

# THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION



## SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORT'S

## EXTENDED RUNWAY

*With new easyJet routes  
to Belfast and Glasgow*

### *Features*

FARNBOROUGH CEO  
*on 'getting business going'*

CORNWALL AIRPORT  
NEWQUAY, *the fastest growing  
UK regional airport*

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS  
CEO *on challenges and optimism*

SCOTLAND'S AVIATION  
MINISTER *points to growing  
confidence*



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

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 **SES AVIATION**

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# KAREN DEE

## *Introduction to The Airport Operator*



*Hello, and welcome to the autumn edition of The Airport Operator magazine. We are now well into the*

*autumn, following what turned out to be a successful summer for airports.*

Overall, the industry itself performed very well and dealt with high numbers of passengers seeking to get away effectively and with little disruption. The feedback from airports is that, but for one incident, it went about as well as it could.

That 'one incident' is of course the outage at NATS that caused a huge shutdown of the UK's airspace over the August Bank Holiday. While massively disruptive and upsetting for passengers, airports and aviation, I was pleased our members responded quickly and efficiently, and that the disruption was minimised and dealt with in a relatively short space of time. The AOA is working closely with the CAA's inquiry into what happened. We will continue to do so and to update members as we seek to ensure this type of incident does not happen again.

Elsewhere we held our Security Conference in York. Topics discussed

included the current thinking about threats, next generation security and implementing new technologies. It was great to see so many members there and I was delighted that feedback was universally positive. Our Operations and Safety Conference takes place in early November, and we will have more on this in our next issue.

We have been continuing our work to develop a manifesto and programme for government ahead of the General Election, with the AOA Board providing invaluable feedback. This important piece of work will form the basis of our efforts to influence the next government, focussing on the wider benefits of supporting aviation through policies that promote stability, sustainability and affordability.

Working with our partners in the Sustainable Aviation coalition, we have been successful in getting the government to agree to an amendment to its Energy Bill in support of Sustainable Aviation Fuel. Government will have to consult on options for a price support mechanism by March and report back on what it plans to do by the summer. We are now working to reduce the timescales involved, as well as influencing the Labour party to support the measures, should they form a government.

We have also been busy attending the party conferences in Bournemouth, Manchester and Liverpool, where we had a number of meetings with ministers, MPs, candidates, and advisers. We also supported

Sustainable Aviation in delivering its events, which included roundtables and receptions at both Conservative and Labour conferences.

Recently, we also provided a submission to the government ahead of the Autumn Statement, in which we called on ministers to look again at aviation and travel taxes, the planning system and airspace modernisation. I have also attended meetings of the ministerial Aviation Council as well as with MSPs in Edinburgh and officials from the airports team at the DfT.

I hope you enjoy this quarter's issue of The Airport Operator. We hear from Fiona Hyslop MSP, the new Scottish Transport Minister, about her priorities for aviation in Scotland. Highlands and Islands Airports Managing Director, Stewart Adams, talks to us on the importance of ensuring our remote communities are properly serviced. Sam O'Dwyer from Cornwall Airport Newquay discusses what has made it the fastest growing regional airport in the UK and Southampton Airport's Operations Director, Mark Beveridge, tells us how its new runway extension will enable it to serve more destinations. There are also articles on our recent Security Conference and the upcoming Operations and Safety Conference, our work at this year's party conferences and recent working group meetings. Finally, we also have contributions from Corporate Partner, ICTS UK & Ireland, and Gold Member, Wilson James. ■

**Karen Dee, Chief Executive**

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# HOW FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT IS 'GETTING BUSINESS GOING' IN LONDON, THE SOUTH EAST AND BEYOND

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*With Farnborough Airport preparing to submit a planning application to change its annual flight limits, Farnborough Airport CEO, Simon Geere, has ambitious plans to build upon the airport's historic legacy.*



*Simon Geere*

As the location of the UK's first powered flight in 1908, Farnborough Airport holds a unique place in aviation history. It's a pioneering legacy which the airport's CEO, Simon Geere, is proud of and is planning to build upon. The airport has just been through a public consultation process to increase its annual flights from 50,000 to 70,000 by 2040, and Geere believes this is essential if Farnborough Airport is to continue to be the leading business aviation gateway in the UK. He explains, "The proposed changes are crucial if Farnborough Airport is to safeguard and sustain its leading economic role and continue serving the future market demand for business connectivity."

Geere sees Farnborough Airport playing a significant role in supporting and promoting the UK Government's policy to make the best use of existing airport capacity to enhance global connectivity, now and into the future. The airport's proximity to the large economic regions of London and the South-East are key drivers for such plans,

having already established itself as an essential part of the region's airport network. Serving over 800 international connections, Farnborough Airport plays a vital economic role both locally and nationally, supporting and generating direct and indirect employment to create economic prosperity in the local and wider area.

As the leading business aviation airport in the UK, Farnborough Airport is relied upon by many businesses for the connectivity and assurance of the flights it serves, which as a sector not only strengthens the economic position and overall attractiveness of the local region but are fundamental to maintaining London and the UK's role as one of the world's leading centres for business and trade.

An economic report by the local borough council concluded the airport's economic impact in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) in the region was almost double the previous 2009 forecast. At present, Farnborough Airport supports 3,000

jobs locally and £200m of GVA for the local economy. With Gulfstream and Flexjet among 70-plus onsite tenants, Farnborough Airport has become the epicentre of a dynamic and thriving aviation and aerospace cluster.

Geere points to how this has enabled the airport to bring inward investment to the region, "Our new hangar, Domus III, is due to be complete by early 2024. At £55m it's one of the single biggest investments in the borough for some time." Occupying 175,000 sq ft, Domus III will provide Farnborough Airport with 75% more hangar space, having the capability to house the next generation of business aviation aircraft and scope to accommodate the expected presence of electrical vertical take-off and landing aircraft into the future.

Geere fully appreciates the need for balance between economic benefits and environmental impact, with Farnborough Airport looking at introducing a new Sustainability Fund as well as enhancing its existing Sound Insulation Grant Scheme and Community Environmental Fund. "At Farnborough Airport we want to be a force for good, striving to be a sustainability showcase for airports around the world," he said.

There have been significant milestones in the pursuit of this aim. In 2018, it became the first business aviation airport to gain carbon neutral status, gaining Level 4+ status, the highest level of carbon accreditation, by the Airport

*"The proposed changes are crucial if Farnborough Airport is to safeguard and sustain its leading economic role and continue serving the future market demand for business connectivity."*



*“We have set ourselves some of the most ambitious environmental goals in the industry – to be Net Zero for emissions within our direct control by 2030 or sooner.”*

Carbon Accreditation scheme, earlier this year. This follows the 2022 launch of its Net Zero Roadmap, in which Geere explains, “We have set ourselves some of the most ambitious environmental goals in the industry – to be Net Zero for emissions within our direct control by 2030 or sooner.”

Progress has been achieved, with the airport’s fleet of vehicles being transitioned to electric and hydrotreated vegetable oil. While in October, Farnborough Airport announced plans for one of the largest solar installations in the South East, which will be installed on the roofs of several airport buildings,

helping to generate 25% of the airport’s power. Sustainable energy solutions are a big focus for Geere, who said “we are always looking for new ways to supply and create sustainable energy sources.”

This is highlighted by Farnborough Airport’s status as one of the largest single-site suppliers of Sustainable Aviation Fuel to the business aviation community in the UK. Having first begun offering the fuel to all customers in 2021, it became the first airport in the world to offer SAF at the same price as standard Jet A1 fuel for a two-week trial period on the lead-up to last year’s Farnborough Airshow. Geere

has further SAF aims, “Our vision sees a future whereby we would like to become a SAF only airport before the end of the decade, acting as an early adopter ‘of scale’ and accelerating the wider take-up of SAF across the aviation industry.”

Geere believes it is difficult to think of another location where the airport and its town are so intrinsically linked, concluding, “The proposed operational changes will enable us to plan for the long-term, allowing us to continue supporting the economic growth potential of the region. This is the success story of Farnborough and its airport. Together they are the home of British aviation, supporting UK enterprise, driving inward investment, securing future economic growth, and of course, ‘Getting Business Going’.” ■

**For more information, please visit [www.farnboroughairport2040.com](http://www.farnboroughairport2040.com) and [www.farnboroughairport.com](http://www.farnboroughairport.com)**



# AOA PLANS FULL CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2024, WITH ANNUAL DINNER, ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND THREE SPECIALISED CONFERENCES

*The AOA has announced that its 2024 Annual Dinner will be held on 19 March, followed by three Airport conferences and the Annual Conference in November.*

**R**egistration for the Annual Dinner will be launched within the coming weeks. This year's event, addressed by Aviation Minister, Baroness Vere, attracted more than 700 guests from airports, airlines, the CAA, the broader aviation community and the media.

Meanwhile, planning has begun for a series of specialised AOA conferences to be held between April and September at locations across the UK. The Airport Conference on airspace and air traffic is expected to take place in the second half of April, the Airport Conference on sustainability in the second half of June and the Airport Conference



*Marko Saaret,  
Events and Member  
Relations Manager,  
AOA*

on security in mid-September. UK Airports 2024 Health and Safety Week will take place between 13 and 19 May.

A full programme of working group meetings has already been announced, with the Aerodrome, Safety and Compliance Working Group, the Airspace and Air Traffic Services Working Group, the Health and Safety Working Group and the Security Group all scheduling four meetings during the year and the PACN and Policy Committee planning five meetings.

Reflecting on this year's AOA events programme, Events and Member



Relations Manager, Marko Saaret, said “As 2023 is nearing its end, the AOA is proud of having delivered four major events to its membership. We can look back with satisfaction to January’s Annual Conference, June’s Annual Dinner and September’s Airport Security Conference in York and on 9 November we will host the Airport Operations and Safety Conference. It means that the AOA is fully back to its pre-Covid event cycle, and we are looking forward to an even busier calendar next year”.

