

**THE AIRPORT**

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIRPORTSUK  
SPRING 2025

# OPERATOR

**LONDON BIGGIN HILL  
AIRPORT'S** capital  
investment programme

**INVERNESS AND  
KIRKWALL AIRPORTS'**  
runway lighting

**CARDIFF AIRPORT**  
prospects boosted

**UK AVIATION NOISE**  
forecast to fall

## **MANCHESTER AIRPORT MD CHRIS WOODROOFE**

expects newly extended  
Terminal 2 to be fully  
open later this year



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



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# THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIRPORTSUK

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## In this issue

**04** Introduction to  
The Airport Operator



**05** London Biggin Hill  
Airport

**09** Sustainable Aviation

**12** Electricity connectivity

**13** Inverness and Kirkwall  
Airports

**17** AirportsUK Operations  
Conference

**18** CBI

**20** AirportsUK Health and  
Safety Week

**21** Drones

**23** Manchester Airport

**27** Noise Road-Map

**29** Cardiff Airport

**33** Egis



**36** AirportsUK Annual  
Dinner

**37** Fire Safety Forum

**39** AirportsUK welcomes  
three new members

**41** From around the sector

**47** AirportsUK  
Meetings 2025

**49** AirportsUK  
Working Groups

# KAREN DEE INTRODUCTION TO THE AIRPORT OPERATOR



## Hello and welcome to the spring edition of The Airport Operator magazine.

What a start to the new year it has been, with airports and aviation more generally very much at the top of the agenda. The beginning of January saw the start of the Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) mandate, which will direct airlines to use increasing amounts of SAF in their fuel mix. Then there was the Chancellor's announcement of the Government's support for a third runway at Heathrow and expanding airport capacity more widely. We have also had the news that the Government is 'minded to approve' Gatwick's proposals for its Northern Runway. And we have seen the Committee on Climate Change issue its seventh carbon budget, acknowledging the industry's progress on decarbonisation and softening its position on expansion.

All these announcements have firmly put airports in the spotlight, with questions around the positive impacts of airports and how we will manage the challenges.

For our part, this is the result of our consistent message to government of the importance of aviation to the UK economy, contributing over £1bn per week in gross value added, and supporting over 1m jobs. We have also been busy highlighting the strides made in decarbonising airports and air travel, delivering significant reductions despite increasing passenger numbers. And a new noise road-map from Sustainable Aviation has demonstrated how, with new, quieter aircraft entering fleets, UK aviation noise output is forecast to reduce by 35% in 2035 compared to 2019, despite a rise in air traffic movements.

These advances have all contributed to the Government's recent comments about, and support for, the role it envisages our sector playing in driving economic growth in the UK. Because the truth is we do connect the UK to the world – helping people go on holiday and stay in touch with friends and family; taking our businesses to new markets for their

goods and services; bringing in tourists that support our leisure and hospitality sector; and generating investment that creates new jobs, opportunities and wealth.

Without us, it would not be possible to deliver any of the Government's plans and ambitions. And that is why we are not going to sit back now, with the job only half done. There are still a host of issues that need to be addressed before we are truly able to contribute to our fullest potential and we will continue to advocate on them on behalf of airports.

The Government is developing plans for industry, trade, infrastructure, planning and border security, and aviation must be a central consideration in all of them. We will be making the case for supportive tax regimes, including business rates, APD, arrivals duty-free and VAT-free shopping. Airspace modernisation and the wider regulatory landscape will also be a key aspect of our ongoing engagement with ministers and officials. So, overall, while it has been a busy start to 2025 for aviation and the AirportsUK team, the rest of the year will see no let up!

And we hope that this flurry of activity is reflected in this quarter's edition of the magazine.

We have articles from our members – Manchester, Cardiff, Biggin Hill, Inverness and Kirkwall Airports – all showing how vibrant and active the sector is at present. There are updates on our annual dinner, taking place later this month and featuring the Transport Secretary as guest of honour, UK airports health and safety week in May, and our operations conference in June. Thought leadership on topics such as fire safety, unmanned drones, and electrical connectivity as it relates to airports also features in this edition. Finally, we have contributions from our partners, the CBI and Sustainable Aviation, on the latest developments in the wider business community and industry efforts to decarbonise.

A packed issue to enjoy and digest, that we hope shows just a snippet of what is going on around aviation. Enjoy.

**Karen Dee**  
Chief Executive

DAVID WINSTANLEY

# LONDON BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT LAUNCHES CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME TO BOOST TRAFFIC AND REVENUES

London Biggin Hill Airport will start a £20m runway resurfacing programme this month as part of a capital investment programme designed to strengthen its position in business aviation.

Asked about his expectations for traffic in the coming years, the airport's CEO, David Winstanley, told The Airport Operator "We would expect to see a significant increase, approximately 10 to 12%, and that is based on the investments we are making in infrastructure".

Work on the runway resurfacing programme, which will be carried out at night to avoid closing the airport, will include LED centre line lighting, edge lighting and run-off and run-on lighting. Other elements of the investment programme include:

- a new Instrumented Runway Visual Range system, which uses specialised sensors located on the runway to provide an automated assessment of runway visibility,
- new 24-hour weather forecasting,

providing pilots particularly inbound from North America, with the latest information on weather conditions at the airport and

- a plan for a new instrument approach to the airport's Runway 03 that will effectively make London Biggin Hill an all-weather airport, with a trial expected to begin in the third quarter of the next financial year.

Winstanley said that the business aviation market had stabilised after Covid, and he expected that it would "start to pick up again in 2025. Europe is our main base market, but we are seeing significant growth in larger, longer sectors, the North American market and elements of Africa and the Middle East. We expect Biggin's traffic to increase because of the significant capital investment we have put in to

improving aeronautical facilities".

Describing the airport's growth strategy, Winstanley said "We listen to our customers and respond accordingly. Our customers, our pilots, have a significant influence on where aircraft are based. So we listen to what they want from an airport in our sector and respond accordingly. If there are blockers for people to come to your airport, you remove the blockers and, if you do that, they will come to you. The instrument approach to Runway 03 is the single biggest example of removing a blocker; pilots have said to me 'we don't fly to you, David, because you don't have on an instrument approach on both runways and I can't guarantee I am going to get my aircraft in', so, we will remove the blocker".

"Our whole strategy" he said "is



**"Europe is our main base market, but we are seeing significant growth in larger, longer sectors, the North American market and elements of Africa and the Middle East. We expect Biggin's traffic to increase because of the significant capital investment we have put in to improving aeronautical facilities."**

to listen to what our customers want, and what we have done here is built an eco-system of 70+ companies, more than any other business aviation airport in Europe. So that gives us diversification of income and revenue and provides a home for aircraft to be based here. They can get all their engineering servicing done here and their aircraft are on the ground less, making them more money”.

Winstanley said it is “hugely important for aircraft to be based at London Biggin Hill, because we gain revenue from different sources, including hangarage and parking. If we are a home base then it attracts maintenance and repair organisations to be based at Biggin, providing a wide range of engineering support facilities. It allows us to get rental revenue and to attract inward investment, generate economic value and generate jobs”. London Biggin Hill is now one of Bromley’s largest employers, with more than 1,700 people working on-site, an increase of 80% since 2012.

Last month Bombardier announced that it will be adding a new two-bay paint facility at the airport, expected to open in the second half of 2026 and designed to accommodate all the company’s Global, Challenger and Learjet aircraft. Winstanley said the announcement was “superb” and would be a £30m investment by Bombardier, on top of their £60m hangar development completed two years’ ago, “so further cementing Bombardier’s commitment to the airport. We are effectively the European home to Bombardier”.

Bombardier is among businesses that have benefitted from London Biggin Hill’s twice-yearly Futures Weeks for local schoolchildren. “There are people now working on full-time apprenticeships with Bombardier who came through our Futures Weeks”, Winstanley noted.



**There are people now working on full-time apprenticeships with Bombardier who came through our Futures Weeks. The Weeks had given them “not just work experience, but high-quality practical exposure to a wide range of what the aviation industry can provide.”**

The Weeks had given them “not just work experience, but high-quality practical exposure to a wide range of what the aviation industry can provide. I know from my own experiences, you can find school academically challenging, but that doesn’t mean you can’t be creative in many ways, including in terms of leadership. So I am passionate about finding the spark in young people and we have a laser focus on how we can attract them into our industry. I think that there is a moral obligation for smaller airports that sit in and directly impact local communities to make sure that the



communities benefit from the airport being there”.

Looking to the future, Winstanley said that he is “excited about what regional air mobility, 50 to 80 seat aircraft flying less than 800kms, might provide. I foresee a growing demand for regional inter-city connected services and I think we could be well-placed for that”. He acknowledged that the airport’s current lease prohibits fare-paying passengers. “That is frustrating” he said “We put a submission to vary the lease. That was declined. When the time is right, we will re-initiate that request”.

Reflecting on the UK’s business aviation sector, Winstanley said “I

am trying to encourage the business aviation community to be clearer about its key messaging so that the Government are informed about policies that they are making that directly impact the industry. Our sector has not always been aligned, but now there are a couple of initiatives where Farnborough, Oxford and ourselves have taken a collective approach. We are starting to see an appetite from central Government to learn more about business aviation”.

He said that his objective is “to focus on the contribution business aviation makes to UK plc and I think that is gaining momentum. We have been somewhat reticent to stick our head

above the parapet, but if you leave a void, I think there is a danger that it will be filled with misinformation. It is our responsibility to inform the regulator and Government. We have to find a way of ensuring that the message lands, is understood and achieves positive outcomes. I have said this at the European Business Aviation Convention in Geneva and at the Air Charter Expo, the business air charter exhibition held at London Biggin Hill. It was a call to arms, and I am encouraged by the response”. ■







## SUSTAINABLE AVIATION

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# WE ARE MORE CONFIDENT THAN EVER THAT GENUINELY SUSTAINABLE AVIATION IS DELIVERABLE

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Sustainable Aviation's Chief Executive, Duncan McCourt, reports on aviation's plans to decarbonise.

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**A** viation is firmly back into the political and media landscape, with the Transport Secretary giving her in-principle backing to an expanded Gatwick, and the Chancellor's growth speech containing such strong support for aviation as a driver and enabler of economic growth for all parts of the UK. It is great to see the government having confidence in the solutions we have available to reduce our environmental impact to allow that growth to happen.

This attention makes it more important than ever that the aviation industry shows that it is and will continue to decarbonise. UK aviation was the first in the world to commit to net zero by 2050, and the Sustainable Aviation Net Zero Road-Map is our plan for how to get there. There are of course challenges, but we are already making good progress. UK emissions are down by 10% since 2005, while passenger numbers are up 20%. Through a combination of more efficient aircraft, better airspace management, commercialising Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), developing zero emission technology like hydrogen-powered aircraft and using effective greenhouse gas removals – I have no doubt that we will get to net zero by 2050.

