

THE AIRPORT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIRPORTSUK
SUMMER 2025

OPERATOR

LONDON SOUTHEND
AIRPORT growth story

LONDON LUTON AIRPORT
expansion backed

AGS AIRPORTS'
record investment

BENBECULA AIRPORT's
place in history

The industry has
"a huge part to
play in national
renewal"

**MIKE KANE MP,
MINISTER FOR
AVIATION**



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THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF AIRPORTSUK

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KAREN DEE

INTRODUCTION TO THE AIRPORT OPERATOR



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

By now, I am sure that you will all have finished your planning for a busy summer peak, which promises to be the busiest on record for UK airports, if the early data for passenger numbers this year are any indication.

That is a testament to how excellently every airport across the whole of the UK performs, that millions of people this summer will be able to go away on holiday or to arrive back in the country almost without giving it a second thought. Of course, there will be isolated challenges, I am sure, but our network is effective, efficient and professional enough that we know it will be solved with minimal fuss and disruption. That is one of our strengths as an industry, our resilience and ability to recover quickly to keep the UK connected. And when it comes to it, what we achieve day-in, day-out is quite remarkable.

We serve millions of flights a year, often in races against time to get arriving passengers off, clean and restock them, and board departing passengers. Hundreds of millions of journeys begin and end at our terminals, with umpteen more pieces of luggage, all needing to be processed, security screened and loaded on the right flights, or being reunited with weary travellers who have just landed and are desperate to get home. And let's not forget that our airports are our first line in guarding the security of the nation, making sure that the very, very few who mean us harm are not able to enter our borders.

This is all before we consider that airports generate huge amounts of wealth for the country and employ thousands of people, directly and indirectly. I know those are the messages that I am constantly relaying to ministers and officials in my meetings with them.

To speak up for all the amazing work that we do, and how much further we could go given the right policy, regulatory and tax environments. And tell all your stories so that they can see just how proud we are of everything that we achieve, which, when you think about it, is a marvel in terms of organisation and logistics.

We have seen this bear some fruit in recent months, with the Government very publicly emphasising the role it wants aviation to play in driving the growth of the UK economy. Everyone at AirportsUK will continue to do this over the next six months of 2025 and beyond, highlighting the hard work colleagues across the sector undertake and the opportunities it enables them to deliver. And I hope that you will continue to support and join us in that!

In this quarter's edition, Mike Kane MP writes for us for the first time as aviation minister on his priorities for airports and how he will champion the sector now he is in place at the Department for Transport. We have articles from members AGS on its plans for Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports, as well as Birmingham, Belfast International, East Midlands, London Southend, Gatwick, and Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides. There is an update on the AirportsUK annual dinner, where the transport secretary spoke warmly about her views on the aviation sector, the new members of the AirportsUK board, updated rules on drones and the new easyJet services at Newcastle International Airport. We also have articles on the government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which is progressing through parliament, AirportsUK's public affairs priorities for the second half of this year, and a recent trip by our Aerodrome Safety and Compliance working group to the Air Accident Investigation Branch.

Our partners Terberg and the upcoming AirportsUK Operations Conference 2025, which promises to be an exciting, industry leading event, are also featured. And finally, I'd like to give a very warm welcome to our newest corporate partner, Cognizant, the multinational information technology consulting firm. Please look out for an article from them in the next issue.

I hope you enjoy reading this packed edition of The Airport Operator magazine, and that you have a good summer.

Karen Dee
Chief Executive

AGS AIRPORTS

RECORD INVESTMENT IN ABERDEEN, GLASGOW AND SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORTS DESIGNED TO KICK-START A DECADE OF GROWTH

Plans by new owners, AviAlliance, to invest £350m in AGS Airports are intended to facilitate sustainable growth across all the group's three airports.

Representing the single largest capital investment in AGS since its formation, the plans, announced on 23 April, are forecast to lead to compound annual growth in passenger numbers across the group over the next five years of around 4-5%.

Kam Jandu, who became CEO of AGS Airports at the end of January, told *The Airport Operator* that the significance of the announcement was "huge", but he emphasised "what I want to convey to all stakeholders with this investment announcement is that we are viewing this journey as a marathon, not a sprint. Our main shareholder (one of Canada's largest pension funds) is patient, and they are looking for a long-term gain and

for certainty and assurance over the long term. That fits well with AGS and the journey that we are projecting for the next decade".

Reflecting on his first 100 days at AGS, Jandu, who was previously CEO at Budapest Airport, said "what has struck me most over the last three months is the appetite and the passion of the people, who are here to support me and the rest of the leadership team and the new shareholders as we go through this next evolutionary phase. When I have travelled to Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton, the appetite and the energy that people have has been very evident. There is a genuine sense of expectation and excitement about the future".

For Glasgow, the investment will result in a comprehensive transformation of the airport's main terminal building. Jandu said the upgrade, renovation and expansion will focus on food and beverage and retail more generally. "A lot of that investment" he said "will be looking at expanding, rebranding and upgrading a lot of the shops and dining facilities. From a commercial perspective, it will be bigger and better and, growing with our passenger forecasts, should be very exciting for everybody".

