serve the South West market, shutting the door to international trade and tourism at a time when the UK needs to show it is open for business. By preventing Bristol Airport from meeting demand for air travel from within the region it serves, the Council will simply exacerbate the situation which already sees millions of passengers a year from our region drive to London airports in order to fly, creating carbon emissions and congestion in the process".

The North Somerset vote is not the end of the process. Because the councillors went against their officers' recommendations, the decision will return to the same committee to be ratified. If the decision is ratified, Bristol Airport has six months to lodge an appeal, which would be heard at a public inquiry.

Stansted Airport also said it was "disappointed" by the Uttlesford vote and was considering its next

steps. A spokesman said that Stansted's application "would have enabled the airport to serve more passengers without any increase in the permitted number of flights and with a noise footprint that is 15% smaller than our current operations". Uttlesford's decision to reject Stansted's application means that the final decision is likely to be made at a public inquiry.

Two weeks after the Uttlesford vote, the Stop Stansted Expansion group suffered a High Court defeat when Mr Justice Dove dismissed their appeal arguing that the Government should consider the planning application. The judge's ruling gave weight to the argument that climate change, noise and air quality concerns are addressed by national policies and not individual planning applications. Stansted welcomed the dismissal of the appeal and said it confirmed what the airport and the Government had said all along, that the application did not raise matters of national significance and should be dealt with and considered properly, as any other planning application. ■

AOA BUDGET REPRESENTATION TO THE CHANCELLOR

At a time when the UK Government's focus is on the country's global prospects, it is important to emphasise that it is aviation that provides essential connectivity for exporters, inward investors and other business travellers.

Aviation is one of the UK's success stories and we want aviation to play its full part in helping to secure the UK's future prosperity.

In the AOA's Budget Representation to the Chancellor, we welcomed the Government's intervention in the case of Flybe earlier this year. The immediate issue highlighted by this case is that of domestic Air Passenger Duty (APD). The AOA is pleased to see its announcement of a review of APD and specifically the issue of double charging of APD on domestic routes. More broadly, we urge the Government to reduce APD by 50% to bring it in line with the UK's competitors, ensuring that global Britain remains competitive.

Alongside the APD review, the Department for Transport has launched a review of regional connectivity to consider how improved connections could be delivered to assist Government's objective to "level up" economic activity across the UK. It is essential that this takes a more

fundamental look at the fiscal and business environment within which UK aviation operates, alongside the APD review.

The AOA called for investment in surface transport access to airports to boost economic growth in our Budget representation to help create new jobs, and this should also be included as part of the Aviation Strategy. The AOA urges the Government to build on the commitment in the Government's Transport Investment Strategy. We would further call on the Treasury to engage with and prepare for the Aviation Strategy to ensure it can be properly funded and any recommendations delivered where a strong business case and proper cost-benefit analysis can be shown. As part of this, the Government should mandate Highways England, Network Rail, local transport authorities and local government to deliver improvements in surface access to airports.

The aviation industry recognises that future growth is contingent on efforts to decarbonise and make air travel more sustainable.

In early February, Sustainable Aviation Carbon Road-Map: A Path to Net Zero was launched, which sets out how the industry can achieve net zero carbon emission by 2050 with the right support from the Government. We asked the Chancellor to announce further plans to support the decarbonisation of airside vehicles and to encourage the greater uptake of ultra-low-emission vehicles at airports, in addition to support for sustainable aviation fuels – a crucial part of the decarbonisation road-map.

We also call for further resources for Border Force to ensure that it is better equipped to deal with increased passenger numbers, particularly at peak travel times. These resources should be based on a long-term plan, informed by analysis by both airports and Border Force to predict and project passenger levels into the future, allowing the Treasury to understand several years in advance what resourcing levels are likely to be required, and to cost these into future budgets accordingly. ■



THE AOA'S "BEST UK AIRPORT" AWARDS GO TO BIRMINGHAM, LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AND LONDON SOUTHEND

At the AOA awards 2019, Birmingham, Liverpool John Lennon and London Southend airports won the Best Airport award in their category. These awards were judged by members of Airlines UK, the trade association for UK airlines.

The “Best Airport” awards were presented by travel journalist, Simon Calder, at the AOA 2019 awards dinner held at London’s County Hall.

Birmingham Airport won the award for “Best Airport handling over 10 million passengers per annum” for the second consecutive year. AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, said that “Birmingham’s commitment to its passengers and customers shone through and secured them their victory amid strong competition for this award from airports across the UK”. The airport’s CEO, Nick Barton, said winning the award “signifies that our strategy to invest in our facilities and service is being positively welcomed by our airlines and customers”.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport won the award for “Best Airport handling between 3 – 10 million passengers per annum”. The airport’s awards entry focussed on a number of achievements including more destinations and more passengers whilst maintaining the highest levels of customer

service and a 5-star rating for its short queue times to pass through security. CEO, John Irving, said: “This is a special award for the airport as it demonstrates how well-respected we are not only by passengers from across the region, but within the aviation industry too”.

London Southend Airport won the award for “Best Airport handling under 3 million passengers per annum” for the fourth time in five years. Glyn Jones, CEO of the airport’s owners, Stobart Aviation, said: “To win this award for the fourth consecutive year is once again down to all the hard work that the team at London Southend has put in”. He said that the airport – the UK’s fastest growing – was “easy to use, with short walking distances, and a lack of queues compared to other London airports”.

Four other airports also picked up awards. **London Gatwick Airport** won the award for “Best Environmental Initiative” for the second year running. This year’s award, for Gatwick’s new circular waste system, was praised by the



judges as “an exciting initiative with clear environmental benefits that was integrated into the airport’s long-term vision”.

