

THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

THE AOA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

*Keynote speaker,
Mark Harper MP,
the Secretary of State
for Transport*

FULL PROGRAMME INSIDE



Features

**SHADOW AVIATION MINISTER,
MIKE KANE MP,** *backs partnership
with a strong aviation industry*

**NEW LONDON SOUTHEND
CEO** *confident the airport will
return to growth*

**HEATHROW RETAIL
DIRECTOR** *on tax-free shopping
and arrivals duty free*

**DEREK PROVAN, DEPARTING
AGS CEO,** *says UK must be a
sustainability leader*

AOA
THE VOICE OF UK AIRPORTS
WINTER 2023



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KAREN DEE

Introduction to The Airport Operator



Welcome to this edition of The Airport Operator which is being published on

the day that the AOA holds its first in-person Annual Conference since the start of the pandemic.

We will have a wide range of well-informed speakers led by Transport Secretary, Mark Harper and Shadow Aviation Minister, Mike Kane, and including Paul Johnson, Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Phil Douglas, Director General of Border Force and several UK airport chief executives. They will help us to take stock of the current position of UK aviation and to look ahead for the coming year.

The day after our Conference will see the first meeting of the new Aviation Council, a joint Government and industry body set up to bring the aviation sector together to learn the lessons of the pandemic and to grow back sustainably. After this initial meeting is chaired by Mark Harper, future meetings will be jointly chaired by Aviation Minister,

Baroness Vere and Gatwick Airport CEO, Stewart Wingate. I am looking forward to participating in the work of the Council, not least because the Government has described its establishment as recognition that a thriving aviation sector is critical for the UK's success.

For UK airports, I am confident that 2023 will be the year when the real recovery takes hold, and we can put the post-pandemic restart behind us. This should be a year of solid recovery and a year when we can work with the Government to deliver on some of the ambitions for the sector set out in the Department for Transport's Flight to the Future strategic framework, including sustainability and airspace modernisation.

Acknowledging that this may well be a pre-election year, we will also be engaging with politicians of all parties to ensure that they are well-informed about the opportunities and challenges that we face. We anticipate that there will continue to be intense interest in our plans to move steadily towards a Net Zero future and we will be emphasising the detailed plans that our airport members have developed to make this a reality for their own operations.

We also look forward to seeing the results of the Government's review of ground handling, which was an area of focus as the sector re-opened after the pandemic. At the time of writing we were still awaiting the detail of the review, but we look forward to

hearing its insights and discussing what comes next. Having a light shone on this part of the aviation eco-system will be useful in making sure we all understand where the challenges are.

Here at the AOA I am happy to report that we have now recruited three new members to our eight-person team. This year for the first time since the start of the pandemic we will have a full programme of working group meetings and other events and we will be well-placed to further enhance service delivery for all our members.

This issue of the magazine includes a report from our newest working group on airspace and air traffic services. From the supply side we have insights from Arup on the role of airports in sustainability and from the Sasse Group on what Covid taught us. Scotland's Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth, writes on how Scottish aviation can thrive in 2023. There are also interviews with Graham Keddie, Managing Director of Belfast International Airport, John Upton, the new Chief Executive at London Southend Airport and Nick Jones, Chief Executive at Newcastle International Airport. We also carry an extensive farewell interview with Derek Provan, who stepped down as CEO of AGS Airports, and as a member of the AOA Board, at the end of last year. He reflects on the significant changes that he has observed in his 25-year career in UK aviation. ■

Karen Dee, Chief Executive

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DEPARTING AIRPORTS GROUP CEO SAYS UK MUST SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A SUSTAINABILITY LEADER AS INDUSTRY CONTINUES ITS RECOVERY

Derek Provan, who stepped down as CEO of AGS Airports at the end of last year, says positioning the UK as a leader in sustainable aviation is an opportunity we can't let slip.



Derek Provan



In a wide-ranging farewell interview with The Airport Operator, Provan, who had overall responsibility for Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports:

- Warned that Europe and America are “way ahead” of the UK on Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) production, which he described as “a huge, missed opportunity”.
- Forecast that the first phase of Glasgow Airport’s solar farm would be completed by this autumn.
- Predicted that an AGS-led consortium will deliver the UK’s first medical distribution network using drones next year.
- Said he expects that a runway extension at Southampton Airport will be completed by the summer and will transform the airport’s prospects.

On sustainability and climate change, Provan described AGS Airports as a sector leader, noting that last year its three airports were

ranked in the top five in the UK for their sustainability credentials and were in the top ten in Europe and the top twelve globally. He said that the 30-acre solar farm being built at Glasgow Airport will supply all the energy that the airport needs and energy for neighbouring businesses. It would also, eventually, allow the airport to make its own hydrogen.

AGS Airports has partnered with ZeroAvia to explore the development of hydrogen fuel infrastructure as well as the resourcing required to support hydrogen flight. Provan said that makes sense for a regional airports group because of the expectation that hydrogen will be a realistic option for smaller aircraft and short flights. AGS and ZeroAvia will work towards a flight demonstration powered by ZeroAvia’s ZA600 600kW hydrogen-electric engine, which is on a path towards certification by 2025. Provan said he was quite confident they would demonstrate that hydrogen is becoming a viable option for short-haul flights.

However, he emphasised that in the

short-term hydrogen and electricity would only work for shorter flights, with their possible use in long-haul flights “a long way down the road”. SAF could be “a bridge between these technologies” and urged the UK Government to seize the opportunity.

Provan said Government “must act on the opportunity that sits in front of us as a country to create our own SAF and become a European leader in SAF production. Government policy is likely to force the airlines to use SAF, but the infrastructure needs to be in place to produce our own stocks and sell surpluses to other countries, or we could end up buying it from other countries and importing it, which defeats the purpose. We must take the opportunity to sustainably grow the industry, or we run a risk of additional and unnecessary cost for the industry and that is a huge, missed opportunity”.

In October 2022, Aberdeen welcomed its first commercial delivery of SAF. The fuel was delivered by Air bp and will be blended with traditional jet fuel for Bristow flights to bp’s North Sea offshore operations in the UK Continental Shelf.

Despite his evident commitment to sustainability projects, Provan said that, of all the projects in which he had been involved, “undoubtedly the one that I am most proud of” is the Scottish project to develop and deliver the UK’s first medical distribution network using drones. AGS leads a 16-member consortium,

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“At AGS, our constant conversation and capital investment programmes are all linked to climate change and the Sustainability Road Map”.

including drone manufacturers and maintenance, repair and overhaul companies, that will enable the National Health Service to deliver life-saving medicines to clinicians and direct to patients living in remote rural areas. It opens the prospect of cancer patients receiving their drugs at home within around half an hour, instead of having to travel for two hours or more to their nearest hospital. The first trial flights have already taken place and Provan expects that the project will go live next year.

During his final months at AGS Airports the Group received a significant boost when the Court of Appeal refused opponents of a runway extension at Southampton Airport permission to appeal against a High Court judgement that the local council’s approval of the airport’s runway application was lawful. Work has already begun on the 164m extension at the northern end of the airport’s runway and is

expected to be completed by the summer. Provan said that would be “a very significant turning point” for the airport, since it will allow airlines to fly larger jets in and out, enabling Southampton to serve destinations across Europe for the first time. He said he was “very confident” that large numbers of people living in and around Southampton, who have been using other airports in the South East, would now choose to fly from their local airport.

Provan’s career in UK airports began in 1998 when he first joined Glasgow Airport. He has been Managing Director of Aberdeen Airport and was also Chief Operating Officer at Heathrow Airport, before becoming CEO of AGS Airports in April 2018. Looking back on nearly 25 years in aviation, he said that the most significant changes that he had observed related to sustainability, digitalisation and security technology.

On sustainability, he said that airports had long had targets and plans, but the focus on the subject today was far different from what it had been two decades ago. Now at AGS he said, “our constant conversation and capital investment programmes are all linked to climate change and the Sustainability Road Map”. He described the Road Map as “clear, costed and Board-approved, with a capital programme ready to be delivered over the next decade”.

On digitalisation, he recalled that in 1998 staff had no access to personal computers and internal communications were largely delivered via notices on notice boards, supplemented by stand-up speeches. Today’s presentations were more likely to be on PowerPoint or via Teams. He said the accessibility that digitalisation had given had been “phenomenal from a communications perspective” and digitalisation was similarly transforming the customer experience.

On security technology, he said that today’s technology was “light years away from where it was 25 years’ ago”. By June next year, in a “back to the future” moment, modern technology would once again make



it possible for customers to keep their laptops and liquids in their bags, thanks to a level of technology that is now far superior to what had been available in the past.

Asked how running a regional airports group differed from being responsible for day-to-day operations at Heathrow, Provan said the most important thing was a difference of focus. At Heathrow the challenge had been “to get through every day delivering the operational and customer service performance that passengers expect”. The sheer scale of operations required “a team of highly skilled people who can deliver that ‘daily miracle’ every day”. By contrast, in a regional airports group, there was a much greater focus on “the challenge of winning airlines and delivering the connecting routes that support the needs of the regions that we serve”.

That challenge was more important than ever after Covid. Provan said that the pandemic had been “without a shadow of doubt the most challenging period in my career. It was unprecedented. No business expects to be at almost zero revenue for almost two years. What sits with me the heaviest is the sadness of having to let so many people leave the business because of the financial position. It weighs heavily on my shoulders then and now”. Provan said that the pandemic had forced airlines to contract and to consolidate into their larger markets, which were rarely regional airports. “We have a lot of great relationships with airlines and a good pipeline of business development, but a year after Covid it is a challenging market position for us” he said.

Despite that, Provan expressed confidence about the prospects for AGS Airports under his successor, Andy Cliffe. He said “I am sure that Andy is going to lead the AGS business to more success. I believe that he has confidence and capability and really needs very little advice from me, but he knows that I am available for any advice, should he require it”.



I love the role that I have, and I love the people that are in the business, but it just feels now that it is time to write that new chapter in life and see what else is out there for me to achieve beyond what I have done to date.

As for his own decision to leave, he said “It feels like the right time to make the decision, though it feels very strange. The easiest decision I could have made was to stay in the business, because I love the business. I love the role that I have, and I love

the people that are in the business, but it just feels now that it is time to write that new chapter in life and see what else is out there for me to achieve beyond what I have done to date. ■

NEW AIRPORT REGULATION, SAFETY AND OPERATIONS MANAGER JOINS AOA

A former Gatwick Airport manager has joined the AOA team, taking responsibility for regulation, safety and operations.

Adele Gammarano started her new AOA role at the beginning of January after more than six years at Gatwick, initially as an airline performance manager and then working within the airport's passenger operations and services department on projects to help improve the infrastructure and efficiency within the airport to create a smoother and more efficient passenger journey.

She will bring that frontline experience to the AOA team, ensuring that the AOA continues to deliver value for UK airports on regulation, operations and safety issues. Externally, Gammarano will act as a key liaison point for the AOA on these issues with both the Civil Aviation Authority and the Department for Transport. Internally, she will take the lead on AOA working groups dealing with airspace, health and safety, rescue and firefighting services, safeguarding and aerospace safety and compliance.

Gammarano will also have



responsibility for coordinating and developing the AOA's UK Airports Safety Week and for working across the range of UK airports on operational and safety policy, including smaller airports, general aviation and business aviation. This will include facilitating the exchange of best practice among airports.

Italian by origin, Gammarano holds an MSc in air transport management

from City, University of London and graduated last year with the International Space University's space studies programme, supported by a scholarship from the European Space Agency.

She told The Airport Operator that she has a passion for the aviation industry and the dynamism that it continues to display despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic. She is looking forward to contributing to the AOA's service to its members and providing a voice for the members, believing that engagement and communication will be key to continuous improvement by the AOA. ■

"I'm looking forward to contributing to the AOA's service to its members and providing a voice for the members".

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MINISTER SEEKING GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN SUPPORT FOR AIRPORTS

Jenny Gilruth writes for The Airport Operator on plans to use Scotland's first ever aviation strategy to improve connectivity

With the start of a new year, it's an appropriate time to reflect on how well aviation has recovered from the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. But, perhaps more importantly, how the sector in Scotland can thrive in 2023. As Scotland's Minister for Transport, I want to help grow Scotland's international connectivity, while taking action to lower emissions in line with our climate change commitments.

Achieving these goals will be challenging and requires building on our long track record of successful partnerships - working with airports and airlines alike. Expanding international connectivity will support Scotland's economic transformation and our aim to be an outward-looking, welcoming country. Before the pandemic, we were better connected internationally than ever before, but a sustained effort is now needed to ensure we are on level

terms with our nearest competitors.