Saaret said he wanted to express his sincere thanks to Dallmeier, ICTS UK & Ireland, SES Aviation, SITA, Thales and Vanderlande for supporting this year’s events via sponsorship, which had helped greatly to ensure high standards and quality at all the gatherings. Looking ahead, he said that the AOA would be aiming to make event attendance as easy as possible for the membership by announcing fixed dates and locations as early as possible, helping with saving the dates, planning budgets and evaluating sponsorship opportunities. ■

*“As 2023 is nearing its end, the AOA is proud of having delivered four major events to its membership. We can look back with satisfaction to January’s Annual Conference, June’s Annual Dinner and September’s Airport Security Conference in York and on 9 November we will host the Airport Operations and Safety Conference”.*



# CORNWALL AIRPORT NEWQUAY'S BUSY SUMMER HAS MADE IT THE FASTEST GROWING REGIONAL AIRPORT IN THE UK

*A 56% increase in passenger numbers this summer, compared to 2022, has brought Cornwall Airport Newquay to within striking distance of its pre-Covid passenger numbers.*

The airport's Managing Director, Sam O'Dwyer, told The Airport Operator that the huge increase in summer traffic had outstripped industry forecasts and put the airport on course for 416,000 passengers this year, compared to 460,000 in 2019. She is confident that growth will continue in 2024 "and that is our target".

Cornwall Airport Newquay was closed to commercial flights for long periods during the pandemic, with passenger numbers slumping to just 67,000 in 2020, before climbing back to 105,500 in 2021 and then 244,000 last year.

Eastern Airway's year-round up to three times a day PSO route to London Gatwick remains the airport's busiest, but a new SAS

summer service from Copenhagen, a new route to Malaga, and new domestic services from Belfast City, East Midlands, London Stansted and Manchester all contributed to the growth. An Aer Lingus service to Dublin offer passengers onward connections to the United States with the additional benefit of clearing US customs in Dublin.

The airport's growing route network, which also includes Dusseldorf, benefits from a mix of both inbound tourist traffic and outbound traffic from Cornwall. Ryanair's decision to offer flights to Alicante, Faro and Malaga year-round has proven popular with Cornish people working in domestic tourism but looking for winter sunshine breaks.

Newly validated figures indicate

that Cornwall Airport Newquay contributes £70m in Gross Value Added to the county's economy. The airport is wholly owned by Cornwall Council, which continues to subsidise it. Moving towards a position where that subsidy would no longer be required has been a key objective for O'Dwyer since she became Managing Director of the airport nearly two years' ago. Central to realising this would be developing a commercially sustainable operating model that relies less on aeronautical revenue and more on development of the airport's 650-acre estate. The Council and the airport are working with CBRE, the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm, to explore how that could be achieved.

Since 2015 the airport has been



*Sam O'Dwyer,  
Managing Director,  
Cornwall Airport  
Newquay*

promoting itself as a location for aerospace-related businesses. It was the first airport in the UK to be awarded a Spaceport licence and is the only one so far to have hosted a rocket launch. In January this year Virgin Orbit's converted Boeing 747 took off successfully from the airport's runway, but, after the 70ft rocket was launched and climbed higher, a fuel filter was dislodged, and the rocket's thrust had a premature shutdown. Rocket components and the nine satellites on board plunged into the Atlantic.

However, O'Dwyer is adamant that this failure was "absolutely not terminal" for Cornwall Airport Newquay's Spaceport project. She said "we gained the licence and we proved that we have got an operational Spaceport. We are now working with the Space Agency and the CAA to make some changes to our operational protocols that will make them more commercially viable. There will be a slight hiatus until there are other operators with the right technology, but we are ready for it, and it is only a matter of time before there will be another launch".

Meanwhile, the airport will continue to work with a dozen space-related businesses that are already using its operational facility, helping companies to test their technology. It will also continue to partner with neighbouring Truro and Penwith College and Exeter University to promote space-related apprenticeships, which include post-graduate qualifications. O'Dwyer is sure that the space sector "is the future" and is pleased to see that local young people now have opportunities to study space-related subjects, gain their qualifications and move into well-paid jobs in Cornwall.

Speaking shortly before the Prime Minister axed the Birmingham to Manchester section of HS2, O'Dwyer said the Government should recognise that the UK's regional airports already provide vital connectivity and should take steps to support them. She urged



*"I think the Government need to be really aware, with all the attention paid to the increasing costs of HS2, that our regional airports already provide a network of regional infrastructure. The issue that we have is that the cost of regulating a small airport is completely disproportionate to the revenue that we can create from it".*

Ministers to consider changing the PSO legislation to extend the existing support for regional airport routes to London to also cover region-to-region routes that are not commercially viable. In addition, she said it was time for the Government and the CAA to re-examine how the costs of regulation are shared between airports, noting that the current system places a disproportionate burden on small regional airports like Cornwall Airport Newquay.

"I think the Government need to be really aware" she said "with all the attention paid to the increasing costs of HS2, that our regional airports already provide a network of regional infrastructure. The issue that we have is that the

cost of regulating a small airport is completely disproportionate to the revenue that we can create from it. We have to comply with the same level of regulation as much larger airports and the cost of regulation makes a profitable operating model unachievable, unless you diversify".

She urged the Government and the CAA to "look at a model that doesn't load such huge regulatory costs on small airports. I think it would be much more economically viable to have a proportionate regulatory model for regional airports so that we can utilise the existing infrastructure that we have in the UK to deliver the connectivity, rather than investing in new technology where the infrastructure is simply not there and the project takes too long". ■

# UNIQUE AOA WORKSHOP SHARES BEST PRACTICE IN AERODROME SAFEGUARDING

*The AOA has brought together airports, consultants and NATS to share best practice on aerodrome safeguarding – which is a legal requirement under ICAO and CAA rules, with the processes undertaken by UK airports regularly audited by the CAA.*

**A**n unprecedented workshop hosted by Heathrow Airport this autumn gave attendees an opportunity to share their own experiences through case studies and to learn about new approaches to ensuring the safety of aircraft manoeuvring on the ground, taking off, landing or flying near airports – making sure in particular that safe operations are not put at risk by external developments.

Held at The Compass Centre, Heathrow, the all-day workshop was organised by the AOA's Aerodrome Safeguarding Working Group, co-chaired by Catalina Peters, Airport Planning Manager at Cyrrus Ltd, the international aviation consultancy, and Kirsteen Macdonald,



*Catalina Peters*

Safeguarding Manager at Glasgow Airport.

Contributors included Sacha Rossi, Air Traffic Control Systems Safeguarding Engineer at NATS,

Adam Ewart, Airport Planner at Newcastle International Airport and bird strike consultant, Jon Middleton. Eight UK airports attended. Rossi's presentation focussed on communication, navigations and surveillance systems – the ground infrastructure used by both Air Traffic Control and aircraft.

Peters told The Airport Operator that the working group decided to organise the workshop because "the safeguarding of airports is a crucial activity for safe operations". Despite that, safeguarding training courses are not currently available in the UK and "we felt there was a need for training for new aerodrome safeguarding officers".

She said “various people who did it in the past either retired or they are not doing it any more. The CAA and the Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (which brings together CAA and airport experts) are trying to get a training course available for all airports, but this is still being looked at, so I felt there was a need for a workshop where we could share our experience. The industry lost a lot of its knowledge when people left during the pandemic. So now we have got a lot of new people coming into the industry and we decided to do this workshop to provide some support for the new members who maybe haven’t got as much experience in dealing with this role”.

The workshop was designed to cover all the basics of aerodrome safeguarding and touched on a wide range of developments around airports that can put safety at risk, including buildings, lighting, cranes, telecommunication masts, electricity pylons, wind turbines, solar farms and landscaping that could create a bird strike hazard.

Airports explained how local planning authorities consult with them on planning applications for new developments, how they use technology to support their assessments and how they deal with applications for permits from crane operators operating within 6km of an aerodrome, with the Heathrow team explaining in detail how they deal with crane and drone permits.

Adele Gammarano, Airport Regulation, Safety and Operations Manager at the AOA, said “Among the highlights of the day, I found the networking and engagement to be incredibly beneficial for facilitating greater collaboration, which will lead to improved safety measures for our aerodromes. The AOA was extremely pleased to facilitate this workshop and we were overwhelmed by the positive response from the delegates”.

Asked if there might be further AOA workshops on safeguarding, Peters said if there is a need the working

group could consider organising modules on specific subjects, either face-to-face or online. “It is such a vast subject” she said. “It cannot be covered in a day. So we just tried to cover the basics and if there is a need to go into a particular area and develop that we can do so. It is a continuously changing environment for us, so we just need to keep sharing our experiences and knowledge”.

Meanwhile, the AOA’s Aerodrome Safety Working Group holds regular meetings to discuss current topics and to participate in consultations from the Government and the CAA, including, for example, the recent CAA consultation on UK wind farm policy. Peters said she feels that the AOA is an important voice for its airport members. “It is not one airport saying something” she said. “It is a group of airports and I think that always has a bigger weight when we raise issues”. ■

*The workshop was designed to cover all the basics of aerodrome safeguarding and touched on a wide range of developments around airports that can put safety at risk, including buildings, lighting, cranes, telecommunication masts, electricity pylons, wind turbines, solar farms and landscaping that could create a bird strike hazard.*



# LEADERSHIP CHANGE AT RFFS WORKING GROUP

*Luton Airport's Deputy Fire Services Manager, Daniel Cartwright, is to succeed Simon Petts, Chief Fire Officer at Gatwick Airport, as Chair of the AOA's Rescue and Fire Fighting Services Working Group.*

**A**dele Gammarano, the AOA's Airport Regulation, Safety and Operations Manager, said she wanted to express the AOA's appreciation for Simon Petts' "exceptional leadership".

She said "Simon has been instrumental in engaging with other airport fire managers and senior fire service officers from other airports, the CAA and Government departments to share best practices and regulatory concerns that affect the rescue and fire fighting sector. His expertise in leading challenging tasks and goals has also been invaluable and we would like to highly commend him for this. His hard work, dedication and valuable contributions have made a big difference. Simon's commitment to the rescue and fire fighter sector is truly admirable and we are grateful for the knowledge and experience he

has shared with us".