Commentators are understandably asking the question of what airport expansion, be it at Heathrow, Gatwick or elsewhere, does to the UK's carbon budgets and legal obligations to decarbonise. Can we do it, and still reduce our carbon impact? The short answer is yes. The fundamental set of assumptions around aviation demand growth to 2050 and the pathway to net zero, as represented both by our industry Road-Map and the planning assumptions of the previous administration, remain broadly the same.



Duncan McCourt

Our Road-Map assumes a 70% increase in aviation activity through to 2050, and the previous Government's Jet Zero Strategy assumed a 70% increase in terminal passenger numbers. These figures were based on a reasonable 'upper end' set of assumptions on airport capacity, which included a third runway at Heathrow and planned capacity increases elsewhere. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has set out more moderate passenger growth, but we disagree with them on some of their assumptions, including around SAF usage, most importantly in our belief that we can meet the government mandate requirements and enable greater passenger and freight growth than the CCC suggests.

This is not to say that there are not significant challenges – there are, and aviation remains one of the toughest industries to decarbonise. We are though seeing genuine progress. The introduction of the ambitious UK SAF mandate was a major step forward. It sends a clear demand signal to the market that airlines will be requiring SAF in ever growing quantities. Alongside the extra funding for the Advanced Fuels Fund and progress towards delivering a

**UK aviation was the first in the world to commit to net zero by 2050, and our Net Zero Road-Map is our plan for how to get there. There are of course challenges, but we are already making good progress.**

Revenue Certainty Mechanism to help drive investment into UK SAF production, we are creating the conditions for success, with the potential for thousands of jobs in the SAF industry across the UK. There is more to do – for example, widening the pool of feedstocks for SAF, and delivering that Revenue Support Mechanism – and we will work with government to do that.

Beyond SAF, we have welcomed government's commitment to airspace modernisation. The new UK Airspace Design Service should help us to deliver the rationalisation of our outdated airspace that will cut emissions quickly by allowing airlines to fly much more efficient routes. It has also been great to see the longer-term funding settlements for the Aerospace Technology Institute, supporting our world class manufacturers to develop and commercialise green aviation technology, like hydrogen.

It is not only carbon where we are making progress. In February we published our latest Aviation Noise Road-Map. At a national level, this shows that the overall noise impact of UK aviation is expected to reduce by 30% over the next decade, even as we grow to meet expected demand. Each new aircraft is quieter and more efficient than the one it replaces, with many new planes 50% quieter than legacy aircraft.

Aviation enables some of the most positive things we do as humans – connecting, collaborating, trading, experiencing new things. For a government looking for economic

growth, it need look no further than the aviation industry, and we are more confident than ever that, with the right support, we can show that growth and net zero -

genuinely sustainable aviation - is deliverable. ■



SUSTAINABLE AVIATION

BKB

**"In February we published our latest Aviation Noise Road-Map. At a national level, this shows that the overall noise impact of UK aviation is expected to reduce by 30% over the next decade, even as we grow to meet expected demand."**

DR RUPINDER PAMME

# ELECTRICITY CONNECTIVITY VITAL FOR UK AIRPORTS

**AirportsUK's Senior Policy Manager, Dr Rupinder Pamme reports:**

**Airports welcomed the statement made by the National Energy System Operator in its consultation last year that there is a "clear and urgent need to reform" the connection process as projects take too long to come to the electricity grid.**

**T**here is a desperate need to reform the connections queue for a project by "readiness" and that so called "zombie projects" that have no hope of coming to fruition need to be removed so they do not block those who have viable projects in place.

A frequent and recurring issue for airports is connections for future demand. For example, for airport operations decarbonisation includes investing in zero-emission heating and power systems, zero-emission vehicles and ground equipment, and charging for site, staff and public electric vehicles. This is separate to the need to support decarbonisation



Dr Rupinder Pamme

of aviation through possible fuel creation on or near site (power to liquid Sustainable Aviation Fuel, or hydrogen) and powering electric planes, which have the potential to create significant new demand within the near future. This will become a critical issue to the decarbonisation of aviation, the focus for the Government's new Jet Zero Taskforce.

Airports have made great strides in decarbonising their operations through their own electricity generation. This is predominantly achieved through solar photovoltaic energy generation, though some wind and energy-from-waste generation is also in use at UK airports. It is therefore vital for airports to obtain urgently grid connections, so they can increase export capacity to

progress their net zero scheme. There needs to be a mechanism to prioritise those sectors that have higher requirements placed upon them and that are hard to abate sectors such as aviation.

The intention to align the connections process to the Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan should accelerate grid decarbonisation and assist airports where they have projects ready that align to Clean Power 2030 Action Plan criteria (e.g. large-scale net zero capital projects) – these should be very clearly prioritised in the connections queue.

Airports have also highlighted the situation around network upgrades, which are a major block in moving projects forward. For example, the current system/equipment upgrades required for release of extra capacity in local area networks at multiple airports is not due until the end of the decade. Other airports report restrictions on the ability to export power to grid, limiting the size of solar farms that can be developed rather than further supporting the decarbonisation of grid power, and limiting the amount of energy that can be offset. ■



Darren MacLeod

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS AIRPORTS LIMITED

# INVERNESS AND KIRKWALL AIRPORTS COMPLETE ENERGY EFFICIENT RUNWAY LIGHTING PROJECTS

The installation of energy-efficient Aeronautical Ground Lighting at Inverness and Kirkwall airports will reduce energy consumption by up to 80%.

**D**arren MacLeod, appointed Chief Operating Officer for Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) in December, told The Airport Operator that the £9m+ investment at the two airports "marks a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to sustainable operations and infrastructure enhancement". The new systems provide crucial visual guidance to pilots during landing, taxiing and take off in low visibility and darkness and feature state-of-the-art LED technology.

MacLeod, who joined HIAL as Head of IT and Digital Transformation in 2017, said that the company had made significant improvements with the introduction of technology to improve efficiency and service, investing particularly in digital technology since he joined. Video conferencing had enabled HIAL to continue to work remotely

"almost seamlessly" during the pandemic lockdown and it had also invested in the Internet of things, solar lighting and runway refurbishments.

He noted that HIAL is "very different from most other airports due to our structure and the remote locations in which we operate" and that winter weather could significantly impact its airports' operations, leading to investment in new de-icer vehicles for runways, taxiways and aprons at Inverness and Sumburgh.

MacLeod also stressed HIAL's commitment to decarbonising its airport operations, reflected in its investment in 17 electric and electric hybrid Ground Power Units (GPUs) to supply power to aircraft when on stand and to provide the power source needed to start them. Replacing diesel powered units, the new GPUs serve Benbecula, Inverness,

Kirkwall, Stornoway and Sumburgh airports "helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality".

Asked about his top priorities in his new role as COO, MacLeod focussed on "safety as the top priority in everything that we do". He said that "one of the key

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elements of safety and compliance is training and with teams located in remote locations, this can be challenging. We are proud to have been recognised for the best use of technology award at the Aviation Industry Awards UK for our innovative use of artificial intelligence video generation software, which has greatly improved our training delivery”.

He said that he will also focus on operational excellence, strategic alignment and financial stewardship “ensuring robust change management while maintaining safe and regulatory compliant airports”. Specifically, he would look to “growing our asset management expertise and working towards the most sustainable operating model which balances community need with our environmental and sustainability objectives”.



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**“Our strong relationships with our airline partners, as well as potential new collaborations in developing sectors such as renewable energy offer exciting prospects as we plan our strategic activity going forward.”**



Macleod emphasised that “while many things have changed, the need for airports for communities across the Highlands and Islands has not diminished, not just to enable scheduled and Public Service Obligation flights but also facilitating emergency operations for lifeline services such as air ambulances and the coastguard”.

Looking ahead, he said that “in terms of opportunities, our strong relationships with our airline partners, as well as potential new collaborations in developing sectors such as renewable energy offer exciting prospects as we plan our strategic activity going forward”.

HIAL’s airports differ greatly in size, with the largest passenger numbers at Inverness, Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway, and much smaller numbers at its other seven airports. Asked if HIAL deals



with them differently, MacLeod said “Each of our 11 airports are unique in their own way, having characteristics ranging from the beach landings at Barra to the oil and gas operations which sit alongside our scheduled services at Sumburgh. Whilst they vary in size, they all conform to regulatory requirements and our risk oversight applies to all in equal measure”.

“Each airport works to meet the needs of the local community, passengers and airline partner” he said “and all provide a professional and friendly service. Our team are at the heart of our operations and our core services are broadly the same at each airport. As an example of this, Inverness has recently won the 2024 Air Service Quality award for best airport under 2m passengers in Europe and airport with the most dedicated staff in Europe”.

Macleod spent over eight years in the RAF as an aircraft technician.

He said “I had a great time in the Airforce but felt that there were other challenges that I wanted to explore. I love technology, innovation and continual development and have been fortunate enough to work for some global ICT companies, police and local authorities. However, aviation has always been my passion”.

Asked about his impression of HIAL’s airports from his perspective as a private pilot, he said “my impression as a customer at HIAL’s airports echoes what I witness in my job every day in that our teams are renowned for providing a warm, friendly welcome to all. The chance to experience Scotland’s beautiful scenery from the skies is fantastic and I would recommend it to anyone”. ■



AIRPORTSUK OPERATIONS CONFERENCE

# REGISTRATION OPENS FOR JUNE AIRPORTSUK OPERATIONS CONFERENCE

**AirportsUK's 2025 Operations Conference is to be held on 24 and 25 June at the Radisson Hotel, Manchester Airport.**

The event's theme will be 'Protect, Adapt, and Recover – Resilient Airports', with registration opening this month for a conference that will run from 11.00 on 24 June to 15.45 on 25 June, with pre-drinks and dinner on the first day.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from the subject matter experts from different airports who chair AirportsUK working groups on aerodrome safeguarding, safety and compliance, rescue and firefighting services, health and safety, airspace management, fire safety, and the integration of drones in daily operations.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation and Compliance at AirportsUK, said the conference would aim to "unite aviation leaders, airport authorities, technologists, environmental experts, and policymakers in a collective effort to create future-proof airports capable of withstanding unforeseen disruptions, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable passengers".

She said that a major focus of the conference will be the exploration of strategies for adapting

infrastructure, operations, technology and environmental approaches to ensure that air travel remains smooth and stress-free. Enhancing operational efficiency, business continuity and recovery efforts will also be highlighted.

As global travel continues its post-pandemic rebound, passenger numbers rise and cargo operations expand, airports are investing in larger terminals, upgraded runways and advanced technology, while seeking to maintain financial stability, operational agility and the capability to recover quickly from unexpected events. Conference presentations will include real-world case studies

illustrating successful preparedness plans and crisis responses. Participants will also discuss upcoming regulations that could significantly impact aerodrome management and compliance.

Gammarano said that by gathering diverse expertise under one roof the conference would aim to "foster shared learning, collaborative problem-solving, and a unified approach to making airports more robust and passenger focused. The event promises an extensive overview of how the aviation industry can protect, adapt and recover through challenges, ensuring travel remains a seamless experience for everyone". ■





**"Airport expansion will play a huge role in economic growth"**

# AIRPORT EXPANSION: BALANCING GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

**"Our airports play a key role in facilitating exports". By Mark Goldstone, Policy Manager – UK Competitiveness, Confederation of British Industry.**

**M**uch has been made of recent announcements by the Chancellor in her growth speech in late January about the expansion of UK airports.

