

THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

BARONESS VERE IS REAPPOINTED AS AVIATION MINISTER

It's a privilege to be able to work with the industry once again, and help it recover after a devastating pandemic.



Features

ANDREW BELL
*Regional & City Airports CEO
urges government to boost connectivity*

TEESSIDE INTERNATIONAL
*Developing plans to pioneer the
use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel*

AUTUMN STATEMENT
*AOA urges the Chancellor to allow
arrivals duty-free shopping*

JET ZERO STRATEGY
*How airport operations in England
could be zero emission by 2040*



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KAREN DEE

Introduction to The Airport Operator



Welcome to this edition of The Airport Operator which is being published as we wait to hear the new Government's plans for taxes and spending.

We appreciate that Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, has some tough decisions to make, but we very much hope that he will act in ways which will enable UK airports to continue to play a key role in supporting the prosperity of the country and of the regions they serve.

Along with the AOA Chair, Baroness Ruby-McGregor-Smith, I wrote to the Chancellor recently setting out how we think he could support aviation, including for example how the introduction of arrivals duty-free could drive business to the UK and put our airports on a level playing field with airports across Europe. You can read all the details of our Autumn Statement submission elsewhere in this issue.

We welcome Mark Harper to his new role as Secretary of State for Transport and are encouraged by the support that he gave to his local airport's expansion plans earlier this year, when the Planning Inspectorate gave a green light to Bristol Airport's plans following an appeal. We are delighted too that Baroness Vere has retained her Ministerial role at the Department and were pleased to see her launching a new aviation recruitment campaign at the end of last month.

Throughout the pandemic, the former Aviation Minister, Robert Courts, engaged with our sector on a regular basis and showed a keen understanding of the challenges we face. We look forward to continuing to engage with him as he returns to the backbenches. Meanwhile, former Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, is the new Business Secretary, and we are confident that he will bring to his new Department a renewed appreciation of the importance of aviation and aerospace to the UK economy.

Ministers may come and go, but officials provide welcome continuity. At the carbon conference that we held at the AOA last month, we were pleased to welcome Darryl Abelscroft, Head of Aviation Decarbonisation Strategy and Technology at the Department for Transport. With the Government planning shortly to issue a call for evidence on how airport operations in England could be zero emission by 2040, this subject will continue to be a top priority for all our airports. We include a detailed report on the conference in this issue.

You will also find interviews with four airport CEOs, representing some very different airports across the British Isles. Carbon was a key theme for both Robin MacRae at Jersey Airport and Phil Forster at Teesside International Airport. Andrew Bell at Regional & City Airports talked to us about how the new Ministerial team at DfT could help regional airports to recover from the pandemic and increase connectivity. Gary Cobb, the new Director at Isle of Man Airport, focussed on how his airport is seeking to safeguard some of its key routes.

Alongside these four airport CEOs, we also have contributions from four of our corporate supporters. The new Director of UK Power Network Services, David Mitchell, describes how wise energy investments can help airports to cut costs and emissions. Darren Porter and Karen Larbey at WTW explain how their company's unique new Airport Risk Index shows airports how to build operational resilience. Steven Thompson, Director at SES Aviation, the AOA's newest Corporate Partner, describes his company and its airport services, while SITA sets out its vision for digital travel.

As we look ahead to 2023, we are optimistic that our airports will continue their recovery from the pandemic, despite the challenging economic background. Here at the AOA, we are looking forward to welcoming many of you back to our Annual Conference on 31 January and to our Annual Dinner on 5 June. ■

Karen Dee, Chief Executive



*Andrew Bell, CEO,
Regional & City Airports*

AIRPORTS CHIEF URGES GOVERNMENT TO BOOST CONNECTIVITY BY HELPING REGIONAL AIRPORTS THROUGH INVESTMENT ZONES, SKILLS AND AIR PASSENGER DUTY

Regional & City Airports CEO, Andrew Bell, is urging the new Ministerial team at the Department for Transport to take action to help regional airports to recover fully from the Covid pandemic and to increase connectivity.

Bell told The Airport Operator that there is an opportunity for the new Aviation Minister, Baroness Vere, and for the Government to “make use of the UK’s regional airports as assets in the development of their strategies around the future of aviation and Jet Zero”.

Specifically, he said the Government should consider:

- Including regional airports in proposed new investment zones. He said that it would make sense to involve regional airports in local authority zone applications because many have the scale, scope and aspiration to grow and
- Working with the aviation sector to ensure that it has the skills that will be needed for future growth. There should be a particular focus on longer-term requirements, including the training of Air Traffic Controllers and engineers which

to develop initiatives that would benefit their local communities.

requires long lead times.

- Making use of the review of Public Service Obligation route rules to enable the complete abolition of Air Passenger Duty on spoke-to-spoke routes between regional airports.

Bell painted a mixed picture of the post-Covid recovery of the airports owned and operated by Regional & City Airports.

Exeter Airport, where the former flybe had accounted for 80% of the airport's pre-Covid business, has faced the most difficult recovery. Passenger numbers this year are forecast to be around 400,000, compared to 950,000 pre-Covid. Bell said that the stark scale of the shortfall to some extent masked the significant progress that had been made in securing new carriers to take over former flybe routes.

He said "we are now in a situation where Exeter's network is almost back to where it was with Flybe, with carriers who had either not operated from Exeter before or hadn't done recently. From a network recovery perspective we have made some really good progress. The trick now is to translate that network recovery into market and airline confidence so that the capacity and passenger numbers start to build back up, frequencies recover, and we end up climbing back to the levels of service that we enjoyed before".

Bell sounded optimistic that there might be some developments in terms of two routes still missing – Paris and Amsterdam. He said "we are targeting those two routes very aggressively to really complete the job. They were very popular routes when Flybe operated them, and we believe that they were profitable routes as well for the airline. We are confident that we have presented the strongest business case we can now that airlines are starting to lift their heads beyond Covid".

Norwich Airport has seen "a more traditional recovery curve" in line



Bournemouth Airport has had a very strong recovery, with this year's forecast passenger numbers of 760,000 only slightly below the pre-Covid total of 800,000 passengers a year.

with the experience of many other airports. Annual passenger numbers pre-Covid were about 500,000 and the numbers this year are forecast to be around 350,000.

Bell said that the three main elements in the recovery at Norwich had been leisure ("which has bounced back very strongly this summer"), KLM's

service to Amsterdam (back to its pre-Covid level of three flights a day) and oil and gas-related flights (both in terms of offshore traffic and the related route up to Aberdeen).

Bournemouth Airport has had a very strong recovery, with this year's forecast passenger numbers of 760,000 only slightly below the pre-

Covid total of 800,000 passengers a year.

Many of the routes from Bournemouth are leisure routes. The two main carriers at the airport are Ryanair and TUI, including in Ryanair's case several city-focussed routes. Of the recovery at Bournemouth, Bell said "it is reflecting the fastest recovering segment of the industry and benefitting from the fact that this was what it had before, so it has come back very quickly". Ryanair has recently announced new routes from Bournemouth, including year-round flights to Venice, Malta and Wroclaw. Bell said, "obviously we are delighted, and we are planning to build on that as we move into next summer".

Meanwhile, the airport is partnering with Bournemouth-based European Cargo to build a new freight business. Initially this came out of the role that the airport played during the pandemic to facilitate the import of Covid-related cargo, such as personal protective equipment and test kits. Bell said that had given Bournemouth Airport an opportunity to prove to shippers and forwarders that there could be time and cost benefits in importing and exporting through Bournemouth as an alternative to the traditional freight lanes into London. Positioning Bournemouth as "a new gateway in or out of the UK for air cargo" was now "a core part of our strategy for the airport". He described it as "a work in progress. We have the appetite to do a lot more to build on the encouraging early progress".

Bell emphasised that across all three airports there will be a continuing focus on carbon emission reduction. Acknowledging that the airports are "relatively early in the journey", he said they are looking at electrifying their operations and starting to integrate electric ground service vehicles. Regional & City Airports is also looking at solar farm investments, as well as exploring how its airports could make sustainable aviation fuels available.

Meanwhile, at this year's Farnborough International Air Show, Regional & City Airports signed a new strategic partnership with Cranfield University to "promote the development, testing and deployment of innovation across the aviation industry". Bell said the signing was "a reflection of our shared commitment to a sustainable future for aviation". Within the partnership, a particular role of Regional & City would be to consider how electric, or hydrogen aircraft could be deployed at commercial airports in the future "and the practical reality of what happens when the aircraft are on the ground of an airport, needing handling, recharging and maintaining". ■

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BARONESS VERE “THRILLED” TO BE BACK AS AVIATION MINISTER

On 2 November Baroness Vere was confirmed in her role as Aviation Minister. Here she writes for The Airport Operator on the challenges and opportunities for aviation – “one of our greatest economic assets”

For Government ministers, a reshuffle typically results in one of three outcomes: a new job; the same job, or no job at all. Only a lucky few get the chance to return to a much-loved role they’ve done previously – which is why I was so thrilled to be reappointed as Aviation Minister in September and delighted when it was confirmed earlier this month that I will be continuing in the role.

Aviation is one of our greatest economic assets and we rely on the trade, business and investment opportunities that only it can generate. So it’s a privilege and a pleasure to be able to work with the industry once again, and help it recover after a devastating pandemic.