"We would like to announce the new Chair of the RFFS Working Group - Daniel Cartwright, Deputy Fire Service Manager at Luton Airport. He will continue to work alongside Doug Pickering, and both will lead this working group". ■

*"Simon's commitment to the rescue and fire fighter sector is truly admirable and we are grateful for the knowledge and experience he has shared with us".*



*Simon Petts,  
Chief Fire  
Officer at  
Gatwick  
Airport*



*Daniel  
Cartwright,  
Luton Airport's  
Deputy  
Fire Service  
Manager*

# HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS AIRPORTS CEO - “WHILE WE CONTINUE TO FACE CHALLENGES, THERE IS ALSO OPTIMISM”

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*The AOA recently welcomed Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) back into AOA membership and The Airport Operator took the opportunity to catch up with Stewart Adams, HIAL’s interim CEO.*

**T**he regional network group is responsible for the management and operation of 11 airports across a vast geographical area in the north of Scotland.

The airports are a vital element of Scotland’s transport network and are located at Barra, Benbecula, Campbeltown, Dundee, Inverness, Islay, Kirkwall, Stornoway, Sumburgh, Tiree and Wick. Supporting lifeline services and essential air connectivity, they provide a crucial service for the diverse communities they serve across the far north - from remote island communities to growing cities.

Stewart told The Airport Operator “Airports, irrespective of size and

location, face similar challenges, particularly as we drive to build back sustainably following the pandemic. It is important that we work together as an industry to tackle similar issues and we look forward to working with the different members in the Association. A key element will be the ability to share learning, experiences and best practice across the 52 airports.”

Having a wealth of knowledge and extensive experience in the aviation sector both in Scotland and internationally, Stewart was appointed to lead the Senior Management Team while the HIAL Board complete the process of recruiting a permanent CEO.

With his understanding and experience of managing both airport and airline operations the HIAL Board felt Stewart was the ideal candidate for the temporary position.

Stewart said “Having led several airlines, including Aberdeen based BMI regional, Tiger Airways in Singapore, and Loganair, as well as spending four years as CEO at Glasgow Prestwick Airport, I can assess issues from both sides. As we know, one can’t operate without the other.

“With over 40 years’ experience in the aviation industry, I know only too well the vital role that HIAL’s 11 airports play. With limited surface travel alternatives, the air



connectivity that the airports and our partner airlines provide to keep local communities connected is fundamental.”

Having been with HIAL over four months, Stewart spoke of the commitment of the teams right across the business. He said “During my time with Loganair, I became very familiar with all the HIAL airports. Each one is different, but all are renowned for offering a professional, but personal experience for all customers and I have seen that dedication from the other side of the fence since joining.

“It is clear that everyone, from frontline operations to support teams, is passionate about what they do and go that extra mile to help provide a service that meets the needs of their local communities.

“Team spirit is evident at airport and departmental level, and indeed company wide, with colleagues keen to get involved in decision making and providing numerous suggestions to help deliver our strategic plan. We are currently looking to implement a number of these suggestions to help us work as efficiently and effectively as possible.”

HIAL is in the unique position that it is wholly owned by the Scottish Ministers and receives subsidies from the Scottish Government under Section 34 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982.

The country continues to face considerable economic and financial pressures, and as a public body HIAL will face funding challenges for the foreseeable future. These exceptional pressures prompted HIAL, like every other organisation in the country, to re-calibrate its goals and reappraise its strategic priorities and spending options. This resulted in a revised strategy that focuses on delivering core activities and prioritising spending on ensuring safe and regulatory compliant airports.

The overriding objective moving forward is to operate as efficiently



*Stewart Adams,  
interim CEO, HIAL*

*“With over 40 years’ experience in the aviation industry, I know only too well the vital role that HIAL’s 11 airports play. With limited surface travel alternatives, the air connectivity that the airports and our partner airlines provide to keep local communities connected is fundamental”.*

and effectively as possible, while at the same time maintaining the high level of service that HIAL’s customers have become accustomed to.

That said, sustainability remains a focus and HIAL is committed to a strategic programme of sustainable low-carbon development for its airports over the next 10 years. HIAL continues to deliver a programme of initiatives to decarbonise its airport

operations and infrastructure. Its long-term aim is to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations, while at the same time protecting the uniqueness of the natural environment of the region.

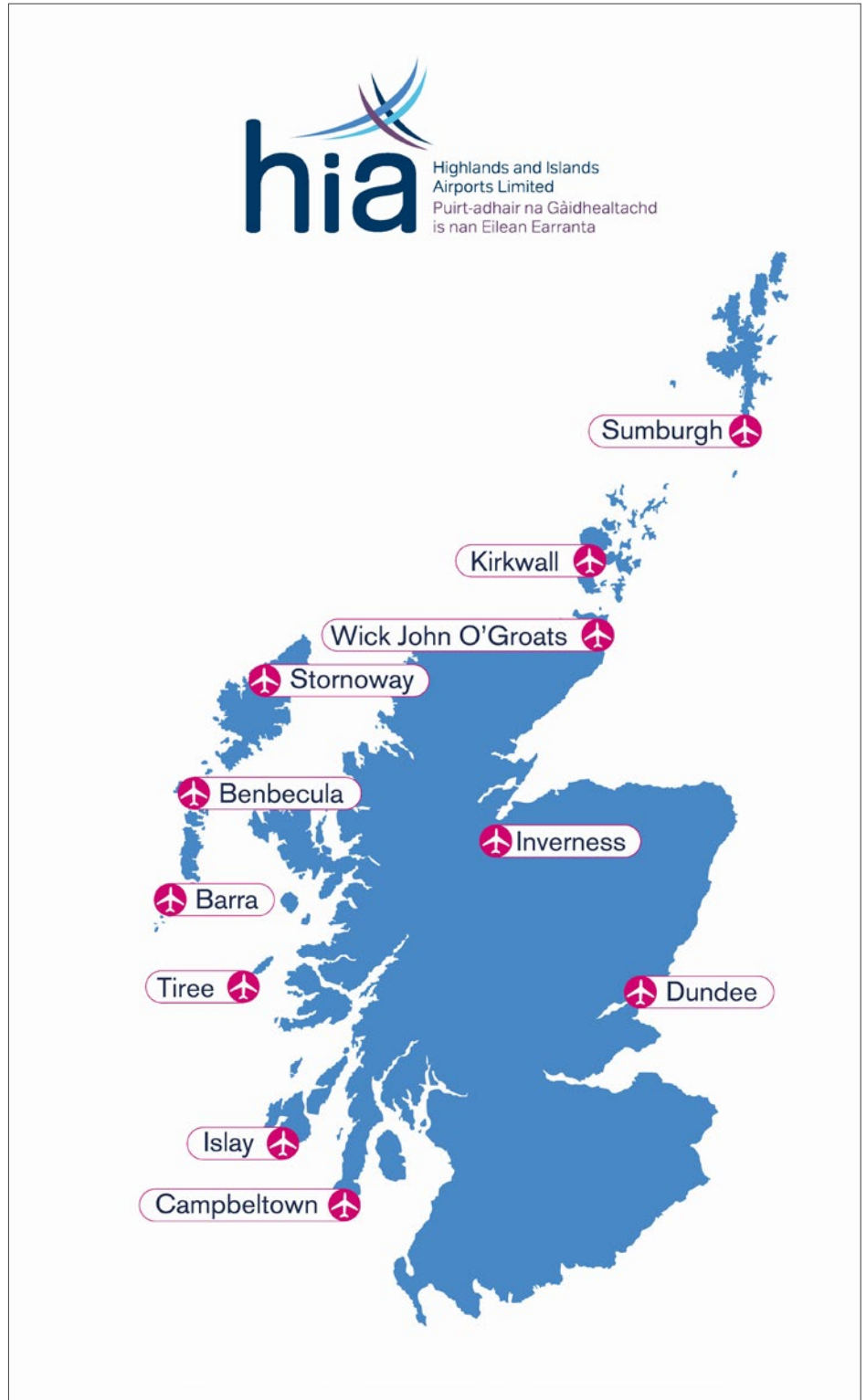
Summing up, Stewart said “While we continue to face challenges, there is also optimism. Passenger numbers were just over 1.4 million

*“HIAL’s airports contribute to the socio-economic prosperity of the region, and the scheduled routes operating from the different sites also provide vital links to UK and international hubs for the business sector and the tourist industry”.*

across all 11 airports at the end of March 2023, sitting at almost 85% of pre-pandemic levels, and we have set a target of reaching 90+ % for this year.

“HIAL’s airports contribute to the socio-economic prosperity of the region, and the scheduled routes operating from the different sites also provide vital links to UK and international hubs for the business sector and the tourist industry. The introduction of new routes, for example from Orkney and Shetland, via Dundee to London Heathrow opens up a world of onward connectivity opportunities for these communities.

“Our colleagues fully appreciate the trials ahead, and I have no doubt that with their support and working in partnership with Transport Scotland, our local communities, airlines and airport operators, HIAL will continue to meet whatever challenges it may face head on.” ■





*Fiona Hyslop MSP,  
Scotland's Minister  
for Transport*

# SCOTTISH AVIATION CLEARED FOR TAKE OFF

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*Fiona Hyslop MSP, Scotland's Minister for Transport, writes for The Airport Operator*

It's been great to take up post as the Scottish Government's Minister for Transport at a time when there are clear signs of optimism for aviation in Scotland, with an ongoing recovery in passenger numbers and in Scotland's route network.

I know the Scottish Government's relationship with the aviation sector has proved to be very fruitful for many years and I am determined to continue that positive engagement.

The sector has just completed its busy summer season with many families flying from Scotland's airports to enjoy a well-deserved break abroad, or to catch up with friends and relations they may not have seen since lockdown. Scotland, and Glasgow in particular, also welcomed many visitors from overseas as we hosted the first ever UCI Cycling World Championships in August.