UK Airports Safety Week awards went to East Midlands and London Luton airports. **East Midlands Airport** won the award for “Best UK Airports Safety Week Campaign”, with the judges praising “an excellent overall campaign which engaged not only the full range of stakeholders on the campus but the wider community around the airport”. **London Luton Airport** won the award for “Best UK Airports Safety Week Initiative”. The airport’s initiative featured the use of a “Safety Bus” – initially just used during Safety Week, it is now a permanent fixture, touring the airport every fortnight to help staff to learn about safety procedures.

The award for “Best Airport for General Aviation”, judged by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), went to **Sywell Aerodrome** for its safe, efficient and friendly environment. The judges said that the Northamptonshire airport was dedicated to providing a General Aviation aerodrome that was



of a high standard and well-liked by many GA pilots.

Two awards went to non-Airport Members of the AOA. **AiQ Consulting** won the award for “Best Solution Provider”. Their entry title was “AiQ and NATS at Bristol Airport; providing an end-to-end capacity assessment from kerbside to airspace”. The judges praised “a holistic, whole journey approach which clearly helped the airport to achieve its goals”. **AECOM** won the award for “Best Innovator” for the work of its Major Infrastructure Resource Optimisation Group, with the judges concluding that benefits to the airport had been clearly articulated. ■

The “Best Airport” awards were presented by travel journalist, Simon Calder, at the AOA 2019 awards dinner held at London’s County Hall.





EDINBURGH AIRPORT'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE SAYS AVIATION SECTOR MUST DO MORE TO CONVINCING THE PUBLIC IT IS "DEADLY SERIOUS" ABOUT CUTTING CARBON EMISSIONS

Public opinion about flying and carbon emissions may be at "a tipping point" according to Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport, and the aviation sector needs to do more to convince people that it is "deadly serious" about cutting emissions.



Dewar said it was “too early to say” whether flight shame was a factor in falling domestic passenger numbers, but he was clear that the aviation sector has got to “show that we are on the most committed path” to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The sector needed to secure vocal third-party support from trusted experts on the issue, including scientists, opinion-formers and policy makers.

He said that Edinburgh Airport is on course to achieve carbon neutrality for its own operations this year and would seek to widen the scope of its activities to encompass not just its own on-site activity and renewable energy procurement but also to influence aircraft take-off and landing patterns and travel to and from the airport.

Dewar said that the airport remains committed to submitting an airspace change proposal and would continue to work with the Civil Aviation Authority on this, since the use of new technology would lead to a reduction in aircraft track miles and emissions, as well as minimising the noise impact of flights. He acknowledged that not all of those affected would be happy with the outcome, but said the airport was determined to achieve “an outcome that will be the best solution in the round”.

Edinburgh Airport’s airspace change plans are designed not just to impact on emissions and noise but also to improve the airport’s capacity. Airspace around the airport has remained unchanged since the 1970s, while passenger numbers have grown from 1 million

to nearly 15 million and the airport is “getting towards the limit of capacity” at peak times.

Creating capacity headroom was also a key element of the airport’s £75 million terminal expansion, opened last summer by Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. The expanded terminal provides more gates, new stands and new retail outlets. There is more investment to come this summer, when the airport will introduce a new baggage system behind the scenes and new check-in facilities, which Dewar says will “transform the check-in experience”.

Outside the terminal the airport’s priority is to see a new road built to alleviate congestion on the airport’s single existing road. Dewar’s hope is that planning permission will be

secured this year, construction will start in 2021 and the new road will open in 2022. He notes that it should be of particular benefit for passengers travelling between the airport and Edinburgh city centre by bus, where Edinburgh achieves 37% public transport modal share, with bus being the largest contributor.

A total of 14,747,830 people travelled through Edinburgh Airport last year, making 2019 the busiest in the airport's history and the busiest ever year for a Scottish airport. Growth in international passengers drove the increase, with EasyJet and Ryanair adding new routes and increasing frequencies, supported at year-end by the arrival of Hungarian low-cost carrier, Wizz Air, with new routes to Warsaw, Gdansk, Budapest and Bucharest. Dewar attributed falling domestic passenger numbers to a combination of factors, including reduced Ryanair flights from Stansted and Brexit-related uncertainty.

Reflecting on the election of a UK Government committed to rebalancing the national economy, Dewar said he was encouraged by the Government's announcement of a review of regional air connectivity. Edinburgh Airport was engaging with the review, which he anticipated would look at existing Public Service Obligations for uncommercial routes, such as those in the Highlands and Islands, and domestic Air Passenger Duty. He acknowledged that the Treasury was traditionally reluctant to consider cuts in APD and suggested that, if cuts were not considered to be appropriate, then the Government should at least consider ensuring that some of the proceeds of APD are invested in decarbonisation initiatives and encouraging and incentivising others to contribute.

Another area of UK Government activity in which Dewar is taking a close interest is this year's negotiation with the EU on the future UK-EU trading relationship



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and on future commercial aviation rights. He is optimistic that both sides will see the benefit of maintaining most of the current flying rights and notes that, in any event, some airlines have already acted to secure new licences that will preserve their freedoms, whatever the outcome. He says that he is more concerned about less obvious risks, such as border checks starting to take longer, and the overall impact of the negotiations on the economy.

Dewar speaks throughout with evident pride in the contribution that his airport makes to the success of the Scottish economy and of the Scottish tourism industry in particular. But he concludes the interview by expressing quiet satisfaction that the airport was

recently named the winner of the International Aviation Review's Best Accessibility Initiative award.