The efforts of our partners in airlines and airports are key. Air transport is directly responsible for around £400m of Scottish gross value added and, in 2019, total tourist spending in Scotland was worth £2.5 billion, with almost two million visitors using Scottish airports.

While airport route development teams have primary responsibility for attracting new air routes, the Scottish Government provides a range of support, including assistance with direct marketing. This has helped us to attract numerous new routes in recent years, including to key markets and hubs in North America, the Middle East and Europe. Last year, we welcomed the announcement by Delta to add an Atlanta route this summer alongside their successful Boston and JFK services to Edinburgh. In addition, WestJet will start a new Calgary-

Edinburgh route in summer 2023 further expanding our direct long-haul connectivity. We also supported our tourism agency, VisitScotland, in rolling out a demand-building campaign to encourage travellers to seek direct flights operating to Scotland from across our key markets. This stimulated new demand across a range of airlines as services started to return to normal. Our route development team also

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*Jenny Gilruth
MSP, Minister for
Transport in the
Scottish Government*

took part in Routes World in October, continuing ongoing discussions with airlines and starting new conversations for more aspirational, long term, route options.

To gather views on how to improve connectivity, the Scottish Government has consulted on what will be our first ever aviation strategy. I am keen that strategy allows for greater flexibility in the application of support to airports and airlines in a post-covid era. But it's also got to listen to what passengers want. Fundamentally, we need a transport system which better listens to its users – and that's irrespective of modes.

Our consultation sought views on how to substantially reduce the harmful emissions from national and international aviation, in line with our legally binding commitment to become a net zero nation by 2045. It's encouraging that many in the sector, including Scotland's main airports, have produced plans committing to reducing their emissions. Globally, the International Air Transport Association, representing nearly 300 airlines worldwide, intends to reach net-zero by 2050, while the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) adopted a similar aspiration last year.

We are also seeing a strong and ever-growing global interest in producing sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF, with several countries planning to introduce a SAF mandate or take

other measures to produce a fuel that can significantly reduce emissions. In Scotland, we are mapping our industrial strengths in SAF, and the key skills needed for it to grow, and identifying the skills needed for the wider transition to zero emission aviation.

There are exciting developments in the Orkney islands, where the UK's first ever hybrid-electric flight took place and where other low emission aircraft continue to be tested. Scotland also has huge potential in hydrogen production – we will want our transport modes, including aviation, to be in the vanguard of using this exciting, sustainable energy resource.

While there is a real willingness to change, it will take time for environmental improvements to come to fruition, and for the aviation sector to show it can adapt to be more sustainable in the future. I'm encouraged by recent signs that it is possible to improve Scotland's international connectivity and reduce the environmental impact of flying. For example, all Scotland's connectivity with Canada now uses the latest generation aircraft, which are significantly reducing emissions compared to aircraft that operated

these routes in 2019.

The wider challenge is to tell a more compelling and evidence-based story as to why the pathway of technological improvement can help cut emissions and help address climate change. We need to help by identifying actions that would best complement the sector's efforts.

Certainly our aviation strategy will be key, but the considerable pressures on the Scottish budget – which is largely fixed by Westminster – cannot be ignored. Nor can the fact that, for the current time at least, aviation remains reserved to the UK Government. Brexit, which Scotland did not vote for, has also made it far more difficult for people to travel to and from Scotland.

Only independence can offer us the full powers and the financial levers that will allow us to realise our ambitions on aviation – namely, a sustainable, thriving sector connecting Scotland, and our people, directly to the rest of the world. ■

Jenny Gilruth MSP is Minister for Transport in the Scottish Government

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BELFAST AIRPORT CHIEF URGES THE UK GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE TO SUPPORT REGIONAL AIRPORTS

Graham Keddie, Managing Director of Belfast International Airport, says the Government should boost regional economic development by providing stronger support for regional airports.





Graham Keddie, Managing Director of Belfast International Airport

Speaking to The Airport Operator, Keddie outlined a three-point plan that he said would assist the Government's levelling-up agenda by helping regional airports to make a greater contribution to the communities that they serve.

He said that the UK Government should abolish Air Passenger Duty (APD), introduce route development support for regional airports and pay for airspace change.

On Air Passenger Duty, Keddie pointed to evidence that the 50% reduction in domestic APD from April has already been beneficial. He said it was "one of the drivers" of Ryanair's decision to return to Belfast International Airport, with 16 routes operating from 26 March, including five to Great Britain. Meanwhile, EasyJet, which is the airport's largest customer, is increasing frequencies to key domestic destinations. Keddie said

that the Government should now go further by getting rid of APD altogether.

On route development support, Keddie said that its introduction would help Belfast International Airport to compete with airports in the Republic of Ireland, where a €90m. package of support is already available for both new and existing routes.

On airspace change, he said it was wrong that airports were expected to pay for modernisation programmes that deliver national benefits. Government already treats the railways and roads as national infrastructure and should adopt the same approach to airspace, he said, recognising that "because we are an island nation and a trading nation, we cannot do without aviation".

Keddie said that, like most other UK airports, Belfast International Airport had suffered huge financial

damage during the pandemic, even though Northern Ireland's airports had been given business rate relief by the Northern Ireland Executive. After a record year in 2019, with 6.27m. passengers, numbers fell to only 1.7m. in 2020, before recovering a little to 2.3m. in 2021 and then more strongly to 4.8m. in 2022. While domestic numbers have recovered well, the return of international travel has been slower. Bookings for this summer look strong, but Keddie doesn't expect to see a full recovery to pre-pandemic passenger numbers until next year.

Despite pandemic-related financial losses, the airport's shareholders are supporting a capital investment programme that will allow Belfast International both to significantly upgrade its terminal buildings and make steady progress towards its target of Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The £15m. terminal upgrade has a target date for completion of 1 June next year. There will be a completely new building to house next generation security equipment, which Keddie says will significantly improve the passenger experience. The new building will, in turn, release space in the existing terminal building for more retail outlets, including duty-free shopping.

Keddie says that the airport's environmental programme will build on what has already been achieved. The airport was one of the first in the UK to link to its own solar farm, which currently provides 30% of the airport's power requirements and may provide more in the future. A new contract with the fuel farm operators includes provisions for the introduction of Sustainable Aviation Fuels to the airport. Keddie says that the airport is looking at battery storage so that it can take more power and store it for night-time operations. It is also looking at electrifying vehicles and has applied for levelling-up funds for two electric buses. Electric charging points are being introduced in key areas.

The airport was one of the first in the UK to link to its own solar farm, which currently provides 30% of the airport's power requirements and may provide more in the future.

Belfast International Airport had suffered huge financial damage during the pandemic. After a record year in 2019, with 6.27m. passengers, numbers fell to only 1.7m. in 2020, before recovering a little to 2.3m. in 2021 and then more strongly to 4.8m. in 2022.

The new security building will be heated by air source pumps and plans are being developed for air source or ground source pumps for heating across the whole of the airport. Some of the environmental plans, including the introduction of LED lighting on the runways and taxi ways and throughout the terminal, have been accelerated, Keddie says, because of recent increases in the cost of electricity and gas.

Looking ahead to next year, Keddie and his team are working with a new start-up, low-cost airline, Fly Atlantic, on its plans to launch direct flights from Belfast International to the United States and Canada. He described Fly Atlantic's planned launch as "a huge opportunity for the airport and for Northern Ireland".

Acknowledging that earlier attempts at low-cost transatlantic flying had not succeeded, Keddie said "our view is that the chances of success are high". The airport beat off competition from other airports in the UK and Ireland to become Fly Atlantic's base airport. Keddie said that Belfast International had been helped by the region's strong ties to North America and the fact that it doesn't have APD on long-haul flights. He noted that the airport



Looking ahead to next year, Keddie and his team are working with a new start-up, low-cost airline, Fly Atlantic, on its plans to launch direct flights from Belfast International to the United States and Canada.

already attracts passengers from neighbouring parts of the Republic of Ireland, including Donegal, Sligo and Louth.

Fly Atlantic founder, Andrew Pyne, says that the airline plans to be operational by the summer of next year, with six new generation narrow body aircraft based at Belfast International. It already has offices at the airport and will start

recruiting its team shortly. Pyne said "Our vision is of Belfast as a strong aviation hub linking Europe and North America. The lack of direct transatlantic air services has clearly been an impediment to Northern Ireland's economic and tourism development which we now intend to remove. The project can be a game-changer. We will be offering affordable fares with brand new aircraft". ■

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL RESOURCE CHALLENGES AND REGULATORY ISSUES DOMINATE THE AGENDA OF THE AOA'S NEWEST WORKING GROUP

The challenge of recruiting a new generation of Air Traffic Controllers and liaison with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on new regulations have topped recent agendas of the AOA working group for air traffic controllers and their partners.

These were the principal issues highlighted by the Chair of the AOA Airspace and Air Traffic Services Working Group when he spoke to The Airport Operator.

Matt Wilshaw-Rhead, who is Safety and Compliance Manager for Birmingham Airport air traffic, said that resource was already an issue before the Covid pandemic, but had been accentuated by it. "We saw a trend of people leaving the industry" he said "and that is not one that we have currently reversed. We are looking at greater use of apprenticeship schemes to encourage younger people into



Matt Wilshaw-Rhead, Safety and Compliance Manager, Birmingham Airport air traffic

the industry. We have an ageing workforce, and we are seeing a steady stream of retirements. That is a global challenge, not just in the UK". He noted that resourcing challenges are, if anything, an even greater issue for the CAA.

Asked about the working group's achievements, Wilshaw-Rhead highlighted what he described as "a number of really big successes" in changing how the CAA rolls out regulations. He said that the AOA working group enabled air traffic controllers to speak to the regulator with one voice and to influence both the substance and implementation



of regulations. While he emphasised that the group did not hesitate to challenge the CAA where necessary, he commended the regulator on what he described as “a very collaborative relationship” with industry.

As an example of that he pointed to a meeting of the Working Group with the regulator towards the end of 2022, where they provided a detailed update on regulatory developments and listened to members’ concerns about a range of issues, including resources, airspace development and CAA aero-medical examiners.

Another issue for air traffic controllers highlighted by Wilshaw-Read relates to the evolution of air traffic regulations following the UK’s departure from the European Union. Where previously the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) had played a key role in relation to UK air traffic controllers,

today this is the responsibility of the CAA. Increasingly, he said, that has meant more alignment for the UK with the rules of the international aviation community coordinated by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

Reflecting on the benefits of the AOA working group, he said that it had given UK air traffic controllers the ability to speak with one voice on a wide range of regulatory issues, including, importantly, challenges relating to the airspace change process. In addition to attending four meetings of the group a year, its members can also join the CAA’s own working groups on issues that are particularly important to them.

Wilshaw-Rhead’s advice to his colleagues is based on an aviation sector experience that stretches back 35 years, including 21 years as an Air Traffic Controller for the Royal Air Force, latterly with responsibility

for the Red Arrows. After gaining his civil licences, he managed air traffic services at Doncaster Sheffield and Tees Valley airports, before joining SERCO as Head of Air Safety and Compliance. He joined Birmingham Airport in May 2019 and has chaired the AOA Airspace and Air Traffic Services Working Group since June 2020. ■

AOA working group had given UK air traffic controllers the ability to speak with one voice on a wide range of regulatory issues, including, importantly, challenges relating to the airspace change process.



*Mike Kane MP,
Shadow Aviation
Minister*

LABOUR BACKS PARTNERSHIP WITH A STRONG AVIATION INDUSTRY

*Mike Kane MP, Shadow Aviation Minister, writes
for The Airport Operator*

Firstly, I want to tell you that we in the Labour party know the benefit to the economy of having a strong aviation industry.

The sector contributes £22 billion each year, opens this country to business and tourism and contributes over one and a half million jobs.

Throughout lockdown, I and my colleagues on the Labour front bench repeatedly highlighted the issues caused by the failure of the current Government to provide a sector-specific deal, which would have enabled you to rebuild and to decarbonise from a position of strength.

The challenges of recovering from the Covid pandemic have been enormously stressful for your industry and workforce.

We saw over the summer the challenge of recruitment and retention, and the impact of chronic low pay on the sector's resilience.

We want to see well paid jobs at

every level, with good terms and conditions which bakes resilience into the workforce.

Labour's plan includes business and unions working in partnership to grow industries and the economy.

It's why we've set out a New Deal for Working People that will deliver higher pay, stronger rights and better work - not just for social justice, but also for the new reality on growth.

And why we will work in partnership to upskill the workforce and have committed to implementing the recommendations of Lord Blunkett's recent review into addressing the chronic skills gap and helping employers along the way.

We want to see the aviation sector continue to play a key role in our economy and communities, and sustainability is central to that.