These recent examples confirm what we have all known for a long time: aviation is a crucial enabler for building Scotland's cultural and

social links; for driving trade and investment opportunities; and for enabling visitors to experience our world-class tourism offer.

I am delighted to see a growing confidence in the Scottish market – demonstrated by recent route launches to Atlanta and Calgary along with the return of the Beijing route and increase in capacity on important routes like Doha, Dubai and Istanbul which allow us to grow our international connectivity even further. Growing connectivity while not returning to previous levels of emissions is, of course, a key commitment of the Scottish Government which will help us to meet our aim of making Scotland as well connected as its peer nations and regions. We continue to work across government with airlines to promote Scotland and to grow our international connectivity for business, tourism, exports and the wider economy.

It is exciting to see other countries looking at the Scottish model of collaboration and support as

they seek to expand their own international connectivity. Despite that, we will not rest on our laurels in what remains an extremely competitive, global market where the demand for new aircraft continues to heavily outstrip supply. To that end, our aviation team, working with VisitScotland and Scottish Development International recently attended Routes World 2023 in Istanbul, Turkey where we made new connections, cemented existing relationships, and spoke about a range of new routes we are keen to help secure – both in the near future

*“I know the Scottish Government's relationship with the aviation sector has proved to be very fruitful for many years and I am determined to continue that positive engagement”.*

and slightly longer term.

I am also pleased to see the efforts airlines and airports are taking to continue decarbonising their operations. Since my predecessor as Minister for Transport contributed an article earlier this year, we have seen some significant signs of progress with, for example, Sustainable Aviation publishing its updated 'Carbon Road-Map' detailing how the sector aims to be Net Zero by 2050.

In January, ZeroAvia test flew the largest aircraft in the world to be powered by a hydrogen-electric engine, a 19-seater aircraft that could potentially be used on a range of Scottish domestic routes. It is welcome that Aberdeen and Glasgow airports are working with ZeroAvia to explore the development of hydrogen fuel infrastructure, and regulatory and funding requirements for delivering zero-emission flights from their airports. The Scottish Government's £150,000 grant funding to Glasgow Airport and the transport-related actions in the Scottish Government's hydrogen action plan will also speed up the development of hydrogen-based technology, helping to achieve true zero emissions flights.

Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL), which operates 11 airports on behalf of Scottish Ministers, has made good progress this year by publishing its Sustainability Strategy, detailing a programme of activity to decarbonise its airport operations, infrastructure and flights. In addition, there was welcome news from Loganair, operators of the vast majority of flights in the Highlands and Islands, who announced a goal for their entire fleet to be zero-emission by 2040.

All these efforts are very welcome, but we cannot talk about decarbonisation without mentioning sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF, a word on everyone's lips right now. Our enterprise agency, Scottish Enterprise, recently published a SAF supply chain mapping study



*“We are calling on the UK Government to do all they can to secure the many jobs and economic benefits that SAF could provide. For our part, in the Scottish Government’s forthcoming aviation strategy, we will emphasise our commitment to ensuring that Jet Zero – the UK Government’s strategy – fully reflects Scottish interests as it is implemented”.*

for Scotland which will help us to consider how we can best meet our commitment to explore options for incentivising the use of more SAF. We’re working very closely with airports in looking at the potential for SAF to ensure that Scotland plays its part in what will be a global transformation away from JetA1.

As welcome as all these developments are, I am conscious that aviation remains a matter almost entirely reserved to the UK Government and that we will be heavily reliant on its actions to help deliver the transformational change that we all want – and need – to see. We are calling on

the UK Government to do all they can to secure the many jobs and economic benefits that SAF could provide. For our part, in the Scottish Government’s forthcoming aviation strategy, we will emphasise our commitment to ensuring that Jet Zero – the UK Government’s strategy – fully reflects Scottish interests as it is implemented. ■



**AOA POLICY DIRECTOR,  
CHRISTOPHER SNELLING, REPORTS**

# **AOA SECURITY CONFERENCE DISCUSSES NEXT GENERATION SECURITY**

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*In September the AOA held its first Security Conference since Covid. We were thrilled with the event, it had wonderful levels of member participation and high quality and insightful content.*

Nearly 100 people participated in the event in York, covering all kinds of airports from across the UK, as well as representatives from the supply chain, industry experts, regulators and government officials.

Over the two days we covered a wide range of topics. The Department for Transport's Head of Transport Security, Sarah Nacey, provided a context for where the Government sees aviation security's immediate challenges and next priorities, whilst Philip Baum, Visting Professor of Aviation Security at Coventry University, did the same from an independent expert's perspective. A panel of industry leaders also shared their thoughts.

The conference benefited from in-person international perspectives, with ACI Europe discussing the view from the EU, and the Transport Security Administration discussing their risk-based approach to screening in the US and the possibilities of working with UK operators more closely in future.

Perhaps the most significant topic up for debate was Next Generation Security, with much discussion about how best to implement the transition by next summer. Airports who had led the way in this shared their learnings and others raised the emerging issues they are facing as the deadline fast approaches.

One of the most delicate topics covered was that of gender identity amongst passengers and staff in the security context. Airports on a panel shared their plans and actions, whilst Stonewall gave a really useful perspective from their side about what companies they work with do. There was an active discussion amongst the members in the room about the best way forward, and this will be a piece of work AOA will seek to support the industry on through our Security Working Group.

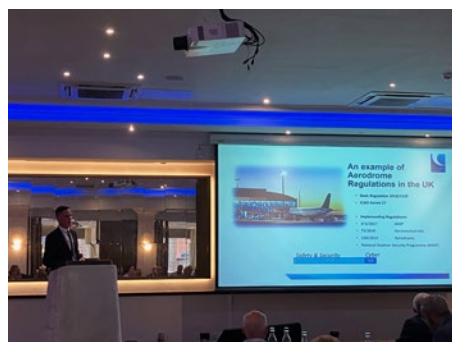
Obviously, the conference also

covered more technical topics aimed at spreading best practice and knowledge across the airport security community. These included cyber security risks, automation, the use of AI and future security management systems.

A large part of the success of the conference on the day was down to the hard work of Security Group Chair and Vice Chair, Caroline Vear from Bristol Airport and Ian Gregory from Edinburgh Airport, and we thank them for their continuing efforts.

The event was only possible with the generous sponsorship of ICTS and Dallmeier, and we also thank them for that. ■

*"A large part of the success of the conference on the day was down to the hard work of Security Group Chair and Vice Chair, Caroline Vear from Bristol Airport and Ian Gregory from Edinburgh Airport, and we thank them for their continuing efforts".*



# CAA HEADLINES AOA OPERATIONS AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

*Jon Round, Head of Airspace, Air Traffic Management and Aerodromes at the Civil Aviation Authority, will deliver the keynote address at this month's AOA Operations and Safety Conference.*

**R**ound will be one of four CAA contributors who will contribute to a wide-ranging discussion of airport operational and safety issues during the all-day conference, to be held on 9 November at the Renaissance London Heathrow Hotel. CAA colleagues joining him will be Neil Gray, Principal Aerodrome Inspector, Mark Griffiths, ground handling policy specialist and James Fremantle, who has responsibility for air travel disability rights.

An overview of current health and safety challenges and opportunities will be provided by Nicola Jaynes, HM Inspector at the Health and Safety Executive, while Lydia Price, Head of Aviation Skills at the Department for Transport, will lead a session on building future workforce competencies.

The sessions will benefit from the expertise of four AOA working group chairs - Heathrow's Katie Bale (Health and Safety), Gatwick's Simon Petts (Rescue and Fire Fighting Services) and Biggin Hill's Ben Spiers and Edinburgh's Stephen Muir (Safety and Compliance). They will also be informed by the day-to-day operations and safety experiences

of airports across the UK, including Biggin Hill, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Heathrow and Liverpool John Lennon.

A key area of focus at the conference will be how airports have dealt with the challenges presented by the loss of skills that resulted from Covid. Airport speakers will share their insights on how they overcame these challenges and the methods they used to improve operational resilience.

Recognising that airport safety involves multiple third parties, beyond the operators themselves, a session will be devoted to safety across the airport ecosystem. Case studies will be presented on compliance monitoring and oversight

management and there will be discussions on measuring safety culture across the ecosystem, as well as digitising measurement and improvements for safety assurance.

Accessibility best practice and case studies will be the subject of a panel discussion that will examine the collaborative efforts of airlines, airports and third-party operators aimed at removing barriers to accessibility for disabled passengers, while meeting regulatory compliance standards. An airline perspective will be offered by Jet2's Accessibility Travel Specialist, Steve Wilson, while Wilson James's Business Improvement Director, Tom Giles, will deliver a presentation on how data is transforming accessible journeys. ■







# RENEWED AOA SAFETY WORKING GROUP “OFF TO A FLYING START” WITH POLICE PRESENTATION ON LASER ATTACKS

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*The AOA’s revived Safety and Compliance Working Group held its inaugural meeting at London Biggin Hill Airport this autumn and heard a presentation from the National Police Air Service on laser attacks.*

The group was co-chaired by Biggin Hill's Head of Safety and Compliance, Ben Spiers, and Edinburgh Airport's Regulation and Compliance Manager, Stevie Muir. The day began with an airfield tour.

Post-meeting feedback from attendees included a comment from Farnborough Airport's Aerodrome Safety Manager, Jonathan Young, that the working group was "off to a flying start and looks set to go from strength to strength". Charles Cardwell, founder and CEO of the aviation consultancy, AIRDAT, described it as "a fantastic platform for learning and sharing".

The National Police Air Service presentation on laser attacks and the Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Act 2018 included guidance on how to respond to laser attacks. In the discussion that followed airports shared best practice, including on reaching out and educating communities on the dangers of laser attacks, which can lead to impaired vision.