More recently Heathrow's announcement of multi-billion-pound investments in the redevelopment of existing terminal buildings whilst also preparing to submit plans to government

to build the long discussed third runway have also taken place. Likewise, the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport that she is minded to approve Gatwick's Northern Runway plans is positive.

As an island nation, connectivity to global markets is essential and our airports play a key role in facilitating exports, both of goods and services. A recent CBI

report specifically highlighted the UK services industry as a global success story, accounting for 90 per cent of our GDP in 2023 and over four-fifths of employment in 2024. The UK is the second largest exporter of services in the world and their value to our economy is only growing, with the UK doubling its services exports since 2016.

We know that companies which trade internationally experience

higher growth than those operating in domestic markets only. In the UK 12% of firms trade overseas, and so driving up the volume and value of goods and services exports should remain a priority for this government. However, for businesses to thrive internationally there needs to be robust access to markets, something which airports facilitate across the UK.

Research from WPI Economics conducted on behalf of Manchester Airports Group, confirmed that ten traditional sectors in the UK particularly reliant on air connectivity contribute £643 billion to GVA and 4.2 million jobs in the UK. Taken together, they are projected to grow faster than the economy as a whole over the next ten years.

Connectivity and ease of travel is fundamental to facilitating trade and inward investment.

For example, following the introduction of direct flights between Manchester and Beijing, export values from Manchester Airport to China grew 41% to £1.29bn in the two years after route launch.

In their 2024 annual report, ACI Europe say that a 10% increase in air connectivity automatically yields a +0.5% increase in GDP per capita.

But our major airports are full. For example, Heathrow is currently operating at approximately 95% of its capacity, with 80 million passenger journeys in 2023 against a capacity of 85 million.

The expansion of Heathrow is expected to have significant economic benefits. The Davies Commission estimated that building a third runway would create more than 70,000 new jobs by 2050 and add £147 billion to GDP. Similarly, expansions at Gatwick and Luton airports are



Mark Goldstone

projected to create thousands of jobs and generate substantial economic benefits.

Proposals for a new runway at Gatwick will inject £1bn into the UK economy every year upon completion and are forecast to generate 14,000 new jobs. Leeds Bradford Airport has also commenced work on a £100 million investment to regenerate its terminal facilities, significantly enhancing the passenger experience and driving economic growth for the region. This redevelopment is forecast to create 1,500 new direct jobs at LBA and 4,000 new indirect jobs, as well as contribute a total of £940 million to the local economy.

Many of these projects have been in development for decades, with barriers to growth, most notably around the planning system, holding them back.

However, challenging questions surrounding airport expansion have been raised about whether net zero goals or economic growth are more important. The answer is that both are vital for a prosperous, sustainable future. Airport expansion will play a huge role in economic growth, but airports and operators recognise this cannot be at the expense of the environment and the transition to a net zero economy.

The sector is committed to

reducing emissions and achieving net zero by 2050. The transition to sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) is a crucial component of this decarbonisation roadmap. The recently implemented SAF mandate will drive take up of this fuel and allow for increased aviation capacity whilst meeting carbon targets, thus supporting both growth and sustainability.

The Government's growth mission will be driven in part by the industrial strategy which is currently being developed. The CBI has played a proactive role in this development, making the case that international connectivity is integral to achieving the Government's number one mission of the highest sustained growth in the G7. We believe strongly that the success of the named eight high growth sectors will not be achieved without strong foundational sectors like aviation. The UK's status as the third largest aviation market in the world can be leveraged as an advantage for the wider economy, in the context of an industrial strategy which plays to the country's strengths.

2025 is a crunch time for growth. Against a backdrop of global uncertainty, the Government's economic policies at home will be put to the test especially around airport expansion. Helpfully, the role airports play in growing the UK economy has been acknowledged by the Government and now we must push forward with an industrial strategy that kickstarts growth, expands exports and inward investment, and accelerates the journey to a net zero economy. ■



# UK AIRPORTS TO SHOWCASE WORK TO ENHANCE SAFETY, PREVENT INCIDENTS AND SUPPORT WELL-BEING

**AirportsUK Health and Safety Week 2025 will run from 19 to 23 May and spotlight three key areas: ground movements; slips, trips and falls; and reducing stress.**

**U**nder the theme *'Enhancing Safety, Preventing Incidents and Supporting Well-Being'*, airports across the country are planning events designed to reinforce essential safety behaviours, regulatory compliance and a culture of well-being throughout the airport.

Ground movements will be a priority, focusing on reducing risks tied to ground handling, aircraft movements, and vehicle operations on the apron, while protecting the safety of passengers boarding and de-boarding the aircraft.

Slips, trips and falls will highlight actions that can be taken to prevent accidents in terminals and on apron walkways.

Reducing stress for passengers and staff, will be the third theme, showing how airports seek to support mental well-being and lower stress for everyone involved in daily operations.

An awards ceremony will take

place at the AirportsUK office on 2 October to recognise airports in small, medium and large categories who demonstrate exceptional commitment to creating a safer and healthier airport environment. The judges will consider submissions relating to the three main themes of the week.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation and Compliance at AirportsUK, said that this year's Health and Safety Week would build on the success of last year's event, which saw over 40 airport members and their communities participate. She stressed that the ultimate goal of the week is to ensure that airports are safe and healthy environments for both staff and passengers.

Gammarano said "By addressing crucial safety and health issues within a single focused week, we aim to build a stronger, more resilient airport community. I encourage staff, partners and stakeholders to participate in



Adele Gammarano

the sessions and activities, share best practices, and collaborate on innovative ideas. Together, the airport community can foster an environment where safety is paramount, passenger experiences are worry-free and every individual, whether travelling through the terminal or working behind the scenes, feels supported and protected". ■



THE IMPACT ON AIRPORTS OF THE GROWING USE OF DRONES

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# AIRPORTSUK SETS UP NEW GROUP TO DISCUSS THE IMPACT ON AIRPORTS OF THE GROWING USE OF DRONES

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A new AirportsUK group has been established to share best practice on the operational impact of the growing use of drones for commercial and leisure purposes.

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The group, which will operate as a sub-group of AirportUK's Aerodrome Safeguarding working group, has been formed at the suggestion of Lisa Allen, Heathrow's Aerodrome Compliance Manager. She will jointly chair it with Ian Astles, Senior Airfield Services Engineer at Farnborough Airport, who is responsible for all aspects of safeguarding, airport operations and working closely with the airport safety team.

Allen, who has had responsibility for monitoring the operation of drones in and around Heathrow Airport for the last three years, told The Airport Operator that she was delighted that the new group's first meetings were providing opportunities to share experiences of drones used in daily operations with airports of all shapes and sizes across the UK. She said that the group would seek to monitor and potentially shape regulation, with the UK Civil Aviation Authority invited to facilitate exchanges of views. Initially the group would focus on having airport members in attendance to set its direction.

Heathrow itself uses drones for infrastructure inspections and closely monitors the use of drones by hobbyists, children and commercial operations within the airport's flight restricted zone, which has a 5km radius around the airport to protect aircraft during all aspects of flight. At a meeting of the group last month she shared details of an educational exercise that Heathrow conducted at Christmas on the dangers of flying drones near an airport, involving both a social media campaign and a leaflet drop to addresses within 5km of the airport.

The leaflet posed the question "Did you know that flying your drone within 5km of an airport without permission is illegal and can be dangerous to aircraft?" It was designed to educate drone users



Ian Astles



Lisa Allen

**The leaflet was designed to educate drone users near the airport on the rules that they need to follow and explained how to register and apply for permits to fly.**

near the airport on the rules that they need to follow and explained how to register and apply for permits to fly.

At the same meeting, Astles explained how drones are managed at Farnborough. He told The Airport Operator that he is "passionate about new and emerging airport technology" and was looking forward to "working with the talented and experienced members of this group to share best practice, enhance my own knowledge and promote effective and safe integration of drones into enhancing airport operations".

Adele Gammarano, AirportUK's Head of Regulation and Compliance, said that the overwhelming attendance and interest in the sub-working group underscored its value to airports. She said "With the expected increase in drone applications within aerodromes, there is a pressing need for new guidance, standards and operational protocols and a forum to share best practices. Effective communication with air traffic colleagues and other stakeholders beyond those in the safeguarding community will be crucial to meeting this need". ■



**Did you know that flying your drone within 5km of an airport without permission is ILLEGAL and can be DANGEROUS to aircraft?**  
This leaflet is designed to educate drone users on the rules that must be followed if you want to fly your drone with 5km of an airport.

**So how far away is 5km?**

**50 Football Pitches**  
A Football Pitch is about 105 metres

**100 Aircraft**  
The average Aircraft is about 50 metres long

If you wish to fly your drone within 5km of Heathrow Airport please visit [Heathrow.com/drones](https://www.heathrow.com/drones) to find the application process that must be followed each time you wish to fly your drone.

**Dos and Don'ts and how to fly safely.**

- **Do** always ensure you and your drone are registered, with the required IDs
- **Do** always follow The Drone and Model Aircraft Code to ensure you always fly safely and legally
- **Do** always follow the steps to apply for a permit to fly your drone
- **Don't** fly your drone if you are unsure whether it is safe to do so.

**!** In the UK, it is against the law to fly a drone or model aircraft without having the required IDs in place (and permissions, where required). If these aren't in place you can be fined for breaking the law when flying. In the most serious case, you could be sent to prison.

Heathrow

CHRIS WOODROOFE

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# MANCHESTER AIRPORT'S £1.3bn TERMINAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME CLOSE TO COMPLETION

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Chris Woodroffe, Managing Director of Manchester Airport, has told The Airport Operator that he expects the airport's newly extended Terminal 2 to be fully open later this year.

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Chris Woodroffe



**W**ith building work at the mega terminal close to completion, the year will be dominated by the wholesale transfer of airlines from Terminal 1 and Terminal 3 to Terminal 2, which received the prestigious UNESCO-backed Prix Versailles architecture and design award for its first phase opened in 2021. The second phase of the transformation programme will be fully operational later this year and the focus will then switch to the reconfiguration of Terminal 3, which will operate as a dedicated facility for Ryanair.

Planning has also begun for work on the apron to build new stands over the next five years to ensure that the airport can accommodate aircraft for the substantial increase in passenger numbers that Woodroofe anticipates. Over 30m passengers used Manchester Airport last year. That total is expected to grow to around 31.5m this year, but the new terminal infrastructure will be capable of handling up to 50m passengers a year.

Woodroofe's expectation of 5% growth in passenger numbers this year is half the growth achieved last year, as airlines focus on the terminal switch. The slower pace of growth in the short term also reflects airline capacity issues as the sector adjusts to slower aircraft deliveries from both Boeing and Airbus.

However, Woodroofe believes that by the summer of 2027 the airport can expect further significant growth in the number of

destinations that it serves. That is currently more than 200, making it the largest in the UK outside the London area. Future new long-haul destinations from Manchester Airport might include Bangkok, Delhi, Islamabad, Lahore and Mumbai.