That recognition of Edinburgh Airport's industry-leading service to Passengers with Reduced Mobility was an important external acknowledgement of the great strides that the airport has made since the days when the regulator ruled that this was an area requiring improvement. Dewar pays tribute to the passion of the airport's customer-facing staff who, he says, should take the credit not just for the award-winning quality of the airport's mainstream service for PRMs but also for the quality of its care for passengers with hidden disabilities, such as children on the autistic spectrum. ■



*Ben Houchen,
Tees Valley Mayor*

The background features a dark, textured surface with a grid of white letters. The letters are arranged in a pattern that suggests a word search or a crossword puzzle. A faint, stylized soccer ball is visible in the lower-left quadrant. The main text is centered and reads:

TEESSIDE AIRPORT REBORN WITH NEW ROUTES TO LONDON, FIVE OTHER UK AND IRELAND DESTINATIONS AND ALICANTE

Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen, has heralded “a new dawn for our airport” after Eastern Airways announced a new daily service from Teesside to London City Airport and new routes to Alicante, Belfast, Cardiff, Dublin, the Isle of Man and Southampton.



Ben Houchen and Tony Burgess, Eastern Airways Managing Director

When the first flight takes off to London City Airport on 27 April it will mark the first time that Teesside has been linked to the capital by air in more than 11 years, restoring a route that Houchen said would play an essential role in Teesside's future economic development.

The first flights from the airport to Alicante in nine years will run twice a week from 17 July. The new Spanish route was revealed by the Mayor and Eastern Airways at Middlesbrough Football Club's Riverside Stadium. The airport has a new partnership with the club to promote it at games and to fans and supporters across the world via social media. Houchen said he was "over the moon" to be able to announce the Alicante route ahead of the first anniversary of the Tees Valley Combined Authority buying the airport.

Taken together, the new routes will give the airport 39 additional flights per week, adding over 185,000 seats each year and more than doubling the number of available seats. Houchen said that the Eastern Airways

announcements were "a massive vote of confidence" in Teesside International Airport. The airline's Managing Director, Tony Burgess, said that his company had a "progressive partnership" with Teesside and was already planning ahead with the airport for an expanded European programme for the 2021 summer season.

Teesside's most popular route continues to be the KLM link to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, Europe's third busiest hub airport, with direct flights to 327 destinations around the world. Looking ahead, the airport is also talking to some of the main low-cost carriers about possible new leisure routes to "sun and sand" destinations and Houchen said he was hopeful about making progress in time for the summer 2021 schedules.

The Teesside airport was brought back into public ownership last year after the Tees Valley Combined Authority agreed to a £40 million deal to acquire the majority stake then owned by Peel Airports Ltd. Today the airport is 75% owned by the combined

authority and 25% owned by Stobart Aviation, who now operate the airport. While the airport continues its search for a Managing Director, day-to-day operations are in the hands of a team led by Stobart Aviation CEO, Glyn Jones. His colleague, Kate Willard, Director of Partnership Development at Stobart Group, said Teesside had seen "a significant uplift in passengers over the last year" and was having its best year since 2013.

Houchen said that his election as Mayor in 2017 on a pledge to buy the airport showed that local people were not prepared to accept its continuing decline and understood that a new approach was needed to realise the airport's potential. He said that the Eastern announcement meant that Teesside was "once again connected by air to all four corners of the United Kingdom and Ireland", but it was "just the start" and showed what could be done "when you believe in local people and our local airport".

He expressed confidence that, over the next 10 to 12 years, "we will again be on a more competitive footing in relation to Newcastle

Airport”, suggesting that the densely populated urban areas surrounding Teesside International Airport would be a great asset in achieving that.

Welcoming the Government’s decision to launch a regional air connectivity review, Houchen said that if the Government wanted to show its support for the regions the best thing that it could do would be to abolish or at least massively reduce domestic Air Passenger Duty.

Houchen said he did not accept that growth at Teesside’s airport was incompatible with the UK’s commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, pointing out that a wider choice of routes from a local airport would mean that people no longer needed to make much longer journeys on the ground to reach an airport. He also suggested that the best way of dealing with aviation’s carbon emissions would not be to limit growth, but instead to look to enterprise and innovation to find new low-carbon solutions. Houchen said that Teesside is already a low-carbon, clean-growth centre, with Redcar-based businesses developing innovative technology for biodegradable jet fuel.

The airport’s aspirations for further growth are not limited to commercial passenger flights. It is also in discussion with a number of offshore wind manufacturers about providing them with a new heliport base for North Sea wind turbines. Houchen said that Teesside could be an ideal location for them, though he recognised that it would first need to upgrade its radar systems to accommodate them.

Another key development on which work is already starting is the creation of a new business park on the 270 acres of land that the Authority owns to the south of the airport. A £23.6 million investment by the Authority to develop critical infrastructure is designed to kick-



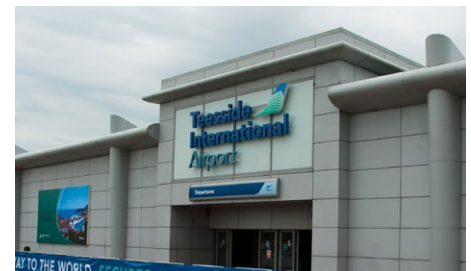
“The best way of dealing with aviation’s carbon emissions would not be to limit growth, but instead to look to enterprise and innovation to find new low carbon solutions.”

start a project that could ultimately result in 3.4 million sq ft of new logistics and manufacturing space and the creation of over 4,000 new jobs. Rental income from the business park would be reinvested in the airport.