Turning to Glasgow's appeal to airlines, he said "they generally don't come here because we are developing a nice airport. They will come, first and foremost, if we have the right cost structure, which we will



"What has struck me most over the last three months is the appetite and the passion of the people, who are here to support me and the rest of the leadership team and the new shareholders as we go through this next evolutionary phase. There is a genuine sense of expectation and excitement about the future".

have, but, secondly, that we have the right operational capability, from serving the Emirates A380, which we do daily today, but also for the low-cost airlines, the segment that we see driving the biggest part of the growth".

Jandu said "as part of the transformation, we are looking at an improved and slightly differently configured boarding process, which will offer pre-boarding zones within the terminal and stands outside to enable passengers to walk to the aircraft and embark and disembark from front and rear stairs simultaneously. It happens across many of the stands now, but not enough for the type of turnaround that a lot of the airlines that we are targeting need".

"Some aircraft are only on the ground for 25 to 30 minutes. They just want to be able to facilitate that fast turnaround to keep their aircraft flying, because if it is not flying it is not earning them money, so this will very much feed into the ultimate airport design that we will be refining over the next few months".

Looking at passenger numbers for Glasgow Airport, Jandu anticipates a total of around 8.5m this year, representing 3% more than last year, when the airport grew by 10% and added 16 new destinations compared to 2023. For 2025 and subsequent years the goal will be to secure about ten new destinations each year.

Reflecting on cities that the airport had served in the past, he said that Copenhagen, Madrid and Milan are all in Glasgow's sights for the future, as well as improved frequencies to the hub airports of Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Paris. "Most significantly still missing" he said "is a direct connection to the US. Clearly the demand from the biggest city in Scotland, which Glasgow is, is that we need to have a New York service, as an example. We have had good conversations with airlines in the US



Kam Jandu and Scotland's Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes MSP

Looking at passenger numbers for Glasgow Airport, Jandu anticipates a total of around 8.5m this year, representing 3% more than last year, when the airport grew by 10% and added 16 new destinations compared to 2023.

and there is an appetite from them to do that".

He said that United Airlines have already sent positive signals about connecting Glasgow to Newark, with an A321XLR aircraft "because they are one of the first airlines to get this Airbus narrow-body long-haul aircraft. So this will unlock that destination and get them back into the Glasgow market, but of course we are also having good conversations with Delta Air Lines and American Airlines about reconnecting".

Finally, he spoke about China, noting that Glasgow has the biggest Chinese student population in the

UK outside of London "and this really lends itself to having a direct connection and, being the business city that we are, we could offer good sister city connectivity to Shanghai. We know there is demand and, if we could get that connected, that would be great to announce as our team will be in China this month as part of a wider city delegation".

For Aberdeen, Jandu said that the terminal had been transformed a few years' ago, so "a lot of the work that we will be doing as part of the investment will be outside, in terms of the airside on the runway, for example, and also the heliport, because it is the busiest heliport in Europe and we need to make sure that we are maintaining that".

He said that Aberdeen will continue to lead the way on energy transition for years to come, anticipating a time when oil and gas business will start to drop off. Nevertheless, the airport is transitioning to some degree from business to leisure travel, which he described as "premium leisure", reflecting the fact that Aberdeen has one of the richest catchment areas in the UK, thanks to the oil and gas industry.

Jandu said "we are emphasising that to airlines and saying 'you

should fly to Aberdeen because you have got a lot of people there who have more disposable income'. We have already seen over the last two or three years a lot more leisure traffic growing than previously and that will remain our focus for Aberdeen in the years ahead".

At Southampton, he said "what we are doing as part of the transformation is making some of the gates and stands bigger, which we need to accommodate, for example, easyJet, who, since we had the runway extension in 2023, will have gone from no routes to 11 routes in winter 2026, all to sunshine destinations". New easyJet routes from Southampton Airport over the last 18 months include Alicante, Amsterdam, Belfast, Faro, Glasgow,

Majorca and, since 31 March this year, a year-round twice-weekly service to Paris Orly.


Jandu said that AGS is also "transforming the commercial offer in the Southampton terminal area, particularly food and beverage, to accommodate the growth and the slightly different passenger profile, with easyJet stimulating a lot more

leisure demand. Southampton is one of the richest catchments in England and it has a direct train service to London as well thereby offering a real alternative to some of the London airports. We aim to capitalise on this and what we are trying to do is to right-size and upgrade the airport to tap into the growth projections that we have." ■

"As part of the transformation, we are looking at an improved and slightly differently configured boarding process, which will offer pre-boarding zones within the terminal and stands outside to enable passengers to walk to the aircraft and embark and disembark from front and rear stairs simultaneously".

Kate Forbes MSP and Kam Jandu



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black headset with a microphone and a black sweater, is smiling and looking down at a desk. The desk is cluttered with various items, including a large map or chart, a keyboard, and some papers. In the background, there are shelves with books and other office supplies. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

BENBECULA AIRPORT

BENBECULA AIRPORT AN ISLAND AIRPORT WITH A PLACE IN HISTORY

Located on the island of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland, Benbecula Airport provides some jaw-dropping coastal views for anyone arriving by plane. Approximately seven miles long in each direction, the island has a proud Gaelic heritage and is managed in perpetuity by a community-owned organisation, Stòras Uibhist, following a community buy-out in 2006.

Benbecula is noted in history as the island where Bonnie Prince Charlie was forced to land when he was caught in a storm trying to flee the country following the Battle of Culloden. Disguised as an Irish spinning maid, Betty Burke, the prince was smuggled over the sea to Skye and the journey is evoked in the 19th century lyrics of the Skye Boat Song.