It’s been a long journey to get to this point, but I am proud that the Government and industry stood side by side throughout COVID. When

the moment was right in March, for example, we took the decision to go further and faster than any other nation in opening our economy and borders. I pledge to build on this close relationship as we return to pre-pandemic levels of travel and provide the connectivity that Global Britain requires.

I am delighted to see airports busy once again. But equally, we must ensure that the industry is ready to accommodate returning passengers in future. Such was the demand from the public to travel at Easter, Half Term and the Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend that some airports experienced disruption. Staff shortages contributed to long queues inside terminals and flight cancellations.

Thanks to our combined response, the aviation industry was able to stabilise operations and deliver

“I am delighted to see airports busy once again. But equally, we must ensure that the industry is ready to accommodate returning passengers in future”.

a much-improved experience for passengers throughout the summer. That included our 22-point plan to support aviation, including accelerated national security vetting checks to speed up staff recruitment, and a temporary amnesty on airport slots to allow airlines to plan and prevent last minute cancellations. These measures were effective, and flight cancellations subsequently fell back to their 2019 levels. To further support the industry’s efforts this

winter, we have offered airlines the chance to hand back 10% of their slots before the season starts, to reduce the risk of unrealistic schedules being advertised and changed at the last minute, as seen during the summer.

I'd like to thank all airport staff for their hard work and patience over the past eight months. Indeed, the whole aviation sector has shown itself to be extraordinarily adaptable and resilient – just as it was under the most difficult of circumstances over the previous two years.

But as the sector returns to normal, we can increasingly focus on longer term plans. In May we published a strategy for the future of aviation, setting out a vision for the sector over the next ten years. The strategy, Flightpath to the Future, sets out ten key priorities – including recovery, sustainable growth, skills, global impact, and decarbonisation – to ensure the UK retains its position as one of the strongest aviation nations in the world.

First and foremost, achieving these ambitions requires further close collaboration. That is why I will shortly be launching the Aviation Council, bringing together representatives from across Government and the industry to implement the strategy. This vital new forum will help us target the main issues facing the industry, while allowing UK aviation to prosper.

We will also continue to work through our well-established Jet Zero Council to deliver on our decarbonisation goals for aviation and maximise the opportunities that decarbonisation brings for the UK. Aviation must earn the right to grow by cutting carbon, and our mission is to reach net zero emissions for aviation by 2050, as we set out in our Jet Zero Strategy in the summer. We are already supporting a variety of technology, fuel and market-based measures to address aviation emissions, and we will continue to do so, so we can look forward to a future of guilt-free flying.

Aviation is by its very nature a global sector and that is why international leadership is one of the key principles underpinning our Jet Zero Strategy. Just a few weeks ago, we helped



Baroness Vere,
Aviation Minister

“Despite the changes and challenges ahead, I am hugely optimistic for UK airports as I take up my new role as Aviation Minister. We have a lot of work to do as we recover from Covid and re-establish Britain as one of the world’s most important aviation hubs”.

secure a historic climate change agreement at the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) with 193 countries committing to reducing international aviation emissions to net zero by 2050, aligning the sector with the Paris agreement’s temperature target for the first time. ICAO also agreed important modifications to its current flagship climate measure – the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA). The changes aim to ensure airlines worldwide will begin offsetting emissions from 2024.

Despite the changes and challenges ahead, I am hugely optimistic for UK airports as I take up my new role as Aviation Minister. We have a lot of work to do as we recover from Covid and re-establish Britain as one of the world’s most important aviation hubs. We have an even greater task decarbonising aviation and unlocking the huge benefits of green technologies. But this is an industry of enormous resource and resilience, with unprecedented opportunities for growth, and I promise to work with you hand in hand to realise that potential. ■

AOA CHAIR CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH BY SUPPORTING AVIATION

AOA Chair, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, is urging Rishi Sunak's Government to support a pro-growth agenda by backing aviation.

Speaking at the start of her second three-year term as Chair of the Airport Operators Association, she said that Ministers should consider how they could offer support to help airports and the rest of the sector to boost connectivity and achieve sustainable growth. She said "we very much support government to have a pro-growth agenda for aviation. Clearly there will always be challenges around that, including planning, noise and sustainability, but we hope that we will have a government that we can work with and will support us to overcome those challenges".

Baroness McGregor-Smith told The Airport Operator "I think that UK airports are really important assets in terms of helping grow the UK economy in the regions and around the South East. Global businesses invest here because there are great transport links through our airports. My view has always been that they are critical to Britain, even more so because we are an island. Aviation is very much an important area for the UK to continue to invest in and making sure everyone understands how important they are to the future growth of the UK economy I think is really important".

"I think that UK airports are really important assets in terms of helping grow the UK economy in the regions and around the South East. Global businesses invest here because there are great transport links through our airports".



*Baroness McGregor-Smith
CBE – Chair, Airport
Operators Association*

She pointed out that before the pandemic aviation contributed more than £92 billion to the UK economy, supported nearly a million jobs and provided £8 billion in tax revenues to the UK Government. Crucially, she pointed to evidence that, for every 10% growth in connectivity, GDP grows by 0.5%.

Reflecting on her first term as Chair, Baroness McGregor-Smith said “I don’t ever want to repeat what we had to go through in the pandemic. There were some dark days. Suddenly we were dealing with the challenges of the pandemic, which clearly for aviation were horrendous. It was the worst time for aviation in the UK. The challenges were hugely significant, and I found myself chairing the AOA through what was the most turbulent time in its history”. She noted that through

“The UK aviation industry as a whole is committed to Net Zero by 2050, but several UK airports have set earlier targets – including Bristol and Edinburgh by 2030, Heathrow by the mid-2030s and Gatwick before 2040”.

the pandemic airports had lost £10 billion in revenue and accrued more than £4 billion of debt. Today, she said, some airports are back to their pre-pandemic numbers financially, but others are not.

Looking ahead to her second term, she said that she is looking forward to what she can do to make sure that airports are better represented and better understood. One of the most important issues is sustainability and cutting emissions.

“Sustainability sits at the heart of the agenda for every airport in the UK” she said “and they have a huge focus on it. They are in a sensible place about what they can do about their own emissions and will continue to be so”. She noted that the UK aviation industry as a whole is committed to Net Zero by 2050, but that several UK airports have set earlier targets - including Bristol and Edinburgh by 2030, Heathrow by the mid-2030s and Gatwick before 2040. ■

AOA URGES THE CHANCELLOR TO ALLOW ARRIVALS DUTY-FREE SHOPPING

The AOA has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, urging him to allow duty-free shopping for passengers arriving to the UK.

In a letter sent ahead of the Chancellor's 17 November Autumn Statement, AOA Chair, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith and AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, said that introducing arrivals duty free would offer "a major opportunity to drive business to the UK to the benefit of the collective economy".

The AOA's representation to HM Treasury points out that establishing duty-free stores for arriving passengers at UK ports of entry is an opportunity only possible because of the UK's exit from the European Union. Noting that post-Brexit the UK Government had increased the duty-free allowance that people can bring into the UK, the AOA said that the only effect of that had been to encourage sales abroad, rather than in the UK. The submission referenced anecdotal evidence that on some routes, duty-free sales travelling to the UK from abroad had increased by 45-50%.

The AOA said the UK Government should follow the examples of Norway, Switzerland and many other

countries outside of the EU, and allow arrivals duty-free. It pointed to research by York Aviation stating that arrivals duty-free has the potential to increase UK sales of duty-free products by up to £100 million per year. The research calculates that such an increase in sales, coupled with the income tax collected from the jobs created, could generate an additional £50 million in tax revenues for the Government.

Included in the representation is a warning that "the effects of Covid, combined with high inflation and energy costs, will make it

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even more difficult for airports to invest in planning and delivering important projects such as airspace modernisation and decarbonisation activities".

Allowing arrivals duty-free is one of a dozen ways in which the AOA suggests that the Government could "help ensure UK airports remain world-leading and provide a globally competitive passenger experience".

The AOA says that the Government should:

Support the development of decarbonised aviation in the UK.

It says that "now should be an opportunity to recover sustainably, returning to 2019 passenger levels but not 2019 carbon emissions and noise impacts". It urges the Government to support the development of a UK sustainable aviation fuels industry and of future flight power technology.

Support delivery of airspace modernisation. The AOA says that, with limited airport capital investment

resources, further short-term funding of £30 million is needed so that airports can take forward airspace change proposals. It warns that “without this we do not have full confidence that the airspace modernisation process will proceed within the desired timescale”.

Reform the planning system to attract investment to the UK. The AOA says that the Government’s frequent use over the years of the power to ‘call in’ and then adjudicate on airports’ planning proposals has created “a climate of uncertainty that makes it far more difficult to secure inward private investment in this vital part of the UK transport network”. It says that “a more efficient and predictable planning system, set against a clear Government policy framework, is a high priority for a high growth Britain”.

Avoid increases in Air Passenger Duty. Pointing out that APD is already a much higher tax than other European competitor markets face, the AOA urges the Government to avoid increases to APD to help UK aviation to recover and not lose out further to EU-based alternative services.

Support marginal UK connectivity. The AOA says that following Brexit, there is more flexibility for the UK and devolved governments to use Public Service Obligation mechanisms to bring back routes that have disappeared due to Covid-19. By connecting important development areas with no suitable transport alternative, PSOs could help develop relatively less connected areas of the UK.