Looking further ahead still, Woodroofe draws on the findings of a 2024 report from Arup which outlined what the full economic potential of the airport could be if the right conditions were in place to unlock transformational growth across the North. It suggested that in this scenario the airport's economic contribution to the region could increase from £5.7bn in 2022 to £16.3bn by 2050, with the potential to secure direct flights to another 50 world-leading cities and to handle up to 60m passengers a year.

Expansion on anything like that scale would begin to put pressure on Manchester Airport's existing terminal infrastructure and while Woodroofe declines to be quoted on that scenario, there has been speculation that at some point in the late 2030s plans could be dusted off for an additional terminal building.

The team at the airport have been encouraged by the positive noises that Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, has been making about airport expansion, but Woodroofe is at pains to emphasise that future growth will depend on the sector making substantial progress in reducing its carbon emissions.

Manchester Airport has developed

detailed plans to achieve Net Zero in its own operations and for the energy it purchases by 2038. Woodroofe said that all the airport's electricity is already zero carbon, and the work left to do relates to gas and diesel engines in vehicles, "both of which have a very solid plan to get us there in 2038, if not before. The bigger challenge, of course, is the aircraft themselves".

He said the airport had sought to ensure that hydrogen manufacturers in the region are imagining a world where aircraft could be powered by hydrogen and that they develop an industry with that in mind and with the airport's future needs in mind. But he said his own view is that "both electrically powered aircraft and hydrogen-powered aircraft are some considerable distance away and so in the nearer term what is

**Over 30m passengers used Manchester Airport last year. That total is expected to grow to around 31.5m this year, but the new terminal infrastructure will be capable of handling up to 50m passengers a year.**



important is Sustainable Aviation Fuel”.

“We are quite excited” he said, “about the idea of an organisation like Fulcrum, who have a manufacturing facility that could be turning domestic waste into jet fuel”. Fulcrum BioEnergy has plans for a £1bn investment at Stanlow in Cheshire to turn 600,000 metric tonnes of waste into 100m litres of SAF each year. A direct pipeline links the site to Manchester Airport.

Woodroffe said “the thing that has been stopping these ideas from going to reality has been the challenge around the stability of the SAF pricing. The Government have been consulting on a price stability mechanism and so that feels like it is starting to get from just being talked about to being acted upon, and so we will continue to push regionally to seek

to build a SAF plant in the North West”.

Another area where Woodroffe is keen to see progress relates to surface access to the airport, “currently over 80% by car and less than 20% by public transport – so, by comparison with other airports, not great. Medium term what is needed is proper investment in rail infrastructure in the North West, but in the short term we have been working very closely with Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, on his Bee Network”.

Since 5 January all local bus services within the area have been brought under the control of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Burnham has said that services will improve this year. A tap-in, tap-out system on buses and trams will be launched on 23

March and Woodroffe said “if you imagine flying into Manchester Airport and looking to use public transport to get into the centre of town that will be incredibly helpful”. The system will be extended to local trains by 2030.

Woodroffe joined Manchester Airport as Managing Director in June 2022 and he said “the thing that struck me when I joined was the extent to which Manchester Airport is part of the fabric of the North and the pride that people regionally feel for the airport. As we rebuilt (after Covid) and took the airport to where it is now and as we look forward to the great things ahead, it is the sort of pride that really lifts you up. We talk about ‘being proud to connect the North’ and this sense of connecting the North to the world is incredibly important to us”. ■



**ARUP**

Manchester Airports Group (MAG)

## A superhub for the North

### How Manchester Airport can drive economic growth and rebalancing



SUSTAINABLE AVIATION

# UK AVIATION NOISE FORECAST TO FALL OVER THE NEXT DECADE EVEN AS AVIATION CONTINUES TO GROW

The UK has reached a tipping point “for the first time, where noise is going to start reducing, even whilst aviation continues to grow”, thanks to latest-generation aircraft, according to Neil Robinson, the Chair of Sustainable Aviation.

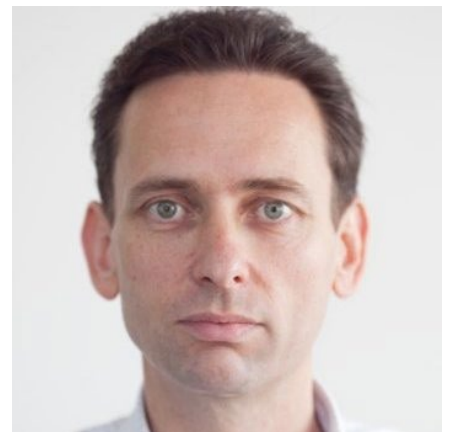
Robinson, who is Chief Sustainability Officer at MAG, wrote that “over the decades, more flying overall has meant more noise generated by aircraft. However, in the UK and for the first time, this latest road-map shows how we have reached a tipping point where noise is going to start reducing, even whilst aviation continues to grow. Aircraft are now coming into use that are very substantially quieter than those they replace. This reduction in per-plane noise will now outpace the growth in flights and over the UK as a whole noise will fall over the next 10-15 years”.

The 78-page road-map notes that each new aircraft is quieter (and more fuel efficient) than the one it replaces, with latest-generation aircraft demonstrating up to



Duncan McCourt

50% noise reduction, compared to the legacy aircraft they are now replacing. As a result, UK aviation noise output is forecast to reduce by 35% in 2035 compared to 2019, despite a rise in air traffic movements. It says that continued noise research by UK industry, supported by government, can



Neil Robinson

ensure this trend continues from the mid-2030s onwards.


Robinson said the road-map sets out the collective efforts of the UK’s aviation industry to minimise noise impacts including by optimising flight paths, managing descent profiles and sharing operational best practice, and

by supporting the continued development of new technology so that noise gains can continue in the long term. It also highlights the vital role that mitigations on the ground will play to support local communities, and the importance of managing factors outside of industry's control, not least the growth of housing under flight paths.

Beyond 2035, the road-map says that continued noise reduction will require the introduction of the next generation of airframe and engine design. To continue to deliver these reductions, Sustainable Aviation calls on the Government to:

- **continue its support for research and development in aerospace technology**
- **accelerate the airspace modernisation programme to deliver noise and carbon savings and**
- **tackle unrestricted housing growth under flight paths by supporting local authorities' ability to enforce land use planning controls around airports.**

Sustainable Aviation CEO, Duncan McCourt, said "It is incumbent on each airport to manage and mitigate its own noise impacts, but this research shows that overall UK aviation is getting quieter, while delivering more economic and social benefit to the UK. Each new aircraft is quieter than the one it replaces, and technology improvements are forecast to reduce the overall noise created by aviation in the UK by a third over the next ten years". ■



**"It is incumbent on each airport to manage and mitigate its own noise impacts, but this research shows that overall UK aviation is getting quieter, while delivering more economic and social benefit to the UK."**



Spencer Birns

**CARDIFF AIRPORT**

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# CARDIFF AIRPORT BOOSTED BY TUI, EUROPEAN CARGO AND BRITISH AIRWAYS

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**Prospects for Cardiff Airport, the National Airport of Wales, have been transformed by significant announcements from three major companies.**

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**W**ithin a space of six weeks:

- European Cargo announced that it had chosen Cardiff as the site for its second UK base, creating over 30 new jobs
- TUI announced that it is basing three aircraft for summer and two for winter at Cardiff, bolstering capacity with a new route and increased frequency to some of its most popular holiday destinations, and
- British Airways announced a multi-million-pound investment in its engineering maintenance

facility at the airport.

Cardiff Airport CEO, Spencer Birns, told The Airport Operator that the three announcements were “fantastic news” for the airport and Wales and reflect the airport’s commitment to growing both its passenger and non-passenger businesses through a partnership approach. There are 34 passenger destinations, and 15 airlines regularly fly from the airport, including non-passenger flights by British Airways, European Cargo, One Air and 2Excel.

He said that the decision by British air freight carrier, European Cargo, to make Cardiff its second UK base



after Bournemouth had filled a long-standing gap in the airport's portfolio, supporting Cardiff's drive to diversify the use of the airport estate. European Cargo's CEO, Jason Holt, said that his company had been attracted to the airport by its 24-hour operational facilities and easy road access to the motorway network.

Launched last October, the new air freight service is now up to four flights a week, with Airbus A340-600s bringing in up to 60 tonnes of freight on each flight. Birns said that the partnership between the airport and the carrier was delivering "a swift service", with freight reaching distribution centres within three hours of the aircraft landing. "It has really worked well" he said, "and we are looking forward to building on this relationship".

British Airways has been operating a maintenance centre at Cardiff Airport for 32 years, providing maintenance services for its Boeing 777s and 787s. The newly announced investment means that from next year the base will also be able to handle larger Airbus A350 aircraft. British Airways said

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## Launched last October, the new air freight service is now up to four flights a week, with Airbus A340-600s bringing in up to 60 tonnes of freight on each flight.

that the project underscores its commitment to the future of its Cardiff-based operations, which employ 770 people.

Rebecca Evans MS, the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, described the announcement as "very welcome news from British Airways paving the way for further growth at their Cardiff site with its highly skilled workforce. It once again demonstrates the vital role that Cardiff Airport plays in bringing investment into Wales and in growing our aerospace maintenance, repair and overhaul sector".

TUI has been operating out of Cardiff Airport for over 60 years. More than 550 people are employed by TUI across Wales, including over 100 at the airport. It has 28 stores across Welsh high streets. Following its latest

announcement of three summer based and two winter based aircraft, TUI now has 26 direct destinations from Cardiff, with a new route to the Canary Island, Fuerteventura, extra flights to Barbados, Crete, Gran Canaria, Majorca, Tenerife and Tunisia, plus an additional 20,000 holidays on sale. The tour operator had already announced that it would be adding Cancun in Mexico and French winter sports destination, Chambéry to its Cardiff network.

Birns acknowledged that the airport's recovery after the Covid shutdown had been hampered by the collapse of both Thomas Cook and Flybe and the loss of three out of four of its hub destinations. That left just KLM's route to its Amsterdam hub, which has been operating from Cardiff for over 35 years.

881,000 passengers passed

through the airport between January and December last year, which is 5% up on 2023. Looking ahead, he said "resecuring the hub connectivity is important because the hubs can bring a lot of people to Wales. The airport is the gateway to the country, and we have the potential to bring in significant amounts of visitors, with all the economic value that entails. We see a big opportunity for inbound tourism. If we look at our KLM service, for example, more than 60% of the customers on that are visitors to Wales. The demand is high, and we need to get those lost hub services back up and running". He indicated that the airport is aiming to secure routes to France, Germany and the Middle East.

"Another part of what we are missing" he said "is the capacity we had in 2019 on some of our major trunk routes. It is a lot lower now than it was then. We were at 14 flights a week to Dublin, but we are currently only getting back up to six. To Edinburgh we were at 16 flights a week; we are currently only at five. So there are gaps in frequency that we need to see reinstated. We serve Majorca, Malaga, Alicante, Faro and Crete, but with nowhere near the right amount of frequency to meet the demand".