Having brought new life to an airport, Houchen has now set his sights on achieving something similar for a railway station.

Teesside Airport station, which is almost a mile away from the airport terminal, currently only comes to life at 14.54 on a Sunday when a westbound train stops on its way from Hartlepool to Darlington. In 2017/2018 the station was used by only 74 people, though that represented an improvement on earlier years when it was the least-used railway station in the country. Bus services linking the station to the airport were withdrawn many years ago.

Now the Tees Valley Combined



Authority has agreed to spend £6 million on a ten-year rescue plan to upgrade the station and to encourage the line’s train operators to stop there. Houchen said: “As we secure more flights and more passengers through the terminal, we need trains to stop more frequently so more and more people can use the railway as a way of getting to the airport”. In the short term a new shuttle bus service to link the station to the airport terminal is being considered, while in the long term there has even been discussion about building new moving walkway links.

All that is a long way into the future. Meanwhile, Houchen has another election to fight. He will stand for re-election as Tees Valley Mayor in May on a platform that includes the slogan: “Teesside International Airport. Promise delivered”. ■

MODERN SLAVERY EXPERT URGES UK AIRPORTS TO TAKE ACTION TO STOP CROSS-BORDER VICTIM TRAFFICKING

Marc Stanton, Director of Slave-Free Alliance, explains how the airport industry is positively progressing in reaction to the real threat of forced labour through human trafficking in the sector.

With recent members of Slave-Free Alliance including a total of eight UK airports, comprising of big industry players such as MAG, AGS, Liverpool John Lennon and Edinburgh, it indicates a huge increase in awareness of the issue of modern slavery within the aviation industry, and a commitment to taking steps to eradicate this monstrous practice.

Human trafficking resulting in enslaved victims is an abhorrent issue which is unfortunately rife here in Britain, although many are unaware of just how significant the impact is. The shocking truth is that modern slavery is on the increase,

with figures of British victims rising over 72% year on year. In the UK alone, there's currently estimated to be 136,000 people living in a state of forced labour, which is only one of the elements encapsulated by the term modern slavery. These statistics are based on only those

cases that are reported; this hidden crime happening amongst us is fuelled by coercion, suppression and terror, meaning that many victims, even upon escape, are silenced through ongoing fear of their captors and potential violent repercussions for both themselves

The shocking truth is that modern slavery is on the increase, with figures of British victims rising over 72% year on year. In the UK alone, there's currently estimated to be 136,000 people living in a state of forced labour, which is only one of the elements encapsulated by the term modern slavery.

and their families. This means it's extremely likely the real number of victimised people is substantially higher.

Unbelievably, traffickers dehumanise their victims, treating them as a money generating possession only useful if they are making the captors a profit. It's happening everywhere, and the airport industry inclusive of its wider supply chain is no exception. Slave-Free Alliance has been developed to help organisations across the UK drive their anti-slavery strategies, supporting them to increase their knowledge, drive awareness and strengthen their defences, ensuring adequate protection against trafficker infiltration. A growing number of UK airports have come to realise that, supported by parent charity Hope for Justice, Slave-Free Alliance offer an unrivalled network of expert assistance.

A Tangible Threat

Exploitation can be happening undetected within any businesses; it's often the case that unprepared outfits learn a hard lesson through victim discovery enabled by a weak link in their supply chain. This was evidenced through Operation Fort, the UK's largest human trafficking bust in UK history, which was supported by Slave-Free Alliance. Over the course of five years, a gang of traffickers were able to place around 400 victims in numerous legitimate businesses across the UK, some of them being well-known, household names. The weak link in this case was a recruitment agency breached through the employment of a respectable looking gang member, who facilitated the placement of victims without raising suspicion. Mainstream media coverage of this prosecution has helped bring the issue of modern slavery to the forefront. Slave-Free Alliance is the preventative partner businesses need to stop this from happening to them.

Marc Stanton,
Director of
Slave-Free Alliance



Slave-Free Alliance has been developed to help organisations across the UK drive their anti-slavery strategies, supporting them to increase their knowledge, drive awareness and strengthen their defences, ensuring adequate protection against trafficker infiltration.

Due to the profitability of the airport industry, many UK airports are required by the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to publish a Modern Slavery Statement outlining intended preventative practice on an annual basis; however this is the minimum legal requirement, and more must be done to adequately shield operations from penetration.

An Inside Understanding

Slave-Free Alliance recommends that every anti-slavery endeavour

starts with an assessment of where each individual business currently stands in relation to its own unique operations and associated risks. A bespoke, expert gap analysis can highlight any potential areas of infiltration in current ways of working and streamline focus on eliminating these vulnerabilities through strategic recommendations. No proactive action can be taken without first understanding the level and specific areas of risk within a business; there is no one size fits all solution, or isolated practice; a

future-focused plan for continuous improvement is essential.

Expanding Explorations

Once there's an understanding of the key risks within a particular organisation, evaluations should next extend beyond the immediate business remit, focusing on the exploration of areas of vulnerability in the wider supply chain. Businesses cannot afford to turn a blind eye; as proven by Operation Fort, low-cost agencies or suppliers whose rates and services seem too good to be true, often are. It's dangerous to assume any business within the supply chain has taken steps to safeguard themselves; the majority of smaller businesses are innocently unaware of the risks, although some can astonishingly be complicit in the cascading of forced labourers. A procurement practice with strict controls ensuring only responsible and reputable suppliers are selected is the most sensible solution. This should be thorough, with focus placed on ethical sourcing, and extend to current suppliers as well as potential contractors and collaborators. Indicators of a sound supplier are: comprehensive Companies House record; insurance and accreditations; complete financial records; updated policies and procedures; record keeping system with standard record reviews.