There was also a discussion on a flooding event at one airport, where heavy and persistent rain caused a local river that runs parallel to the airfield to burst its banks, with water encroaching on the runway. Several airline air safety reports were produced by flight crew operating in and out of the aerodrome, as well as multiple runway condition reports.

The Civil Aviation Authority presented a review of mandatory occurrence reporting statistics covering various categories, including ground handling/ramp occurrences, aerodrome occurrences, ground collision, runway incursions, runway excursions and fuel spillages. The presentation also included updates on key policies and regulatory developments.

Ben Spiers said "it was an honour hosting the inaugural AOA Safety and Compliance Working Group. Since I joined the industry over 15 years ago, the AOA meetings have been invaluable to industry, so to now be giving back in the capacity of

## *The National Police Air Service presentation on laser attacks and the Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Act 2018 included guidance on how to respond to laser attacks.*

co-chair, is a privilege". Stevie Muir said it was great to see the group up and running again and he was looking forward to seeing it develop.

Farnborough's Jonathan Young said "the first in person ASC working group was a great opportunity to understand issues facing the industry, discuss joint solutions and share best practice. It also provided an excellent networking opportunity and some very engaging conversations for operational safety. The agenda for the next meeting is already taking shape to include discussions on airside driving and prevention of runway incursions". ■



*"The first in person ASC working group was a great opportunity to understand issues facing the industry, discuss joint solutions and share best practice. It also provided an excellent networking opportunity and some very engaging conversations for operational safety".*

Jonathan Young



# AOA PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT TO CALL FOR STABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

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*Peter Campbell, the AOA's head of public affairs and media, gives us a preview of the organisation's upcoming election manifesto*

**W**ith a General Election due to be held at some point in the next year, the AOA has been developing a programme for the next government, one that will help aviation grow and play a big role in helping the UK grow. We have been working with members of the board, those who sit on our Public Affairs and Communications Network and the Policy Committee, as well as engaging closely with political officials to pull together relevant and realistic proposals that can be implemented.

The programme identifies three key conditions that must be met so that aviation can prosper: stability, sustainability and affordability. Without any of these preconditions, the sector will not be able to grow, to decarbonise, or to continue to be available for everyone. The UK will then not be in as strong a position to encourage inward investment, to help businesses reach new markets, to create new jobs and to give its people access to the benefits of foreign travel.

#### STABLE

Like most competitive industries, aviation craves stability above all else. In its tax regime, planning system, infrastructure network, ensuring the environment is

*The programme identifies three key conditions that must be met so that aviation can prosper: stability, sustainability and affordability. Without any of these preconditions, the sector will not be able to grow, to decarbonise, or to continue to be available for everyone.*

*Peter Campbell,  
Head of Public  
Affairs, AOA*



conducive to support growth while changes are limited only to those that are necessary is key. Otherwise, aviation businesses will simply choose to locate elsewhere, to invest in other markets and bring the benefits of flight to different countries. We want to ensure this is not the case for the UK, and that its aviation market continues to lead the world.

#### SUSTAINABLE

Ensuring that aviation plays its role in helping the UK meet its net zero obligations and enabling it to grow beyond its 2019 passenger levels without releasing more carbon is vital. This can be achieved through Sustainable Aviation Fuels, hydrogen and battery powered flight. These also present an opportunity for the UK to be the world leader in cutting edge future flight power. Being the first to invest in these technologies will create thousands of jobs, bring in billions in investment and will increase the country's energy security.

#### AFFORDABLE

As an island nation, the UK relies heavily on its air links and its people greatly value the ability to travel to foreign destinations, as well as being able to move high value goods quickly. This must be enabled to continue, and flight should not become the sole preserve of the wealthy through high taxes, regulatory restrictions, or an otherwise uncompetitive market. The UK and its people can then continue to enjoy the benefits of air travel and exposure to foreign destinations.

Individual proposals that align with these strategic aims are being developed and the final programme will be launched by the end of this year. These will then be submitted to the political parties as part of their manifesto writing processes for consideration to be included in the final platforms for which they campaign. AOA will then use this programme as the basis of our lobbying in the following years, to enable the development of a stable, sustainable and affordable aviation sector. ■

# INTRIGUE, CONTROVERSY, TENSION, OPTIMISM AND DESPONDENCY AT THE PARTY CONFERENCES

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*Peter Campbell, AOA's head of public affairs and media gives us a round-up of all the action, excitement and gossip from party conferences*

**S**o, honestly, I love party conference season. Oh, I'll definitely complain about living in hotel rooms and out of suitcases for the thick end of a month, the beige, fried food and warm white wine, and the inevitable conference cold, but really, this is my Glastonbury. And this is undoubtedly the case for every other political operative (nerd?) working in this space, as we run from one event to another, pretending we are all in the West Wing.

This year, I was lucky enough to attend all three conferences: the Liberal Democrats in Bournemouth; the Conservatives in Manchester; and Labour in Liverpool. All three are unique and similar in their own ways and dependent on the general political mood of the country at the particular time they are being held. This year was no exception,

with intrigue, controversy, tension, optimism and despondency in evidence at all three in some measure or other.

AOA was up at the conferences to support the activities of the Sustainable Aviation (SA) coalition, in the first instance. SA held a panel discussion in conjunction with the Conservative Environment Network and a reception for aviation-minded delegates, both with Baroness Vere, the Aviation Minister, in Manchester. Along the M62 in Liverpool the following week, SA also held a reception with the Labour shadow aviation minister, Mike Kane MP and a roundtable facilitated by the New Statesman on sustainable aviation with Alan Whitehead MP, the party's veteran energy spokesperson.

The events were useful for the discussions and conversations, where

we were able to learn a bit more about the wider view of the Labour party towards sustainable aviation fuel and our efforts to decarbonise. There was also some insight into the policies that the Conservative government will be pursuing as we enter the final year before a General Election. And there were also good discussions around issues of noise and air pollution with Liberal Democrat MPs and candidates.

For the AOA itself, we wanted to use these conferences as opportunities to meet with up-and-coming backbench MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates who are likely to be in the House of Commons following the next election. This we were able to do, meeting with politicians and officials representing areas in and around the likes of Heathrow, Gatwick, Bristol, Newcastle, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Exeter. This gave us the opportunity to brief them on the latest with aviation

in general and with airports in their own constituencies, specifically.

The overall sense at all three conferences was of political parties getting ready for an election. The Liberal Democrats were genuinely optimistic that they are set to make significant gains next year and even to be in a position where they could support a minority government. The Conservative conference seemed a little flatter than usual, perhaps unsurprising given the current polling figures, and there was a definite sense that the party needed to renew itself and its offering. Labour, meanwhile, was in buoyant mood, tempered slightly by the desire to take nothing for granted and give no hostages to fortune.

A good conference season then, with a real mix of experiences, styles and attitudes. Clearly, this is a result of the current circumstances each party finds itself in at present and these obviously could change very quickly. The next year will be an interesting one to see what happens, but for 2023 my Glastonbury period is finished, and I am delighted to be back in my own bed. ■

*“I was lucky enough to attend all three conferences: the Liberal Democrats in Bournemouth; the Conservatives in Manchester; and Labour in Liverpool. All three are unique and similar in their own ways and dependent on the general political mood of the country at the particular time they are being held”.*



AOA POLICY DIRECTOR, CHRISTOPHER  
SNELLING, EXPLAINS THE NEED FOR BETTER  
REGULATORY APPROACHES

# WASTE NOT, WANT NOT. MINIMISING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CABIN WASTE

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*Efforts continue by AOA and members to minimise the environmental impact of cabin (or catering) waste as part of efforts to be as sustainable as possible.*



As readers may know anything on non-domestic flights potentially contaminated with organic waste needs to be incinerated. So this is not just food/drink waste, but anything that you cannot reasonably be sure has not touched such waste (so even random paper that has been thrown in a rubbish bag with some food waste would count as contaminated for regulatory purposes). The practical effect on some flights is that all rubbish is just assumed to be contaminated and so is incinerated. The environmental impact of this approach has increased in recent years due to Brexit, as EU waste is now classed as foreign.

The AOA has been in dialogue with the Department for Transport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for several years now seeking to get a solution to this problem. A unilateral decision to just allow recycling of EU contaminated waste is not possible apparently as this would infringe trade rules by giving the EU an unfair advantage over other countries. Mutual recognition of EU food/health regimes for this purpose is possible but there are clearly many aspects to this, as well as other topics where a bilateral deal would be beneficial. International waste is not necessarily at the top of the list for a mini deal. However, we are continuing to press the issue with Ministers and hope that even if this is a long term solution, progress can be made.

In the meantime, members and airlines are working to minimise the issue. Trials have been held to ensure sufficient separation of contaminated and non-contaminated waste so that the regulator, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), will allow higher proportions of waste from EU flights to be recycled. We will now work with members, DEFRA and APHA to ensure these trials can be widened out. We have



*Christopher Snelling  
Policy Director, AOA*

recently involved the UK's seaports industry, as the same issues affect cross-Channel ferries as well.

Hopefully, with collective effort we can minimise the environmental impact of cabin waste in the short term, whilst moving to better regulatory approaches in the long run. ■

*Members and airlines are working to minimise the issue. Trials have been held to ensure sufficient separation of contaminated and non-contaminated waste so that the regulator, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), will allow higher proportions of waste from EU flights to be recycled.*



CHRISTOPHER SNELLING, REPORTS ON  
RESILIENCE CHALLENGES AT UK AIRPORTS

# AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL A “MAJOR CONCERN” FOR AOA BOARD

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*Ahead of the summer there was an understandable level of focus from politicians and the media on the resilience of UK aviation. Would we see a repeat of the issues with ground handling resource? Would strikes (handlers, airport staff or Border Force) cause a major issue?*

In the end all seemed to be going reasonably well. We avoided mass newspaper coverage delighting in summer getaway airport hell, and whilst conditions were difficult in many places, with some flight cancellations needed, the general picture was seen as successful in the challenging environment we have today.