Initially, Scottish Airways serviced the Outer Hebrides using available stretches of grassland before establishing a landing ground at Balivanich Airfield in 1936.

From 1940, the airfield saw an influx of RAF personnel and aircraft, developing facilities onsite to accommodate what became thousands of troops stationed there and at several other sites around the islands at its peak. In 1941, what was now known as RAF Benbecula became an official flying base alongside RAF Stornoway on the neighbouring island.

During the Second World War, the airfield operated under the command of the Royal Air Force's No 15 (GR) Group, Coastal Command. At this time, its role was defensive, protecting Allied convoys from German U-boat and aerial attacks with aircraft concentrating on patrols out into the North Atlantic using the B-17 Flying Fortress and later the Vickers Wellington. The contribution of the crews based at both Benbecula and Stornoway were recognised as making a significant contribution to the war effort and eventual victory.

From the late 1950s, the airfield served as the range headquarters for what is now known as the Hebrides Range, where the first guided nuclear weapons for Britain and America were tested. The range has also been used to test high altitude meteorological

research rockets. Now operated by defence contractor QinetiQ for clients including the Ministry of Defence and BAE Systems, it is described as the largest air and sea range in the UK.

The events around the opening of the missile range inspired the book, *Rockets Galore*, published in 1957 by author Compton Mackenzie, who was otherwise known as Sir Edward Montague Compton Mackenzie. A sequel to his previous literary success, *Whisky Galore*, it became a successful film starring Jeannie Carson, Donald Sinden and Roland Culver.

Today the airport plays a significant role for the local community, supporting not only military activity, but also vital emergency services out of hours, scheduled services to Glasgow on the Scottish mainland and a Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract for flights to Stornoway. The airport attracts up to 30,000 passengers each year. Benbecula airport's military connections continue today supporting exercises with the movement of troops and weaponry as well as acting as a base for a mobile radar unit.

Earlier this year, trials of the Technam P2012 Traveller, as a

potential new aircraft for the Benbecula to Stornoway route were carried out by Hebridean Air Services and the Western Isles Council - Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The trial also included an assessment landing on the beach at Barra.

The airport café, Ceilidh Cidsin, whose name reflects the fusion between local and international food cultures, was taken over by local entrepreneurs, Roddy and Lorna MacKay in September 2024. It has proven to be a popular spot

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for passengers and locals alike with its vibrant menu and friendly atmosphere.

The coastal location of Benbecula airport is a key attraction for many visitors but also leaves it vulnerable to the impact of the

extreme weather it can sometimes experience. Over the last 20 years HIAL has invested in several coastal protection projects along the western boundary of the airfield. These have helped to restore the coastline after storm damage and protect it for future

years with additional materials along with the landscaping and replanting of dune areas.

Whatever the weather throws at it, Benbecula stands proud of its place in history and for the future to come. ■

The airport café, Ceilidh Cidsin, whose name reflects the fusion between local and international food cultures, was taken over by local entrepreneurs, Roddy and Lorna MacKay in September 2024.



MIKE KANE MP, MINISTER FOR AVIATION

MIKE KANE MP, MINISTER FOR AVIATION, SAYS THE INDUSTRY HAS "A HUGE PART TO PLAY IN NATIONAL RENEWAL"

Writing for The Airport Operator, he says airports "drive growth, enable trade, and connect people to jobs, education and each other":

Since taking up this post, I've seen first-hand the energy and expertise of those working across the UK's airports. That effort is essential. Airports drive growth, enable trade, and connect people to jobs, education, and each other. Whether it's unlocking opportunity or leading the transition to clean energy, this industry has a huge part to play in our national renewal.

Unmatched in reach, aviation is central not only to this government's plans but its actions.

Take Heathrow. The UK's only hub airport has long faced capacity constraints with negative knock-on effects for the whole industry, not just London. Indecision got previous governments nowhere. We're determined to press ahead. Why?

It's not expansion for expansion's sake. A third runway at Heathrow could unlock billions in investment, bringing with it more than 100,000 jobs and improving global connectivity for businesses worldwide. Once proposals are submitted, we'll move quickly to

review the Airports National Policy Statement and give the clarity the sector has long sought. And I'm clear: any scheme must be delivered in line with our legal obligations on climate and the environment.

The message is simple: yes to growth, yes to urgency, yes to social and environmental responsibility. And for that matter, yes to regional airports too.

They are vital for growth and connectivity. I travelled to Yorkshire a couple of months



The message is simple: yes to growth, yes to urgency, yes to social and environmental responsibility. And for that matter, yes to regional airports too.

back to see Leeds Bradford's Airport's transformative £100 million terminal expansion, set to be ready for Summer 2025. I understand AviAlliance have committed to invest £350m over the next five years to transform Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports. And in Doncaster we will back local efforts to reopen the airport, including £30 million in devolved investment and a working group that brings government together with local stakeholders. That's a visible proposition that could deliver tangible change.

But whilst runways make the headlines, it is airspace that provides the invisible infrastructure that keeps aviation moving and yet its design hasn't moved with the times. Now is the time to modernise. That's why we've established the Aviation Futures Forum, bringing ministers and industry together to shape the direction of the sector.

It's also why, in March, we confirmed that we are launching the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS), a single guiding mind to coordinate future changes. Backed by a support fund, UKADS will begin with the complex London Terminal airspace. The goal: quicker, quieter, cleaner journeys and skies fit for the future.