Activating Awareness

As well as being vulnerable through their extended supply chain and own operations, Airports can also be the unwitting conduits of human traffickers shuttling victims through the system undetected. Cross border trafficking is still a prevalent crime associated with the facilitation of modern slavery, despite improved controls. A prevalent demographic of victims trafficked outside of their country of origin are those of North African and Middle Eastern descent, with 41% of these nationals being repatriated from a

different area entirely. Awareness activation beyond the essential security staff to all airport staff members, from retailers to cleaners and everyone in between, is pivotal in the prevention of this heinous crime. Some of the things to look for when screening for victims include dishevelled appearance; visible injuries or ailments; irregular anxious behaviour; a strange dynamic with their travelling companion; the inability to understand simple requests in relation to their personal circumstances. The Combatting Human Trafficking Handbook released by Airports Council International this year would be the very minimum advised educational intervention to inform staff.

Training for staff to identify potential contractors or employees who could be victims of forced labour is equally important. In addition to the universal signs mentioned above, one of the strong victim indicators is if an employee is accompanied to and from work, seemingly unable to have freedom of movement beyond this arrangement. Roles that are particularly at risk vary, including those in waste management and

cleaning positions. Assumptions should never be made about any employee, permanent, temporary or otherwise engaged. A clear set of standards, values, sanctions and a reporting system should be applied harmoniously from employment inception for all. It's therefore important for HR to have an extensive understanding and to push this recruitment protocol out to the wider organisation, including any external recruitment agents.

The advice in this article is not exhaustive; there are many more elements to consider when constructing the best possible armour for your organisation. By joining Slave-Free Alliance, you'll be uniting with a coalition of airports displaying a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery within business and supply chains. In-depth advice and services include training, technical consultation, gap analysis, multi-site assessments and more, which will positively impact your organisation; 100% of members said they were very likely to recommend membership to another organisation. You'll also be benefiting the worldwide fight against modern slavery, as all profits made by Slave-Free Alliance are reinvested in Hope for Justice's charitable activities committed to ending oppression on an international level, for good. ■

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**Aberdeen, East Midlands,
Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool
John Lennon, Manchester,
Southampton and Stansted
airports are all members of Slave-Free Alliance.**

*By joining
Slave-Free
Alliance, you'll
be uniting with
a coalition
of airports
displaying a zero-
tolerance approach
to modern slavery
within business
and supply chains.*

NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCES PLANS TO BECOME A NET ZERO AIRPORT BY 2035

Newcastle International Airport has detailed plans to become a Net Zero emissions airport by 2035, its centenary year.

The airport will take steps to procure and generate renewable energy, as well as shifting to new technologies. Over the next 15 years a brand-new fleet of electric vehicles will be introduced across the airport, including passenger and car park buses, with improved facilities for customers with electric vehicles.

Newcastle will also work with airlines to encourage more use of the latest, most efficient aircraft, such as the A320 NEO. The NEO aircraft, which already operates at the airport, delivers a 15% saving in CO2 emissions.

The airport's Chief Executive, Nick Jones, said: "Decarbonising the airport before 2035 will be a challenge, but this is something that we feel strongly about. Newcastle International is an extremely important asset to the region and we pride ourselves

on being a good neighbour. The people of the North East are at the heart of everything we do, so it is vital that we make the changes needed to be able to grow the airport in a sustainable manner that protects the environment we all live and work in".

Meanwhile, the airport has been celebrating the launch last month of a new six-days-a-week Lufthansa service to Munich, where the hub airport provides over 130 onward connections to Europe, the Americas and Asia Pacific. The new route, complementing an existing Eurowings route to Dusseldorf, is expected to reinforce Germany's position as the North East's largest inbound tourism market.

Jones said: "We are delighted that Lufthansa, a globally renowned, five-star airline, has chosen to operate from Newcastle International Airport. Watching the

first flight take to the skies was a very proud moment for the airport and an important milestone for the region". ■

"Decarbonising the airport before 2035 will be a challenge, but this is something that we feel strongly about. Newcastle International is an extremely important asset to the region and we pride ourselves on being a good neighbour".



CORNWALL AIRPORT NEWQUAY APPOINTS NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR

Cornwall Airport Newquay has announced that Pete Downes will be its new Managing Director from 4 May.

Downes will join from London City Airport, where he is currently Aviation Director. He began his career in transport with FirstGroup and entered the aviation industry at Bristol Airport, where he was Head of Aviation. He replaces former Managing Director, Al Titterington, who left Cornwall Airport Newquay to become Terminal Operations Director at Birmingham Airport.

Commenting on Downes' appointment, Cornwall Airport Newquay Chairman, Tim Jeans, said: "As we reach more destinations by air than ever before from Cornwall, Pete is ideally placed to boost the future of the airport and the vital role it plays to connect visitors and businesses with our region. We are in a strong position and Pete will bring his experience and knowledge to continue this strategic growth and enhance our contribution to the Cornish economy".

Downes said he was "delighted to have the opportunity to lead the team at Cornwall Airport Newquay, building on the airport's impressive track record of delivery for the region. Having spent several years working in the South West of England previously, I am looking forward to returning and working together with our airlines, partners and stakeholders to create an exciting future for aviation in Cornwall."