Use aviation’s UK Emissions Trading Scheme contributions to help decarbonise the industry. The new UK ETS will raise £300 million in new revenues for the Government. The AOA says that a substantial proportion of this should be focussed on helping aviation transition to a net-zero future, including helping airports

decarbonise themselves. It says that this is “especially needed if the Department for Transport sticks to its current plans to require English airports to achieve absolute zero emission 10 years earlier than other equivalent ground infrastructure”.

Invest in airport surface access across the UK. The AOA says the Government should provide a fund for improvement schemes that widen airport catchment areas, improve journey times and reduce the climate impact of travel. It says that by setting clear timetables on infrastructure projects that link airports to the national railway network the Government could deliver growth and jobs and secure private investment.

Invest in a seamless travel border. The AOA says the Government should put in place the building blocks for a seamless UK border in the coming years. It suggests that it should consider providing funding for the development and trialling of seamless journey technology that will make the UK border more secure but also cut waiting times for passengers and freight.

Enable UK workers to be upskilled through a reformed skills policy and apprenticeship levy. The AOA

says that airports face a challenge to ensure a sufficient pool of UK-eligible workers are available in highly skilled roles, such as air traffic control and engineering. It suggests that the Government should allow businesses to spend the apprenticeship levy on general skills training to support airports re-recruiting staff as the recovery gathers pace.

Consider impacts of Business Rates changes. The AOA notes that airports’ business rates are currently being revalued and expresses concern that “some airports will face exponentially larger bills”. It says that the Government should consider ways in which they could be supported.

Examine the negative effects of pensions taxation. Airports have lost many skilled staff in specialist, training-intensive areas such as Airport Fire and Rescue, Air Traffic Control and Air Traffic Engineering. Some of those leaving have cited concerns about the potential for significant tax burdens as their pension pots exceed the lifetime allowance. The AOA says that the Government should review how pensions taxation affects essential staff in critical roles. ■



TEESSIDE INTERNATIONAL PLANS TO PIONEER SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL AS CARGO PUSH GATHERS PACE

Teesside International Airport is developing plans to pioneer the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel as it kickstarts cargo services as part of the airport's next big push.

The airport's Managing Director, Phil Forster, told The Airport Operator that the ambitious plans were feasible because the Teesside region produces more than half of the UK's entire hydrogen output and hydrogen can replace more expensive household waste as the key feedstock for the fuel.

This, along with the existing on-site fuel farm providing Jet A1 and AV-Gas, comes as efforts to drive cargo services at the airport gather momentum, with Teesside set to become a Border Control Point shortly.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) that has been produced up to now has largely been produced from sources such as cooking oil. However, the supply of this material is finite and, as its owners have realised that they have a sought-after commodity, the price has gone up, making it a more expensive option.

However, it is possible to produce SAF from hydrogen, carbon dioxide and water, and Teesside International has a cluster of chemical firms on its doorstep. SAF produced in this way is likely to be much cheaper than the alternatives and could be a useful revenue-earner. It could be exported

in bulk by ship to other countries, but it could also be used to entice new air operators into Teesside.

By Forster's account, Teesside International Airport is "doing a huge push on renewable energy". It has plans for an on-site solar farm and has also recently taken its ground-handling in-house. Forster said that Teesside has 5.2m people within a 90-minute drive of the airport, "but it is the ESG credentials that we are delivering that is our new USP".

The airport's SAF plans are one key element of its strategy to develop diversified revenue streams, adding



*Phil Forster, Managing
Director, Teesside
International Airport*

to existing revenues from commercial passenger traffic. Another is cargo. On 29 August this year it officially opened its new state-of-the-art £2.5 million cargo handling facility. Its 21,000 sq. ft. hangar is equipped with cutting-edge security screening and offers handling, freight forwarding, storage and regular cargo services. Having recently secured Approved Regulated Agent status from the Civil Aviation Authority, the airport is also able to handle secure cargo.

Teesside airport is also in the final throes of becoming a Border Control Point, which will enable it to become a UK entry point for flowers, fruit and vegetables. Forster said that Teesside is well-placed to build a cargo business because it is not slot-constrained and because of its good motorway connections with the rest of the country.

The opening of the cargo handling facility came shortly after global aviation company, Willis Lease Finance Corporation, announced that it will be seeking planning permission for an investment of up to £25 million in new aircraft maintenance hangars on land at the airport that is part of the Teesside Freeport. Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen, said that it was “multi-million-pound private sector investments that will truly secure our airport’s future and this is potentially the largest we have seen in years”.

Building on the area’s existing Freeport status, the airport’s shareholder, the Tees Valley Combined Authority, has also expressed interest in the airport becoming one of three sites in a new investment zone in the region. Investment zones would benefit from time-limited tax incentives over ten years such as 100% relief from business rates on newly occupied business premises, as well as a streamlined mechanism for securing planning permission. Forster said his view was that securing investment zone status would be “an absolute game-changer for the airport”.

Houchen is well-known locally for having said “our airport needs to be



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more than just flights to Alicante to succeed”, but the flights to Alicante and other summer sun destinations served by Ryanair and TUI did rather well this year, with load factors of over 90%. Forster said “It has been an excellent summer. It has been a joy to see passengers coming back through the terminal going to leisure destinations such as Alicante, Corfu, Faro and Majorca. The airport is now back on the map. It has been a tremendous summer that has finally shown that there is a demand from Teesside and that people want to fly from their local airport”.

Encouraged also by KLM’s recent reinstatement of two flights a day to Amsterdam, which he expects will boost passenger numbers in the coming weeks, Forster said the

airport is still discussing potential opportunities for 2023 with airlines. “We clearly want to continue to grow the passenger opportunity” he said, “to bring more routes and more airlines and to offer more choice”.

As Teesside International Airport heads towards the end of this year it is hoping to have one more reason to celebrate as it contemplates the prospect of exceeding pre-pandemic passenger numbers. Its 2019 passenger numbers were 150,000. Last year the total was only 72,000. Now the airport is forecasting that the 2022 total is likely to hit 160,000, which would be a 5% increase on 2019, and Forster sounds confident of further growth in 2023 that could boost the airport’s passenger total to 207,000. ■

SITA

POWERING DIGITAL AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

**SERGIO COLELLA,
PRESIDENT EUROPE SITA**

SITA is the world's leading specialist in air transport communications, information technology and digitalisation, aiming to transform passengers' journey from end-to-end, by enriching the digital experience for our customers on the ground and in the air thanks to our unrivalled experience and solutions. At SITA, our vision of digital travel is a future where you can travel from anywhere to everywhere without ever needing to present your travel documents or to stop to confirm your identity, check-in, cross a border, or access any number of services at your destination.



Airports' and airlines' traffic has been showing a very encouraging performance over the last two quarters of 2022. Eleven European airlines are now in the top 40 worldwide, and the top 5 European airports ranking is still led by IGA Istanbul Airport, with passenger numbers 7% above 2019 figures, followed by Amsterdam, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt, and London Heathrow, respectively. Moreover, the UK is still the busiest state in the Eurocontrol network with 5,604 flights per day, -13% vs the same week in 2019. So, as reported by Eurocontrol, overall network traffic was at 88% of 2019 levels during September 2022, which shows a great recovery.

We witnessed the challenges facing airports during the peak season, with most large airports still struggling to get back to pre-pandemic levels. Moreover, the unclear state of the market with post-Covid effects, the war in Ukraine, and the energy crisis means that the industry must work collaboratively and find ways to be dynamic and adaptive, leveraging digital transformation. However, we remain positive as the industry is working actively to address these challenges to ensure smoother operations on the ground. Making the most of the latest air-transport solutions can help keep daily airport activities efficient without compromising on the passenger experience.

It is more than ever important to be able to adapt in this ever-changing world. Digital transformation is key for airlines. This is a world in which passengers expect every travel process to be digital, creating a seamless experience for travellers, with no need to rely on manual processes for passport checks and visa issuance. As travel becomes more connected and intermodal, having unified digital systems that simplify the passenger journey across land, sea, and air will become increasingly important. The recent focus on sustainability and future mobility have demonstrated that becoming an intermodal hub for

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*Sergio Colella,
President Europe SITA*



seamless travel is driven by the needs of passengers above all else. Airports can benefit from these trends by considering the entire customer journey instead of focusing on air travel alone. This can be achieved by collaborating with rail and even cruise companies to further improve a seamless travel experience. This collaboration has proven to dramatically expand an airport's catchment area. Examples of this can be seen in Brussels, Amsterdam, or at Paris Charles De Gaulle Airport. Seizing this huge opportunity now, will benefit our businesses, our customers, and indeed the environment.

The role of biometrics, and specifically face recognition

It is more than ever important to be able to adapt in this ever-changing world. Digital transformation is key for airlines.

solutions, is critical in ensuring a seamless and more confident passenger journey. We can confidently state that biometrics is one of the key industry solutions for making daily airport operations more efficient and it will continue to improve passengers' comfort, confidence and an overall seamless



travelling experience through the flexibility to manage more on their personal devices. In this context, the agreement between the world's largest airline alliance, Star Alliance, NEC Corporation and SITA will help foster adoption of one biometric identity for multiple journeys. SITA has already deployed biometrics technology in 21 locations globally, where 1,525 touchpoints are already committed and 842 will be rolled out soon. With SITA setting a global example, we are confident that this technology will become the norm across the globe in the foreseeable future.