Birns took over as CEO of Cardiff Airport, which is owned by the Welsh Government, in August 2020 "with a remit of stabilising the ship and making sure we could see ourselves through Covid. We were then given a remit to regrow the business and a major part of that is focussing heavily on diversification of our income. We are very fortunate to have a 230-acre site, all attached to a 24-hour runway with no slot constraints, which is quite rare in the UK".

In addition to Cardiff Airport, he has responsibility for the

## **TUI has been operating out of Cardiff Airport for over 60 years. More than 550 people are employed by TUI across Wales, including over 100 at the airport. It has 28 stores across Welsh high streets.**



neighbouring airfield of St Athan, formerly RAF St Athan, now a commercial, predominantly MRO-related, airfield. Birns noted that "because of the supply chain issues with Boeing and Airbus for delivery of aircraft, airlines are having to look after their aircraft longer and maintain them and keep them flying, so there is very high demand in the sector for MRO".

"We are running Cardiff and St Athan airports together" he said "There are over 4,000 people employed across the two sites, and we are typically driving well over £200m a year in economic GVA to Wales. We have three major MRO centres, two flying schools, three FBOs, a major cargo operation and the passenger activities. We also play a pivotal role in helping Wales to secure major sporting events and have signed a contract with UEFA to help host the Euro 2028 football tournament, with the opening match to be played in Cardiff".

The airport regularly welcomes thousands of customers travelling in and out of Wales for major events like the annual Six Nations rugby championship and high-profile concerts in Cardiff and Swansea.

Birns said he is also very proud of the role that Cardiff Airport plays in inspiring the next generation of aviation talent, with an international centre for aerospace training based at the airport. A unique university degree programme delivered by Cardiff Met University, in partnership with Cardiff Airport and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, offers students a BA (Hons) course in aviation management. Now in its third year, Birns said that the course "provides high quality skills locally, which is attractive for further investment in aviation across Wales". ■



EGIS

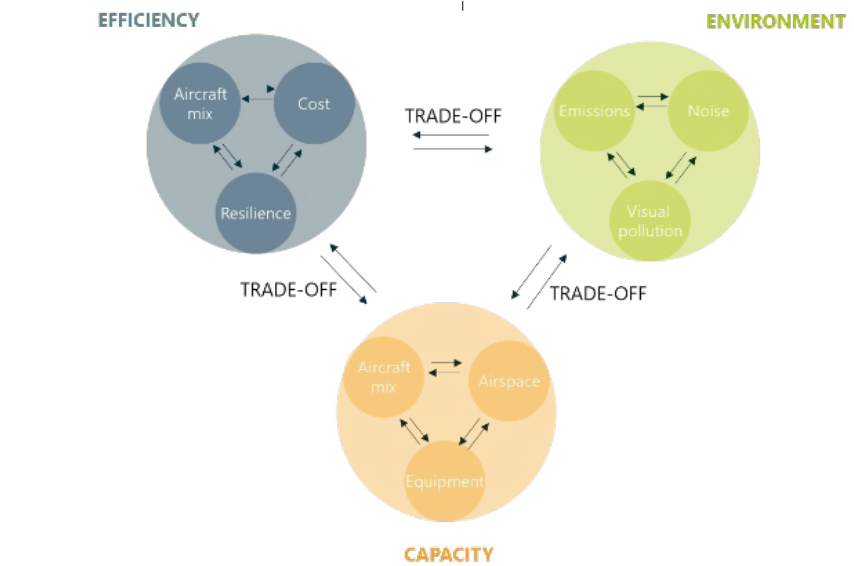
# PBN: A KEY ENABLER OF THE UK'S AIRSPACE MODERNISATION STRATEGY, BUT HOW?

Performance Based Navigation (PBN) is an important building block in the UK's Airspace Modernisation Strategy, but despite its many benefits, its implementation can be complex. Egis' Philip Church discusses the trade-offs for UK airports.

The Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority are jointly leading a programme to modernise UK airspace. This includes structural redesign, enhancing the functionality of operational systems and leveraging new technology to better integrate and manage all forms of air traffic. A key component is PBN, a system enabling precise flight paths that can help reduce carbon emissions and fuel costs while improving operational accuracy.

## A QUICK EXPLAINER

As a concept, PBN is nothing new. It has helped increase enroute capacity and contributed to emissions reduction. It also provides an effective way for aerodromes to implement instrument approach and departure procedures without needing to rely on physical infrastructure. However, it increases reliance on Global



Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), which are increasingly subject to jamming and other attacks.

From a deployment perspective, the difficulty in minimising local impacts can be exacerbated by the technical requirements and limitations on PBN when used in congested airspace, with multiple interdependent

Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) and Standard Instrument Arrivals (STARs) and needing to accommodate a mix of conventional procedures for non-equipped aircraft. Route design might be the easiest part when you consider the complex Air Traffic Control procedures and the lengthy regulatory approvals needed.

## THE TRADE-OFFS

Achieving the potential benefits of PBN requires balancing several factors which have a direct impact on the operation. It will not always be possible to balance all the competing requirements, and selecting the priorities may need to consider more than just local impacts. The figure above illustrates this dependency. As the PBN impact moves further away from the airport into the wider Terminal Maneuvring Area (TMA) and connections to the enroute phase, the complexity of balancing the different options becomes even greater. For example, as part of work to modernise the airspace in Amsterdam Schiphol's TMA, Egis tested 156 individual scenarios across six key measures for two different time horizons. This involved 588 runs through fast-time simulation software to identify efficiency and capacity impacts and 96 runs through noise modelling software to evaluate the environmental impacts of the various measures.

### 1. Environment

PBN has a role to play by providing stabilised flight profiles and supporting continuous climb and descent operations. Given the precise nature of the track that is to be flown, this means that modern flight management systems can optimise the trajectory. Future Airspace Strategy Implementation proposals to move stacks higher would support this but could lead to longer PBN routes, decreasing Air Traffic Control flexibility and potentially impacting capacity.

On departure, the most efficient operation is for the initial climb to be done as quickly as possible (reduced CO<sub>2</sub> and minimised fuel burn), which requires more thrust and generates more noise closer to the airport. It's not just about



Philip Church

**A key component is PBN, a system enabling precise flight paths that can help reduce carbon emissions and fuel costs while improving operational accuracy.**

emissions. Even though modern aircraft are quieter, seeing a stream of planes can still lead to complaints about visual pollution, especially when they overfly an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Nevertheless, airports must work within the constraints of their specific location, such as proximity to urban areas, terrain, and

existing infrastructure. This means that these environmental pressures might not be manageable within the PBN design limitations, or they might need to be adjusted due to coordination requirements with nearby airports.

### 2. Efficiency

A well-designed PBN network ensures efficient aircraft flow.

However, maintaining capacity might require more airspace or be limited by the need for compatibility with conventional navigation infrastructure. Minimising the amount of vectoring and enabling continuous climb/descent operations delivers environmental efficiency but potentially at the cost of a reduction in capacity. For example, using only speed control (not vectors) and allowing the aircraft to manage its descent will require STARs to have enough track miles to maintain separation. Retaining level segments and vectoring may increase capacity but will reduce the efficiency, increase the fuel burn and increase the overall costs of the operation.

Recent increases in GNSS jamming and spoofing have highlighted a need for PBN to be designed with backup infrastructure (e.g. distance measuring equipment – DME/DME). This is a problem that is gaining global attention. From an airport’s perspective, this might seem far removed from the local issue, but it can directly impact airline operations. If GNSS is lost because of spoofing, it may not be possible to switch back to PBN for the remainder of the flight (aircraft system dependent), and reversion to vectoring or conventional procedures will have direct impacts on capacity and the environment.

While retaining suitable infrastructure to support such contingencies might be possible for some airports, for other smaller airports, the business case might preclude such investment. Disruption across the network might be a consequence of this trade-off.

**3. Capacity**

Air travel is recovering quickly to pre-COVID levels. PBN can be an enabler to capacity – given the right volumes of airspace, such as

**Any change to the PBN environment requires an analysis of the trade-offs, flight trials, consultation and engagement with all stakeholders to address concerns, explain the complexities and achieve consensus.**

with ‘point merge’. As highlighted by the environmental trade-offs, allowing aircraft to fly their optimal routes means that each needs to be able to calculate its own descent/climb profile. We know from our support to Gatwick trials that PBN technology offers advantages through highly precise lateral track-keeping and maintaining aircraft within an optimal altitude range during descent. However, there is additional complexity in managing arrivals noise, where aircraft type and configuration, descent management, meteorological conditions and terrain absorption all play a part. For example, overly steep descent approaches can also result in higher noise levels due to changes in aircraft configuration, such as increased use of flaps, slats, or speed brakes.

**THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

While PBN is pivotal to the UK’s Airspace Modernisation Strategy, its implementation involves navigating complex trade-offs. Recent live trials and simulation studies have provided critical insights, increasing the industry’s understanding of this essential building block in airspace modernisation. Any change to

the PBN environment requires an analysis of the trade-offs, flight trials, consultation and engagement with all stakeholders to address concerns, explain the complexities and achieve consensus. These can be time-consuming and contentious, making the use of fast time simulations that consider airspace constraints and fleet mix a valuable tool for down-selection and balancing requirements. ■



**Egis is an AirportsUK Silver Member.**

# THE AIRPORTSUK ANNUAL DINNER 18 MARCH MARKS 18 YEARS OF GRAND AVIATION SECTOR GATHERINGS AT GROSVENOR HOUSE

By Marko Saaret, Events and Member Relations Manager, AirportsUK.

In 2007, the Airport Operators Association invited its guests for the first time to the JW Marriott Grosvenor House. Little did anyone know then, that this would remain the venue for UK aviation's biggest social event for 18 years. Yes, that's right, this year will be our 18th consecutive black-tie gathering at the stylish and historical Grosvenor House -- and this for one very simple reason -- our guests love it!

Of course, the venue is grand, impressive and conveniently large to accommodate all of us without feeling overcrowded. But it also carries a rich history going back to the 1920s -- and beyond.

The hotel which opened here in 1929 was built on the site of the 19th century London residence of the Dukes of Westminster, whose family name is Grosvenor. Nowadays, The Great Room

is regularly used as the venue for many prominent awards ceremonies such as The Asian Awards, Pride of Britain Awards, as well as charity balls and other events, and it is often seen on British television. However, it originally contained an ice-rink where in 1933, Princess Elizabeth, the future Queen Elizabeth II, learnt to skate at just seven years of age. International ice hockey matches were also played here with the venue being home to a Canadian ice hockey team, recruited from among the Canadians living in London.

Ten thousand sandbags and five miles worth of blackout material protected the building during World War II -- and it served the war effort. At first The Great Room was an Officers' Sunday Club and then from 1943 it was the US officers' mess, with General Dwight

D. Eisenhower among its regular visitors.

After renovation work costing £142 million and lasting four years, The Great Room became one of the largest ballrooms in Europe, with a maximum capacity of 2,000 seated guests. The AirportsUK Annual Dinner is not, of course, about numbers, but we are proud to be here for one of the most anticipated occasions for the entire UK aviation sector.