The appointment of a new Managing Director follows an announcement from British Airways that it will start operating a service between Cornwall Airport Newquay and Heathrow Airport this summer. BA will operate the service five times a week from early July to early September. The flag carrier will be the airport's eighth airline partner. Flybe is switching its public-subsidy-supported Cornwall Airport Newquay service from Heathrow to Gatwick.

The airport has also been boosted

by a decision by Cornwall Council to provide £10.3 million of additional cash to support plans to create a horizontal launch site at the airport to get satellites into space orbit. The council's decision means that the Virgin Orbit satellite launch system is closer to operating out of Cornwall Airport Newquay from 2021. ■

"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to lead the team at Cornwall Airport Newquay, building on the airport's impressive track record of delivery for the region"

HEATHROW TO APPEAL AGAINST COURT OF APPEAL JUDGEMENT

Heathrow Airport has announced that it will appeal against a judgement delivered by the Court of Appeal that blocks progress on its plans for a third runway.

The judgement found that the Government had failed to take into account commitments made under the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change when assessing Heathrow's expansion plan. It ruled that this makes the UK's Airports National Policy Statement unlawful.

The effect of the judgement is to put the third runway plans on hold until either the decision is reversed by the Supreme Court or the Government undertakes a review of the Airports National Policy Statement which takes the Paris Agreement into account.

Heathrow expressed confidence that its appeal would be successful and said that "in the meantime, we are ready to work with the Government to fix the issue that the court has raised". It said that ensuring that a third runway would be compatible with a strategy to deal with climate change under the Paris Agreement was "eminently achievable".

The airport also said that a failure by the Government to remedy the issue could impact airport growth elsewhere in the country and

cast doubt on other infrastructure projects, including roads and housing.

The Government said that it had decided not to appeal against the Court of Appeal judgement and acknowledged that the existing Airports National Policy Statement is of no legal effect unless and until the Government carries out a review under the Planning Act 2008. Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said: "The court's judgement is complex and requires careful consideration. We will set out our next steps in due course".

AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, said UK airports were clear that they could meet growing aviation demand sustainably. In a statement issued following the judgement, she said: "Whether it is for well-earned holidays, travelling to business meetings or facilitating

40% of the UK's trade by value with non-EU countries, aviation is the transport of choice for business and consumers across the UK and their demand for aviation connectivity continues to grow. All UK airports want to meet that demand, both through more point-to-point connectivity and additional hub capacity.

"Airports are clear that we can meet growing aviation demand sustainably. UK aviation as a whole has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 while meeting a growth in demand of 70%, as forecast by Government. The Sustainable Aviation coalition's Decarbonisation Road-Map sets out how we plan to achieve our target. In addition to this, many airports have individually committed to net-zero emissions for their own airport operations, some considerably sooner than 2050". ■





UK FIRST FOR LONDON LUTON AIRPORT

London Luton Airport has become the first and only UK airport to achieve Airports Council International (ACI) customer experience level one accreditation.

London Luton Airport has become the first and only UK airport to achieve Airports Council International (ACI) customer experience level one accreditation.

The achievement sees the airport join eight European airports and 35 airports around the world who have attained the accreditation, which recognises airports committed to providing great customer service. Level one accreditation entails communicating externally and internally that customer service is a priority.

The accreditation comes six months after London Luton appointed customer experience specialists to support the design and implementation of a customer

experience strategy, including installing new customer service desks throughout the airport and introducing a mystery shopper programme.

Clare Armstrong, Head of Customer Experience for the airport, said: “We are absolutely thrilled to have been recognised and accredited for the work that we are doing to transform the experience at London Luton Airport. We know that this is only the beginning of an exciting journey. Our customer service strategy is helping us ensure customer experience is the golden thread that runs through every part of our business and every step of the customer journey”.

Meanwhile, the airport’s passenger growth figures continue to outperform the European average. In 2019 EU airports saw passenger traffic increasing by 3.3%, but London Luton was up 8.6% to 17.99 million passengers, the fifth highest in the UK. ■

“We are absolutely thrilled to have been recognised and accredited for the work that we are doing to transform the experience at London Luton Airport.”

FIVE NEW MEMBERS JOIN AOA

The AOA has welcomed into membership five new companies, including Frequentis, which joins as a Silver Member.

The four new Associate Members are Altitude Angel, D-Fend Solutions, SkyNet Worldwide Express and vLogix.



Frequentis is a developer of Air Traffic Management Solutions for airports and control towers. It describes itself as the global market leader in voice communications systems and its other capabilities include network solutions for air traffic management, aeronautical information management solutions and Remote Digital Towers.

With more than 500 customers in 140 countries, Frequentis says that it has been innovating air traffic control centres for 70 years, offering “reliability and performance in control centres when it matters most” and setting standards that “define information and communication solutions for safety-critical environments”. The company says that its commitment is “a safer world” and that 3 billion passengers fly safely with Frequentis every year.



Altitude Angel is a provider of Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) technology solutions which enable the safe integration and use of fully automated drones into airspace. It prides itself on its work with leading air navigation service providers and aviation authorities, including NATS, LVNL (the agency in charge of air traffic control in the Netherlands) and Avinor (the state-owned company that operates most of Norway’s civil airports). It also works with drone manufacturers, including DJI, and cutting-edge developer platforms.



D-Fend Solutions manufactures an autonomous counter-drone system that takes over the communication links of rogue commercial drones and lands them safely in designated zones. It enables airports to enforce “no-fly zones” by neutralising intruding drones with maximum safety, enabling normal operation of authorised drones, co-existing with airport wireless communication, protecting take-off and landing runways and airstrips and using forensic extraction to identify a drone’s ground operator.