And we all know there are big challenges ahead.

Technological development is a critical part of the path to net zero and we must work in partnership with

industry and trade unions to seize every opportunity for the British economy.

It is vital we work with the sector to support the development of innovations such as electric planes and alternative fuels.

But we are also aware of system inefficiencies, and that a proportion of our emissions reductions will come from improving the efficiency of existing aviation systems.

“We will work in partnership to upskill the workforce and have committed to implementing the recommendations of Lord Blunkett's recent review into addressing the chronic skills gap and helping employers along the way”.

There is huge potential to improve the efficiency of existing aircraft through improvements to wings, to structures and to other systems. We have also done work on the modernisation of airspace, and how this can contribute to reducing emissions, by enabling point to point flights, preventing stacking and making take-off and landing routes less fuel heavy.

Last year our shadow team visited leaders in aviation who are investing in precisely these technologies of the future.

Investing in technologies will also encourage world-leading innovation here, in Britain, while supporting good, well-paid jobs.

Investing in technologies will also encourage world-leading innovation here, in Britain, while supporting good, well-paid jobs.

This partnership across the economy will be at the centre of a future Labour government; one that links prosperity, social justice and climate justice, as the three tenets of a responsible Labour Government.

Across the economy, a Labour government will commit £28bn a year, quadrupling the current Government's own investment, and match this with private investment in green technologies to get us to where we must be to meet our legally binding climate obligations.

This is a future we are keen to develop in partnership with industry and trade unions, and we look forward to continuing that conversation in the year ahead. ■

Mike Kane MP is Shadow Aviation Minister.



NEWCASTLE AIRPORT BOUNCES BACK FROM THE PANDEMIC AND INVESTS IN SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Newcastle International Airport is celebrating a smooth recovery from the pandemic, as it starts work on major security and sustainability capital investment projects.





Nick Jones, Chief Executive, Newcastle International Airport

Chief Executive, Nick Jones, told The Airport Operator, that he was proud of his airport team who had “worked really hard to ensure as smooth as possible a recovery from an operational performance point of view. The team pulled together incredibly well over the summer of 2022, and we did well. There was a real sense of achievement that we had weathered the storm”.

He also commended the work of the airport’s aviation team who had maintained strong relationships with airline partners during the pandemic, which he said had contributed to the steady return of all of Newcastle’s pre-pandemic carriers. Last year saw a strong recovery from the airport’s pandemic low of 1.23m passengers in 2021 to a 2022 total of 4.18m. Jones said the recovery had been faster than anticipated, though he still expects that it will be two years before Newcastle returns

to the 5.3m. passenger total that it recorded in 2019.

Milestones in the recovery had included securing a Ryanair two-aircraft base, extra capacity from Jet2 and TUI, significant restoration of frequencies by BA, KLM and Air France, the return of Lufthansa, Eurowings and Aer Lingus and the return of Emirates’ daily service to Dubai at the beginning of December, which was “fantastic”. Jones said it had been “a major milestone” for the airport to see the Emirates plane – the biggest that operates into Newcastle – arriving on its first restored service. He said that Emirates had “a game-changing impact on exports and the region’s business community and “getting it back has been huge for us”.

New services in 2023 include an Aegean service to Athens, Flybe services to Heathrow and Belfast City, with extra Loganair capacity

New services in 2023 include an Aegean service to Athens, Flybe services to Heathrow and Belfast City, with extra Loganair capacity and a Sun Express route to Antalya in Turkey.

and a Sun Express route to Antalya in Turkey. As the year progresses, Jones said “we would hope to see further filling out of schedules, additional leisure flights and some new routes”.

Beyond route development, the airport’s current focus is on major investments in security and sustainability. Work started in October on a major redevelopment of the airport’s security area that

will increase capacity and see new equipment and technology installed to ensure that the airport can maintain its current security times of less than 6 minutes for 98% of passengers. The work will be carried out in two phases, this winter and next winter, ensuring that Newcastle will be ready for the ending of current liquid and laptop rules by the summer of 2024.

There will also be “very significant capital investment” to ensure that Newcastle International Airport can meet its ambitious target of net zero by 2035. The airport has secured a green loan, which will provide £15m over three years to support sustainability projects, including a transition to electric vehicles and the next phases of the airport’s solar farm project to generate renewable electricity, which Jones said is “progressing really well”.

Planning permission for a 16MW solar farm on the airport’s own land, adjacent to its operational area, was secured early last year. Phase 1, which will deliver 3MW, is currently under construction. All the solar panels are in, and the farm should be generating electricity in March. The first phase will provide just under a fifth of the airport’s electricity requirements. Plans for the next phase, which could include additional battery storage, are currently being developed.

Jones said that Newcastle had always “aimed to be ahead of the pack” on sustainability and had the benefit of “strong support for an ambitious net zero target year of 2035 from our shareholders”. He said that both the region’s seven local authorities (who own 51% of the airport’s capital) and AMP Capital (who own the remaining 49%) are “really committed to the sustainability agenda”.

The airport’s public commitments on carbon emissions are backed up by a carbon management plan, which details how it will achieve its targets on both Scope 1 and 2 emissions (including infrastructure, energy and vehicles) and Scope 3 emissions

(primarily green travel for passengers and staff - which will be boosted later this year by the arrival of a brand-new fleet of Metro trains to the airport and around the wider region). On Scope 1 and 2 the goal is, if possible, to get to net zero. To meet any shortfall on Scope 3 emissions, the airport is committed to carbon offsetting, initially from woodland planting. It is part of the North East Community Forest project and last winter planted 8,300 trees on airport land. Plans for the next phase are currently being considered.

Finally, Jones said that real estate development continues to be “a big part of our agenda”. The first phase

of AirView Park, a new business park on airport land is now complete and provides a headquarters building for the home construction company, Bellway plc. Phase two of the business park is now under construction and the airport is also working with regional partners on the delivery of other enterprise zone sites. ■

The airport has secured a green loan, which will provide £15m over three years to support sustainability projects.





HEATHROW'S RETAIL DIRECTOR SAYS THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LOOK AGAIN AT TAX-FREE SHOPPING AND ARRIVALS DUTY FREE

Fraser Brown, Retail Director at Heathrow Airport, is calling on the Treasury to commission independent economic assessments of the likely impact of bringing back VAT-free shopping for foreign tourists and allowing UK airports to open arrivals duty free stores.

Brown, who is also Interim Chair of the Association of International Retail, told The Airport Operator, that the UK Government should take a fresh look at both issues. “They are both significant issues” he said “and I would urge the Government to look at both. They are different, but their commonality is about giving airports and ports the right policy framework to be economically competitive with their major international airport and port competitors. Both are policy tools that could help ports and airports in the UK to be as competitive as they possibly could be”.

On the abolition of VAT-free shopping for overseas visitors Brown said he was “bemused, to put it mildly” as to why the Government had decided on “this act of economic self-vandalism” when the UK left the European Union. He said that up until 1 January 2021 “we had an environment where on the High Street and at our ports and airports we felt we were internationally competitive”. That had been an important element, he said, in the UK’s attractiveness to tourists, helping to support shopping both on the High Street and in airport departure lounges.

Now, he said, there was already evidence that tourists are reducing the number of days that they stay in the UK, as part of a trip to Europe, as a direct result of their inability to shop tax-free in this country. Shopping days in London and in centres like Bicester Village (which, before the pandemic was the second most visited location in the UK by Chinese tourists after Buckingham Palace) were being replaced by extra shopping days in cities like Milan and Rome. It was clear, he said, that the abolition of tax-free shopping is a drag on both the attractiveness of the UK and of the travel retail offer at the country’s ports and airports.

Brown pointed to a November 2022 report from Oxford Economics assessing the impact of tax-free shopping in the UK. This suggested

The reintroduction of tax-free shopping would attract more than 1.6 million extra visitors to the UK in 2025/2026, stimulating an additional £2.8 billion of tourist spending.

that the reintroduction of tax-free shopping would attract more than 1.6 million extra visitors to the UK in 2025/2026, stimulating an additional £2.8 billion of tourist spending. The report said the direct fiscal cost of reintroducing tax-free spending would be 70% lower than the Treasury’s projection. Additional visitor spending would sustain £4.1 billion in GDP and support 78,000 jobs, generating £1.1 billion in tax revenue for the Exchequer.

Noting that both the Treasury and DCMS Select Committees have criticised the Government’s approach, Brown is urging the Government – both directly as Heathrow and through the AOA and the UK Travel Retail Forum – to ask the Office for Budget Responsibility to conduct an independent assessment of the direct and indirect impacts of the abolition of tax-free shopping in the UK. It was, he said, “incredibly frustrating” that the Treasury had so far shown no willingness to do this.

On arrivals duty free Brown said that leaving the EU had presented the UK with an

opportunity to introduce arrivals duty free into the ports and airports in the UK, as both Norway and Switzerland have done. The Government’s failure to do this was offshoring economic activity by UK passengers returning from the Continent.

He said that “when I meet them at conferences, my colleagues that run duty free stores in departure lounges in Spain and Italy are rubbing their hands at the opportunity that the British Government has gifted them, in terms of selling those dutiable products, primarily alcohol and tobacco. If we follow the lead of sensibly minded governments like Norway and Switzerland, we can bring that economic activity back onshore by having arrivals duty-free stores”.

Brown acknowledged that the Government has expressed concern that these would damage domestic sales, suggesting, in effect, that supermarkets and off-licences might sell less alcohol because passengers were purchasing it in arrivals duty free stores instead. He urged the Government to look at data from Norway and Switzerland contained in an October 2022 report for the UK Travel Retail Forum. This says that there is no evidence of such a link and that the primary competitive relationship is with departure shops in origin countries. ■

*Fraser Brown,
Retail Director at
Heathrow Airport*



A TAXING APPROACH ON AIRPORTS - WHAT PROSPECT FOR CHANGE ON THE TAXES ON SHOPPING?

AOA POLICY DIRECTOR, CHRISTOPHER SNELLING, WRITES FOR THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

It has long been a source of frustration that the UK Government does not support our airports or aviation industry through a competitive tax regime on retail at airports as other countries do.

Operating in an internationally competitive market, we are undermined instead of helped by the VAT and duty free tax environment (not forgetting that our industry also pays very high taxes on flying by international standards, but that's another issue).

VAT

As an EU member state, the UK offered a tax-free shopping incentive to visitors who were departing for non-EU destinations. On leaving the European Union, the UK could have extended this shopping incentive to those travelling to EU destinations too, making the UK's towns and cities the nearest and cheapest destinations for millions of Europeans looking for best value for their money (given EU passengers

are not eligible for tax-free shopping in EU countries), and helping to lure more European tourists to our shores than ever before. Instead, the Treasury chose to abolish the tax-free shopping incentive altogether.

AOA is part of a broad campaign to get all international visitors to the UK

- both EU and non-EU - not to have to pay VAT on purchases wherever they are made in the UK. There is a retailer/tourism argument that this supports spending in locations across the UK and attracts price-sensitive passengers to the UK. This summer we briefly had success when the Liz Truss government announced



its intention to introduce exactly this tax break. Unfortunately, the adverse impacts of the collective tax cutting package they announced sunk not just the Chancellor and the Prime Minister, but also the plan to introduce VAT-free international shopping.

Following the U-turn on the policy Treasury has held wash-up sessions with industry to discuss their views on the situation. We were able to get a dedicated airport session with Treasury officials where we had members directly represent their views on how the tax change would have benefited them and thus the UK collectively. Members gave strong messages about how international experience shows that other territories work collectively to support connectivity and the attractiveness of their countries as destinations, and how the UK fails to do this.

Duty Free

The opportunity here is in arrivals duty free (ADF). Again, leaving the EU has opened up opportunity here that the Government has not taken advantage of. ADF shops are in use in other locations – they were first introduced in Norway in 2005 and then Switzerland in 2011. Clearly having ADF available in the UK would encourage returning UK travellers to spend some of their money here in the UK instead of at the departure airport abroad. This would create an economic benefit for the airport and for the UK generally, whilst not losing any significant Government revenue as the purchase is replacing those made abroad, rather than those made on the British high street.

The Treasury are not supportive of the concept of ADF and unlike VAT we have not seen any opening from them on this. Their main rationale is that it would take money from the high street (and them) as it would replace other UK shopping. In AOA's conversations with them it is also clear they have practical concerns about whether airports



*Christopher Snelling
Policy Director, AOA*

AOA is part of a broad campaign to get all international visitors to the UK – both EU and non-EU – not to have to pay VAT on purchases wherever they are made in the UK.

would be able to physically fit in this service before the customs border.