By popular demand, we have invited David Meade, who was with us last year, to be with us again for another year's entertainment.

With only a few days left until this grand event, please make sure you have booked your tickets for what will be without a doubt a wonderful night -- and a highlight of the aviation sector's year. ■



FIRE SAFETY

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# NEW AIRPORTSUK FORUM TO FOCUS ON FIRE SAFETY

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AirportsUK has created a new group to provide guidance to airports across the country on how to enhance their fire safety management practices.

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The new forum will also seek to work with the Home Office, the Building Safety Regulator and the UK Civil Aviation Authority on national legislation, regulation and guidance on fire safety in the airport environment.

Mark Proudley, Group Head of Fire Safety Policy and Standards at MAG, who proposed the group, told The Airport Operator that he had been impressed by the energy and enthusiasm evident at its first two meetings, with airports of all sizes keen to benefit from the fire safety management forum, which brings together airport fire safety professionals from across the country.

Proudley said "This group provides a platform to share experience so that we can drive continuous improvement in fire safety standards across UK airports. Our primary objective as fire safety professionals is protecting life safety, with further objectives around property protection and the operational continuity of our airports".

The forum is a new sub-working group of AirportsUK's Health and Safety and Rescue and Fire Fighting Services working groups. Proudley co-chairs it along with Heathrow's Principal Fire Engineer, Kabbe Njie, and London Luton's Life Safety Senior Engineer, John Moriarty. Proudley said the new group would for the first time offer opportunities to talk about fire safety in depth with airport experts in fire safety management and engineering.

An important focus for the group will be to look at how it can contribute to national standards around fire safety and the airport environment. Specifically, it plans to:

- work with the Home Office on its planned review of fire safety guidance documents such as

the fire safety risk assessment for transport premises

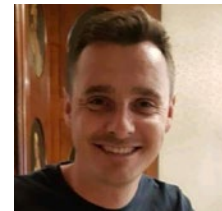
- link in with the different industry bodies that relate to work on high-risk buildings, currently focussed on high rise buildings but expected eventually to encompass airport terminal buildings and
- collaborate with the CAA on developing new guidance around fire safety in the airport environment.

Over 50 people participated in the forum's kick-off meeting, held on Bonfire Night last year, and a similar number attended the second meeting held at Heathrow Airport last month, where the main item on the agenda was a presentation from Heathrow on the Building Safety Act and its application to airports. The next meeting in May will discuss the opportunities with the CAA to improve fire safety management guidance, electric vehicle fire safety controls for the airside environment and managing fire risks associated with lithium-ion battery-powered products across the airport estate.

Proudley said that the group is also looking at how it can support all of its members, specifically smaller airports outside of the meeting, potentially through online forums "where people can raise questions and get support from fire safety professionals, because not everybody at these airports has a dedicated fire safety lead or someone to talk to about fire safety challenges."

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation Compliance at AirportsUK, said she was very grateful to all three co-chairs and the members for their invaluable feedback and collaboration. She said "Their efforts underscored the need to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders to address

existing and emerging risks, as we did with last year's lithium battery forum. The collective input from everyone involved not only helped identify key areas of focus but also fostered the exchange of best practices and important lessons learned for the benefit of the entire industry. These included the importance of upskilling the workforce in fire safety management to ensure that airports maintain the highest levels of protection for passengers, staff and infrastructure". ■



John Moriarty



Kabbe Njie



Mark Proudley

NEW MEMBERS

# AIRPORTSUK WELCOMES MITIE AS CORPORATE PARTNER AND TWO NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Mitie, which describes itself as the UK's leading facilities management company, has joined AirportsUK as a Corporate Partner.



## Mitie

The company says that "making sure the UK's airports run without a hitch requires seamless facilities management. Everything from state-of-the-art cleaning to security, colleague training and maintenance must be delivered to the highest standards. Combining cutting-edge technologies with industry expertise, Mitie provides a full range of end-to-end services to keep environments clean, safe, operational and efficient".

Its current UK airport clients include Belfast City, Birmingham, East Midlands, Heathrow, London City, London Luton, London Stansted and Manchester.

A case study on the company's website

describes its partnership with Heathrow, which began in 2010, where a 200-strong Mitie team provides 24/7 engineering support, including maintenance, monitoring and installation services across all terminals.

In a testimonial, Nick Eckert, Head of Engineering for Heathrow Terminals 1, 2 and 3 and Specialist Systems said "The relationship that Heathrow holds with Mitie is strong and growing stronger. Mitie are always responsive to technical challenges and pro-actively seek to offer the airport value for money whilst maintaining asset performance. The forecast for the next few years continues to show significant growth in passenger numbers, continuing to use the same four

terminals. These will be busier than ever and as a consequence, will require an extremely high standard of care to ensure that passengers and colleagues transit through and work for an airport that is fit for the future. I know that Mitie will rise to this challenge".



### Comet

Comet, a new associate member, is a technology-enabled root cause analysis tool designed to help organisations identify and resolve systemic issues that lead to incidents and hinder performance. It offers a suite of digital tools for incident management, audits, inspections, supply chain assurance and AI-driven analytics. Comet says that it enhances safety, compliance and efficiency by streamlining investigations, tracking corrective actions, and mitigating risks before they escalate.

The company says that its structured methodology ensures consistent investigations, empowering teams to uncover underlying causes and drive lasting

improvements. The tool is described as highly configurable and easy to implement, integrating seamlessly with major HSE platforms and adapting to specific operational needs. Comet says that, with AI-powered assistance and intuitive workflows, it simplifies complex challenges, turning data into clear, actionable insights.



### De-Wipe

De-Wipe describes its products as the only award-winning, scientifically proven decontamination solution that effectively reduces the risk of occupational cancer. Its range of products - including decontamination wipes, hand, hair and body wash, equipment wipes and equipment wash - are designed to remove harmful toxins and carcinogens from the skin before they can penetrate and increase cancer risk.

The company says that airside professionals such as ground handlers, aircraft crew, refuelers and traffic control personnel are frequently exposed to dangerous toxins without notice, with those working near aircraft during refuelling

particularly vulnerable. It says that its scientifically-validated decontamination wipes effectively eliminate cancer-causing pollutants from the skin, providing essential protection against occupational hazards.





## From around the sector

# BOURNEMOUTH AIRPORT CELEBRATES FIRST JET2 FLIGHTS

**Bournemouth Airport has celebrated its inaugural Jet2 flight as the airline and tour operator launched flights and holidays from its newest UK airport base.**

The official arrival of Jet2.com and Jet2holidays in Bournemouth with an inaugural flight to Tenerife on 4 February marked the start of a season that will see the companies operate to 16 destinations across Europe, the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands. Two-based aircraft will operate up to 27 weekly flights.

In response to strong demand the companies brought forward the launch of the new airport base by two months, from 1 April to 4 February. As well as bringing forward the launch date, they are expanding their summer 2026 programme with 21 destinations and a fleet of three-based aircraft.

Speaking on 4 February, Andrew Bell, CEO of Regional and City Airports, which owns Bournemouth Airport, said "Today marks a milestone moment for Bournemouth Airport as we proudly celebrate the first Jet2.com and Jet2holidays flight and the significant



start of operations at Bournemouth as their newest base airport".

He added "The arrival of Jet2.com and Jet2holidays, alongside our wider route development initiatives, has acted as a catalyst for new employment opportunities and a multi-million-pound investment in our

airport infrastructure and facilities. These enhancements ensure that we are ready to embrace a period of exciting growth, while continuing to deliver a first-class experience for passengers".

Bournemouth Airport welcomed over a million passengers last year for the first time since 2008.

# GATWICK WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT THAT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT IS "MINDED TO APPROVE" ITS NORTHERN RUNWAY PLANS

**London Gatwick's CEO, Stewart Wingate, has welcomed the 27 February announcement by Heidi Alexander on the airport's plans to bring its Northern Runway into routine use.**

Wingate said: "We welcome the announcement that the

Secretary of State for Transport is minded to approve our Northern Runway plans and outlined a clear pathway to full approval later in the year".

He added that "it is vital that any planning conditions attached to the final approval enable us to make a decision to invest £2.2bn in this project and realise the

full benefits of bringing the Northern Runway into routine use. We will of course engage fully in the extended process for a final decision".

Wingate said "we stand ready to deliver this project which will create 14,000 jobs and generate £1bn a year in economic benefits. By increasing resilience and capacity we can

support the UK's position as a leader in global connectivity and deliver substantial trade and economic growth in the South East and more broadly. We have also outlined to government how we plan to grow responsibly to meet increasing passenger demand, while minimising noise and environmental impacts".

## HEATHROW ANNOUNCES MULTI-BILLION-POUND UPGRADE AHEAD OF SUMMER PROPOSALS FOR A THIRD RUNWAY

**Heathrow's CEO, Thomas Woldbye, has announced a multi-billion-pound phased investment, the largest in the airport's history, beginning this year and including new investment in terminal infrastructure and aircraft stands.**

The airport will work with airlines and the UK Civil Aviation Authority to finalise plans to invest in the capacity of Terminal 2 and make changes to optimise and increase passenger capacity in Terminal 5. It will also reconfigure and improve the layout of the airfield, increasing the number of aircraft stands, to improve resilience and punctuality.

New infrastructure will have improved environmental credentials and will use more sustainable sources of power. The investment programme also includes plans to improve bus and coach connections.

Woldbye said that the plans to upgrade terminal buildings, enhance the passenger experience and improve resilience and sustainability would

ensure that Heathrow remains globally competitive, as well as creating opportunities for UK businesses in this Parliament and beyond. His address was delivered at British Steel, Scunthorpe, and included a commitment to maximise supply chain opportunities for UK steel producers.

He also confirmed that the airport is developing proposals for a third runway, which he described as "critical for the country's future economic success", to

share with Government by summer. The summer announcement will include "the pathway to a third runway", as well as full details of the investment programme and phasing.

Woldbye said "With strict environmental safeguards, expanding Heathrow will prove that the UK economy can be grown responsibly and deliver on commitments to future generations. This project can only go ahead if we meet the rules on noise, air quality and carbon that the

Government sets out in the Airports National Policy Statement. It's as simple as that".

He added that "even though we're serving more passengers than ever before, our noise footprint is smaller and we're also using more sustainable aviation fuel than ever before. I want to assure you that we are committed to listening and working with our local communities to provide them with the certainty they deserve, ending years of doubt".





## From around the sector

# MAJOR EXPANSION IN FLIGHTS FROM CORNWALL AIRPORT NEWQUAY TO THE ISLES OF SCILLY

**Seven times more passengers are expected to fly from Newquay to the Isles of Scilly this summer thanks to an expanded schedule announced by Skybus.**

The Isle of Scilly Steamship Group's airline will soon gear up from last year's three weekly flights to two flights every day, except Sunday, from 12 May. A further increase from 1 July will see a third flight added each day at lunchtime from Monday to Saturday.