Then came 28 August and the NATS failure. Much of UK airspace was effectively closed with over 1,500 flights cancelled and hundreds more delayed that day alone, and more in the days after as airlines struggled to recover schedules. IATA estimates that the failure may have cost airlines around £100m.

An initial report issued by NATS said a problem occurred with a flight plan processing system which caused the whole system to go into a safety-first fail-safe mode, preventing handling of flight paths on the normal scale.

The impact of the incident varied from airport to airport. However, concern was expressed that the contingency measures put in place by NATS resulted in a reduction in capacity of approximately 85% across the airspace network.

An independent review is now underway by the CAA and will report in the New Year. AOA made representations about the terms of reference and have ensured that airports are listed as one of the parties upon whom the impact needs to be considered. Airports will be able to input to the inquiry.

In discussions with members so far, aside from the obvious frustration with the incident occurring at all and the time it took to rectify it, it was also felt that NATS communications on the day were lacking – with airports and airlines unable to understand what had gone wrong and how long the fix was likely to

take. AOA will pursue these points in its ongoing dialogue with the Government.

The NATS incident, whilst hopefully an isolated one, does touch on the area where many airports feel resilience is most challenged – air traffic control. There are resource limitations in many airports around the UK, and this is likely to remain an issue for the medium term. AOA is exploring all avenues to help improve the situation. Options include regulatory adjustment, skills and recruitment support and enabling more use of technology. This issue continues to be of major concern to the AOA Board and AOA will pursue this. ■

# SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORT'S EXTENDED RUNWAY OPENS WITH NEW EASYJET ROUTES TO BELFAST AND GLASGOW

*Southampton Airport's £17m 164-metre runway extension was officially opened on 21 September by Aviation Minister, Baroness Vere.*



The longer runway allows modern and more efficient aircraft like the A320 and B737 to operate from Southampton for the first time and in doing so opens up destinations that were previously out of range.

Mark Beveridge, the airport's interim Operations Director, told The Airport Operator that it is "an exciting time for everyone associated with the airport. I'm pleased to say that our route development team have had early success, with easyJet introducing flights to Belfast International last month and Glasgow this month using the A320 and A319 respectively. Discussions with other airlines are ongoing".

Beveridge took over the Operations Director role from Steve Szalay immediately following the official opening. On his appointment

he said "I first joined AGS (which operates Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports) in 2020 as Operations Director of Aberdeen airport and I'm really looking forward to taking on the same responsibilities for Southampton. The extension future proofs our airport and, now it is complete, we can get on with the job of working with our partners to ensure the airport continues to play its part in delivering wider social and economic prosperity for the region".

In 2019 almost 1.8m passengers used

the airport, but the total dropped to 640,000 last year due to the combined impact of Covid and the loss of Flybe, which at one point had accounted for almost 9 out of 10 of the airport's passengers. Beveridge said, "we're now rebuilding passenger numbers and anticipate carrying a million passengers this year and next". AGS have described the runway extension as "guaranteeing the airport's viability for the future".

Southampton Airport is currently

*In 2019 almost 1.8m passengers used the airport, but the total dropped to 640,000 last year due to the combined impact of Covid and the loss of Flybe, which at one point had accounted for almost 9 out of 10 of the airport's passengers.*



served by ten airlines who operate 20 routes across the UK and Europe. Loganair, Eastern, Aurigny Airlines and Blue Islands are among the airlines providing domestic connectivity, while British Airways and KLM offer routes to France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

The extension project was completed on time, on budget and without compromising the airport's normal operations. Asked how that had been achieved, Beveridge said "Planning is critical to the success of any project like this, and our team did a fantastic job. The main challenge was ensuring we maintained an operational runway throughout the construction phase. This meant all of the ground works were carried out at night before handing back a safe and compliant runway every morning".

The project delivery team and the contractors worked "hand-in-hand with the airport's operational team. This close collaboration meant everybody involved was absolutely clear on the project timelines and what was expected from them on a daily basis allowing us to deliver the extension on time and on budget".

To secure planning permission for the runway extension from Eastleigh Borough Council, the airport committed to mitigations on noise and caps on traffic movements. The noise measures include the provision, where required, of sound insulation for households, care homes and schools. Flights between the hours of 06.00 and 07.00 will be restricted to a maximum of 20. Annual passenger numbers will be capped at 3m up to 2030.

Speaking at the official opening, Baroness Vere said that regional airports like Southampton were vital to support the Government's efforts to help create economic opportunities. She said that the new runway extension would help deliver 2,000 new jobs and open the city up to more international routes.

The Minister was joined on the airfield by the airport's leadership



*Mark Beveridge, interim  
Operations Director,  
Southampton Airport*



*"Regional airports like Southampton are vital to support the Government's efforts to help create economic opportunities. The new runway extension will help deliver 2,000 new jobs and open the city up to more international routes".* Baroness Vere

team, local business representatives and five local MPs, including the airport's constituency MP, Paul Holmes, who said "I have been passionate about seeing this important development through

since I was elected. The works will cement Southampton Airport's status as a viable regional alternative to the main airports in and around London and will undoubtedly help to regenerate the town of Eastleigh". ■



# HIGHLY TRAINED SECURITY STAFF WILL BE INSTRUMENTAL TO THE SUCCESS OF NEXT GENERATION SECURITY AT UK AIRPORTS

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*The successful introduction of next generation security technology at major UK airports by June next year will depend on the quality and training of the security agents operating it, according to the airport security specialist, ICTS.*



Arrivals →

**A**lan Dutt, ICTS UK & Ireland Executive Director, Aviation, told The Airport Operator that “next generation security is an absolute necessity for aviation. However, it is important to understand that with any new technology there needs to be highly trained personnel. The key to the success of the technology will be trained personnel”.

The UK Government has mandated that by June 2024 major airports in the UK must have installed new security technology that will enable passengers to travel with larger liquids in their cabin bags and keep them, and large electrical items such as laptops, in their cabin baggage during the security process. Dutt said that introducing next generation security should result in both an enhanced passenger experience and improved security.

He said that aviation needs to do more to recognise the vital role that security agents and supervisors play – “they work hard, and they save lives”, he said “We can do more to recognise it. We need to make it more appealing and attractive”. Specifically, he suggested that new aviation security staff should be able to gain qualifications that would recognise that they are embarking on a career that is a profession, not just a job.

“The aviation industry is already one of the most trained and highly regulated within the security sector” he said “I believe we should make aviation security training a qualified training sector, which would allow staff to get recognised qualifications and make this profession a career. We should make the training a recognised qualification, at each point, equivalent to other qualifications where UCAS points are achieved. Then we would have a real profession and I think that would make it more attractive for other people to come in and say I could have a career and a qualification here”.

*Alan Dutt, ICTS UK  
& Ireland Executive  
Director, Aviation*



Dutt, a 34-year aviation security industry veteran, said that the employment market has evolved since Covid. More and more people are looking for jobs where they could choose their hours of work or work from home. “It has shrunk the labour market” he said, “there is a smaller pond to fish from”. This had made recruitment challenging for aviation where hours are sometimes unsociable and at their peak when most people want to go away, during the summer and at Christmas. “We need to applaud the staff within the industry for their commitment and hard work” he said.

Covid had been very stressful for the entire aviation sector, “but very quickly the industry came together. During tough times the aviation community sticks together and that has been a key factor. The collaboration between ICTS and our customers ensured that together we could recruit the right people and take our time to ensure that staff were fully trained before they went

*“The aviation industry is already one of the most trained and highly regulated within the security sector. I believe we should make aviation security training a qualified training sector, which would allow staff to get recognised qualifications and make this profession a career”.*

out to the operation. We all lost experienced people during Covid, but at ICTS UK we were fortunate that most of our experienced staff remained with us and they were instrumental in helping us during the recovery”.

He also cited the recent AOA Security Conference, where ICTS was a sponsor, as evidence that the aviation community “pulls together and becomes one. We all have the aim of getting people away on their travels safely, securely and happily. It was invaluable that the AOA took this initiative. The UK aviation sector has been a pioneer in aviation security, and it is important that we can use such events to exchange ideas and best practice so that we remain industry leaders as a unified sector”.

Looking to the future of airport security in the UK, ICTS has been in discussion with the Department for Transport about securing approval to deploy its revolutionary Inner Eye technology at UK airports. The technology combines the latest in Artificial Intelligence with the efficacy

of human screeners. Inner Eye users can stream up to three images per second, which is ten times faster than traditional screening methods. As Dutt explains “the machine is notified of a bag that has a potential threat inside through brain waves. So we are taking out of the process the brain telling the hand, the hand pushing the button and rejecting the bag. It makes the process a lot quicker”.

Meanwhile, ICTS is also looking at how using the Inner Eye device could help to improve its own recruitment process for screeners, building on its existing use of basic psychometric testing. A one-minute test of potential recruits using Inner Eye would show how many images an individual can detect, helping the company to identify who are

likely to be the best screeners. While pre-selection processes for aviation security agents are unregulated, Dutt said that ICTS would, nevertheless, seek to discuss and agree any plans to use Inner Eye during recruitment with the Department for Transport, as the key to any successful project is working in partnership with major stakeholders.

The company says that it helps airports to manage risk, enhance resilience and ensure compliance. It currently provides security services at Aberdeen, Bristol, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Glasgow, Heathrow, Manchester and Southampton airports. ICTS UK and Ireland is an AOA Corporate Partner. ■





*Gurjit Wood, Arup  
UK/IMEA Aviation  
Leader*





# AOA GOLD MEMBER, WILSON JAMES, DESCRIBES HOW IT PARTNERS WITH UK AIRPORTS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

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*Transforming UK Airports with Sustainability  
and Passenger-Centric Solutions*

## INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry is at a pivotal juncture, where it must simultaneously address environmental concerns and enhance the passenger experience. UK airports, in particular, face numerous challenges in achieving sustainability goals and anticipating passengers' evolving needs. In response to these challenges, Wilson James, a leading provider of security, logistics, and business services, has emerged as a key player in supporting UK airports. Across several initiatives, products and services, Wilson James is spearheading efforts to help UK airports achieve their ambitious targets and requirements.