This then remains a plank of medium to long term campaigning at AOA. Our colleagues at UK Travel Retail Forum have produced a useful case study document on the Norwegian and Swiss experience – supporting our lines on how this change would not undermine the domestic high street. We have also compiled data from members about exactly how they would practically offer ADF within their buildings before the customs point.

We will be using this material in our submission to the spring Budget, and also a potential AOA MP event, building on the work of The All Party Parliamentary Group for The Future

of Aviation, which we support, on this topic.

Prospects from here

Our best estimate is that we are not on the threshold of success on these tax changes. Whilst VAT-free shopping was proposed, the 'Trussian' approach on tax cutting now has some negative connotations. So, we are not expecting success in the Budget this March. But neither of these sensible changes will ever come about if we do not continue to push for them. We will do this through direct lobbying such as our MP event, through joint working with UKTRF and other retail groups and of course with our members, supporting their work at the local level. ■

NEW LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT CEO CONFIDENT THE AIRPORT WILL RETURN TO GROWTH

In his first media interview since joining London Southend Airport in September, the new Chief Executive Officer, John Upton, told The Airport Operator “It is tough right now, but it is a rebuild and the opportunity is enormous. It is very exciting”.



*John Upton, Chief
Executive Officer, London
Southend Airport*

Before the pandemic London Southend Airport was growing, with over 2m passengers a year and flights to 40 destinations. With three routes announced so far for the coming summer, with EasyJet flying to Faro, Malaga and Majorca, Upton expresses confidence that more will follow. He said, “We are confident that we will have some more announcements to come in due course for the summer of 2023. More is coming for 2024 -we are in live dialogue with multiple airlines now in terms of potential basing and re-establishing our proven capacity and routes of 2018 and 2019”.

Passenger numbers were down to 94,000 in the year from April 2021 to April 2022, but Upton says they will have grown in the following year. Looking ahead, he says, “We are working hard to get back to 2019 in the next three-to-five-years and obviously we are striving to beat that timeframe. We know that we have a competitive advantage”.

Asked to describe that advantage, Upton explains “Right now, we have available ‘real estate’ to enable and accelerate airlines’ top and bottom line’ growth. A lot of the airports around us have congested airspace and terminals, are expensive, have slow taxi and turnaround times with only limited available slots. Given this, we are a natural place for growth for airlines, with our low-cost base, an efficient operation and proximity to London – only 50 minutes away by train. It’s challenging right now, but we have so many things going in our favour.”

He says that a lot of the airport’s 40 pre-pandemic routes were “highly profitable for airlines and the industry knows that. We are up to 50 to 75% cheaper than a number of our local London neighbours in terms of operating costs. We are considerably quicker in terms of turn around and taxiing times. We have in-house handling, so we are a one-stop shop for airline partners. We are naturally close to Europe, so our airline partners don’t have to navigate through the ‘spaghetti



junction’ of airspace over London when they fly with us. We know it is a compelling proposition.”

Upton acknowledges that airlines “have been through some tough times in the pandemic and they are rebuilding and seeking to grow again, while managing a number of headwinds. We can be a key enabler in driving their revenues and recovery trajectories over the coming months and years”.

While emphasising that his primary focus is commercial passenger growth, Upton points to both General Aviation and cargo handling as other potentially important revenue streams for the airport. He points to “a real blend of General Aviation happening, which is good and exciting. We are seeing sports teams, Hollywood actors and rock stars. They use us because we have a fabulous product, are close to London and it is a quick and easy journey, so that is growing very nicely”. In addition, there are well-established flying clubs, business jets, HM Coastguard operations, air ambulances and military planes.

On cargo, Upton is pleased to have secured a new global partner, who began flying in the first quarter of this year. He is also looking at

“We are working hard to get back to 2019 in the next three-to-five-years and obviously we are striving to beat that timeframe. We know that we have a competitive advantage”.

the current opportunity to use the airport’s bonded warehouse to offer quick access to a professional screening service for dutiable goods. Hauliers may be facing congestion at nearby ports and airports, he suggests, but by using the London Southend bonded warehouse they could “drive through the green lane, as opposed to having to go through the congested red lane”.

Upton is keen to stress the airport’s proactive approach to achieving net zero and sustainability. He said that London Southend had “made a great start on our journey to net zero with 25% of our terminal’s energy usage already being met by renewable sources, generated onsite from our solar farm. In fact, since commissioning our total carbon saving equates to the planting of

just over 40 million trees. Because we are London's newest airport, as we grow, we can and will make infrastructure and operational development decisions to achieve our 100% net zero plan without being limited by existing unsustainable infrastructure"

He also strongly supports the view that airports must be ready to support airline net zero targets. Upton said that airlines and aircraft engine manufacturers are "at the front end of what the future will look like for the industry to fully achieve net zero". That meant, he said, that airports should also be ready to help with emissions that they don't control directly, including supporting reduced aircraft carbon emissions by providing access to sustainable aviation fuels.

Asked what attracted him to the CEO role at the airport, Upton said that it was because of the people he met as he was going through the process to join. He recalls that "I enjoyed the passion and commitment that I encountered with everyone I met from the front line up to the senior team. Those people, frankly, are inspiring and, having started working with them over the last few months, it is crystal clear that everyone is deeply passionate and is committed to the airport's success".

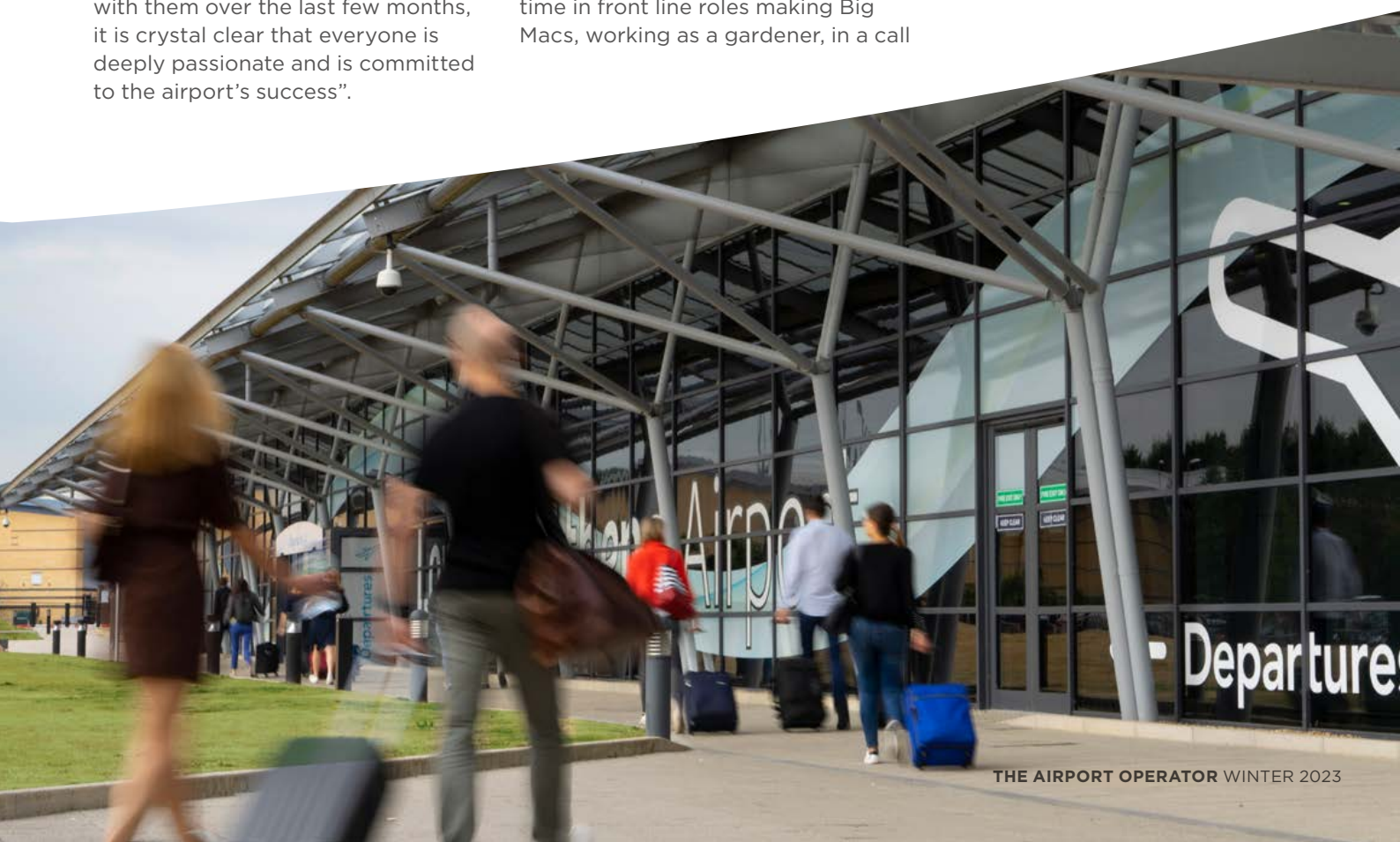
London Southend had "made a great start on our journey to net zero with 25% of our terminal's energy usage already being met by renewable sources, generated onsite from our solar farm".

Also, he said about his role, "it is, for me, a 're-start up' project because we got to 2m+ passengers in 2019 and we were very much on the way up. Then the pandemic struck. I led an aviation business through the pandemic, so I know just how tough it was in the aviation sector during that period and so the opportunity to get stuck in to regrowing a highly successful business was very exciting. We've the right kind of dynamic and entrepreneurial mindset which allows us to act with real pace and agility".

Upton believes that his 30-year career, which he describes as "eclectic", has prepared him well for his current challenge. He was previously CEO for No1 Lounges, Managing Director at Leon Restaurants and Senior Director at McDonald's UK, but also spent time in front line roles making Big Macs, working as a gardener, in a call

centre, a pub and in a warehouse. He says that all this experience has helped him to learn more about working with customers, teams, and lenders and to think about costs, sales and profitability - all "good grounding" for the London Southend role. He also credits his wife, three young boys and a dog for their support and for helping to keep him fit.

Now, he concludes, "there are some tough days, but generally I spring out of bed, and I am enjoying what I am doing. You surround yourself with good people, which I am blessed to have, and it is exciting. We're building from the bottom up, going from where we are today to 2m again and then to 3m and beyond. Watch this space". ■





*Benny Wunderlich,
Managing Director,
Sasse Group*



COVID TAUGHT US TO BE AGILE, CLEANER AND GREENER

**BENNY WUNDERLICH,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, SASSE GROUP**

The Sasse Group with its 6500 employees has been providing facility management services for 45 years, including at eleven airports in the UK, Germany and Bulgaria. During the Covid pandemic, the business developed concepts to raise hygiene and cleaning standards to a whole new level.



The Covid pandemic has forced us to think again: How do we make the airports served by our organisation even cleaner, safer and more enjoyable - all in a sustainable context? Since the pandemic that is exactly what our customers and passengers have been demanding, and quite rightly so, an even higher standard of hygiene and cleanliness.

One of our answers is called 4 Level Hygiene Concept. We developed this new programme during the pandemic and implemented it at all the airports we serve. The success proves us right; our customers were awarded the Skytrax 4 Star Rating for Covid 19 safety, among others. In turn, other airports we serve have received the first certification of its kind in the UK as part of the Airport Council International (ACI) Airport Health Accreditation program as a result.

While the entire aviation industry is working on its returning strategies, we see it as our duty to support our customers in this process and to sustainably increase hygiene and safety at the respective properties. At Sasse, we do this not only with highly motivated employees, but also with state-of-the-art technology and digital solutions. For example, the Sasse Group was the first company to use robotics at a UK airport.

Sasse has implemented our autonomous cleaning concept at all airports served by our company. This step is also a response to the recruitment crisis triggered by the pandemic and Brexit. A cleaning robot cannot fully replace good staff, of course, but it can help compensate for staff shortages. In addition, with the help of autonomous cleaning equipment, we could increase hygiene standards at airports and contribute to the

At Sasse, we have always worked with state-of-the-art technology. We have digitised our entire workflow with a bespoke developed CAFM system and an app for our employees and customers.

passenger experience.