Amy Smith, Head of

Commercial at Cornwall Airport Newquay, said "This significant boost in flights underscores the strong partnership we've built with Skybus over more than three decades and reinforces our airport's role as a vital gateway for the Isles of Scilly. The enhanced schedule provides greater convenience and connectivity for passengers and highlights the continued demand for this popular route. We're excited to support Skybus as it creates more opportunities for travel between our unique

regions".

Skybus' 30-minute flights between Newquay and St Mary's Airport in the Isles of Scilly will be operated by the airline's four-strong fleet of 17-seat DHC6 Twin Otter aircraft. Flight timings have been designed to enable passengers to arrange connecting flights from Cornwall Airport Newquay to a wide range of destinations throughout the UK, including London, Manchester and Edinburgh.

Each Skybus flight to the hub island of St Mary's is met by a shuttle

bus offering transfers on the island and to the harbour for boat transfers to the four other inhabited islands – Tresco (best-known for the sub-tropical Tresco Abbey Gardens), St Martin's, Bryher and St Agnes, the southernmost tip of England.

Cornwall Airport Newquay welcomed over 400,000 passengers last year. Upgrades to the airport's terminal building this spring include improved check-in and security processing and an enhanced departure lounge.

# RECORD YEAR FOR EDINBURGH AIRPORT

**Edinburgh Airport welcomed more than 15m passengers last year, a milestone achieved for the first time ever at a Scottish airport.**

Gordon Dewar, the airport's Chief Executive, said "It's great to hit this major passenger milestone that shows the clear interest that people have in tourism and travel, both to and from Scotland. It's

an achievement that reflects the incredible spirit of our team, the excitement of our passengers to see the world, and the growing connections we're proud to foster across Scotland and beyond. We look forward to seeing even more people this year".

Highlights of the record-breaking 2024 included Emirates returning to Edinburgh with a daily service to Dubai, JetBlue entering the

Scottish market with daily summer flights to New York and WestJet expanding its presence by adding Halifax and Toronto to its Calgary service.

New routes and airlines for 2025 include the return of American Airlines and its Philadelphia route, JetBlue adding Boston to its options and Austrian Airlines entering the Scottish market with its seasonal route

to Vienna. easyJet has announced that it will base a 10th A320 aircraft at Edinburgh Airport this summer to facilitate new routes to Bordeaux, Düsseldorf, Enfidha (Tunisia), Marrakech, Milan Linate, Olbia (Sardinia) and Zurich.

Work is also underway to improve passenger facilities at the airport, with an expansion to its check-in hall and a range of new food and drink options.

Virginia Barrett and Simon Geere



## FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT LAUNCHES NEW AIRPORT OPERATIONS TRAINING COURSE

**Farnborough Airport has launched its inaugural training course in airport operations, developed in partnership with Farnborough College of Technology.**

The 'Farnborough Airport Professional Certificate in Airport Operations' is a unique eight-week training course designed for adult learners and combines college studying alongside hands-on learning at the

airport.

Customer service, health and safety, security and ground handling are among the subjects covered in the course, which is aimed at giving students the foundational knowledge needed to apply for positions in the industry, whether at Farnborough or elsewhere.

The airport's CEO, Simon Geere, said "As an employer of choice in the local area, we aim to attract, train and retain talent from

all backgrounds and experiences. In doing so, we hope to support local people into the workplace and into the aviation industry. With this in mind, we are delighted to be working with the Farnborough College of Technology to launch our new training course, building on our pioneering past and developing the next generation of skilled professionals right here in the local community".

Farnborough College's Principal, Virginia Barrett,

said "The college has a long history of developing local people for careers in aviation, so we are delighted to extend our training to support an even wider number of roles at the airport to meet demand. I would encourage anyone interested in training for a new career to look into the course and the careers it could lead to".



## From around the sector

### NEW CEO AT LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT

#### A 25-year aviation industry veteran has taken over as CEO of London Southend Airport.

Jude Winstanley, who started in his new post in December, has previously worked for British Airways, Swissport and International Aviation Group with roles across ground handling, cargo, airport operations and customer experience.

The airport's Chairman, Hamish de Run, said Winstanley's "deep expertise and knowledge of the aviation industry will guide and drive

us through our next phase of growth and innovation".

Winstanley said he is "passionate about providing passengers with exceptional customer service". He described the airport as a key asset to east London, Essex, Southend and East Anglia and said that he would aim to accelerate its growth momentum.

Stressing that the airport offers an immediate solution for London's capacity needs, he said "London Southend Airport is uniquely positioned to help address the

current capacity crunch in London and the South East. Our fully operational runway, growing airline partnerships, and seamless connectivity to central London via rail and road makes us the perfect choice for airlines and passengers right now. While other airports plan for tomorrow, London Southend is ready today".

This month sees the opening of EasyJet's 10th UK base at the airport, with the airline offering ten destinations from 30 March, deploying three 186-seat A320neo aircraft. Next month

the airport's new airline partner, Eastern Airways, will launch daily flights to Cornwall Airport Newquay.



Jude Winstanley

### JET2 AND TUI SIGN MAINTENANCE DEALS AT TEESSIDE AIRPORT

#### Jet2 and TUI have signed maintenance deals with Willis Aviation for work at the company's Teesside Airport base.

The Jet2.com deal is a long-term agreement for Willis to provide in-depth 'C-Checks' on its Boeing 737s. The regular checks require a large majority of the aircraft's components to be inspected. TUI has

also signed a long-term agreement with Willis for maintenance services to be carried out on its narrow-body aircraft. TUI Boeing 737NGs will be the first to see maintenance checks at Teesside.

Phil Forster, Managing Director at Teesside Airport, described the deals as big boosts for the airport. He said "They show that we're growing as an attractive option for aircraft MRO

with operators sitting up and taking notice of what our site has on offer. Having quality companies like Jet2 and TUI more involved with Teesside is a huge boost. Firms can see their aircraft maintained and painted at Teesside and this strengthens our push to see more aircraft based here".

Meanwhile, aviation services and technology company, Draken, has secured its Teesside

operations for the next four years after agreeing a new deal with the Ministry of Defence. The company has signed a new £173m contract with the MOD to support military training with the RAF. Draken's experienced ex-military fighter pilots regularly fly against the RAF over the North Sea as part of the 'enemy' force in training for Lightning and Typhoon fighter pilots.

## AGS AIRPORTS HAS NEW OWNER AND NEW CEO

### AviAlliance has acquired AGS Airports from Ferrovial and Macquarie and appointed Kam Jandu as CEO.

The new owner of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports is a wholly owned subsidiary of PSP Investments, one of Canada's largest pension investors. AGS Airports joins the company's global airport network, which includes stakes in Athens, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and San Juan (Puerto Rico) airports.

Gerhard Schroeder, Managing Director of AviAlliance, said "Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports are excellent assets with strong growth potential. They will benefit significantly from the forward-thinking exchange of expertise in growing connectivity, expanding passenger numbers and delivering superior passenger experience from across our airport portfolio".

The new AGS CEO, Kam Jandu, former CEO of Budapest Airport, said that the three airports "present growth

opportunities for airlines and other business partners alike. We aim to further improve their economic impact in a sustainable manner for the benefit of all stakeholders".

He added "We have so much potential for growth and best of all, a measured political landscape to realise these ambitions on a regional and national scale. Working hand in hand with airlines, associations, key suppliers and forward-thinking Ministers is the perfect catalyst to drive us forward. We have an



Kam Jandu

amazing team of people across the group who are incredibly excited about the future, just like me".

Charles Hammond OBE, former CEO of Forth Ports Ltd, has been appointed Chairman of AGS Airports.

## STANSTED TO SUBMIT PLANNING APPLICATION TO INCREASE ANNUAL PASSENGER LIMIT TO 51M

### London Stansted Airport will submit a planning application "in the coming months" to increase its annual passenger limit to 51m passengers from the 43m currently permitted.

There would be no increase in the number of flights at the airport. The ability to serve a larger number of passengers is based on airlines planning to use larger models of aircraft than previously forecast,

enabling more people to fly on each plane.

Ahead of the planning application the airport is carrying out a public consultation. The airport's Managing Director, Gareth Powell, said "We understand the airport's operation and growth is an important issue, especially for people living close to us, so the consultation is an opportunity to engage widely with our local community on how Stansted grows in the most sustainable and

efficient way possible to make the best use of its existing capacity".

A new airport sustainable development plan sets out how Stansted will manage the impact of the airport's operation on local communities to the 2040s. It includes improvements to Junction 8 of the M11 to reduce congestion, working with train operators to improve the Stansted Express and with partners to nearly double the size of Stansted College, to train more young people.

The airport also plans to relieve pressure on local roads by ensuring that half of all journeys are by public transport and by providing funds for local bus services and roads and measures to tackle fly-parking. It says that airport infrastructure will be powered by 100% renewable energy helping to achieve the airport's target of Net Zero by 2038. The airport recently announced a £1.1bn investment programme, including an extension to the existing terminal.

# AIRPORTSUK MEETINGS & EVENTS 2025



- **Smaller Airports Roundtable (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
18 March @ 1:30pm – 3:00pm
- **Annual General Meeting**  
**Grosvenor House Hotel**  
18 March @ 6:00pm
- **Annual Dinner (Black Tie)**  
**Grosvenor House Hotel**  
18 March @ 7:00pm
- **Security Group**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
20 March @ 11:00am – 12:30pm
- **Health & Safety**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
20 March @ 1:00pm – 3:00pm
- **Security Group (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
20 March @ 1:30pm – 3:00pm
- **Rescue & Fire Fighting Services (RFFS)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
3 April @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Public Affairs Communications Network (PACN) & Policy Committee (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
8 April @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Sustainability Working Group**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
24 April @ 10:00am – 12:00 midday
- **AirportsUK Board Meeting**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
29 April @ 10:30am – 1:00pm
- **Airspace & Air Traffic Services (AATS)**  
**Farnborough Airport & AAIB visit**  
30 April @ 2:00pm – 4:30pm
- **Airspace & Air Traffic Services (AATS)**  
**AAIB visit**  
1 May @ 11:00am – 1:30pm
- **Rescue & Fire Fighting Services (RFFS)**  
**sub-working group Fire Safety Forum**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
8 May @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **UK Airports Health & Safety Week**  
**Various Airports**  
19 May – 23 May
- **General Counsels Forum (Airports only)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
23 May @ 2:00pm – 3:30pm
- **Planners Forum (Airports only)**  
**Airport – location tbc**  
June date tbc
- **Health & Safety**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
4 June @ 11:00am – 1:30pm
- **Public Affairs Communications Network (PACN) & Policy Committee (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
10 June @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Security Group**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
12 June @ 11:00am – 12:30pm