And as part of that future, aviation must be a leader in our transition to net zero. In fact, UK airports already lead the world in sustainability, many pledging net zero operations well before 2040. We're supporting them, and the wider sector to decarbonise. We've extended Aerospace Technology Institute funding to 2030, with nearly £1 billion for R&D on aircraft manufacturing. In January, we introduced a sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) mandate and are legislating for a revenue certainty mechanism to

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support UK SAF production.

Alongside that, the Jet Zero Taskforce provides the collaborative platform for government and industry to break down the barriers to green aviation. That communication is vital. Decarbonisation is not some side challenge, but central to aviation's future competitiveness.

These issues are urgent. The challenge is steep. There's no room for drift. But from airport expansion and airspace reform to green fuels and next-generation technology, the government is focused on delivery. A huge part of that is working with you.

Another part of that is nurturing the talent of the future. Projects like Reach for the Sky are there to inspire the next generation of aviation talent. Over the next few years, I want us to expedite every effort to promote the brilliant careers and exciting opportunities within the sector, because we can never have too many cheerleaders.

Of course, the sector needs more than cheerleaders, it needs leadership. I'm a Manchester City supporter. I was a fan long before Pep Guardiola became the manager, and I'll be a fan long after he's gone. That's the thing about institutions that matter: they endure. Airports and all the thousands of people putting their shoulder to your cause have outlasted every ministerial career.

They will outlast mine. So what is my job?

It is, I think, to be a good custodian to this industry. One who furnishes the broad church of aviation with the tools and resources it needs to thrive. That means working with you to improve resilience. It means bringing confidence and clarity to the intertwined missions of growth and net zero. And to do all that, it means listening to and learning from your experiences.

Carl Jung once said, "You are what you do, not what you say you'll do." There's an awful lot to say and an awful lot to be getting on with but, together, we will get on and do it. ■

DR RUPINDER PAMME

UK AIRPORTS SEEK "MORE AMBITIOUS" PLANNING REFORMS

AirportsUK's Senior Policy Manager, Dr Rupinder Pamme, outlines what airports want from planning reform

In January this year the Chancellor made a very welcome speech in Oxfordshire where she highlighted her support for aviation growth and expansion of the UK's airports capacity, as well as the Government's commitment to streamlining the planning system.

Airports and the aviation sector are vital to the Government's growth agenda. The sector makes an enormous contribution to the economy, bringing investment and creating jobs. Expanding capacity to support growth will not be at the expense of sustainability goals.

The Government published its Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB) in March, with the aim of reducing the burden of the planning regime and speeding up delivery of vital infrastructure. Airports have viewed the legislation positively and believe that it could help to deliver large schemes, especially National



Dr Rupinder Pamme

Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). However, whilst the direction of travel is right, reforms should be more ambitious to enable airports to meet demand and bring forward investment. In the case of this Bill, members have highlighted that those outside the NSIP process, which many of our airports are, may see a significantly more limited set of benefits.

AirportsUK has worked with members to provide input to the Bill on the outcomes they believe planning system reform should deliver. We have shared members' feedback with the Department for Transport, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the

Confederation of British Industry.

Members wanted to see, for example, a narrowing as far as possible of the scope for legal challenges to the Airports National Policy Statement; reform of non-NSIP infrastructure projects via the Town and Country Planning Act consenting route; a clearer policy direction and instructions from Government on what is needed when it comes to planning policy to give certainty about what rules are being worked to; and clear and transparent criteria for planning applications that are 'called-in' by the Secretary of State, with a clear time frame for when a decision needs to be made.

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is at present at the House of Commons Committee Stage, with various amendments being tabled as it progresses through, as well as line-by-line scrutiny by MPs. We have been working with officials and MPs, briefing them on further improvements that can be made, as well as discussing the next steps we can take as the Bill progresses to ensure that members' voices are heard. ■

SITA

RETHINKING THE PASSENGER EXPERIENCE FROM CHECK-IN TO BAGGAGE CLAIM

By Cristian Argentin, Vice President, Europe, SITA

In an era of record travel volumes and rising expectations, airport operators face an increasingly complex mandate: create seamless, efficient and resilient passenger experiences, even under pressure. Technology is no longer a support function – it's a strategic enabler.

The need for intelligent, passenger-centric design is particularly clear in baggage handling. While mishandling rates are declining, congestion, transfer delays and limited visibility continue to frustrate both passengers and operators. With global traffic expected to double by 2040, now is the time to modernise processes and unlock new efficiencies.

From Lost Bags to Total Visibility

SITA's latest Baggage IT Insights report shows mishandling rates in Europe have dropped to 12.3 bags per 1,000 passengers, a 26% improvement on 2007, as the sector embraces full digitalisation. Touchless systems, real-time notifications and biometric bag

drops are no longer emerging technologies – they are becoming mainstream.

Passengers increasingly expect the same transparency for their luggage as they have for personal items tracked via consumer tech like Apple Airtags – which we have integrated into our WorldTracer® system, providing real-time updates and enhanced visibility throughout the journey. Baggage visibility isn't just about convenience; it builds trust. And for operators, real-time insights improve responsiveness and reduce costly disruption.