Equally important is to ensure sustainable operations. Aviation is vital to modern society and the global economy; the industry is looking to use technology to build back better and greener following the pandemic. The pressure on the air transport industry to further reduce emissions has accelerated in the last few years. This is not only essential for regulatory compliance and social acceptance but can translate into efficiencies on fuel and energy consumption and indeed into a cost competitive advantage. We all have a clear responsibility: to build a more

sustainable industry that is critical for associated sectors like trade, tourism, and business. The industry, through ACI and IATA, has set ambitious targets to be net carbon zero by 2050, which can be met if we start tackling emissions today. Airports consume considerable energy to power their buildings, the services they provide (e.g., baggage handling systems) and airside operations. Moving to alternative energy sources from conventional fossil fuels like electrification is a key focus for airport decarbonisation. SITA is very committed to support aviation in its decarbonisation journey.

SITA has solutions that help airlines around the world to significantly reduce fuel consumption in the air, optimising the climb and descent phase and using machine learning for proposing more direct routes. Moreover, SITA is engaged in reducing emissions on the ground. For this purpose, SITA and Envision Digital – a global Artificial Intelligence of Things technology leader – have joined forces to develop solutions to help airports decarbonise and reduce infrastructure related energy consumption at airports. Concerning airport operations, SITA supports

SITA has solutions that help airlines around the world to significantly reduce fuel consumption in the air, optimising the climb and descent phase and using machine learning for proposing more direct routes.

improvements in reporting and emission reduction efforts, with capabilities that measure, predict, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in various 'Scope 3' areas of the airport, including aircraft turnaround (e.g., mobile resources and assets), landing and take-off cycles (e.g., stand allocation and taxi times).

Looking forward, climate-neutral aviation will require continued investment, collaboration, and innovation to create ways to bring mutual benefits and gradual shifts towards a net-zero carbon industry. ■



BUILDING RESILIENCE WITH WTW'S AIRPORT RISK INDEX

WTW and the University of Cambridge's Centre for Risk Studies have unveiled their revolutionary new Airport Risk Index (ARI) designed to help owners and operators build operational resilience against the growing number of risks they face. The ARI, which was three years in development, was presented to more than 100 global airport executives at WTW's annual Airport Risk Community (ARC) conference in Lisbon in September.

The Index combines historical and predictive analysis to give airports the ability to interrogate their assumptions on risk. In an operating environment of non-stop change and competing demands on resources, it is easy to focus on the current issues that often dominate executive surveys, rather than the 'what if's'. The index sets out both likelihood and impact for the indexed threats to offer a perspective on what has always been possible and what we need to prepare for.

Features of the Airport Risk Index

In its present configuration, the ARI compares 110 of the world's busiest airports (by passenger volume) against 19 of the sector's most prominent threats, measuring

the probability and impact of any interruption in operations.

The airports were chosen as a representation of the largest commercial airports but also by considering the importance of the interconnectivity of the airports across the globe. By also mapping the characteristics of these airports, such as runway composition and number of terminals, airports can explore the index results for similar organisations. In this way, users can see how they compare to best practice, and in doing so, see where they need to improve and where often limited risk-management resources are best applied.

The 19 threats were chosen for their potential to cause high-impact

events that could shut down an airport for extended periods or cause a prolonged and significant disruption. More common disruptions that usually do not cause lengthy delays were omitted, as it is rarely the day-to-day operational events that push resilience beyond capacity, plus it is those rare threats that can fall off top 10 risk lists.

Because events happen with varying intensity – simply listing a systems intrusion as a 'cyber-attack' is not very helpful for building resilience. To explore the ranges of possible events, historical precedents and research were used to create multiple scenarios, each with a storyline that allows airport operators to build shared understanding about how events might unfold. Each scenario

gradually increases in impact but decreases in likelihood to provide a more complete representation of the risk. Every scenario that is possible, has been underpinned by historical precedents, and can be explored to understand where to focus resources.

This deep level of analysis depicts a corresponding numerical view of disruption to operational activity, as well as a projected recovery curve (see example to the right) for each of the 66 scenarios for each airport depending on their resilience and vulnerability assessments.

A prompt to ask the right questions

Even with the depth of processing and research that went into each of these scenarios, the Index was not designed to give exact answers, but to encourage stakeholders to ask the right questions. Just as no risk operates in isolation, responding to the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) environment needs action across the breadth of an organisation – there is no shortage of parties with a stake in the game, with different perspectives and levels of understanding.

This shared view allows exploration of key questions such as:

- Did we think about this range for our risk?
- Are we prepared for all these impacts?
- Why have we included the risks we have?
- How do we measure recovery?
- Do we agree with these results?
- How can we improve?
- What other stakeholders who will respond during an event do I need to pull in?

Interconnectivity of risk

This modelling can also help users to investigate operational impact of threats by exploring potential pathways through the index. For example, while the index has 3 different cyber scenarios, it may also be useful to explore other end points, such as aircraft crashes,



Notes: The curve is comprised of four key parameters: Initial Severity (IS) – how much did the event reduce operating capacity; Duration of Initiation Severity (DIS) – how long the airport will be at the initial reduced capacity; R90 – how long it will take to return to 90% operational capacity; and R100 – time to full recovery. For illustrative purposes only.

power outages or fire and explosion scenarios, to determine where resilience could be exceeded.

Looking to the future, there may also be additional threats that need to be considered. As the world transitions to a low carbon economy and looks to diversify energy security, nuclear facilities may appear on your risk lists as governments approve new sites. Sea level rise may also change the risk profile of perils such as tsunami and flood. Risk is not static, it's dynamic and it's also interconnected – as an example, the International Civil Aviation Organization suggested in September the industry starts paying more attention to cumulative risk in its latest [guidance](#) on preparing now for climate change.

A mirror to the future?

In an era when mounting demands for greater risk transparency and accountability are being driven by environmental, social and governance requirements, the ARI is designed to help organisations build stakeholder confidence for today and the future. As WTW explores the outputs with the [Airport Risk Community](#), we will be keeping an eye on where the index could

be further developed, including additional scenarios and cumulative impacts.

Ultimately, with the Airport Risk Index framework, airports will be able to reassure governments, regulators, investors, insurers and business partners that they have a real-time understanding of their risks and the resources in the right places to help ensure operational dependability. ■

Darren Porter and Karen Larbey WTW Airport Risk Community (ARC) leadership

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WTW offers insurance-related services through its appropriately licensed and authorised companies in each country in which WTW operates. For further authorisation and regulatory details about our WTW legal entities, operating in your country, please refer to our [WTW website](#). It is a regulatory requirement for us to consider our local licensing requirements.

STEVEN THOMPSON, DIRECTOR AT SES AVIATION, THE AOA'S NEWEST CORPORATE PARTNER, DESCRIBES HIS COMPANY AND ITS SERVICES

Founded in 1998 by Dr Tony Ball, and originally named Show and Events Security, the company specialised in delivering crowd management to major events throughout the UK. In 2014 the company re-branded as SES Group to allow the business to expand and incorporate the three divisions: Show and Event, SES Security and the SES Academy.

In 2019 Steven Thompson joined SES Group as a Company Director bringing an aviation portfolio of Airport Covert and Overt Testing, Governance and Compliance along with his expertise in aviation manpower resilience, this firmly placed the business onto the aviation map.

In 2020 it saw SES Group acquire Concorde Airport Security (CAS), CAS a Stansted based company who specialised in security screening services for the airports large Fix Based Operator (FBO) community, became part of the SES family and as a result SES Aviation was born.

SES Group are considered experts in the field of Security and Crowd Management solutions throughout the UK. The Company has been responsible for the planning and delivery of some of the nations' largest and high-profile events, including the annual New Years' Eve 'Marking of Midnight' celebrations

in the heart of London, the 2012 Queens Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and more recently in 2022 the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

SES Group is a leading provider of manned guarding/security for Network Rail providing a unique customer service model which has synergies with the aviation industry and was seen by the company to be a natural progression.

The SES values are the FIVE P's.

- **Professional in Approach**
- **Proactive & Innovative**
- **Proud of our Client Services**
- **Putting Public Safety First**
- **Promoting & Growing Teams**

Our vision is being committed to providing an experienced, professional security service, which protects the public and invests in people development.

The SES Academy is responsible for delivering SES Group's bespoke continuous professional development (CPD) programme and in 2021 SES Aviation became a CAA registered aviation security training provider utilising the high-tech training facilities at the company's head office in Harlow which is in easy reach of all the London airports.

As a CAA registered training provider and our people focused vision as a family company, we use our experience to offer individuals the highest level of training and skill development. Importantly all our Aviation Instructors come from an aviation security background and have boundless experience to draw on which provides unparalleled level of insight.

Following the CAAs Quality Assurance Framework allows focus on aviation security training, it's in the detail from implementation, the quality of our policies and procedures, session plans, having a robust quality assurance strategy, high standards, and appropriate

*Steven Thompson,
Director, SES Aviation*



trainee data management. Our obsession for quality assurance means continuous improvement is implemented every step of the way, as this is part of our company DNA.

SES Aviation provides security services for regional and large airports across the UK, in these areas our aviation clients rely on our security teams to provide the highest level of professionalism coupled with a new ethos of client satisfaction. We utilise state of the art technology and process' to allow our aviation clients to manage their security threats and ensure the safety of passengers and staff from home to destination.

SES Aviation understands the importance of the passenger experience, our friendly and professional aviation security support teams can deploy at short notice in areas such as passenger preparation, PRM, security training and testing, allowing airports to focus on essential areas of their business such as passenger and staff screening.