At Sasse, we have always worked with state-of-the-art technology. We have digitised our entire workflow with a bespoke developed CAFM

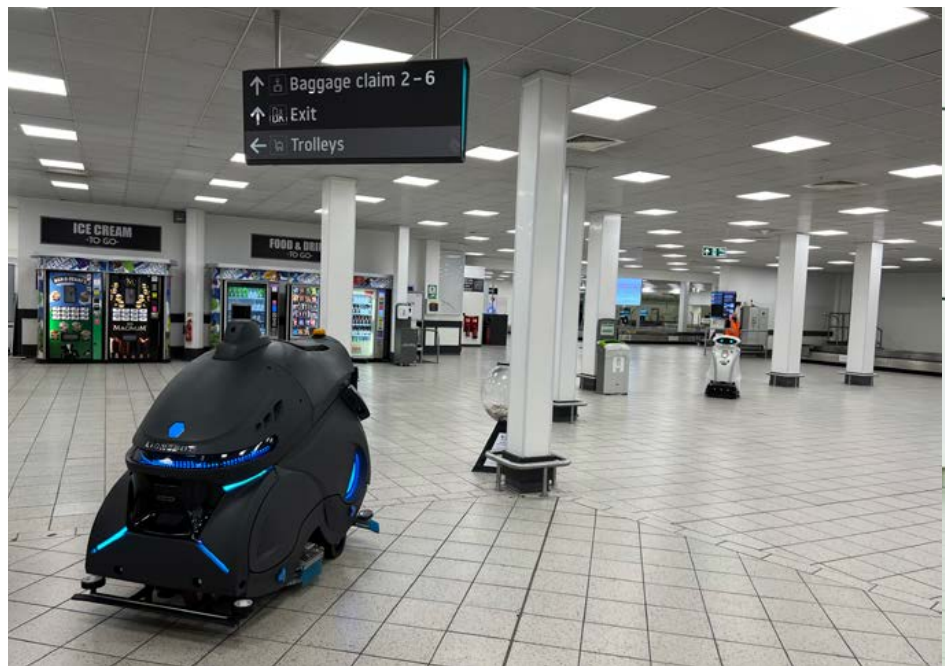
system and an app for our employees and customers. Thanks to these new technologies, we were not only able to reduce expensive administration costs, but we were also able to create more transparency for our customers and ensure an almost exclusively data-oriented service delivery.

The next digitisation project is already on the horizon. In 2023, as part of our “On Demand” strategy, we want to convert all public washroom facilities in the airports we serve in the UK to SMART Washrooms. This means sensors in all consumable dispensers, people counters and feedback systems for passengers, among other things. Further digitisation and innovation projects are already in the pipeline and will follow. The way we managed our airports until the Covid pandemic began is a thing of the past. We are very aware that we must be even more agile and innovative to meet the demands of our customers and passengers in the future.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is always at the centre of all these initiatives and based on the CSR strategy developed by the Group in 2020. In addition, we want to support our customers in their CSR strategies and thus make our contribution. Our new hygiene concepts, robotics technologies, and digitalisation initiatives offer the first sustainable solutions in this regard. Our decision to become a Real Living Wage Employer during the pandemic was also an important component of our CSR strategy.

Covid was very challenging for us all, but there is also something positive to report. At Sasse we have grown even closer to our airport customers during the pandemic. We have managed to build even more mutual understanding and trust over the past two years. Together, we have found a way out of the crisis and are now shaping the future. And this is based on a common understanding which is characterised by agility and flexibility.

At the heart of all our efforts is



At the heart of all our efforts is always safety and the highest standards of hygiene for passengers. To achieve this, we rely on new technologies, innovative cleaning concepts and our experience from 45 years of facility management.

always safety and the highest standards of hygiene for passengers. To achieve this, we rely on new technologies, innovative cleaning concepts and our experience from 45 years of facility management. At

Sasse, we want to help to ensure that the UK not only remains one of the most important hubs for international aviation - but becomes even safer, greener and cleaner. ■

*Gurjit Wood, Arup
UKIMEA Aviation
Leader*



ARUP



OUR NET ZERO AMBITION REQUIRES A DIVERSE APPROACH ON THE GROUND

*Arup UKIMEA Aviation Leader Gurjit Wood
considers the role of airports in the aviation
sustainability challenge*



Aviation is an exciting industry to be a part of, a dynamic sector which has been the engine for civilisation's advances: shrinking distances, connecting communities across nations, pioneering innovation and generating huge amounts of economic growth and development. Alongside these advances, the industry has become more equitable – creating a diverse workforce and making previously remote places accessible. Air travel has removed barriers to many leisure and work opportunities. Aviation has enabled us to become a truly global community – an achievement which must be continued.

There is no doubt that while the industry must continue to provide these important functions for society, the time is now to focus on doing so sustainably. Currently responsible for two to three per cent of global carbon emissions, achieving net zero by 2050 and doing so in an equitable and accessible manner is a huge challenge for the industry. As a significant proportion of those emissions come from flight, it is one of the most difficult industries

to decarbonise. Science and technology are working hard in this area – with exciting innovations in new fuels and aircraft technologies advancing every day.

On the ground, Arup is focussed on the role airports can play in the journey to net zero. We look at the transition to sustainable aviation in airports across five pillars.

The transition to net zero

Reducing energy consumption to cut carbon footprints is a key area of focus – simpler wins include switching to more efficient lighting, reducing air cooling, and efficiently managing buildings across the airport. Optimising airfield layouts to reduce aircraft fuel consumption can also significantly reduce carbon emissions across an airport. We look for ways to eliminate the use of fossil fuels where possible – implement surface access strategies which help prioritise public transport or move to electric or hydrogen cell vehicles.

Adoption of circular economy principles

We promote responsible

Currently responsible for two to three per cent of global carbon emissions, achieving net zero by 2050 and doing so in an equitable and accessible manner is a huge challenge for the industry

consumption to minimise the materials used in airport design or refurbishment. Circular economy principles of re-use and re-purpose can keep costs down, as well as minimise impact on the environment and benefit the local economy around an airport. For example, why not offer your used carpet tiles or furniture to be refurbished and re-used by the community rather than disposing of them? When new makes best sense, use low embodied carbon materials and design for disassembly

and reuse – ensuring longevity of new builds beyond the airport’s initial use. Think about supply chains – can you optimise yours for locally sourced materials? This approach can lower consumption, reduce costs and remove waste.

Improving health and wellbeing

Airports should focus on designing user-centric infrastructure, incorporating feedback from the shop floor to improve operations and the airport experience for employees and passengers. This is a useful way to ensure airports offer inclusive environments for differing needs. I’m excited about a current project where we are evaluating every step of the journey from kerb to aircraft, to see what changes can provide an equitable experience for people who are hard of hearing, anxious, partially sighted or less mobile, for example. On the flip side, we’re working with an airport to look at a ‘day in the life’ of a check in agent, a security agent and other ground staff with the aim of enhancing the working day experience. After all, the sustainability of an airport and the aviation industry relies on its ability to recruit and retain talented staff.

Respecting planetary boundaries

Minimising environmental impact must include water, biodiversity, plants and habitats. It’s all too common to see a patch of free land at an airport being used for storage during construction. To make best use of this as a sustainability opportunity, we develop ecological and restorative plans which help airports create vegetation zones. We suggest native species are used or create flora and fauna plans for construction phasing in order to protect biodiversity.

Enhancing resilience of communities

For Arup, community resilience is an important element of the pathway to sustainable airports. We support our clients in developing solutions which recognise local community needs, support growth and longevity of the



local economy. It can be anything from creating local academies for training apprentices, delivering equal employment opportunities to simply getting stuck in cleaning up local parks. The airport can use its influence to be a catalyst for change and innovation - as a transport hub, they can influence local transport providers to change to electric taxis or hydrogen buses.

We work with our airport clients to help them rethink their business models and operations across all these critical factors – balancing

social value and resilience as they work towards net zero-carbon.

As the world focuses on the urgent need to tackle the climate emergency, the much-maligned aviation industry has a real chance to show it can play its own, vital role in helping to decarbonise the transport sector while ensuring equitable access to sustainable aviation. No single strategy will deliver a sustainable industry – but decarbonising airports has a huge role to play within the wider industry. ■

AOA WELCOMES SIX NEW MEMBERS

Cohesive

Global asset management and data company, **Cohesive**, has joined the AOA as a Gold Member.

Cohesive works with clients to build and implement digital and data strategies to ensure that they get the best out of their assets and the associated data. Using the power of data, it seeks to deliver transformational outcomes for companies and their built assets.

With a track record of delivery across leading UK airports, Cohesive offers airport owners and operators a wealth of knowledge in construction asset management and in the use of data for asset operation and maintenance within the built environment. It helps clients to harness the value of data associated with an asset throughout its lifecycle - from its first point of inception in the virtual environment, through the design and build of that asset, to its subsequent use within the physical environment. Cohesive works with clients to optimise their data to manage their assets and then uses the associated information to enhance decision making and help clients reach their goals.



Aviation fuel company, **Air bp**, gas joined the AOA as a Silver Member.

As the specialised aviation division of BP, Air bp is one of the world's largest suppliers of both aviation fuels, including Avgas and kerosene jet fuels, and lubricants for both turbine and piston-engine aircraft. It provides customers with wider market access to sustainable aviation fuel across a number of locations. Air bp is particularly enthusiastic to participate in all AOA activities related to sustainability policies.



Global consultancy, **Develop Consulting**, has also joined the AOA as a Silver Member.

With a mission of "relentless pursuit of operational excellence", Develop Consulting says that it "helps organisations to be the best they can be". It says that its consultants "deliver real value to your business, supporting in implementing real change and improving on efficiency, quality and delivery". Working in multiple sectors and geographies, Develop's aviation clients include Airbus, Cobham Air Services and a global maintenance, repair and operations company.



The world's largest aviation services company, **Menzies Aviation**, has likewise joined the AOA as a Silver Member.

Founded in Edinburgh in 1833, the global aviation logistics specialist today operates in 250+ airports across 58 countries, more than any other aviation services company. With its global headquarters in London, Menzies Aviation is the world's largest provider of ground services (handling 11,000 aircraft every week), air cargo services (2m tonnes every year) and fuelling services (6,000 aircraft fuelled every day).



Global engineering and environmental consultancy, **Ricardo**, has also joined the AOA as a Silver Member.

Specialising in the transport, energy and scarce resources sectors, Ricardo advises aviation clients on tackling climate change and decarbonisation. It keeps them up to date on the most recent research on reducing carbon emissions, including research on next generation electric aircraft, hydrogen fuel cell aircraft, sustainable aviation fuels, fuel economy and air traffic control.



Aviation consultancy, **ICF**, has joined the AOA as an Associate Member.

ICF describes itself as one of the world's largest aviation consultancies, delivering independent solutions drawn from a deep well of strategic, commercial, financial, operational, technical and regulatory expertise. ICF says it provides airport and transaction solutions combining world-leading airport and transaction consultancy experience with cross-aviation expertise to inform robust investment and commercial decisions.

JET2.COM AND JET2HOLIDAYS ANNOUNCE BIGGEST EVER PROGRAMME FROM BRISTOL AIRPORT

Jet2.com and Jet2holidays have announced their biggest ever summer operation from Bristol Airport, increasing capacity by 13% compared to last summer and adding a seventh-based aircraft.

In total the airline and the tour operator have 32 destinations on sale for this summer, including new routes to Malaga and Chania (Crete), operating almost a hundred weekly flights during peak periods.

To support the expanded

programme at Bristol Airport they will be seeking to fill over 100 roles, including flight deck and engineering roles and ground operations and cabin crew positions.

Steve Heapy, CEO of Jet2.com and Jet2holidays said “We are extremely excited about our third summer at Bristol Airport, which will be our busiest and biggest yet. Since launching flights and holidays in 2021, the response from customers and independent travel agents across the South West and South



Wales has been enormous and this has enabled us to enjoy the growth we have seen”. ■

CHARLIE, AGED 7, IS BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT'S NEWEST AND YOUNGEST AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER

Seven-year-old Charlie Yates “became an air traffic controller” just before Christmas.

Charlie donned his own named hi-vis gilet and headphones before taking his seat on the top deck of the Birmingham Airport air traffic control tower to line up aircraft for take-off and landing.

An aviation fanatic from Walsall, Charlie's other passion is caring for his father, Darren, who is housebound much of the time due to fibromyalgia and other limiting conditions, which mean that he is only able to leave the house with the aid of strong opioid painkillers. To thank Charlie for his care Darren wrote to Birmingham Airport asking if his son could have a behind-the-



scenes tour as a Christmas treat and the airport invited Charlie and his parents in for a VIP visit.

Charlie was shown the air traffic visual control room, the radar control room and the air traffic simulator used for training new and existing controllers. His reaction: “Today was brilliant. Best day ever. I want to be an air traffic controller now”. His

father said “I am not sure Santa will be able to top this. I was overcome with emotion just seeing Charlie's face. A truly magical day.