Smarter Spaces by Design

Meeting these expectations also means rethinking airport infrastructure – something we've explored deeply through our recent acquisition of CCM. Known for its expertise in airport interiors and public space design, CCM enhances SITA's ability to deliver what we call "technology by design": integrating advanced systems into physical spaces in ways that feel intuitive and human

centric.

At Doha Airport, for instance, CCM's designs have helped maximise space efficiency while improving passenger flow and comfort through the implementation of innovative solutions such as hybrid self-service bag drop kiosks and optimised check-in counters. At Rome's Fiumicino, meanwhile, the implementation of CCM's pivoting check-in counters generated a 20% increase in check-in capacity. These counters were designed with modularity and futureproofing in

The need for intelligent, passenger-centric design is particularly clear in baggage handling. With global traffic expected to double by 2040, now is the time to modernise processes and unlock new efficiencies.



At SITA, this belief in innovation through collaboration continues to shape how we support the aviation industry in delivering smarter, more seamless and more sustainable journeys.

mind, allowing seamless upgrades from traditional agent-assisted check-in to self-service bag drop (SSBD) with minimal infrastructure changes.

Collaborating for Impact: Evolving Airport Operations

Innovation in the airport space isn't only about passengers – it's about empowering those who support them. At one UK airport, we've worked together to transform how technology is used, repositioning it from a cost centre to a strategic asset. This includes developing the concept for a "model office" where new systems and processes can be tested in real-world conditions, from biometric reconciliation to baggage processing. In addition, we've been working on a continuous collaborative improvement process to enhance existing solutions and ensure they are fit for the future.

Meanwhile, we've partnered with several other airports and airlines to roll out our Flex Agent App – a mobile tool that lets ground crew check in passengers and manage baggage from anywhere in the terminal. This flexible approach removes the need for fixed desks and reduces infrastructure strain, while also helping passengers get assistance faster, closer to where they are.

The Next Chapter for CUPPS

Common Use Passenger Processing Systems (CUPPS) have been a bedrock of airport operations for years. But the next generation is taking shape – systems that are more modular, more data-connected and more responsive to the ebb and flow of daily airport life.

Recent deployments show how CUPPS can adapt quickly to changing conditions, enabling better collaboration between stakeholders and smoother experiences for passengers. Whether it's biometric-ready infrastructure, predictive queue



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management, or mobile-enabled agent services, CUPPS is evolving to meet the moment.

Looking ahead, CUPPS platforms could become even more dynamic—supporting cloud-based deployments, integrating with mobile and wearable devices, and enabling real-time data sharing across airport ecosystems. These capabilities may allow airports to scale services up or down based on live passenger volumes, reduce infrastructure costs, and improve responsiveness during disruptions.

There is also growing interest in how CUPPS can support sustainability goals. For example, future systems might enable more efficient use of shared infrastructure, reduce energy consumption, and support paperless processing. As airports continue to reimagine their role in the travel journey, CUPPS is well-positioned to serve as a flexible, future-ready foundation.

A Shared Responsibility

While technology plays a central role, it's the collaboration between airport operators, airlines and solution providers that truly drives change. The examples are rooted in close partnerships and shared goals.

This year's Baggage IT Insights

report reinforces the point: when we align data, design and decision-making, we move from reactive operations to proactive, predictive management.

In the years ahead, airports will continue to be challenged – not just by rising passenger numbers, but by expectations for personalisation, efficiency and trust. The opportunity is to rise to that challenge not with one-off upgrades, but with holistic, forward-thinking strategies that put passengers and operations on the same path.

At SITA, this belief in innovation through collaboration continues to shape how we support the aviation industry in delivering smarter, more seamless and more sustainable journeys. For more data and insights [click here](#) to check out SITA's latest IT Insights Report, or our Baggage IT Insights report [here](#). For more on future-proofing airports, sign up for our June 24 webinar: morning edition [here](#), or afternoon edition [here](#). ■



SITA is an AirportsUK Gold Member.



TERBERG DTS

TERBERG DTS: DRIVING THE FUTURE OF GROUND SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN THE UK

By Sam Brockington-Belli, Head of Aviation Sales UK & Ireland, Terberg DTS UK

In the evolving landscape of airport operations and emergency services, Terberg DTS stands as a beacon of innovation and reliability. With roots stretching back over 150 years, this UK-based company has carved out a formidable reputation in the ground support

equipment (GSE) and fire and rescue sectors. As the industry pivots toward sustainability and digital transformation, Terberg DTS is not just keeping pace—it's leading the charge.

Aviation Division: Electrifying the Apron

The Terberg DTS Aviation Division has long been a trusted supplier of robust, high-performance equipment tailored for the demanding airport environment. From aircraft pushback tractors to cargo handling vehicles, the division partners with global manufacturers like Goldhofer,

Guinault, TowFLEXX and Langa Industrial to deliver cutting-edge solutions.

A major milestone in 2025 was the UK demonstration of the Goldhofer PHOENIX E, a fully electric aircraft tow tractor. This event marked a significant step in Terberg's commitment to decarbonising airport operations. The PHOENIX E, known for its zero-emission performance and low operating costs, is emblematic of a broader industry trend: the electrification of GSE to meet stringent environmental regulations and reduce carbon footprints.

Terberg's aviation offerings are not limited to towing. The company also supplies ground power units (GPUs), air start units, and air conditioning systems, many of which are now available in electric variants. These systems are essential for maintaining aircraft readiness while parked and transitioning them to electric power drastically cuts emissions and noise pollution on the tarmac. The APU off mantra is possible.