Airports face unique daily challenges never more so than now. The UK aviation industry collectively faced unprecedented challenges because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and what was the norm no longer existed. As restrictions on travel eased aviation activity increased. Airports and airlines alike,

“Our commitment is realising the vision of creating a successful, recognised, and sustainable aviation company with a clear commitment to the professionalisation of the wider aviation workforce and industry”.

along with their contractors and suppliers experienced significant further operational and commercial challenges causing unseen disruption. Quite often operational situations arise that don't have an obvious training objective, practical scenario or on the job training module that prepares security staff and managers to deal with it. Operational mentoring helps close this gap and reduce the risk while improving and increasing experience for key positions and appointments.

SES Aviation can deploy an operational mentor or instructor to transfer the necessary expertise that our clients can call upon to help develop their own management and staff. This gives the knowledge, skills and confidence to undertake compliance management and security tasks from monitoring, reporting, corrective action plans, report writing and mitigation.

All these challenges must be managed proactively to ensure there is no reduction in aviation security and to maintain public confidence in the safety and security of aviation.

Our commitment is realising the vision of creating a successful, recognised, and sustainable aviation company with a clear commitment to the professionalisation of the wider aviation workforce and industry. ■

SMART INVESTMENT AT THE RIGHT TIME CAN HELP UK AIRPORTS TO MINIMISE COSTS AND ACHIEVE CARBON REDUCTION GOALS

Wise energy investments can help airports to minimise spiralling wholesale energy costs and make significant progress in cutting carbon emissions.

That is the key message from David Mitchell, the new Director of UK Power Network Services – the company which is a Corporate Partner of the AOA and a long-term energy infrastructure partner to several UK airports, including Bristol, Gatwick, Heathrow and London City.

Mitchell, who took over the company's leadership in July, told The Airport Operator that helping airports to achieve their sustainability goals is at the heart of the UK Power Network Services business. He said that the company seeks to add value for its airports clients by sharing its knowledge of innovation in the

electricity sector and drawing on its experience in defence, ports, railways and public networks.

UK Power Network Services are a partner in many of the UK's largest infrastructure projects, including HS1, where they designed, built, financed and now maintain the electricity network for the highspeed railway, and Hinkley Point C, where it is undertaking electrical works for the first nuclear power station constructed in the UK in over 20 years. It hopes to play a similar role in the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power plant. This £20 billion project would be capable of providing electricity for six million British

homes.

Mitchell says that his top priorities are safety – for staff, clients and the public – and delivering reliable solutions for clients. UK Power Network Services aims to be a trusted adviser and service provider to UK airports, while remaining essentially invisible to the passengers who pass through airports, taking advantage of resilient electricity supplies at multiple touch points without even thinking about it.

Reflecting on the recent experience of the company's airport clients, he is acutely conscious of the dramatic hit to airport revenues over the past

David Mitchell, Director of
UK Power Network Services



two years, the spiralling wholesale energy costs that they face today and the increasing pressure that they also face to reduce their carbon emissions, with the Government proposing that all English airport operations should be absolute zero emission by 2040.

He emphasises that the sustainable energy transformation sits at the heart of today's UK Power Network Services business and argues that there is an alignment between airports' needs to cut carbon emissions and minimise energy costs, while all the time ensuring supply resilience. The key to success, he suggests, is making a careful assessment of both the cost of investments and the pay-back delivered over time. The investment

“UK Power Network Services aims to be a trusted adviser and service provider to UK airports, while remaining essentially invisible to the passengers who pass through airports, taking advantage of resilient electricity supplies at multiple touch points without even thinking about it”.

needs to be carried out, he says, “wisely, not too early and not too late. No-one wants to spend the money ahead of need, but they do need to ensure that investment aligns with the overall strategy to meet future capacity requirements”.

Mitchell says many airports have already made significant progress in terms of decarbonising operations including electrifying vehicles including tugs, shuttle buses, passenger and staff cars and the wider airside support vehicles. Airports also need sufficient infrastructure to allow aircraft that have landed to connect to the electricity network to provide pre-conditioned air and to run their auxiliary supplies, so that they don't have to run their own turbines.

In looking for ways to drive down energy costs one way of achieving that would be the inclusion of on-site or off-site solar generation, which, Mitchell says, is often the most cost-effective way to invest. Where power purchase agreements are involved, he says airports need to make sure that the terms of the agreement deliver lower prices than public networks for the whole life of the agreement and optimally match their load. Large off-site systems offer a lower cost per unit MWh, but care must be taken to consider the total cost of connection and distribution around the airport.

The long-term horizon, he suggests, will be for some airports to consider what changes they may need to make to handle short-haul electric aircraft. Specifically, he notes, they will need to ensure that they have appropriate charging in place to support efficient turnarounds. That might involve fixed or mobile chargers or a battery-charging station that can fork-lift one set of batteries out and replace it with

a new set while ensuring that the used batteries are then recharged at the most economical time both for operations and energy costs. Beyond that, for long-haul aircraft, airports may need to think about whether they will have the right infrastructure in place for hydrogen aircraft. This may include on site production of the hydrogen fuel which in turn would require more energy, as more electricity is needed to draw hydrogen from the atmosphere.

Mitchell delivers all these thoughts with the enthusiasm of the engineer that he has always been but asked what the key to successful relationships with airports is, he is clear that it is as much about listening as it is about talking. As he puts it, “the key to success is constant dialogue, understanding their issues, their problems, thinking as if we were one. For us it is not about the airport. It is about the passenger journey. It is the passenger experience that is key to the airport. We need to align with that and, as the provider of electricity services, we just want to be invisible to passengers”.

Offering an overall summary of what he wants to say to airports, Mitchell puts it this way: “Airports need to ensure that they do have a sustainable, resilient energy strategy that takes into account future changes and future demands. As I said, no-one wants to invest money ahead of need, particularly as now is a very tough time for the aviation industry. It has been two years of no money coming in and airports are still recovering. So they need to be wise with what they are doing and ready for the pressures that are coming from governments, from energy costs and from the ultimate clients, the passengers. Our engineers – and I include myself there – are always happy to explore all these issues with existing clients and potential new clients”. ■

David Mitchell is Director of UK Power Networks Services. He is a chartered electrical engineer who joined the organisation in 1980 as an apprentice. UK Power Networks Services is a Corporate Partner of the Airport Operators Association.





DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT SEEKS EVIDENCE FROM ENGLISH AIRPORTS ON HOW THEY COULD ACHIEVE ITS AMBITION FOR ALL OPERATIONS TO BE ZERO EMISSION BY 2040

The Government official responsible for aviation decarbonisation has called on airports in England to provide evidence on how their operations could be zero emission by 2040.

Darryl Abelscroft, Head of Aviation Decarbonisation Strategy and Technology at the Department for Transport was speaking last month at the AOA's carbon conference.

He confirmed that it is the Government's intention to issue a call for evidence this year on their ambition for all airport operations in England to be zero emission by 2040. He told the conference that a feasibility study by Mott MacDonald had confirmed that this goal is technically feasible and commercially viable.

However, he also accepted that there are unanswered questions about the ambition and areas that the Government needs to better understand. Asked to explain what exactly the Department means by "airport operations", he said, "the starting point for me is it should be things involved in people flying, the core things an airport does to enable people to fly" and he emphasised "we want to work with the sector on this".

Asked if the Government's goal might not most easily be achieved by suppressing demand, he said "We want to preserve the ability of people to fly. The Jet Zero strategy is not just about decarbonisation. It is about growth. It is a strategy that unapologetically favours unlocking the economic growth of the aviation sector, but also the technologies and the fuels that will be needed to decarbonise, so there is a huge opportunity with Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) to grow a UK SAF industry, employing people up and down the country and aerospace as well. We are already a global leader in aerospace, but the new technology solutions we are going to need in aerospace are a massive opportunity for us".

Abelscroft said he had been working on Jet Zero for two years during the pandemic and "it feels like it would have been so easy for the sector, so badly affected by Covid, to really just focus on that. I have just been

blown away by how frequently the commitments coming forward from the sector have been on Jet Zero and decarbonisation and how ambitious they have been. It really has been a feature of the last two years that the sector is showing total ambition to decarbonise".

He told the conference that he has also been greatly encouraged by the recent agreement in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) assembly for a long-term aspirational goal based on Net Zero by 2050. The sector had been leading on that for the last year and he said the agreement was "a game-changing moment that brings the whole globe into the decarbonisation of aviation".

Abelscroft was the opening speaker at an all-day conference that brought together over 70

"We want to preserve the ability of people to fly. The Jet Zero strategy is not just about decarbonisation. It is about growth".

delegates from service providers and airports of all sizes and types from across the country. It was the AOA's first conference to focus on carbon, the first such face-to-face meeting for over two years and the first time that the AOA had welcomed members to the conference room at its office in Smith Square, Westminster.





Darryl Abelscroft, Head of Aviation Decarbonisation Strategy and Technology at the Department for Transport

During the morning session attendees heard from **Andy Mace, Director, Arup**, an AOA Corporate Partner, on how airports could generate clean energy on site from solar power systems. He stressed that from an economic or commercial perspective the best position would always be to generate solar power on land owned and located at the airport. He cited current and planned schemes at Cornwall Airport Newquay, Edinburgh Airport and Newcastle Airport.

Gavin Roberts, Principal Energy and Technology Consultant, UK Power Networks Services, another AOA Corporate Partner, spoke about options for energy efficiency and how airports could move away from gas for heating. He said that, overall, airports are looking at a very large increase in their electricity usage compared to now. By installing heat pumps they could guarantee carbon savings now and he said there is a lot of evidence that the life-time operating costs of heat pumps are cheaper than existing alternatives.