Paul Boat, head of air navigation services for Birmingham Airport, who gave Charlie his air traffic controller badge, said “Seeing Charlie's face light up was priceless. His excitement was infectious”. ■

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY CONSULTS ON PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE AIRSPACE CHANGE PROCESS

Airports, air navigation service providers and those affected by airspace change have until 5 March to comment on the CAA's proposals to simplify its guidance for airspace change.

The proposals were set out in detail in a 94-page CAA consultation document published earlier this month. The Authority said its aim is to "make its guidance easier to understand and make the requirements of the stages, steps and gateways to request an airspace change clearer". It also wants to make the process more proportionate and tailored to each proposal put forward.

Following the consultation, an updated version of the guidance, known as CAP1616, should be ready before the end of June. The



Jon Round, Head of Airspace, Air Traffic Management and Aerodromes at the CAA said "Airspace change affects so many of us, and as an organisation we strive to keep learning and improving. Our proposals will go some way to making sure the airspace change process is easier to understand and that the requirements at each step are much clearer".

Round said that the engagement the CAA had undertaken so far had been "invaluable in understanding how the airspace change process can be improved, both for change sponsors and those affected by airspace change. This gives us the opportunity to reflect on the feedback and make further improvements to the guidance". ■

CAA said it did not believe that any changes would "undermine work already completed by change sponsors (typically airports or air navigation service providers) of in progress airspace change proposals".

RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF DESTINATIONS AT LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT

Leeds Bradford Airport has announced a record number of destinations for 2023 and 2024.

For the first time in its history, the airport will feature 80 destinations across year-round and regular seasonal charters throughout the 2023/2024 schedule. New destinations include Bergen (Norway), Perpignan (France) and Porto (Portugal). There will be increased capacity on flights to Faro (Portugal), Palma de Mallorca (Spain) and Tenerife (Canary Islands).

To cater for this boosted schedule, the airport has made significant investment to its terminal, undertaking an extensive development of Hall A. The check-in hall is being reconfigured to optimise space and Hall A will feature a new Scandinavian inspired design, with contemporary lighting and wooden screening. Upgrades to retail and food and beverage units, together with the airport's lounges, will be completed before this summer.

The airport is also recruiting to ensure that it has the staff to meet demand during peak periods. Lindsay

Beresford, the airport's Human Resource Director, said "As we head into a peak summer period with more destinations than we have ever seen before we are looking for strong local talent to join our team that supports our ambitions to be a leading airport, connecting Yorkshire to the world". ■



HEATHROW'S YEAR-ON-YEAR IMPROVEMENT IN PASSENGER NUMBERS LARGEST IN EUROPE

London Heathrow Airport handled 61.6 million passengers last year, compared to 42.2 million in 2021.

That year-on-year improvement was the largest of any airport in Europe. The EU and North America were Heathrow's most important markets, with 21.3 million and 15.4 million passengers respectively. Heathrow's 2022 total represented 76% of its 2019 numbers.

Looking at December 2022 alone, Heathrow reported a 90% year

on year increase in passengers, with a monthly total of 5.9 million. Transatlantic travel played a key role, underlined by the fact that New York JFK is again Heathrow's busiest route.

The airport reported that 92% of passengers passed through security in under 10 minutes during the Christmas period. CEO, John Holland-Kaye said "2022 ended on a high with our busiest Christmas in three years and a smooth and efficient service for passengers,

thanks to the hard work of our colleagues and close planning with airlines, their ground handlers and Border Force". ■



JUNE 2024 CONFIRMED AS DEADLINE FOR AIRPORTS TO INSTALL NEW SECURITY TECHNOLOGY

The Department for Transport has confirmed that major UK airports will be required to update their screening equipment no later than June next year.

As a result, passengers will be able to leave liquids and large electrical items in cabin baggage as they go through security. The requirement for liquids to be no more than 100ml and in a clear plastic bag will be lifted and the 100ml liquid container limit will be extended to 2 litres. The new screening equipment uses CT X-ray technology to provide a 3D image of what is in passenger bags.

Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, said "The tiny toiletry has become a staple of airport security checkpoints, but that is all set to

change. I am streamlining cabin bag rules at airports while enhancing security. By 2024, major airports across the UK will have the latest security technology installed, reducing queuing times, improving the passenger experience, and most importantly detecting potential threats".

AOA Policy Director, Christopher Snelling, said "This investment in next generation security by the UK's airport operators will provide a great step forward for UK travel, matching the best in class around the world. It will make the journey through the UK's airports easier and air travel itself more pleasant".

One of the first UK airports to operate with the new technology will

be London City Airport, which will introduce it this Easter. CEO, Robert Sinclair, said "The current security requirements are cumbersome and slow everyone down. With this new technology in place we will be able to process more passengers and more trays than ever before, and the whole passenger experience will be much better" ■



LEADING ACADEMIC EXAMINES EDINBURGH AIRPORT'S ROLE IN THE ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Professor Duncan Maclennan, an economist with an international reputation, is to review the role of Edinburgh Airport in Scotland's economy.

He will compare how Edinburgh and Scotland's approach to balancing aviation emission reductions with economic wellbeing compares to strategies now being deployed in Sydney and Toronto.

A former Special Adviser to the First Minister of Scotland, Maclennan has also been Chief Economist in the Government of Victoria and Chief Economist in Canada's Federal Department for Infrastructure and Cities. He has also acted as adviser to Ministers in the UK, France, Poland, Norway and New Zealand. Emeritus Professor of Urban Economics at the University of Glasgow, he holds similar part-time Chairs at the University of New South Wales and McMaster University, Ontario.



Maclennan has been commissioned by Edinburgh Airport to report on how leading global cities work with their local airports and how those collaborative relationships can benefit, economically and environmentally, the wider communities, cities, regions and nations they serve. He is considering the impact of commercial aviation on metropolitan economic development, how governments work with airports to deliver growth and meet

sustainability targets, the role of airports in delivering prosperity and aviation's role in supporting the transition to net zero.

He said "For most Scots innovation, productivity and trade will be the route to wellbeing and that requires connectivity. Strategic approaches, at national and metropolitan scales, to the economic roles of airports can radically alter the steepness of economy-emission trade-offs. Scotland needs to explore those options".

Sir John Elvidge, Chairman of Edinburgh Airport, said "We hope Professor Maclennan's report will provoke a national conversation in Scotland, one that brings local and central government and the private sector to the table to consider the examples he is studying and look for opportunities for Scotland to be a world leader". ■

NEW LUTON AIRPORT TRANSIT LINK EXPECTED TO OPEN BY EASTER

London Luton Airport's new rapid transit shuttle is expected to be operational by Easter.

The planned opening date of the DART (Direct Air Rail Transit) in early April will allow for final technical testing and completion of work on the ticketing system.

Luton's new cable-drawn driverless railway will replace a shuttle bus service and will allow passengers to

travel the 1.4 miles between Luton Airport's Parkway station and the airport terminal in under 4 minutes. Operating 24 hours a day, it will cut the journey time between London's St Pancras station and the terminal at London Luton Airport to just 32 minutes.

King Charles was given a special trip on the DART during his visit to the town on 6 December. ■



LUFTHANSA, RYANAIR AND EASYJET BOOST FLIGHTS FROM LIVERPOOL AIRPORT

Three key airlines have announced plans to boost their presence at Liverpool John Lennon Airport this summer.

Lufthansa will be increasing the number of weekly departures to Frankfurt at the start of the summer, following the success of the service which it launched in May 2022. It will increase frequency to six weekly departures, operating every day except Saturday, increasing the airline's capacity from Liverpool next summer by 50% compared to last summer.

The airport's CEO, John Irving, said "This is tremendous news not just for the airport but for the city region and beyond as this will enable passengers to easily travel to more global destinations via Frankfurt. It is also good news for the region's visitor economy, further opening up access to the Liverpool city region, the North West and North Wales and great timing ahead of the forthcoming Eurovision song contest".

Ryanair will expand its operations from the airport in the summer by

adding new routes to Ibiza, Madrid and Shannon in addition to basing a fourth aircraft in Liverpool. EasyJet will add a seventh aircraft to its Liverpool base and will launch a new route to the Greek island of Corfu. ■



LONDON CITY AIRPORT SUBMITS PLANNING APPLICATION TO INCREASE PASSENGER CAP AND TO ALLOW SATURDAY AFTERNOON FLIGHTS

London City Airport has submitted a planning application to the London Borough of Newham requesting an increase in its annual passenger cap from 6.5m to 9m.

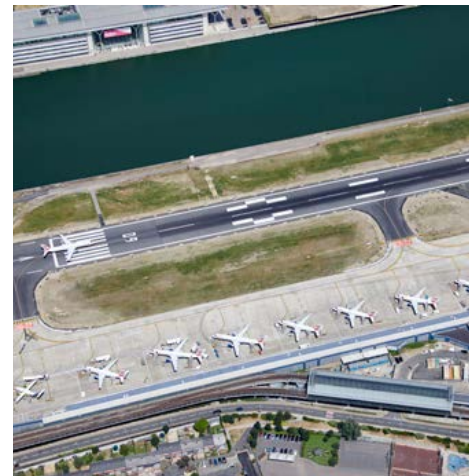
The airport is also seeking permission to extend operating hours on Saturday afternoon from the current closing time of 12.30 pm until 6.30 pm. In addition it is seeking permission for three additional flights in the first half hour of operations on Mondays to Saturdays from 6.30 am.

In a first for a UK airport, London City Airport says that it will mandate that only cleaner, quieter new generation aircraft will be allowed to operate in any newly extended hours on a Saturday and for any new flights in the first half hour of the day. It says that, if consented, the proposals

would create close to 2,200 new jobs across London by 2031, with 1,340 being created at the airport itself.

The airport's Chief Executive, Robert Sinclair, said "As we bounce back from the pandemic and demand increases, we need to ensure London City can accommodate the increase in business and passengers forecast over the next decade, particularly as East London grows. We have listened to the feedback provided in our extensive consultation, and have adjusted the proposals to reflect concerns raised, including reducing the proposed increase in operating hours on Saturdays, reducing the proposed increase in flights in the first 30 minutes and retaining the existing limit on flights in the last 30 minutes".

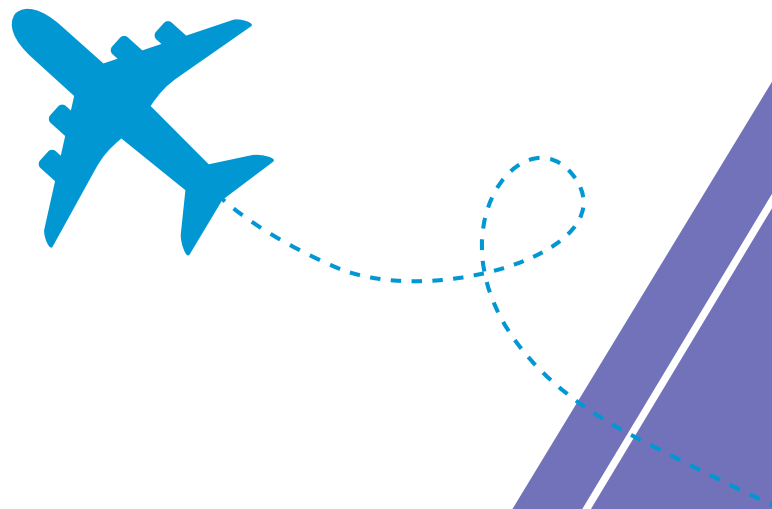
Sinclair said that the proposals would "create more jobs, invest more money into the local community, fund better transport connections and improve sound insulation for local residents". ■





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AIRPORTS FOR THE FUTURE



ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

31 JANUARY 2023

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WELCOME



Karen Dee
Chief Executive
AOA



Welcome to the AOA's 2023 Annual Conference, whose theme is "Airports for the future".

This will be our first in-person Annual Conference since before the pandemic. Our Chair, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith and I are greatly looking forward to welcoming you back and to celebrating your successes in overcoming the greatest challenges our sector has ever faced.

We are delighted that the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper MP, has agreed to deliver a Ministerial keynote address and that we will also hear an Opposition perspective from Shadow Aviation Minister, Mike Kane MP. Their contributions will be complemented by a presentation from the Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Paul Johnson, on the economic and political outlook for 2023.

From an industry perspective, we will hear from three airport Chief Executives and Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI Europe, in a panel session on the current status of UK and European airports and future challenges, as well as from Heathrow Airport's Chief Executive Officer, John Holland-Kaye, who will take part in our traditional big interview.

Other panel sessions will examine some specific issues, including the role of aviation in driving regional growth, delivering a sustainable aviation future and the role of airspace modernisation in enhancing capacity and reducing environmental impact. The border of the future will be addressed by Border Force Director General, Phil Douglas.