Fire & Rescue Division: Innovation in Emergency Response

Based in Gloucester, the Terberg DTS Fire & Rescue Division is a cornerstone of the UK's emergency response infrastructure. The division supports both military and civilian fire services, offering a comprehensive suite of vehicles, equipment, and maintenance services.

What sets Terberg apart is its ability to customise fire and rescue vehicles to meet the unique needs of each client. Whether it's rapid intervention vehicles for airport runways or heavy-duty fire trucks for industrial sites, Terberg's solutions are engineered for performance and reliability.

The division is also exploring hybrid and electric fire vehicles, aligning with the UK government's

Sam Brockington-Belli (right) with the Goldhofer PHOENIX E tow tractor



A major milestone in 2025 was the UK demonstration of the Goldhofer PHOENIX E, a fully electric aircraft tow tractor. The PHOENIX E, known for its zero-emission performance and low operating costs, is emblematic of a broader industry trend: the electrification of GSE to meet stringent environmental regulations and reduce carbon footprints.

net-zero targets. While the electrification of fire engines presents unique challenges—such as power demands and operational range—Terberg is actively collaborating with technology partners to develop viable solutions. These efforts reflect a broader industry push to modernise emergency response fleets without compromising on capability.

The UK GSE Market: A Sector in Transition

The UK's GSE market is undergoing a profound transformation. Driven by airport decarbonisation mandates, rising fuel costs, and technological advancements, operators are increasingly investing in electric and hybrid equipment. According to industry

analysts, the UK GSE market is expected to grow steadily through 2030, with electric GSE accounting for a significant share of new purchases.

Terberg DTS is well-positioned to capitalise on this trend. Its partnerships with leading electric GSE manufacturers, combined with its in-house engineering expertise, allow it to offer turnkey solutions that meet both operational and environmental goals. Moreover, the company's Terberg Connect telematics platform provides real-time data on vehicle performance, enabling predictive maintenance and operational efficiency.

Another key factor is the shift toward equipment rental. Many airport operators now prefer leasing over purchasing,



allowing them to adapt quickly to fluctuating demand. Terberg's flexible rental solutions, which include electric and conventional GSE, cater perfectly to this evolving business model.

Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

Despite the momentum, the transition to electric GSE is not without hurdles. Infrastructure remains a critical bottleneck—many airports lack the charging capacity to support a fully electric fleet. Additionally, the upfront cost of electric equipment, though offset by lower operating expenses, can be a barrier for smaller operators.

However, these challenges also present opportunities. Terberg DTS is actively involved in consulting and infrastructure planning, helping clients design and implement charging solutions that future-proof their operations. The company's holistic approach—spanning equipment, software, and support—positions it as a strategic partner in the green transformation of UK airports.



Terberg DTS is actively involved in consulting and infrastructure planning, helping clients design and implement charging solutions that future-proof their operations.

Conclusion: A Legacy of Leadership

As the aviation and emergency services sectors navigate the twin imperatives of sustainability and efficiency, Terberg DTS continues to set the standard. Its dual focus on innovation and customer-centricity ensures that it remains at the forefront of industry change.

Whether it's deploying electric pushback tractors on the runway

or engineering next-generation fire trucks, Terberg is not just responding to the future—it's building it. In a market defined by rapid evolution and high stakes, that kind of leadership is not just valuable—it's essential. ■



Terberg DTS UK is an AirportsUK Gold Member.



SPONSORS



AIRPORTSUK OPERATIONS CONFERENCE

AIRPORT RESILIENCE – THE THEME OF THIS MONTH'S AGENDA – SETTING AIRPORTSUK OPERATIONS CONFERENCE

'Protect, Adapt and Recover – Resilient Airports' will be the theme of the AirportsUK Operations Conference in Manchester on 24 and 25 June.

Ian Elston, the Department for Transport's Deputy Director, Aviation Resilience and Connectivity, **Kathryn Leahy**, NATS' Chief Operations Officer, and **Chris Woodroffe**, Manchester Airport's Managing Director, will deliver keynote addresses at the conference at the Radisson Blu, Manchester Airport.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation and Compliance at AirportsUK, said that "in his flagship session, Mr Elston will outline how the Government is translating hard-won lessons from recent disruptions – ranging from severe weather shutdowns to system-outing induced groundings – into a comprehensive forward-looking aviation resilience strategy".

She said that the conference would "unite aviation and airport stakeholders – leaders, regulators and policymakers – to develop more resilient airports that can withstand disruptions which include modernising infrastructure and technology, enhancing operational efficiency, and bolstering business continuity and recovery. As post-pandemic passenger and cargo volumes continue to grow, the event will highlight collaboration and shared learning as essential to creating agile, passenger-focused airports for the future".

The UK Civil Aviation Authority will provide six speakers for the conference, contributing to panels on operations and infrastructure, fire safety management and consumer policy, as well as providing a regulatory update.

James Bell, the regulator's Innovation Strategy Lead, will give a future-focussed presentation on the CAA's regulatory approach to AI and automation. In addition, other members of the CAA will cover the new upcoming regulation on ground handling and Obstacle Limitation Surfaces, also addressing climate change, focussing on both adaptation and mitigation strategies within the aviation sector.

Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE will present to the conference on the subject 'From terminal to tarmac: the blueprint for seamless traveller experiences', followed by a panel session with representatives from London Gatwick Airport, Jet2 and Jet2 Holidays and Wilson James. A panel session on workplace psychological safety will include representatives from Heathrow and London Luton airports and will address how employee well-being, stress management and organisational culture can foster a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Gammarano said she was grateful to NATS, the global leader in air traffic management, and Egis, the global construction engineering and operating firm, for providing conference sponsorship and pleased to confirm the conference exhibitors, Comet, OneReg and Enhancing Excellence. ■



Ian Elston



Kathryn Leahy



Chris Woodroffe



James Bell



Baroness
Grey-Thompson DBE

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



DAY 1

10:00	Arrival & registration
11.00–11.10	Welcome & introduction Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance – AirportsUK
11.10–11.30	Opening address from Government Ian Elston, Deputy Director, Aviation Resilience & Connectivity – Department for Transport Q&A
11.30–11.55	Keynote address from industry Kathryn Leahy, Chief Operations Officer – NATS Q&A
11.55–12.40	CAA regulatory update Mark Griffiths, Ground Handling Policy Specialist – CAA Matt Roberts, Policy Principal Aerodromes – CAA Q&A
12.40–12.50	Commercial presentation: NATS
12.50–14.00	Networking lunch
14.00–14.45	Enabling airports of the future: CAA's regulatory approach to AI & automation James Bell, Innovation Strategy Lead – CAA Q&A
14.45–14.55	Commercial presentation: Egis Group
14.55–15.30	Networking break
15.30–16.20	Resilience for airports: Operations & Infrastructure in a changing world Rachel Burbidge, Senior Policy Officer, Environment & Climate Change – EUROCONTROL Georgie Covill, Senior Aviation Resilience Policy Advisor, Airspace, Resilience & Connectivity – Department for Transport Nick Orwin, Emergency Planning Manager – London Luton Airport & Chair, UK Aviation Emergency Planning Group Mike Sparrow, Policy Specialist Aerodromes – CAA <i>Moderator: Nicole Park, Head of Air Traffic Services – London Southend Airport</i> Q&A
16.20–16.40	Accelerating growth: Elevating airport performance Monika Simonaityte, Chair, Technical Operations & Safety Committee – ACI Europe
16.40–17.00	Rebuilding stronger: How to prepare Dr Fabian Steinmann, Lecturer in Organisational Resilience & Change – Cranfield University
17.00–17.05	Closing remarks Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance – AirportsUK
19.15–20.00	Pre-dinner drinks
20.00	Dinner

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



DAY 2

08.00–09.00	Breakfast
09.00–09.10	Welcome & introduction Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance – AirportsUK
09.10–09.40	Keynote address from industry Chris Woodroffe, Managing Director – Manchester Airport Q&A
09.40–10.30	Protect, adapt & recover in the context of fire safety management Graeme Day, RFFS Policy Specialist – CAA Lee Delaney, Leading Fire Engineer – Manchester Airports Group John Moriarty, Life Safety Senior Engineer – London Luton Airport Mark Proudley, Group Head of Fire Safety Policy & Standards – Manchester Airports Group <i>Moderator: Nicole Park, Head of Air Traffic Services – London Southend Airport</i> Q&A
10.30–11.10	Networking break
11.10–11.35	From terminal to tarmac: Blueprint for seamless traveller experiences Presentation: Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE
11.35–12.15	From terminal to tarmac: Blueprint for seamless traveller experiences : Panel session Liz Boadella-Burton, Head of Product & Passenger Experience – Wilson James James Fremantle, Senior Manager, Consumer Policy & Enforcement – CAA Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE Lauren McDaniel, Senior Commercial Operations Manager – London Gatwick Airport Steve Wilson, Assisted Travel & Medical Manager – Jet2 & Jet2 Holidays <i>Moderator: Christopher Snelling, Policy Director – AirportsUK</i> Q&A
12.15–12.50	Future-proofing airports: Harnessing technology Lisa Allen, Aerodrome Compliance Manager – Heathrow Airport Ian Astles, Senior Airfield Services Engineer – Farnborough Airport <i>Moderator: Nicole Park, Head of Air Traffic Services – London Southend Airport</i> Q&A
12.50–14.00	Buffet lunch
14.00–14.45	Clear skies: cultivating psychological safety Lisa Ward, Head of Health & Wellbeing – Heathrow Airport Emma Meenan, Head of Health & Safety – London Luton Airport Joana Faustino, Principal Health & Wellbeing Specialist – Rail Safety & Standards Board <i>Moderator: Nicole Park, Head of Air Traffic Services – London Southend Airport</i> Q&A
14.45–15.00	Closing remarks Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance – AirportsUK
15.00	Conference closes

*Speakers, topics & timings may be subject to change

BIGGEST EVER AIRPORTSUK HEALTH AND SAFETY WEEK

From Cornwall to the Highlands, airports right across the UK have underlined their commitment to the health and safety of passengers and staff by enthusiastically participating in this year's AirportsUK Health and Safety Week.

Running from 19 to 23 May, themes of the week included ground movements; slips, trips and falls in passenger areas and reducing stress. The week was supported by the UK Civil Aviation Authority and sponsored by AIRDAT, the airport systems, training and consultancy service. All participating airports will be eligible for a series of awards to be announced by AirportsUK on 2 October at the AirportsUK office in London.