Andrew Chadwick, Technology Innovation Lead, Aviation at Connected Places Catapult

discussed what airports will need to do to meet the hydrogen and electric charging needs for future aircraft. He spoke about the new infrastructure, operational procedures and skills that would be needed to ensure that airports could support a range of different aircraft fuel types. Chadwick said airports would need to consider three questions: what do we need, when do we need it by and how much will it cost?

During the afternoon session **Elizabeth Hegarty, MD Aviation and Transport Services at Wilson James** stressed the importance of collaboration between service companies and their airport clients. She said that strategic partnerships open opportunities for economies of scale and partnering with other service companies. Hegarty said that sustainability also offers a great opportunity for companies to engage with their employees. She pointed out that many small decisions by individuals working at airports could make a big difference.

In a session on future cars and airports, **Andy Eastlake, CEO, Zemo partnership**, a non-profit zero emission mobility partnership,

partly funded by the Department for Transport, told attendees that one in five cars sold today have plugs. From an airport perspective, he said that the key will be to consider the needs of different types of users, including travellers, drop-off and hire cars. On the same subject, **Tom McLennan, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA)**, said that the demand for electric vehicles from people renting cars at airports is growing. A central consideration would be how best to provide rapid charging and the BVRLA would welcome early engagement with airports on how to achieve this.

During the final session, **Russell Fowler, Senior Project Manager, Transport Decarbonisation, at National Grid** urged airports to consider their future electricity needs now, pointing out that applications for connections to the grid are increasing significantly. Describing the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales as “a critical enabler”, he said that collaboration between National Grid and airports is key. Fowler said, “if we work together early on, we can explore least regret solutions”. ■



Heathrow

AIRPORTS IN SCOTLAND AND LONDON PLAYED A KEY ROLE FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Gatwick and Heathrow airports all played a key role in the events that followed the death of the Queen at Balmoral on 8 September.

The Queen's passing at the age of 96 after more than 70 years on the throne triggered long-laid plans for the nation to bid her farewell and welcome the accession to the throne of His Majesty, King Charles III.

Created in the 1960's and revised

many times subsequently, Operation London Bridge set out how the country would respond to the Queen's death, with the phrase "London Bridge is down" used to relay the news to the Prime Minister. Operation Unicorn dealt with arrangements if the Queen were to die in Scotland, as she did. Operation

Spring Tide set out arrangements for the accession of King Charles.

Aberdeen Airport, described in 2017 by Camilla, the new Queen Consort, as her favourite airport, was at the centre of events around the death of the Queen. On the day that the Queen died, Aberdeen, an hour

from Balmoral, helped to facilitate the arrival of the Royal Household on several flights, as well as the departure the following day of Prince Harry.

The first public appearance of the new King, following the Queen's death, was at Aberdeen Airport, where he was met by Operations Director, Mark Beveridge, and Chief of Business Services for AGS Airports, Roger Hunt.

Media from around the world descended on the airport for a three-day period, with 60 journalists, photographers and camera operators reporting from the top of the airport's multi-storey car park.

Edinburgh Airport was involved as the King arrived in Scotland on 12 September to attend a service of thanksgiving held in the Queen's honour at St Giles Cathedral. The following day an RAF C-17 Globemaster was used to transport the Queen's coffin from the airport to RAF Northolt in London.

The arrangements for the Queen's departure from Scotland were years in planning. The arrival of the Queen's procession at the airfield was marked by a two-minute silence, with airspace suspended to ensure silence throughout the ceremony. Passengers within the terminal were able to watch, with views of both the cargo apron, where the ceremony took place, and the runway from which the C17 departed.

Gatwick Airport played a central role before and after the Queen's state funeral on 19 September, as it handled the arrival and departure of Heads of State and Ministers and more than 500 other VIP passengers. Gatwick's response plan, Operation Penny Black, written in collaboration with Sussex Police and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, was co-ordinated by the airport's Incident Operations Manager, Luke Mosley.

Gatwick welcomed representatives of the King and the Government to



meet and greet dignitaries as they arrived into the UK. Police and UK Border Force worked to ensure the security of the arriving and departing delegations, while also ensuring minimal disruption to the airport's normal operations. In a thank-you note written to colleagues across the airport after the events, Mosley said "you have all done Gatwick proud".

Heathrow Airport was where the Queen first stepped foot as monarch on British soil when she returned to the UK from Kenya in 1952, following the death of her father, King George VI. Three years later she opened the airport's first permanent passenger terminal, which re-opened in 2014 as The Queen's Terminal.

The airport's Director of Operations, Dale Reeson, said that following the Queen's death Heathrow's position as an international gateway had to be balanced with its proximity to Windsor Castle. On top of its regular

schedules, Heathrow welcomed funeral guests from around the world, while making sure that operations never interrupted the solemnity of events in London and Windsor.

Ahead of the funeral procession from Westminster Abbey to Windsor Castle, Heathrow Community Rangers supported neighbouring councils to tidy up areas along the procession route. On the day of the funeral, thousands of people lined local roads. Departures and arrivals were halted at key moments to ensure that proceedings in London and Windsor and as the procession passed by the airport's boundaries were not affected by aircraft noise.

Reeson said he hoped that passengers and those that might have been affected "appreciated our desire to do our bit in paying tribute to the Queen who touched so many of our lives". ■

NEW ISLE OF MAN AIRPORT DIRECTOR CONSIDERS HOW TO SAFEGUARD KEY ROUTES

Gary Cobb, who took over as Isle of Man Airport Director in August, is looking at the best way to safeguard the future of routes from the island to Liverpool, London and Manchester.



Through the coming winter season he will consider whether the airport should maintain its current “open skies” approach on these routes or whether it might be better to move to a licence-based approach to ensure that competition does not lead to saturation and decisions by airlines to abandon a route completely.

Cobb came to his Isle of Man Airport leadership role following earlier stints at Gatwick and Highlands and Islands Airports. Initially Head of Airside at Gatwick, he then became Head of Airfield Planning, where he worked with colleagues to develop the proposal to bring Gatwick’s northern runway into regular use alongside the existing main runway. At Highlands and Islands Airports he was Chief Operating Officer, with responsibility for the group’s 11 airports. At Isle of Man Airport, he is a civil servant, reporting to the Department of Infrastructure and required to strike a balance between the airport’s commerciality and the wider socio-economic needs of the Isle of Man.

A key issue for island residents is the maintenance of services on lifeline routes to the airport’s top three destinations: London, Liverpool and Manchester - all routes currently served by easyJet and Loganair. Liverpool is seen as a particularly crucial destination because of its key role in meeting islanders’ health needs.

Cobb explained to The Airport Operator that “one of the big fears on the island (and what has been seen in the past) is where you have a stable operator running one route, a new operator comes onto that route, takes passengers from the incumbent, both of them fail to make money and then both leave that route”. He said avoiding that requires “a very careful dance”.

Working with the Isle of Man Government departments, Cobb will consider whether the island’s airport should maintain its current open skies approach for all routes or whether there could be a case



Gary Cobb, Airport Director, Isle of Man Airport

A key issue for island residents is the maintenance of services on lifeline routes to the airport’s top three destinations: London, Liverpool and Manchester - all routes currently served by easyJet and Loganair.

to move to a model where airlines are obliged to apply for licences to fly particular routes. While licences might be an option, Cobb said, it might also be the case that commercial levers could be used to protect routes.

As well as looking at this specific issue, Cobb is also starting work on a 10-year plan for the airport to allow better financial and asset planning to be carried out by the Government. As a first step to developing that, Cobb and his airport colleagues

are engaging with passengers, politicians, the public, staff and airlines to find out what they want to see, what the island needs and what would be good for the airport. One important actor that will be included, will be the Government’s plan to grow the island’s population from its current 85,000 to a total of 100,000, which is expected to increase the airport’s passenger numbers.

Before the pandemic in 2019 annual passenger numbers at Isle of Man Airport were 855,000. This year



that total is expected to be around 550,000, while the forecast for next year is around 700,000. The airport's top three routes are to London (with flights to Gatwick, Heathrow and London City), Liverpool and Manchester, with a new route to Dublin also growing in popularity. Looking ahead to future connectivity, the airport is engaging in discussions with airlines on some other possible new routes, with Jersey and Guernsey seen as having good potential for both business and leisure travel.

Cobb emphasised that season length, frequency and the timing of flights are also important for passengers using the airport. Next summer FlyDirect will extend the period of its summer flights to Majorca to run from May to September. The new Irish regional airline, Emerald Airlines, which launches operations earlier this year, is expected to increase frequencies to Dublin and Cobb said he is hopeful that the times would change as well to allow better connections through Dublin to the USA. ■



Before the pandemic in 2019 annual passenger numbers at Isle of Man Airport were 855,000. This year that total is expected to be around 550,000, while the forecast for next year is around 700,000.

JERSEY AIRPORT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE AS PASSENGER NUMBERS BOUNCE BACK

Jersey Airport is looking at the possible introduction of hydrogen flights and is assisting with drone trials, as it stages a strong recovery from the pandemic.

The airport and its base carrier, Blue Islands, have announced plans for a collaboration with the US aeronautical company, Universal Hydrogen, to examine the potential for transforming aviation in the Channel Islands with clean hydrogen.