It promises to be a very informative and interesting day and I hope you will both profit from and enjoy it. Equally, I hope that as many of you as possible will stay to enjoy our networking drinks reception at the end of the day, where you will have an opportunity to meet new AOA team members who have joined us during and since the pandemic.

The focus of this year's conference is the future of our sector, but I would also like to take this opportunity to look back and reflect on the experiences of our airport members as they faced and grappled with the existential challenges that the pandemic presented.

None of us had ever experienced anything like this and the pandemic reminded us of the unique role that airports play in providing essential services for the country in even the most difficult of times. As airports maintained their ability to provide those services throughout the crisis, airport overheads remained high even as passenger revenues plummeted. UK airports racked up losses on a scale that they had never experienced before.

Today, thankfully, those days are behind us, but I believe that we can learn some enduring lessons from them, not least the vital importance in a crisis of regular communication with airport staff, with Government and regulators and with airports' multiple local stakeholders. From a personal perspective I am hugely grateful to all the AOA Board members, who rose to the challenge and played an essential role in helping our airports first to survive and then to recover.

Now we can once again face the future with confidence and that is what today's conference is all about.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

09.00	Registration & Breakfast
09.30	Welcome & introduction Katie Prescott, Business Technology Editor – The Times • Moderator Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE, Chair – Airport Operators Association Karen Dee, Chief Executive – Airport Operators Association
09.45	Road to recovery – panel discussion on current status of UK & European airports & future challenges Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive – Edinburgh Airport Olivier Jankovec, Director-General – ACI Europe Alberto Martin, Chief Executive Officer – London Luton Airport
10.30	Border of the future Phil Douglas, Director-General – Border Force
11.00	Networking coffee break
11.30	Ministerial keynote address The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP – Secretary of State for Transport
12.00	Aviation driving regional growth – North East case study Dr Arnab Basu MBE, Chief Executive Officer – Kromek Group Sarah Green, Chief Executive Officer – NewcastleGateshead Initiative Richard Jewsbury, Divisional Vice President UK – Emirates Graeme Mason, Chief Sustainability & Communications Officer – Newcastle International Airport
12.30	Economic & political outlook for 2023 Paul Johnson CBE, Director – Institute for Fiscal Studies
13.00	Networking lunch
14.00	View from the Opposition Mike Kane MP – Shadow Minister for Transport
14.30	Delivering a sustainable aviation future – the Government’s view David Silk, Director of Aviation and Airports – Department for Transport
14.45	Delivering a sustainable aviation future – the industry’s view Jonathon Counsell, Group Head of Sustainability – International Airlines Group Matt Gorman MBE, Chair – Sustainable Aviation Brian McClean, Director of Communications and Sustainability – AGS Airports David Silk, Director of Aviation and Airports – Department for Transport Robert Sinclair, Chief Executive Officer – London City Airport
15.15	Networking coffee break
15.45	Airspace modernisation – enhancing capacity & reducing environmental impact Spencer Birns, Chief Executive Officer – Cardiff Airport Dave Curtis, Director, Safety & Sustainability – NATS Richard Moriarty, Chief Executive Officer – Civil Aviation Authority Tim Norwood, Chief Planning Officer, London Gatwick Airport Mark Swan, Head – Airspace Change Organising Group
16.15	Big interview John Holland-Kaye, Chief Executive Officer, Heathrow Airport
16.45	Sum-up Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE, Chair – Airport Operators Association Karen Dee, Chief Executive – Airport Operators Association
17.00	Conference closes
17.00-19.00	Networking drinks reception

*Speakers & timings may be subject to change



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SES AVIATION

SES AVIATION

SES Aviation was created in 2020, when the SES Group acquired Concorde Airport Security, a Stansted-based company which specialised in security screening services for the airport's large Fix Based Operator community.

In addition to aviation, the SES team have experience in many sectors, including rail and maritime, supporting operations, delivery of training and maintaining compliance.

The company's motto is "You are in safe hands". Its mission statement is to "ensure a safe, smooth and fully compliant experience by providing the highest level of professional training and services". Its vision is a commitment to "providing an experienced, professional security service, which protects the public and invests in people development".

SES Director, Steven Thompson who has joined the Group in 2019, says that SES provides much needed cost-effective solutions. He emphasises that "being a private company, we have more freedom than traditionally associated with a plc. Being lean and agile, we have low overheads, which means we can provide products and services at significantly reduced costs.

The AOA would like to thank SES Aviation for providing Gold sponsorship for its 2023 Annual Conference.

THALES

THALES UK

Thales is a global technology leader with more than 81,000 employees on five continents. The Group is investing in digital and "deep tech" innovations – Big Data, artificial intelligence, connectivity, cybersecurity and quantum technology – to build a future we can all trust.

Thales' high-tech solutions, services and products help companies, organisations and governments to achieve their goals and ambitions.

Thales UK, a wholly owned subsidiary of Thales Group, and a world leader in Air Traffic Management, offers a comprehensive range of CNS/ATM (Communications, Navigation, Surveillance/Air Traffic Management) solutions from design and integration to installation and maintenance.

In aerospace, governments, airports, airlines, pilots, crews and passengers rely on Thales to make flight safer, easier and more efficient by designing, delivering and supporting the systems that keep our skies running. From air traffic management, training and simulation solutions, nose-to-tail aircraft connectivity and in-flight services, we enable and connect all parts of the aerospace ecosystem in the air, on the ground, and in between.

The AOA would like to thank Thales for providing Gold sponsorship for its 2023 Annual Conference.



SPEAKER PROFILES



DR ARNAB BASU MBE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - KROMEK GROUP

Dr Arnab Basu is the founding CEO of Kromek Group plc, a supplier of patented radiation detection technologies to the Medical Imaging, Nuclear Detection and Security Screening markets globally with operations in Durham and Huddersfield in the UK, and Pennsylvania and California in the USA. Arnab has also been part of many trade missions including a Prime Minister led mission to India in November 2016 and has led UK trade missions to Asia.

A prominent figure within the business community, Dr Basu is currently chair of the Academic Health Science Network for the North East and North Cumbria (AHSN) (a National Health Service organisation) and Chairman of Durham City Cricket Club.

In January 2014, he received an MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to regional development and international trade and, in July 2016, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science by Northumbria University. Arnab has recently been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Durham.



ANDREW BELL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE - REGIONAL & CITY AIRPORTS

Andrew Bell is Chief Executive of Regional & City Airports (RCA), a leading UK regional airport operator.

RCA owns Bournemouth, Exeter, Norwich and Coventry Airports, and operates Solent Airport on behalf of its owner. RCA also operates XLR Executive Jet Centres, the boutique FBO business which has centres at Birmingham, Liverpool, Bournemouth and Exeter Airports.

Andrew is an experienced airport director and senior executive with a track record over 15 years of delivering effective change and rapid improvement in airport efficiency, profitability and investment activity. He is a chartered accountant and a member of the board of the Airport Operators Association, and has held external stakeholder roles covering issues including regional transport planning and the promotion of the UK's regional airports.



SPENCER BIRNS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - CARDIFF AIRPORT

Spencer Birns is the CEO at Cardiff Airport, since August 2020.

Spencer has over 25 years of industry experience and has studied travel, tourism and hospitality management and has worked in various elements of the sector with management responsibilities in Catering, Travel & Tourism along with Airport Management.

He has worked for Cardiff Airport since 2006, joining from Manchester Airport and headed up the Air Service Development activities. In 2010 he assumed responsibilities for all Commercial and Aero income for the airport and was elevated to the Board as Commercial Director in 2013. Following 5 years of strong successful growth for airport including promotion to Chief Commercial Officer in 2019.

Spencer has previously worked for My Travel group across many commercial and retail related management roles over a 9 year period. Prior to this he has worked for Yates for over 3 years with management experience in the Catering and Beverage elements of the business.

He has a strong focus on revenue development and cost control which has helped Cardiff Airport develop with an entrepreneurial spirit and flair delivering effective results.



JONATHON COUNSELL, GROUP HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY - INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES GROUP

Jonathon is a Master's graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Imperial College, London and has an MBA from INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France.

In July 2015 Jonathon became Group Head of Sustainability for the International Airlines Group with responsibility for the group sustainability strategy across the Groups' four airlines Aer Lingus, British Airways, Iberia & Vueling.

In August 2019 he was elected as the Chair of the newly formed IATA Sustainability and Environment Advisory Council.

Jonathon is also Chair of the oneworld airline alliance's Environment & Sustainability Best Practice Group

In November 2020 Jonathon became Chair of the UK Government's Jet Zero Council's Sustainable Aviation Fuel Delivery Group.



DAVE CURTIS, DIRECTOR, SAFETY & SUSTAINABILITY - NATS

Dave Curtis has been Safety Director at NATS since April 2022, responsible for ensuring the company maintains its focus on continually improving all aspects of safety management and performance, which is particularly important as new concepts and new technologies are rolled out over the coming years. Originally a controller in the London TMA, since 2014 his roles have focused on the future of ATM, policy and airspace. He has led NATS' work on airspace modernisation and the operational concepts needed to face the challenges ahead, and has represented NATS with customers, policy makers and regulators, general aviation and suppliers.



KAREN DEE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE - AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

Karen Dee joined the AOA as Chief Executive on 1 March 2017.

Karen has more than 30 years' experience in policy development, communications and representation activities within the transport sector. Her career has incorporated roles in government, consultancy and trade associations including: the Department for Transport, Market Access, the Road Haulage Association, CBI, Policy Solutions and more recently, the Freight Transport Association where she worked as Director of Policy for six years.



GORDON DEWAR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE - EDINBURGH AIRPORT

Gordon Dewar took up the post of Chief Executive in July 2012, with the airport experiencing 63% growth in passengers from 9m to 14.7m passengers in 2019 - a record for any Scottish airport.

Rebranding the airport as the place where 'Scotland meets the world', Gordon has overseen significant capital investment in capacity, productivity improvements and customer service enhancements that have been recognised through airport and wider business awards in Scotland, the UK and internationally.

Gordon worked tirelessly to steer the airport through the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring it stayed open throughout and diversifying the approach.

Gordon spent 4 years with BAA running Glasgow and Edinburgh airports through periods of extensive investments in terminal capacity and passenger growth from 2007 to 2010. He then spent 2 years as Chief Executive at Bahrain International Airport creating a independent and profitable business for the first time after a carve out from Government.

Gordon has held a number of senior positions with leading transport operators, including commercial, general management and business development roles. Prior to this he spent 10 years in Transport Consultancy.

Gordon is a Board member of the Airport Operators Association (AOA) and the Scottish Tourism Alliance.



PHIL DOUGLAS, DIRECTOR-GENERAL - BORDER FORCE

Phil Douglas was appointed as interim Director General for Border Force in November 2021. Prior to this, Phil was Director of Asylum & Protection Transformation, working to transform the end to end asylum system. Phil has extensive knowledge and experience across the Home Office, including national security, Border Force (where he was Regional Director for Heathrow Airport), enforcement and asylum policy. Outside the Home Office, he has also worked at the Ministry of Justice where he was Director of Youth Justice and Offender Policy. Phil started his civil service career as an immigration officer at Heathrow Airport.



MATT GORMAN MBE, CHAIR - SUSTAINABLE AVIATION

Matthew is Carbon Strategy Director for Heathrow in the newly formed Carbon, Communications and Communities department. He has been Sustainability Director at the airport for the last decade, leading the team that developed "Heathrow 2.0", the airport's leadership plan for sustainable growth launched in 2017. He played a key role in developing the new approach which put local communities and the environment at the heart of the airport's plans for a new runway and was backed by a strong majority in Parliament in 2018. Heathrow won the Edie "Sustainable Business of the Year" award in 2019, and the airport's new net zero plan, launched at the start of 2022, has been shortlisted as "plan of the year" in the Business Green Leaders Awards.

Matthew chairs "Sustainable Aviation", the coalition of UK airlines, airports and manufacturers that sets industry-wide sustainability goals and drives progress towards them. In early 2020, Sustainable Aviation became the first national aviation group in the world to commit to net zero 2050.

He has represented the global airports sector in the International Civil Aviation Organisation's working group on climate change, and Heathrow on the Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change. He has been a trustee of the Hillingdon Community Trust and the Heathrow Community Fund, Vice-Chair of SERA (the Labour Environment Campaign) and a trustee of Tourism Concern, which campaigns for ethical tourism.

He was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2021 for services to the decarbonisation of aviation.



SARAH GREEN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD INITIATIVE

Sarah was appointed CEO of NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI) in 2020. Sarah oversees all aspects of NGI, the destination and inward investment agency that delivers for Newcastle, Gateshead, and the wider region. Prior to NGI, Sarah was the Director of Regions and Nations at CBI. She qualified as a lawyer with Clifford Chance working Hong Kong, London and Shanghai and has a MSc in Urban Regeneration and an MBA. Sarah is also currently completing a PhD scholarship at Durham University, studying the social impact of small businesses on the rural economy.