- **Security Group (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
12 June @ 1:30pm – 3:00pm
- **Sustainability Working Group**  
**Airport – location tbc**  
19 June @ 11:00am – 4:00pm
- **AirportsUK Board Meeting**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
23 June @ 10:30am – 1:00pm
- **Airport Conference: Operations**  
**Raddison Blu – Manchester Airport**  
24–25 June (launching end of March)
- **Rescue & Fire Fighting Services (RFFS)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
26 June @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Aerodrome, Safety & Compliance (ASC)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
9 July @ 2:00pm – 4:30pm
- **Aerodrome Safeguarding**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
3 September @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Health & Safety**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
9 September @ 1:00pm – 3:00pm
- **Sustainability Working Group**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
11 September @ 10:00am – 12:00 midday
- **Public Affairs Communications Network (PACN) & Policy Committee (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
16 September @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Airport Conference: Security**  
**Delta Hotels Marriott – Liverpool**  
17–18 September (launching end of May)
- **Airspace & Air Traffic Services (AATS)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
29 September @ 11:00am – 1:30pm
- **Aerodrome, Safety & Compliance (ASC)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
1 October @ 1:00pm – 4:30pm
- **AirportsUK Board Meeting**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
2 October @ 10:30am – 1:00pm
- **Planners Forum (Airports only)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
7 October @ 11:00am – 12:30pm
- **Rescue & Fire Fighting (RFFS)**  
**Airport – location tbc**  
23 October @ 11:30am – 4:00pm
- **Public Affairs Communications Network (PACN) & Policy Committee (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
4 November @ 11:00am – 1:00pm
- **Health & Safety**  
**Airport – location tbc**  
12 November @ 12:00 midday – 4:00pm
- **AirportsUK Board Meeting**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
18 November @ 10:30am – 3:00pm
- **Aerodrome Safeguarding Seminar**  
**Airport – location tbc**  
26 November @ 12:00 midday – 4:00pm
- **General Counsels Forum (Airports only)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
28 November @ 2:00pm – 4:00pm
- **Airspace & Air Traffic Services (AATS)**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
3 December @ 11:00am – 1:30pm
- **Security Group**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
4 December @ 11:00am – 12:30pm
- **Security Group (Airports only)**  
**AirportsUK Office**  
4 December @ 1:30pm – 3:00pm



# AIRPORTSUK WORKING GROUPS



## Aerodrome Safeguarding Working Group

The Aerodrome Safeguarding Working Group consists of airport members responsible for safeguarding activities at their respective airports. This group brings together the AirportsUK members under the safeguarding discipline to act as a single point of contact for airport safeguarding technical and regulatory matters in the UK. Safeguarding activities at an aerodrome involve liaising with Local Planning Authorities, analysing the impact on the airports safe operations due to

a development including: the building heights, landscaping, wildlife hazards, impact on CNS equipment and instrument flight procedures (IFPs), glint and glare, lighting and obstacle lighting. The main purpose of the working group is to exchange best practice and technical expertise, to debate and consult on regulatory development and to liaise with the CAA on changes in the current and or future regulatory framework. The membership works towards ensuring consistent standards are

being delivered by all stakeholders in the industry.

The Working Group meets at least twice a year, and also holds an annual seminar by visiting one of the airports. During these meetings, industry professionals discuss relevant practices, new regulations, and aim to upscale their skills through bespoke workshops. They also liaise with industry experts to learn about new technologies and trends.

**Adele Gammarano**

Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

## Sub-working group: drones use in daily operations (airports only)

This group is composed of SMEs from the Aerodrome Safety, compliance and safeguarding, along with some members of the airspace team. The primary focus is on integrating drones into daily airport operations, including their use for approach light inspections, surveys, project documentation, and more.

The sub-working group aims to address key challenges faced by airports, with a major topic of discussion being the increasing volume of drone permit applications from both internal and external stakeholders. The group will explore strategies to manage this influx effectively. Additionally, the group has agreed

to focus on establishing guidelines for regular drone operations within airport perimeters, ensuring safe and efficient integration into existing workflows.

**Adele Gammarano**

Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

## Aerodrome Safety & Compliance Working Group

Operations managers and directors from airports come together with specialist stakeholders in the Aerodrome Safety & Compliance Working Group to facilitate and actively promote technical knowledge & best practice sharing and achieving the highest levels of Safety and Compliance in a consistent manner across Aerodromes. The group

coordinates consultation and open communication with Aerodromes and regulatory bodies to ensure safe working practices, supported by robust reporting methods in all relevant operational business units.

The discussions within the group cover a wide range of topics, including runway safety, proposed ICAO Annex 14 amendments, compliance requirements and

**Adele Gammarano**  
Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

aerodrome audits. Additionally, there is a focus on ensuring smooth airport operations during the winter season, studying existing and emerging safety risks (such as runway incursions and excursions, laser attacks, etc), and identifying potential solutions to mitigate their impact. The group is also responsible for managing the implementation of regulatory developments and requirements.

## Airspace & Air Traffic Services Working Group (AATS)

The Airspace and Air Traffic Services Working Group (AATS) was formed in 2018 when the Airspace Modernisation Strategy was first published, and in response to new developments in order to ensure best practice sharing on a number of issues in the Air Traffic industry. The group takes the lead on a range of topics

from the changing regulatory landscape of ATS, ranging from Airspace Modernisation, and integration of new technologies for new airspace users to ATCOs skills and resilience. This dynamic group is interested in sharing knowledge and best practice while ensuring fair representation for all ANSPs. Through AirportsUK,

**Adele Gammarano**  
Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

we work closely with CAA, DfT, and other relevant industry bodies to influence regulatory reforms. Our main goal is to flag any conflicts between existing regulations and proposed new ones, such as the new Information Security Management System (ISMS) related to cybersecurity and ensure a smooth transition.

## General Counsels Forum (airports only)

The AirportsUK General Counsel Forum's purpose and scope is to discuss matters of common interest to UK airports and with respect to members' roles within each airport. This will include

legal, governance, compliance and regulatory matters affecting the aviation industry in the UK. The group will act in accordance with each airport's confidentiality obligations regarding its own and

**Christopher Snelling**  
Policy Director  
AirportsUK

its business partners' information. The group will not discuss any matters which could put members at risk of breaching competition law.

# AIRPORTSUK WORKING GROUPS



## Health & Safety Working Group (H&S)

The group represents a broad mix of UK airports and specialist stakeholders to collaborate on subjects of common interest and purpose. It seeks to improve its collective ability to manage occupational health and safety risks, a platform where members consider arising risks and feed into other industry groups or consultations. The group openly shares information, performance, procedures,

learning from incidents, and best practice experiences to benefit wider upskilling and focuses on maximising best practice by sharing safety performance metrics allowing for UK airport benchmarking. The group meets quarterly and organises at least one annual visit to the airport to share best practices. Members are also invited to join other working groups such as RFFS, which reviews risks associated with

**Adele Gammarano**  
Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

new technology and conducts trials to ensure that procedures and standards are taken into account. The Health & Safety Group is the lead AirportsUK group for the organisation of the very successful annual national campaign supported by CAA: UK Airports Health & Safety Week, which includes an award for the top three finalists.

## Planners Forum (airports only)

The Planners Forum meets three times a year. Two virtual meetings and one in person. There is the opportunity for regular emails between Planners to raise issues

and share best practice. This is administered and facilitated through the AirportsUK. The types of issues covered are: Permitted Development Rights, Compulsory

**Rupinder Pamme**  
Senior Policy Manager  
AirportsUK

Purchase Orders, Surface Access, and Masterplans. The forum works in close collaboration with the Sustainability Working Group due to the overlapping of issues.

## Policy Committee (airports only)

The Policy Committee forms and shapes AirportsUK's positions on public policy issues and Government proposals. It meets both formally to update on and

discuss a full range of issues, as well as ad hoc to take up specific issues as they arise. Current issues include taxation of aviation, sustainability issues, borders,

**Christopher Snelling**  
Policy Director  
AirportsUK

airspace modernisation and airport/airline regulatory policy. The Policy Committee receives input from other bodies listed here on their areas of expertise.

## Public Affairs & Communications Network (PACN) (airports only)

**Peter Campbell**  
Head of Public Affairs & Media  
AirportsUK

The AirportsUK 's work in representing UK airports to politicians and the wider public is supported by the Public Affairs and Communications Network (PACN), which gathers communications professionals

from member airports. It informs and discusses AirportsUK's media priorities and tactics as well as outreach to MPs (including the Aviation, Tourism and Aerospace APPG), MSPs, MSs, MLAs and other directly elected figures

across the UK. PACN also offers the opportunity for airport colleagues to connect over work they are doing in support of their businesses.

## Rescue & Fire Fighting Services Working Group (RFFS)

**Adele Gammarano**  
Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

Airport Fire Managers and Senior Fire Service Officers from airports come together to share best practice and regulatory concerns which may affect the Rescue and Fire Fighting Services.

The group works closely with industry experts such as the Civil Aviation Authority and other government agencies such as the Environmental Agency to collaborate on professional discussions and industry

engagement. The focus of these discussions is on various topics such as the recruitment of Firefighters, the use of PFAS, the review of new hydrogen trials, sharing lessons learned on car park fires, and new technology available or sharing best practice to manage and contain electric fires. The group also implements RFFS Medical Standards and emergency preparedness around airport fuel farms. The group

meets quarterly and organises at least one annual visit to the airport to share best practice. Moreover, this group arranges ad-hoc joint forums with the H&S group to discuss particular trends or risks based on member's feedback, a prime example of such a forum is the associated risk with lithium-ion batteries in small devices and personal equipment.

## Sub-working group: Fire safety management

**Adele Gammarano**  
Head of Regulation & Compliance  
AirportsUK

This group is composed of SMEs from the Health & Safety, RFFS, and Fire Safety sectors, formed to address specific risks, as fire safety is often included under general health and safety. The Group's

aim is to enhance collaboration and share best practice among fire safety professionals in UK airports. It will focus on developing industry-wide fire safety policies and standards, with initial

discussions covering topics such as Article 22 compliance, fire risk assessments, evacuation management, and lithium-ion battery safety.

# AIRPORTSUK WORKING GROUPS



## Security Working Group (CTC security clearance required to attend meetings)

**Rupinder Pamme**  
Senior Policy Manager  
AirportsUK

AirportsUK Security Working Group gathers security compliance managers and airport heads of security to discuss the latest iterations of aviation security regulation, changing threats to aviation and the technology to respond to those threats. The Security Group is joined on a

quarterly basis by representatives from the AirportsUK's non-airport members who contribute a supply-wide perspective to discussions. The group is also joined by representatives from the Civil Aviation Authority and Department for Transport who update airports and other

attendees on the latest thinking regarding aviation security from Central Government. Recent topics of focus for the group include the Next Generation Security, the Access Pass Holders Information Distribution System (APHIDS).

## Sustainability Working Group

**Christopher Snelling**  
Policy Director  
AirportsUK

AirportsUK runs a Sustainability Working Group bringing together Sustainability and Environment Managers from across member airports to discuss and take collective action on the sector's commitment to Climate Change

obligations and other issues. The group meets four times a year: twice in person and twice virtually. The key issues identified for the coming years are climate change, noise, waste and adaptation. AirportsUK's full engagement in

this area is also addressed by our participation in (and part funding of) the cross-industry Sustainable Aviation (SA) group. This group receives feedback via AirportsUK on SA's work and shapes AirportsUK's input to it.



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