Blue Islands has a fleet of ATR regional transport aircraft, which is one of the first aircraft that Universal Hydrogen are retrofitting for hydrogen propulsion. Airport Director, Robin MacRae emphasised that although this is still “very early technology”, Universal Hydrogen are progressing very quickly with the first flight trials, scheduled for later this year.

A retrofitted Channel Islands aircraft fleet would require regulatory approval from both the EU aviation safety agency (EASA) and the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), but

Universal Hydrogen are already well-advanced with the approval process. Universal Hydrogen has suggested that it could “provide a true zero emissions solution for Blue Islands’ services as early as 2025”. MacRae said “we are working closely with Universal Hydrogen and Blue Islands on developing new ground-operating procedures for hydrogen propulsion aircraft and on early engagement with our aviation regulator in the Channel Islands”.

Jersey Airport is also part of a £3.7m Innovate UK- funded project which will culminate in a series of demonstration flights of “uncrewed aircraft” (drones) in and around Jersey in early 2024. The airport and consortium leads have already held a public consultation meeting in Jersey to address safety questions and to outline the benefits that drones could bring to the Channel Islands. MacRae said “we are talking about how

Jersey Airport is also part of a £3.7m Innovate UK- funded project which will culminate in a series of demonstration flights of “uncrewed aircraft” (drones) in and around Jersey in early 2024.

drones could enhance Search and Rescue capability around the islands, deliver critical medical supplies from the mainland and, indeed, ultimately provide air taxi services within the Channel Islands as well”.

MacRae came to Jersey in 2019,

*Robin MacRae,
Director, Jersey Airport*



initially as Head of Air Navigation Services, after a long career at Highlands and Islands Airports. Asked to recall his first impressions of the airport, he told The Airport Operator that what had really struck him was that, even though it was a relatively small airport, it was committed to “innovation and forward-thinking and once I started that became more and more apparent, that it was an organisation that wasn’t standing still. It was very innovative and not scared of grasping opportunities to make meaningful change”.

He took on the Airport Director role in June 2020, just weeks after the pandemic had closed Jersey Airport to most commercial flights. Working with the Jersey Government, the airport gave support to Blue Islands to enable them to continue their Southampton service, ensuring that islanders would be able to access health care on the mainland and

“Working with the Jersey Government, the airport gave support to Blue Islands to enable them to continue their Southampton service, ensuring that islanders would be able to access health care on the mainland and essential workers could continue to reach Jersey”.

essential workers could continue to reach Jersey. When the lockdown began many of the airport’s staff were redeployed to support the island’s wider pandemic response. Airport fire crew drove ambulances, security officers were redeployed to provide security at the island’s General Hospital and back-office staff helped with the island’s Covid helpline and with food deliveries.

MacRae said that at an early stage the airport began considering how it could come out of the pandemic

and restore connectivity. Central to that was a decision to set up a Covid testing facility at Jersey Airport. MacRae said “that meant that we could open the borders here and test every single passenger that came in through the airport and we did that free of charge. Clearly that had benefits for us. People were starting to want to travel again, and they could come to Jersey and get a free test. That was important for us, and it meant that in July 2020 we were able to open the borders here and start commercial flying again”.

Meanwhile, the airport had reduced its overall headcount by around 25% through voluntary release and early retirement schemes. There were no compulsory redundancies, but many security staff took advantage of the voluntary release scheme. As passenger numbers began to increase, the airport trained non-security staff to support the security screening process during peak times. As the operation continued to ramp up, more security staff were recruited which, McCrae said, had ensured sufficient resource this summer to manage queues and maintain a good passenger experience at the airport.

Now MacRae is happy that Jersey Airport's pre-pandemic connectivity has essentially been restored, with more than 35 destinations served currently, which he describes as "pretty damned good for an island that is nine miles by five". He mentions the early return of easyJet and British Airways (BA) flights, including a five-year agreement with BA on the Heathrow route, as well as a new deal with Jet2 providing links to five UK destinations. easyJet's Gatwick route is the most popular, closely followed by BA to Heathrow.

Passenger numbers have increased substantially from the pandemic low of just over 400,000 in 2020, up to over 600,000 in 2021. Expectations for 2022 are for 1.35m and the projection is for around 1.75m passengers in 2024.

Equally, passenger numbers have increased substantially from the pandemic low of just over 400,000 in 2020, up to over 600,000 in 2021. Expectations for 2022 are for 1.35m and the projection is for around 1.75m passengers in 2024, which would exceed the pre-pandemic total of 1.7m. MacRae forecasts that by 2027 Jersey Airport's passenger total could be as high as 1.85m.

Those increasing passenger number projections are based not just on the resilience of existing routes, but also on an expectation of improved connectivity to mainland Europe. MacRae says that Jersey Airport has been working very closely with its airline partners on that and although he couldn't give details at this stage, he said that the airport's passenger number forecasts reflect

a confidence that this improved connectivity will be achieved.

Against that background, the airport is at the early stages of considering a terminal and runway redevelopment plan that would be designed, in MacRae's words, to "future-proof the airport out to 2050". As a first step, the airport hopes to install next generation security equipment before next summer. Other ideas under consideration for the future include a new food and beverage and retail offering and possible redevelopment of the pier and the apron. The airport is examining the implications for the runway of possible changes to airline fleets, including the potential for hydrogen-fuelled aircraft. ■



AOA RECRUITS NEW TEAM MEMBER TO LOOK AFTER EVENTS AND MEMBER RELATIONS

Former Sales Director, Marko Saaret, joined the AOA in October as Manager of Events and Member Relations.

Saaret told The Airport Operator that he has a passion for aviation and jumped at the opportunity of applying for the AOA role to build on his previous experience in events, hospitality, sales and journalism. Estonian by origin, he has a journalism degree from the University of Tartu and spent more than five years as Brussels correspondent for Estonian Radio reporting on the EU and NATO.

His first opportunity to meet AOA members was at the AOA's carbon conference on 10 October, but the big established events which he will have responsibility for organising will be the AOA's annual conference and its annual dinner. He is also planning

to consider ideas for new potential events and formats.

On the membership side of his role, he said that he wants to make sure that member benefits are as meaningful as possible and potentially to add new benefits. In discussions with AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, he has outlined his ideas for a members' survey, where all members would be asked about which benefits are most important for them, where they are satisfied and where they see room for improvement. He said that he would aim to use the results from the survey as a basis to ensure that the AOA continues to provide the most effective service for its members. ■



AVIATION SECURITY, RUNWAY CLEANING AND CIVIL ENGINEERING COMPANIES JOIN AOA



SES AVIATION

Leading aviation security company, **SES Aviation**, has joined the AOA as a Corporate Partner.

Drawing on many years of security experience, the company says its team of professional, knowledgeable and full-trained security officers deliver the highest standard of screening services for airports and fixed-based operators. It provides security officers throughout the UK, either ad hoc or full time, as well as the management, auditing or compliance oversight of existing teams.

SES Aviation's services include: passenger screening and the screening of airport goods, cargo screening, security training, aircraft search and guarding, vetting, meet and assist and consultancy and audit.

BUCHER
municipal

Machine industry company, **Bucher Municipal**, has joined the AOA as a Silver Member.

Bucher Municipal provides cleaning and clearing equipment for airport operations, including runway sweeping, runway de-icing and glycol recovery cleaning. The company says its equipment helps airports to build up resilience against local disruptions, to keep runways and other areas safe and to maintain on-time performance.

AMCO GIFFEN

Civil engineering company, **AmcoGiffen**, has joined the AOA as an Associate Member.

The company describes itself as a leading partner in the design and delivery of innovative and complex multi-disciplinary engineering, construction and maintenance services across the transport, energy and environmental sectors.

RYANAIR TO ADD A SIXTH AIRCRAFT TO ITS BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT FLEET FROM NEXT SUMMER

Ryanair has announced that it will add a sixth aircraft to its Birmingham Airport-based fleet in the summer of 2023.

The expansion will create 180 direct jobs and support a total of 1,700 local jobs. It takes Ryanair's total investment in Birmingham to £525m and the destinations on offer to customers to 42, with new routes to Girona and Pisa. Two of the six based aircraft will be Boeing 737 8-200 aircraft, which can carry 4%

more passengers, while burning 16% less fuel with 40% less noise. Ryanair's summer 2023 schedule will include more than 350 flights a week from Birmingham and increased frequencies on 10 routes, including Bergamo, Dublin, Madrid, Porto and Palma.

Birmingham Airport Chief Executive, Nick Barton, said "We are thrilled Ryanair is significantly expanding its Birmingham offering. Basing a sixth aircraft here will increase options for



customers, create jobs and boost the West Midlands economy". ■

RYANAIR ADDS THREE NEW ROUTES FROM CORNWALL AIRPORT NEWQUAY

Dublin, London Stansted and Malaga will be added to Ryanair's Summer 2023 schedule from Cornwall Airport Newquay – marking almost a 60% growth in the carrier's services from the airport.

The three new Ryanair destinations, commencing on 23 April, will join established connections to Faro and Alicante, with the airline offering over 25 weekly flights on the five routes. Sam O'Dwyer, the airport's Managing Director, said she was delighted by Ryanair's decision and suggested that Malaga, in particular, would undoubtedly be a very popular addition to Cornwall Airport Newquay's list of destinations.

Aer Lingus Regional has also announced a new Summer 2023 link, to Belfast City. The four-times

weekly service from 3 April will be added to the airline's existing route to Dublin, where flights will be increased next summer from four-times weekly to daily.