With a passion for improving the visitor economy, advocate for social mobility and enabler of economic growth in the North East, she sits on the Tourism Industry Council, is an Independent Advisory Board member at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM), a council member at the National Trust and a non-executive director at Ryder Architecture.



THE RT HON MARK HARPER MP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

Mark Harper was appointed Secretary of State for Transport on 25 October 2022.

Previously, he served as Chief Whip (Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury) from May 2015 until 14 July 2016. Previously Mark served as Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform from May 2010 until September 2012. He served as Minister for Immigration from September 2012 until February 2014 and as Minister for Disabled People from July 2014 until May 2015.

He was elected Conservative MP for the Forest of Dean in May 2005.



JOHN HOLLAND-KAYE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - HEATHROW AIRPORT

During his time as CEO, Heathrow has consistently improved service levels for passengers, while reducing costs, and it is now rated one of the best airports in the world. John has championed a third runway at Heathrow, building cross party and national support. In 2017 he launched Heathrow 2.0, a plan for the airport to become a centre of excellence in sustainable aviation. He has a keen interest in promoting diversity and social mobility, and is chair of the Business in the Community Employment and Skills Leadership Team. John is also a Non-Executive Director at Thames Tideway.

Before becoming CEO in July 2014, he was Development Director, responsible for delivering the £2.5bn Terminal 2 on time and on budget, and Commercial Director, responsible for growing revenues and improving passenger service. Prior to joining Heathrow, John worked in housebuilding in the UK and US, with Taylor Wimpey, and in brewing and leisure retail in the UK with Bass plc. His early experience was as a strategy consultant advising leisure and FMCG companies in the UK, US, Australia and the Philippines.

John is married with two daughters.



OLIVIER JANKOVEC, DIRECTOR-GENERAL - ACI EUROPE

Olivier Jankovec became Director General of the European Region of the Airports Council International (ACI EUROPE) in September 2006. ACI EUROPE is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over 500 airports in 55 countries. Our members facilitate over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe. Air transport supports 13.5 million jobs, generating 886 billion in European economic activity (4.4% of GDP). In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions for operations under their control by 2050, without offsetting.

Olivier first joined ACI EUROPE in March 2006 as Director of Strategy & Communications. He has more than 25 years of governmental and lobbying experience, having worked for Alitalia (2002-2006), Air France (2000-2002) and the Air Transport Directorate of the European Commission (1994-2000).

Immediately prior to joining ACI EUROPE Olivier was the Director of Institutional Relations for Alitalia where he was in charge of governmental affairs at national, European and International levels. During this time, he was also Chair of the Association of European Airlines Policy Committee. In 2006 and 2007, he participated in the EU's High-Level Group on the future of aviation regulation in Europe.



RICHARD JEWSBURY, DIVISIONAL VICE PRESIDENT UK - EMIRATES

Richard first joined Emirates in May 1996 as Commercial Analyst and then progressed to a number of executive management roles in Route & Fleet Planning, Commercial, Revenue Optimisation and Performance Development before joining Emirates UK in April 2018 as Divisional Vice President UK.



PAUL JOHNSON CBE, DIRECTOR - INSTITUTE FOR FISCAL STUDIES

Paul is a professional economist who has been director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies since 2011. He is a columnist for The Times, and is a regular contributor to other broadcast and print media. He is currently a member of the UK Climate Change Committee, and of the Financial Services Culture Board. He is a visiting professor in the UCL Policy Lab and at the UCL department of economics.

Previous roles have included time as chief economist at the Department for Education and as director of public spending at HM Treasury, where he also served as deputy head of the government economic service.

Paul was appointed CBE in the 2018 birthday honours.



MIKE KANE MP, SHADOW MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

A former primary school teacher, Mike began his political career as a Councillor on Manchester City Council in 1991 where, as the Executive Member for Arts and Leisure, he oversaw the investment strategy which led to the transformation of Central Library.

Mike worked for James Purnell, and his successor Jonathan Reynolds from 2008 until 2011. He then worked for Tameside Council as a Senior Executive Assistant based in the council leader's office until elected to Parliament in a by-election in 2014.

Mike was elected as the Member of Parliament for his home constituency, Wythenshawe and Sale East. Mike was Shadow Minister for International Development from September 2015 to October 2016, when he was appointed Shadow Minister for Schools. In April 2020 Mike moved to the Shadow Transport team as Shadow Minister for Aviation, Maritime, Space & Security. As he has a significant Chagosian community in his constituency Mike is also Chair of the Chagos APPG.

Mike is married to Sandra. He enjoys keeping free range chickens in his garden where he enjoys growing his own fruit and veg. He is a regular football player, a cyclist, a MCFC season ticket holder and plays the flute and the bagpipes in a local pipe band."



ALBERTO MARTIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - LONDON LUTON AIRPORT

Alberto Martin has been the CEO of London Luton Airport (LLA) since 2018, having successfully led the business during the pandemic. Using his international and extensive leadership experience, gained over a wide portfolio of airport assets, LLA has undergone a transformation focused on sustainable and social growth, and improving the experience of its people and passengers.

Alberto joined the airport in 2017 as Planning and Investment Director, where he was responsible for the delivery of its transformational £160m expansion project. Before joining LLA, he gained 20 years' experience in airports, holding a variety of executive roles across Spain, including 10 years as Managing Director of Gran Canaria and Fuerteventura airports where he led the successful delivery of major capital expansion programmes. During his 6 years at Gran Canaria, it saw record growth in profitability and passenger numbers, and effectively delivered improved airport experience.

He is MSc in Aeronautical Engineering and was previously Chairman of the Regional Airports Forum of ACI-Europe.



GRAEME MASON, CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Graeme obtained a First Class Honours Degree from the University of Kent and a Master of Philosophy in Town and Country Planning from University College London. He started his career in planning at West Sussex County Council, where he participated in the RUCATSE (Runway Capacity to Serve the South East) project. He joined the Airport in 1993 and since then has overseen the production of Newcastle's first ever Masterplan and three subsequent reviews, as well as planning for all developments including a major terminal extension, hotel, control tower, fuel farm, filling station, business park and solar farm. Graeme has also instigated CSR and environmental strategies and the Net Zero Carbon 2035 plan, and over the years has built up strong and varied relationships on behalf of the Airport at a national, regional and local level. In recent years, he has taken on the role of media spokesman and drives the airport's public affairs strategy. Graeme is also a member of the CBI Regional Council and is a trustee of the Newcastle United Foundation.



BRIAN MCCLEAN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY, AGS AIRPORTS

Brian is Director of Communications and Sustainability for AGS Airports which comprises Aberdeen International, Glasgow and Southampton airports. In addition to overseeing AGS' communications and public affairs functions, Brian is responsible for delivering the group's sustainability strategy which sets out how AGS balances the clear economic and social benefits of aviation with its climate change responsibilities. Prior to joining Glasgow Airport in 2011, Brian spent nine years working for a leading communications consultancy.



BARONESS RUBY MCGREGOR-SMITH CBE, CHAIR - AIRPORT OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION

Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE has been Chair of the Airport Operators Association since 1 September 2019.

Ruby is also Chair of Mind Gym and the Chair of the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Ruby is a non-Executive Director for the Tideway Tunnel and was previously the President of the British Chambers of Commerce and Chief Executive of Mitie Group, the strategic outsourcing company which employed over 65,000 people and during her tenure became the largest Facilities Management business in the UK. Ruby joined Mitie in 2002 as Chief Financial Officer, became the Chief Operating Officer in 2005 and Chief Executive Officer in 2007. She is one of a small number of women who have held the position of Chief Executive in the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 and is the first Asian woman to be appointed in such a role within that group of companies.

Ruby was recognised as a top 50 female world business leader by the FT in 2013.

Ruby was an Independent Non-Executive Director of Page Group from 2007 to 2017. She Chaired the Audit Committee, was a Member of Nomination and Remuneration Committees and latterly their Senior Independent Director.

Ruby is a member of the House of Lords, having been granted a Life Peerage in 2015. She is also a member of the Risk Assessment and Risk Planning Committee and is responsible for the Independent Report to the UK Government on Race in the Workplace published in February 2017. Chair of the UK Government's Women's Business Council between 2012 and 2016 and a Business Ambassador for the UK from 2012 to 2019. She was appointed by the UK Government to be the In-Work Progression Commissioner in 2020.

Ruby is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in 2015, the profession's most prestigious Award.



RICHARD MORIARTY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE - CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

Richard Moriarty was appointed as the Civil Aviation Authority's Chief Executive in May 2018, having served as the Group Director of Consumers and Markets for two years. In this role, his responsibilities had included airline licensing, the economic regulation of airports and consumer redress and enforcement activities. Before joining the Civil Aviation Authority, Richard had previously held senior roles in both the public and private sector, in fields such as water, energy and social housing.



TIM NORWOOD, CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER - LONDON GATWICK AIRPORT

Tim is Chief Planning Officer and Director of Corporate Affairs at Gatwick Airport with responsibility for the preparation of the long term Master Plan including promoting the Airports Northern Runway Project. Tim's remit also covers communications, public affairs, external engagement, noise and airspace and sustainability. He was previously Chief Planning Officer at EDF Energy working on renewable electricity projects. Prior to that, Tim held several planning roles in BAA at Heathrow and Stansted Airports. Tim has also worked in local government and consultancy.



KATIE PRESCOTT, BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY EDITOR - THE TIMES • MODERATOR

Katie Prescott is one of the UK's best-known business journalists. A familiar voice to millions of listeners after a decade reporting for the BBC, Katie was the Senior Lead Business Presenter for Radio 4's Today Programme and a Business Correspondent across BBC News on TV, radio and online.

She's now the Technology Business Editor for The Times and a weekly columnist for the newspaper's award-winning business section. Across the fast-changing landscape of tech, media and telecoms, Katie brings all the key stories to readers, listeners and viewers across Times platforms.

At the BBC, Katie worked across all the corporation's major news outlets as the on-screen face and voice explaining and analysing the tumultuous changes wrought by COVID-19, the European debt crisis and new technology, in addition to the challenges of sustainability and climate change.

She has travelled extensively for her work, from Tanzania and Rwanda to China and America as well as working as a journalist in the BBC's New York Bureau.

Katie is a highly accomplished speaker and moderator. Having worked with a range of major clients, she is well placed to host and facilitate at conferences and other events requiring her expertise in technology, business, finance, economics, media, digital disruption, cyber security and sustainability.

Katie has a degree in Modern Languages from Oxford and lives in London with her two children.



DAVID SILK, DIRECTOR OF AVIATION AND AIRPORTS - DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

David Silk is the Director of Aviation and Airports in the Department for Transport, having previously been the department's Director for Airports, Infrastructure and Commercial Interventions for the last 2 years. He is responsible for all aspects of aviation and airport policy. Prior to joining DfT, David's career was in HM Treasury, where he had a number of senior roles, including on welfare, housing, local growth and education spending. He has significant experience in policy, strategy and commercial roles.



ROBERT SINCLAIR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - LONDON CITY AIRPORT

Robert Sinclair joined London City Airport as Chief Executive Officer in October 2017, bringing a broad range of airport management and general business experience with him to the role.

Prior to his role at London City Airport, Robert was CEO of Bristol Airport for nine years between 2008 and 2017. Before moving to the UK he was Chief Financial Officer at Auckland Airport, with responsibility for the finance, strategy, corporate affairs and IT divisions at New Zealand's international gateway airport.

Robert is a qualified lawyer and chartered accountant.



MARK SWAN, HEAD - AIRSPACE CHANGE ORGANISING GROUP

Mark Swan joined the Royal Air Force in 1979 after completing a UK law degree. He flew Phantom and Tornado fighters until 1997 after which he joined the UK Ministry of Defence doing various policy, strategy and programme management roles.

Mark joined the CAA Board as the executive director of Airspace Policy in Feb 09 responsible for oversight of the national airspace. He led the collaborative programme with UK CAA, NATS, UK MOD and DfT, to establish the UK's Future Airspace Strategy. In 2013 he merged the CAA Safety and Airspace groups into one and was a national voting member on both the Eurocontrol Provisional Council in Brussels and the European Aviation Safety Agency in Cologne.

Mark left the CAA in 2019 to set up and lead the Airspace Change Organising Group, which is managing the current national airspace transformation programme involving 22 major commercial airports in the UK and NATS. He qualified as a Fellow and Chartered Director of the UK Institute of Directors in 2008.



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