### I. SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES IN UK AIRPORTS

#### 1. Environmental Concerns

As global awareness of climate change and environmental issues continues to grow, the aviation industry is under increasing pressure to reduce its carbon footprint. UK airports, as major hubs of air travel, have a significant role to play in this endeavour. They must embrace sustainable practices and innovate to minimise their impact on the environment.

#### 2. Wilson James' Sustainability Solutions

Wilson James has recognised the urgency of these environmental concerns and is committed to helping UK airports become more sustainable. They are actively involved in various initiatives such as waste reduction, energy-efficient technologies, and emissions reduction through logistics products and services. Through partnerships and innovation, Wilson James assists airports in achieving their sustainability goals while ensuring efficient operations.

Proprietary software and two consolidation centres (located in East London and Feltham



respectively), with the logistics arm of the firm, allow Wilson James to assist with everything from construction programmes to BAU materials management post completion. Most prominently, Wilson James manages the Heathrow Logistics Integrator (HLI) which handles secure movements between landside and airside environments and supports infrastructure requests across the airport campus.

### II. ANTICIPATING PASSENGER NEEDS

#### 1. Passenger-Centric Approach

UK airports serve passengers from all walks of life, including those with varying physical and cognitive abilities. Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity is crucial for a positive passenger experience.

Passenger satisfaction is paramount for the success of any airport. The key to achieving high passenger satisfaction lies in anticipating and meeting their needs. As travellers' preferences evolve and become more diverse, airports must adapt their services to remain competitive.

Wilson James is at the forefront of developing passenger-centric solutions that enable UK airports to better understand and anticipate the



needs of their travellers, particularly passengers with restricted mobility (PRM). As the largest supplier of PRM services in the UK, they employ cutting-edge technology and data analytics to enhance the passenger experience, from arrival to departure. These solutions encompass a range of services, from efficient security checkpoints to personalised services and specialised training to accommodate a range of physical and hidden limitations.

### III. SUSTAINABLE SECURITY PRACTICES

#### 1. Security Challenges

The security of an airport is non-negotiable, and in today's world, it is essential to maintain a high level of vigilance. However, security

practices need to evolve in tandem with sustainability goals and passenger experiences. Traditional security procedures often consume considerable resources, including energy and materials.

## 2. Wilson James' Approach

Wilson James is committed to redefining airport security by implementing sustainable practices without compromising safety. They are pre-emptively working to introduce new screening technologies that not only enhance security but also reduce the need for extensive manual checks, thus minimising inconvenience to passengers. This also requires significant training and education preparation on the part of specialist teams to manage this change ahead of deadlines required by legislation.

## IV. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND PASSENGER ENGAGEMENT

### 1. Technological Innovation

In the digital age, airports need to embrace technology to enhance passenger engagement and satisfaction. Wilson James recognises the importance of technology in improving the passenger experience.

### 2. Wilson James' Technological Solutions

Wilson James has invested in digital transformation, including mobile apps and self-service kiosks that facilitate passenger check-in, streamline security procedures, and provide real-time information on flights, amenities, and services. Such innovations not only improve the passenger experience but also help airports gather valuable data to anticipate passengers' needs and preferences better.

At the time of writing an exciting new app-based technology is being trialled in partnership with Gatwick Airport. The intention is to develop more and better options for PRM passengers to plan and manage their

travel experience and empower them as customers. While still in development, initial learnings are highly encouraging.

## CONCLUSION

Wilson James is a driving force behind the transformation of UK airports, addressing their key challenges in sustainability and passenger-centric services. Through sustainable practices, technology-

driven solutions, and a commitment to enhancing the passenger experience, they are playing a vital role in helping UK airports reduce their environmental impact and better anticipate the needs of their travellers. As the aviation industry continues to evolve, Wilson James remains a valuable partner for UK airports, ensuring that they not only meet their sustainability goals but also provide an exceptional travel experience for passengers. ■



*“As the aviation industry continues to evolve, Wilson James remains a valuable partner for UK airports, ensuring that they not only meet their sustainability goals but also provide an exceptional travel experience for passengers”.*

# AOA WELCOMES THREE NEW MEMBERS

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Security company, **Mitie Security**, has joined the AOA as a Silver Member.

The company describes itself as the largest intelligence-led security company in the UK and a trusted partner of leading transportation providers.

Mitie says that it aims to make sure that the UK's airports run without a hitch through seamless facilities management. It promises that everything from state-of-the-art cleaning to security, colleague training and maintenance will be delivered to the highest standards.

Combining cutting-edge technologies with industry expertise, Mitie offers a full range of end-to-end services to keep airports clean, safe, operational and efficient.



Airport systems, training and consultancy company, **AIRDAT**, has joined the AOA as an Associate Member.

Specialising in technology to streamline processes, minimise incidents and reduce operational costs, the company traces its origins back to 2006, when it was created to assist with the improvement of the airside driving scheme at Gatwick Airport.

Since those early beginnings, the company says, its team, products and services have grown to become a trusted and world-leading airport systems, training and consultancy company. Every member of the AIRDAT Team has aviation experience. Pilots, ground engineers, senior airport operations staff and more, make up the specialised group that helps to deliver its services.



Artificial Intelligence based automatic threat detection company, **SeeTrue**, has also joined the AOA as an Associate Member.

SeeTrue says that it revolutionises the current security screening process, addressing the challenges of passenger throughputs, experience, security, and cost with a new Artificial Intelligence approach.

SeeTrue's Autonomous AI™ Detection, provides automatic threat detection and alarm resolution for X-ray and CT systems. This enables passengers to leave items in bags, reduces manual procedure and increases throughput while maximising safety to provide a seamless passenger experience.

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## VINCI AIRPORTS LAUNCHES £500M INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AT BELFAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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A five-year £500m investment programme at Belfast International Airport will increase its operational efficiency and improve both passenger experience and environmental performance.

Announcing details of the plan, Nicolas Notebaert, CEO of VINCI Concessions and President of VINCI Airports, said “Our investment will support the airport’s positive dynamic by strongly improving the passenger experience. The airport plays a vital role for aviation, tourism and the wider local economy. As a long-term partner, VINCI Airports is committed to sustainably develop the airport and increase its environmental performance”.

Phase one of the programme is currently under way with the

construction of a new security building. The £25m facility will transform the passenger security experience by introducing modern x-ray screening equipment that will mean that passengers no longer have to remove liquids or electronics from their luggage. The new building will be operational by next summer.

The investment plan will also update existing facilities, improving the airside departure areas with additional departure gates and extra seating. The immigration area will also be extended and there will be new catering and retail outlets. A new 26MWp solar farm on the airport site will generate 22.4 GWh of electricity and save 12,500 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

Airport Managing Director, Graham

Keddie, said “VINCI’s commitment to Northern Ireland has been unwavering and their determination to invest such an amount demonstrates the belief they have in the airport, its team and potential for future growth. As we mark our 60th anniversary, this announcement sets out how we intend to provide a long-term strategic vision for the airport, our passengers and the wider region”. ■



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## BRISTOL AIRPORT STARTS WORK ON ITS LARGEST EVER CAPITAL PROJECT

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Bristol Airport is investing over £60m to create a new public transport interchange hub and multi-storey car park.

A major public transport interchange hub will be created for coaches, buses and other forms of public transport on the top level of the multi-storey car park, more than doubling the number of bus and coach bays and creating one of the region’s largest bus/coach interchanges. The top level of the car park will also provide a dedicated drop off and pick up location and a new gateway for all customers with ease of access to the terminal via a glazed pedestrian bridge.

The new multi-storey car park will provide over 2,000 places, state of the art technology and blue badge parking. Internal road improvements and design will segregate pedestrians and vehicles, making it safer for everyone.

The project forms part of the airport’s multi-million-pound transformational development plan to enable 12m passengers a year to use the airport, creating thousands of new jobs, opening up new direct air links and supporting inbound tourism.

Dave Lees, Bristol Airport’s CEO, said “This project is transformational

for our customers. It is the largest single capital investment project since the terminal opened in 2000 and will take 18 months to complete. The development work will need to be phased to accommodate the normal day-to-day airport operations. Customers will see several temporary changes taking place, including temporary relocation of some car parks and changes to internal road layouts. We will keep customers informed via directional signage, customer messaging on car park bookings, the website and on social media”. ■

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## UK CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY APPOINTS ROB BISHTON AS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Aviation industry veteran, Rob Bishton, who joined the CAA in 2014, took over as its Chief Executive on 21 October.

A former commercial pilot, Bishton has been a member of the CAA Board since 2019, leading its Safety and Airspace Regulation Group. He helped lead the organisation's preparations for Brexit and its response to the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bishton said he was "delighted to be taking on the role of Chief Executive. The Civil Aviation Authority plays a vital role in shaping the future of aviation and aerospace. I am committed to working closely with our stakeholders to ensure that the industry remains safe, innovative and competitive. It is our commitment



to deliver for consumers, who rightly expect the highest standards from our industry. I look forward to building on the CAA's legacy of excellence on both the domestic and global stages".

Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, said "It's vital that the CAA has strong leadership to manage and regulate one of the most competitive and innovative aviation sectors in the world, so it's great to welcome Rob Bishton as the new Chief Executive Officer. He has been a valuable member of the CAA since 2014 and has over 30 years of aviation experience".

CAA Chair, Sir Stephen Hillier, said "Having worked closely with Rob for a number of years, I am delighted he is our new Chief Executive. With safety and consumers at the heart of our mission, his deep understanding of the sector makes him very well prepared for the complex challenges and opportunities ahead". ■

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## EXETER AIRPORT REOPENS JUST HOURS AFTER FLASH FLOOD SHUTS TERMINAL

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An unprecedented September storm inundated the terminal building at Exeter Airport, but "a massive team effort" by airport staff allowed the airport to reopen within hours.