Meanwhile, Cornwall Airport Newquay's winter connectivity has been enhanced by the arrival to the airport of the new flybe, offering twice daily flights to London Heathrow from Monday to Friday (daily at weekends) and a daily link to Manchester. O'Dwyer said the new flybe services add much-needed extra capacity to two of the airport's major markets, emphasising that "offering more airline choice



and year-round connectivity is a key focus for us". The airport now has 10 airlines in its portfolio, more than before the pandemic. ■

HYDROGEN-POWERED AIRCRAFT COULD BE OPERATING FROM GLASGOW AIRPORT BY 2025

A new partnership between AGS Airports and ZeroAvia opens the prospect of hydrogen-powered aircraft operating from Glasgow Airport as early as 2025.

ZeroAvia, which describes itself as the leader in developing zero-emission solutions for commercial aviation, has announced an agreement with AGS Airports to explore the development of hydrogen fuel infrastructure, regulatory framework requirements and resourcing required for delivering zero-emission flights from Glasgow and Aberdeen airports.

The team at AGS will work with ZeroAvia's airport infrastructure team to assess the opportunities for hydrogen production onsite, as well as exploring potential commercial routes. Switching some routes to aircraft powered by ZeroAvia's hydrogen-electric powertrain would help AGS Airports to reduce Scope 3 carbon emissions from aircraft and reduce noise and air quality impacts locally. AGS will also explore how hydrogen can be used to remove emissions across ground operations.

The partners will work towards a flight demonstration powered by ZeroAvia's ZA600 600kW hydrogen-electric engine, which is on a path towards certification by 2025. Commercial routes from Glasgow could follow soon after. The ZA600 is designed to power 9-19 seat aircraft up to 300 nautical miles. Hydrogen-electric engines use hydrogen in fuel cells to generate electricity, which is then used to power electric motors to turn the aircraft's propellers.

Derek Provan, Chief Executive of AGS Airports, said "The development of hydrogen powered aircraft has the potential to completely revolutionise aviation and it is becoming an increasingly viable option for regional and short-haul aircraft. As a regional airport group serving the Highlands and Islands of Scotland as well as the Channel Islands from Southampton, AGS will be the perfect testbed for hydrogen flight. Through our partnership with ZeroAvia, we will address some of the challenges associated with the generation, delivery and storage of hydrogen on-site and how we can prepare

our infrastructure to support zero emission flights".

Scottish Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth, said "This is an encouraging development as hydrogen has the potential to be a true zero emission fuel and could play a key role in helping the Scottish aviation sector to reach net zero. Many of the routes that operate from Glasgow and Aberdeen to airports across the Highlands and Islands are served by small aircraft and real social, economic and environmental benefits could be delivered by cleaner, quieter and lower cost aircraft. I congratulate AGS Airports and ZeroAvia on this partnership and will follow its progress with interest". ■



LONDON CITY AIRPORT ANNOUNCES £12M DEPARTURE LOUNGE UPGRADE

London City Airport is embarking on a £12m departure lounge upgrade with retail and restaurant partners to enhance the customer experience for its passengers.

The changes, set for completion by summer 2023, will provide 30% more

seating, two new restaurants and an expanded duty free and retail space.

The airport's Chief Executive, Robert Sinclair, said "Whilst Covid has postponed our plans to build an entirely new terminal building, it has not diminished our ambition to

invest in providing a London centric experience we know our passengers want and have been waiting for. Our recovery in 2022 has been strong, with 2.17m passengers to date, and we and our partners want to be ready to deliver an even better service in 2023 for even more passengers". ■

BRISTOL AIRPORT PARTNERS WITH JET2.COM TO OPEN NEW AIRSIDE ELECTRIC CHARGING HUB

Partnering with Jet2.com, funding from Bristol Airport's carbon transition programme has been used to develop the infrastructure to accelerate the electrification of airside vehicles and equipment at the airport.

A new airside electrical vehicle charging hub, with four dedicated Jet2.com electric vehicle charging bays and two bays for business partners, is now operational. The airport's carbon transition programme was set up earlier this

year to support initiatives reducing direct and indirect emissions from airport infrastructure.

Simon Earles, Sustainability and Corporate Affairs Director at Bristol Airport, said "We are delighted that another project has been completed with funding from the programme. The collaboration with Jet2.com in providing the electric charging hub in the busy airside aircraft operating area assists with aircraft turnarounds". Ian Doubtfire, Jet2.com's Sustainability and Business



Development Director, said the hub would "play a critical role in enabling us to further reduce our ground-based emissions". ■

LAST PASSENGERS ARRIVE AT DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT

The last plane touched down at Doncaster Sheffield Airport on 4 November, after the owners, Peel Airports, announced the airport's closure, citing a lack of financial viability.

The final Tui passenger flight brought holiday-makers home from Hurgada in Egypt. The last outbound flight took off on 29 October for Katowice in Poland.

Peel Airports announced in September that aviation services at the airport would be wound down after a strategic review concluded that a break-even business plan could not be identified, and no tangible proposals had been received to buy the airport. The Group's Chairman, Robert Hough



said he recognised that this would be "a great disappointment to many" but added "the intractable problem remains the fundamental and insufficient lack of current or prospective revenue streams, together with the airport's high operating costs".

Doncaster Sheffield Airport opened to the public in April 2005 and within two years of opening had recorded 2.28m passengers. This month's closure came after Wizz Air announced in June that it had decided to end most of its flights from the airport. ■

EDINBURGH AIRPORT ADOPTS NEW TECHNOLOGY IN BID TO INCREASE WIND POWER



Edinburgh Airport is to introduce innovative technology in a bid to identify untapped wind energy across the airport's site.

In a trial with green energy company, Katrick Technologies, wind mapping sensors will be put in place across the airport estate, including on the terminal roof and around the runway, to find areas of unexploited low-level wind power. The sensors will identify

the optimal areas where wind panels could be put in place to capture and convert energy, providing the airport with an opportunity to generate additional green energy and be more energy efficient.

Katrick Technologies Co-CEO, Vijay Madiani, said "Traditional wind turbines simply aren't feasible for airport estates. The goal of our partnership with Edinburgh

Airport is to provide them access to previously untapped areas of energy through our wind panels". Danny Quinn, Technical Asset Director at the airport, said "We are always looking to embrace fresh ideas, particularly when it comes to the generation of green energy, and this technology has the potential to provide new opportunities". ■

LOGANAIR GROWS ABERDEEN AIRPORT CAPACITY BY 30%

Loganair has announced an expansion programme from its largest base in Aberdeen, where it serves 14 destinations.

As part of its summer 2023 programme, Loganair has added an extra flight on its services to Manchester and Esbjerg and increased capacity on its Dublin and Birmingham routes. Taken together, the changes will increase seat capacity by 30%.

The airline has added a fourth daily service to Manchester and a Sunday service to Esbjerg in Denmark, a popular route for the oil and gas sector. Larger aircraft will be used to accommodate more passengers to Dublin and Birmingham.

Christopher Tibbett, Group Head of Airline Relations and Marketing at AGS, which operates Aberdeen Airport, said "We are absolutely



thrilled to see Loganair continue to expand their offering from Aberdeen next summer, across routes to the UK, Ireland and Denmark. ■

GREEN LIGHT FOR SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORT RUNWAY EXTENSION AFTER LEGAL CHALLENGE IS BLOCKED

Southampton Airport has begun planning to deliver a runway extension it has described as “a vital step in securing the airport’s long-term viability”.

Plans for the 164m extension at the northern end of the airport’s runway can go ahead after the Court of Appeal refused opponents permission to appeal against a High Court judgement, which agreed earlier this year that Eastleigh Borough Council’s approval of the airport’s runway application was lawful.

The airport said “as a result, there can be no further challenge to the

legality of the borough council’s decision, and we can begin to plan for the delivery of the scheme. The runway extension is a vital step in securing the airport’s long-term viability and it will also deliver significant economic benefits to the region”.

After the extension is built, the extended runway will allow airlines to fly bigger planes. As a result, the airport believes that its passenger numbers could eventually grow to as high as 3m passengers a year, compared to its pre-Covid total of 2m passengers in 2019. ■



EMIRATES EXPANDS SERVICE FROM NEWCASTLE AIRPORT TO DUBAI

Emirates is scaling up its operations from Newcastle International Airport to allow passengers from the North East to fly seven days a week from 1 December.

The airline, which operates a wide-body Boeing 777 aircraft, will introduce a sixth and seventh weekly flight in response to a steady growth in bookings. Emirates also now offers an earlier lunchtime departure, improving connections to long-haul destinations, including Australia, the Indian Ocean, Malaysia and Thailand.

Nick Jones, the airport’s Chief Executive Officer, said “Emirates’



Dubai service has gone from strength to strength over the past 12 months. We are all pleased that demand for the iconic eastbound service has continued to grow resulting in the return of their pre-pandemic daily schedule, departing

at lunchtime. Not only does this investment represent the airline’s confidence in our airport. It opens up even more opportunities for the North East public to connect to the world via Dubai in addition to creating even more cargo capacity. ■

AOA 2023 SAVE THE DATE

Top Events confirmed

AOA Annual Conference

Tuesday 31 January

Park Plaza London Riverbank

AOA Annual Dinner

Monday 5 June

JW Marriott Grosvenor House Hotel

Please add the dates to your diary - further details to follow



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