SkyNet Worldwide Express, based near Heathrow Airport, is the world's largest independently owned courier company. It provides international business to consumer and business to business delivery to over 150 countries worldwide. It says that it achieved its number one status "by successfully providing business solutions for hard to service destinations" and that it offers e-commerce retailers tailor-made shipping solutions to boost their cross-border business.



vLogix is an independent baggage consultancy, established in 2010. It specialises in business requirement definition, planning, design and specification of electro-mechanical and IT control systems, principally for the baggage and cargo handling environments. UK and British Isles airports for whom it has worked include Birmingham, Bristol, East Midlands, Gatwick, Glasgow, Heathrow, Jersey, London Luton and Manchester.

AOA RECRUITS NEW POLICY MANAGER

The AOA has recruited Rupinder Pamme as its new Policy Manager, succeeding Peter O'Broin who has left the AOA to become Campaign Manager at the International Air Transport Association.

Rupinder joined the AOA in January 2020 as Policy Manager. She has a PhD in the Study of Religion and has worked at the British Retail Consortium, Energy Institute and the Royal Aeronautical Society.

At the Society she worked on a project sponsored by Boeing - the Schools Build-a-Plane

Challenge, which provided young people in secondary schools the opportunity to build an aircraft and gain wider STEM subject experience.

Rupinder said: "I am excited to have joined the AOA and will enjoy getting into the detail, the variety of issues, and working closely with our members." ■





LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT HEADING FOR “PROFOUND CHANGE” WITH WORLD CLASS NEW TERMINAL BUILDING

If everything goes according to plan, construction work will start later this year on a completely new terminal building for Leeds Bradford Airport that will transform the passenger and airline experience and enable the airport to meet its ambitious environmental targets.



Hywel Rees, the airport's new Chief Executive, has only been in post for nine months, but in that period he has scrapped plans to refurbish the existing terminal building. Instead, AMP Capital, the airport's owners, have agreed to invest up to £150 million in a brand-new terminal building that, he says, will mean "a profound change" in both the perception and the reality of the airport experience.

When you ask most incoming chief executives about their first impressions of their new workplace, most find positive features to emphasise, but for Rees his first impressions last year were around "the scale of the challenge of improving Leeds Bradford". He saw a terminal building essentially unchanged since the 1960s, with an old-fashioned and unreliable baggage-handling system that

too often produced "an appalling situation both for the passengers and the airlines".

He had inherited a plan, which had planning consent, to construct a new arrivals hall on the eastern side of the existing terminal building, but quickly came to the conclusion that it just wasn't ambitious enough to sufficiently improve the customer experience or to meet today's expectations around sustainability. In Rees' words: "We just need to start again".

The result was an announcement in January that the existing terminal building would be demolished and replaced with a new three-storey terminal building that would be capable of handling up to 7 million passengers a year (compared to the current annual total of 4 million passengers). The current

terminal, built in 1965, will operate throughout construction, until the new terminal opens, if all goes well, in 2023. A public consultation on the plans opened last month.

"The plan is not about accelerating the airport's growth, since it already has planning consent for up to 7 million passengers, but is about "a modern customer experience."

A planning application should be submitted this spring and, if planning permission is secured by the summer, construction work will start by the end of the year.

Rees emphasises that the plan is not about accelerating the airport's growth, since it already has planning consent for up to 7 million passengers, but is about "a modern customer experience, a smarter experience" and about ensuring that Leeds Bradford can meet its target of net zero carbon emissions from airport operations by 2023. The airport has committed to ensuring that the new terminal plans will be certified as "excellent" by the BREEAM sustainability standard, which is awarded only to the most environmentally efficient buildings internationally.

A central element of the new plans will be a single new baggage hall with three machines, in place of the two existing halls, with one machine each, finally putting an end to "the stressing experience" for passengers that can result when one of the existing machines breaks down and the terminal building turns into "a big baggage rack".

Rees says that Leeds Bradford has "under-performed for so long that many have lost sight of the massive opportunity there is here". Leeds Bradford is the fourth biggest metropolitan area in the country, nearly 10% of the UK's population live within a 90-minute drive from the airport and Leeds is the UK's third largest financial centre; yet the airport is currently only the 15th biggest in the country. He is convinced that the new terminal building will take the airport "a long way along the path" to enhancing its performance to match the size of the opportunity.

While improving the passenger experience is a central element of the plan, Rees is also clear that a more modern and efficient Leeds Bradford Airport should encourage airlines to take a fresh look at their own plans for route development.



*Hywel Rees, Leeds
Bradford Airport,
Chief Executive*

2023 might turn out to be the most significant year for Leeds Bradford Airport's prospects since it opened in 1931.

He says that improved choice for passengers, including on new and underserved routes, as well as improved frequencies to key hub and city destinations would all be very welcome.

Rees is hoping that the Government's review of regional air connectivity will result in action by Government to improve the viability of routes from regional airports. The then Aviation Minister, Paul Maynard, was at the launch of Leeds Bradford's new terminal plans, describing the airport as "the global gateway to one of the most beautiful parts of the world". Rees is hopeful that the Government's review of Air Passenger Duty will result in a revised structure that could benefit regional and international connectivity.

Like many other UK airports, Leeds Bradford is also looking to see improvements in surface access, with proposals for a new Parkway rail station at the top of the list. Leeds City Council is backing plans

for a new station to be built on the Harrogate line about 0.9 miles from the airport.

The two sites would be linked by shuttle buses and the council says that the new station would help to take cars off the road, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions. It would give airport passengers direct rail links to Leeds and Harrogate, and potentially onwards to York. Rees says that the daily Azuma services from Kings Cross to Harrogate could also potentially stop at the new station as it passes the site. The council wants to build the station by 2023, the same year that the new airport terminal building could be completed. Rees says that prospects for the new station "have never been higher" and rates the chances of it actually being built as "high".