Torrential rain on the afternoon of 17 September saw up to 32mm of rain recorded at the airport in just an hour, inundating the terminal building and resulting in the cancellation of inbound and outbound flights for the rest of the day.

But thanks to the efforts of 25 airport staff who worked on the clean up through the night the airport was able to reopen on 18 September for the day's first flight to Menorca.

Exeter Airport Managing Director, Steve Wilshire, said "I've never seen rain like it, and it happened so suddenly. We were flooded to a depth of a few centimetres, and we had no option but to close while we cleaned up. It was a massive team effort and I'd just like to say thank you to the whole airport crew who pulled out all the stops to make sure we could open in time for our first departure in the morning".

"Thankfully none of our critical systems was damaged by the flood and we quickly got back to normal. We would like to thank all our passengers for their patience and understanding".

Torrential rain also briefly closed Leeds Bradford Airport last month after a TUI plane skidded off the runway while landing amid heavy rain and wind on 20 October. The airport reopened the following morning after "a huge team effort" to recover the plane.

A spokesman for the airport said "The LBA team and partners worked tirelessly throughout the night in torrential conditions to recover the aircraft in order to safely reopen the runway and airport. It was a huge team effort in exceptionally difficult conditions from all corners of the airport and our partners". ■

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## NEW HEATHROW CEO STARTS WORK

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Thomas Woldbye, former CEO of Copenhagen Airport, has started work as the new CEO of London Heathrow Airport.

Woldbye took over from John Holland-Kaye on 18 October. Holland-Kaye had served as Heathrow's CEO for over nine years, leaving behind a legacy of having transformed Heathrow into a premier global hub. He developed the plan for Heathrow expansion that secured Parliamentary approval, navigated the business through Covid-19 and enabled the airport to recover faster from the pandemic than its European competitors, while taking the lead in pushing global aviation towards net zero by 2050.

His successor said "The UK already has a hub airport that is the envy of much of the world. As I spend



my first days getting to know the colleagues and Team Heathrow partners who make it a success, I'm looking for how we can make Heathrow even better for our customers and the British economy. I am naturally excited and proud, as well as humbled, to have been chosen to lead what is arguably the most famous airport in the world on its future journey".

Woldbye said he had "personally

experienced how the excellent team at Heathrow has successfully improved both the infrastructure and the service to passengers over the past years to create a strong platform for further success. Heathrow is an important engine for the British economy and inextricably linked to the success of London and the wider UK. I look forward to being part of charting the path for this iconic company. My ambition will be to make the airport even better for passengers, for airlines, the community and every part of the UK".

The new CEO will oversee Heathrow's multi-million pound plans to upgrade existing facilities over the next three years to further improve the service for passengers, including the next generation security programme and a new baggage system for Terminal 2. ■

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## LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT EMBARKS ON £100M TERMINAL REGENERATION

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Work has begun on a £100m+ investment in a revitalised terminal building at Leeds Bradford Airport, starting with a new extension.

The regeneration will eventually combine the new 9,500 sq.mt. three story extension with a significant refurbishment of the current terminal building.

Passengers will benefit from the creation of additional aircraft stands, more seating, faster security, new shops and restaurants and a larger baggage reclaim area and immigration hall, as well as improved access for passengers with restricted

mobility. The regeneration will also help the airport to further decarbonise its operations, with the installation of new heating, lighting and machinery, including new baggage belts.

The airport's Chief Executive, Vincent Hodder, said "This announcement marks the beginning of a new era for Leeds Bradford Airport. The investment will give us the infrastructure needed to deliver an outstanding customer experience, support the growth of our airline partners, enhance connectivity for business, investment and trade and provide the airport that Leeds,

Bradford and Yorkshire have been waiting for".

Describing the airport as "a key asset for our region and our community", he said that the investment would support broader investments underway in Leeds and Bradford "creating new jobs, new opportunities and shared benefits for our community". York Aviation has estimated that by 2030, the regeneration has the potential to create 1,500 new direct jobs at the airport and 4,000 new indirect jobs, as well as contribute a total of £940m to the local economy. ■



## GOVERNMENT TO CONSULT ON NEW MEASURES TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL INDUSTRY

The Government will launch a consultation in March next year on options for a revenue certainty scheme to support SAF production in the UK.

A September announcement from the Department for Transport committed the Government to introducing a revenue certainty mechanism to support UK SAF production and boost its uptake, giving producers greater assurance about earnings from the SAF they produce.

The consultation will invite comments on options for designing and implementing the scheme to provide confidence to investors and hasten the transition from aviation's current reliance on fossil fuel.

The Government aims to have at least five commercial SAF plants under construction in the UK by 2025 to cement what it describes as "the UK's status as a world leader in this industry". It says that the scheme "along with the introduction of a SAF mandate in 2025, will provide fuel security, grow the economy and help to create over 10,000 jobs by 2030, rising to 60,000 by 2050".

Aviation Minister, Baroness Vere, said "Not only will sustainable aviation fuel bring countless economic opportunities, including creating thousands of green jobs, this certainty will allow the industry to harness its full potential, bringing us closer to net zero flying. This commitment is an important step to create cleaner and greener aviation in the UK and will cement our position as a global leader in innovation, creating a new talented workforce that champions decarbonisation and paves the way for future air travel".



Jonathon Counsell, Chair of the Jet Zero Council SAF Delivery Group, said "SAF will play the most important role in meeting our net zero targets and especially in reducing aviation emissions this decade. So we welcome the commitment to a revenue certainty scheme. Industry is ready to take part in the consultation process to determine the right mechanism to secure the investment needed to create a UK SAF industry. The Jet

Zero SAF Delivery Group will work with government to move forward quickly with the consultation". ■

## STORNOWAY AIRPORT'S COASTAL PROTECTION PROJECT IS COMPLETE



Major engineering works to protect Stornoway Airport on the Isle of Lewis in North West Scotland from the effects of coastal erosion have been completed.

The £5.3m programme by Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd saw over 36,000 tonnes of rock armour placed and landscaped on the beach sides of the runway embankment.

The completed infrastructure consists of a 'mattress' of almost 22,000 tonnes of stone created beneath the beach, with over 2,000 baskets filled with stone built on top to reinforce the beach and stop the sea from eroding the land. In addition, more than 14,000 tonnes of rock armour stone were positioned on the headland at the end of the

runway.

Monitoring by HIAL identified the need for the work to be undertaken and a public consultation was held in 2021. Without restoration, the loss of the sand dunes which shield the airfield and taxiway would have put the airport at risk of flooding during severe weather and storm conditions.

Duncan Smith, HIAL General Manager West, said "When we noticed that coastal erosion was becoming a significant issue on the north east area of the beach next to the airport, plans were swiftly put in place to restore the coastal defences and maintain airport infrastructure which would all have been at risk if the work had not been carried out".

Kevin O'Leary, HIAL Chief Operating Officer, said "This project was an extremely important one as part of our ongoing commitment to support essential connectivity for our island communities. The significant investment made will protect the long-term future of the airport and vital connections for the communities of the Western Isles". ■

## GATWICK AIRPORT ADDS NEW CARRIERS AS REPORT SAYS USING ITS NORTHERN RUNWAY WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE INBOUND TOURISM

London Gatwick Airport has attracted 14 new carriers since last year, with more coming.

Atlantic Airways, the Faroe Islands carrier, is the latest operator to add Gatwick to its network, returning to the airport after 11 years. Starting in June next year, the service from Vagar will operate twice weekly from 1 June to 31 August.

TAAG Angola is due to begin a three-weekly Luanda – Gatwick service next month and Ethiopian Airlines returns this month after a 17-year absence.

Other airlines that have added Gatwick to their route network over the last year include Air Algerie, Air China, Air India, Air Mauritius, China Southern, Delta, Lufthansa, Saudia,

Greek airline, SKY Express and Spanish low-cost carrier, Volotea.

The airport is proposing to bring its existing Northern Runway into regular use alongside its Main Runway. A new report by Oxford Economics says that those plans would facilitate a significant increase in inbound tourism to London, the South East and the rest of the UK. It suggests that international visitors arriving via Gatwick are likely to increase from 5.6m in 2019 to 9m in 2038, 1.6m more than without the Northern Runway.

Under Gatwick's plans, regular use of the Northern Runway for departures will increase the airport's capacity, seeing throughput increase to around 75.6m passengers in 2038 and around 80.2m passengers in

2047. Many of these additional slots would support long-haul services from high-spending markets such as the USA, the Middle East and Asia.

As a result of increasing numbers of international visitors, there would be 130,700 jobs by 2038 both directly and indirectly supported by Gatwick-facilitated tourism. This compares to 84,100 jobs in 2019 and would be 28,700 more jobs than without the Northern Runway. ■



## LUTON AIRPORT PROVIDING REGULAR UPDATES ON “COMPLICATED AND CHALLENGING SITUATION” FOLLOWING CAR PARK FIRE

Neil Thompson, Operations Director at London Luton Airport, has been providing regular updates to passengers whose cars were damaged or destroyed in a massive blaze at the airport's Car Park 2.

More than 100 firefighters from Bedfordshire's Fire and Rescue Service fought the blaze on 10 October which is believed to have spread from a diesel car and damaged over 1,400 cars. The airport was closed for several hours while the fire was brought under control.

In an update issued on 21 October, Thompson said “Having worked with our engineers, experts and insurers, we are getting closer every day to making a final decision on what is going to happen to the car park and the vehicles contained within it”.

“Working with our structural engineers, we now plan to remove around a hundred cars from the top deck of the car park for the purposes of stabilising the structure. Once removed, these cars will be stored in a safe compound, and we will contact customers and work with insurers to inform them of

the process of recovery for these cars”.

“For all other vehicles in the car park, the assessment remains largely unchanged which is that no cars can currently be accessed or removed from the car park. The structure remains fundamentally unsafe and the adverse weather over the last few days hasn't helped”.

Thompson said he wanted to “thank customers for their ongoing patience and understanding as we work our way through this complicated and challenging situation”. ■



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