If he is right, 2023 might turn out to be the most significant year for Leeds Bradford Airport's prospects since it opened in 1931. ■

LONDON CITY AIRPORT TOPS 5 MILLION PASSENGER MARK

Over five million passengers travelled through London City Airport in 2019, making it the busiest year in the airport's history.

A total of 5,100,000 passengers flew in to and out of the airport last year, a year-on-year increase of 6.3%, driven by the launch of new routes, combined with additional flights and larger aircraft with more seats on existing routes.

The most popular route remains Amsterdam, while Edinburgh and

Dublin continue to be the second and third most popular routes. Leisure passengers now account for 55% of passengers travelling to and from the airport. For 2020 new routes have been announced to San Sebastian and Dundee.

During 2020 work will continue on the £500 million City Airport Development Programme that will turn water into land, enabling the airport to accommodate more passengers, more new-generation aircraft and maximise the potential of

the airport's runway.

This year will also see the launch of London City's state-of-the-art digital control tower, making it the first major airport in Europe to operate with such a tower. The newly constructed tower uses 360-degree HD cameras and sensors to provide a live feed of information to a new NATS control room in Swanwick, Hampshire, helping the airport to achieve significant efficiencies and improvements. ■

WORK STARTS ON BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT'S BIGGEST TERMINAL INVESTMENT IN A DECADE

Construction work has begun on a £30 million departure lounge extension at Birmingham Airport to help the airport cater for a forecast growth in passenger numbers to 18 million by 2033.

Commenting on the development as he visited the airport to help break the ground for the extension, the then Aviation Minister, Paul Maynard, said: "Our second city's airport serves more than one million passengers every month, so it is vital that it has the world class facilities and state-of-the-art infrastructure it deserves".

The airport's biggest terminal investment in ten years will provide a modern two-storey extension with an outdoor terrace area, growing the space by 45% to create more natural

light, circulation space and new shops and restaurants.

It will be complete early next year.

Birmingham Airport handled almost 12.7 million passengers in 2019, an increase of 1.6% on the previous year. Dublin, Dubai and Amsterdam were the year's top three routes, with Dublin serving almost a million people over the year.

The airport has been encouraged by last month's Government decision to press on with the building of the new HS2 rail link between London and Birmingham. Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, noted in the House of Commons that when the link has been built passengers arriving at Birmingham Airport will be able to get to central London by train in 38 minutes. ■



DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT ANNOUNCES £10 MILLION TERMINAL REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Doncaster Sheffield Airport has announced details of a £10 million terminal redevelopment plan to enhance the customer experience at the North of England's fastest-growing airport.

Key elements of the plan are an expanded arrivals hall and security search area, new gate bridges and an expansion of the airport's retail food and beverage offering. Many of the

planned improvements should be completed for summer 2021

Airport Chairman, Robert Hough, said: "Doncaster Sheffield Airport already boasts a modern purpose-built terminal building involving over £100 millions of investment just fifteen years ago. It is so important that, as we grow, we continue to maintain our award-winning passenger experience. Today's

announcement follows £3.5 million invested to create additional parking spaces to keep up with customer demand and £2m investment in our on-site solar farm that will generate 25% of the airport's energy".

Over the past five years the airport has seen exponential growth, with passenger numbers last year up to 1.45m and forecast to double within the next five years. ■



GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES £2 MILLION AIRFIELD DEVELOPMENT FUND

A new Airfield Development Fund is being launched by the Department for Transport to support local airfields.

The fund will provide commercial expertise support to local airfields, ensuring airfield businesses receive access to advisers, offering help to support their future development and potentially including advice on science and engineering training, developing electric aircraft and preserving heritage aircraft.

The Department is encouraging applicants to apply for advice from the £2 million fund from this spring by demonstrating how it could help them protect or expand their business. Applicants, who will have four weeks to apply, will be able to apply for help on proposed developments, protecting airfields or expanding training facilities and commercial opportunities. Only airfields handling fewer than 200,000 passengers a year will be eligible.

Announcing the creation of the new fund, the Department said



that many airfields often struggled with business development and financial sustainability, even though they were an integral part of the £3 billion general aviation sector and considered to be the grassroots of the entire aviation sector. It said it recognised the significant contribution that smaller airfields made to the wider UK economy and the launch of the fund demonstrated the Government's commitment to supporting the general aviation industry, with the aim of making the UK a world leader in general aviation.

Paul Maynard, Aviation Minister at the time of the announcement, said: "The UK government recognises the enormous contribution smaller airfields make to the UK economy and to the people they serve, where many aviation careers take first flight. We are committed to protecting our airfields and easing the challenges that many businesses face. This support will help airfields prosper, creating and securing more jobs, while inspiring the next generation of aviation and engineering enthusiasts". ■

NEW AVIATION MINISTER APPOINTED

Kelly Tolhurst, MP for Rochester and Strood, has been appointed as the new Aviation Minister at the Department for Transport.

She was previously a junior Minister at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy,

where she had responsibility for small businesses. At the Department for Transport she will also take responsibility for the maritime sector.

Kelly Tolhurst replaces Paul Maynard as Aviation Minister.

He held the role for six months, replacing Baroness Vere, who was Aviation Minister for four months. Prior to that Baroness Sugg held the role for 18 months. The UK's longest-serving Aviation Minister of recent years was Robert Goodwill, who held the role for four years. ■



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