Commitment to the week came from the very top, with **Heathrow** CEO, Thomas Woldbye, commenting "I had a fantastic time visiting colleagues and taking part in the activities. It was great to connect with so many passionate professionals across our teams who are all committed to making our airport a safer place for all. At the heart of it all is a simple message: Everyone should come home from work safe and

Heathrow Airport



well. Let's keep safety at the forefront – every day, in every role”.

Smaller airports were among the most enthusiastic participants this year. **Cornwall Airport Newquay** organised over 40 events, some supported by the Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service, the South West Ambulance Trust and Devon and Cornwall Police, including yoga at Spaceport Cornwall.

Events at **Highlands and Islands Airports** included a live-fire demonstration and decontamination exercise, a trauma response workshop at Tiree and kickboxing at Inverness Airport fire station. Elsewhere in Scotland, Aberdeen Airport organised security awareness sessions, while Glasgow Airport welcomed over 300 visitors to a health and safety event promoting all aspects of health, safety and wellbeing.

The UK's leading business aviation airports also played their parts, with workshops on fire safety first aid, operational safety and wellbeing support, as well as a Spitfire biscuit decorating challenge at **London Biggin Hill**. **Farnborough's** events included two-hour sessions on "human factors, system safety and the messiness of work".



Cornwall Airport Newquay

Commercial airports across the London area were active participants. Like many other airports, **Gatwick** organised foreign object debris walks on the runway. There was also a wellbeing workshop, and a biodiversity and wellbeing walk. **London City Airport's** varied programme included a firefighter-for-a day experience, an interactive online safety quiz and a safety marketplace promoting vital safety behaviours, regulatory awareness and a positive wellbeing culture for both passengers and staff.

At **London Luton Airport** there were NATS ATC tower visits, flight simulator sessions and yoga, meditation and wellbeing check ins. **London Stansted's** programme included a virtual reality fire safety experience, a wheel change challenge and therapy animal visits.

Elsewhere in the south of England, **Bristol Airport** organised airside operations experience tours and CPR training delivered by the airport's fire service, with disruptive passengers training delivered by Avon and Somerset Police. At **Southampton Airport** the airport fire service showcased first aid skills, there were tours of the NATS air traffic control tower, a safety video presentation which focussed on slips, trips and falls, yoga sessions and a wellbeing walk in Lakeside Country Park.

In the Midlands, **Birmingham Airport** had health and safety and security roadshows, mental health awareness sessions and what the airport described as 'The Greatest Safety Show on Earth' – 'a fun carnival themed take on safety'.



Birmingham Airport



Gatwick Airport



Glasgow Airport

In the north of England, **Liverpool John Lennon Airport** organised a life support session teaching how to correctly use a defibrillator and deliver CPR, an aircraft safety talk delivered by the Jet2.com team and a fuelling demonstration from Menzies Aviation. **Manchester Airport's** programme included fire service tours, safety talks on the into-plane fuelling process and a mock aircraft turnaround with Jet2.com.

Over in Northern Ireland, **Belfast City Airport** created a pop-up wellness centre with audio-visual, compression and red-light therapy for both passengers and staff, as well as a charity lunch in support of Air Ambulance Northern Ireland.

Airports were well supported by non-airport AirportsUK members,

including **AIRDAT**, the sponsor of Health and Safety Week, with the AIRDAT crew "out and about helping keep safety in the spotlight". The company's training bus was at London Luton Airport and at Heathrow the team helped by putting pushback and marshalling skills to the test.

Baines Simmons, specialists in aviation safety management and an AirportsUK Silver Member, emphasised to airports that fatigue risk management is key for any industry with a 24/7 safety critical workforce, stressing that the likelihood of near misses, slips and lapses increase with fatigue levels, which can have a very significant impact on the risk associated with ground movements.

Comet, which seeks to help airports enhance safety, prevent

Bristol Airport



Belfast City Airport



Aberdeen Airport

incidents and support wellbeing in airport operations, placed a focus on aircraft turnaround, which it described as one of the most time-sensitive activities in the aviation cycle. Referencing the psychological strain of working in a high-pressure airport environment, Comet outlined practical steps airports can take to reduce that pressure.



Farnborough Airport



Liverpool John Lennon Airport

GHOST (the CAA-led Ground Handling Operations Safety Team), which describes itself as the world's leading ground safety forum, took the opportunity presented by Health and Safety Week, to invite participating airports to take part anonymously in a three- question, one- minute safety survey.

Summing up, Adele Gammarano, AirportsUK Head of Regulation and Compliance, said "This year's AirportsUK Health and Safety Week has been nothing short of inspirational. From Cornwall to the Highlands – and every terminal, fire station and tower in between – colleagues rallied behind the simple promise that everyone should go home, safe and well, every day. Whether it was yoga at Spaceport Cornwall, a live-fire drill in Tiree, or Heathrow's leadership walkabouts, each activity showcased the ingenuity and passion that define our sector".

"I am especially grateful to the UK CAA, HSE and AIRDAT and the

many emergency-service partners and all the AirportsUK members whose support turned great ideas into memorable experiences. To every airport team, big or small, thank you for proving that safety and wellbeing are shared values, not box-ticking exercises. Your commitment this week strengthens our industry today and sets a higher bar for tomorrow, and I can't wait to celebrate your achievements when we announce the awards on 2 October". ■

London Stansted Airport

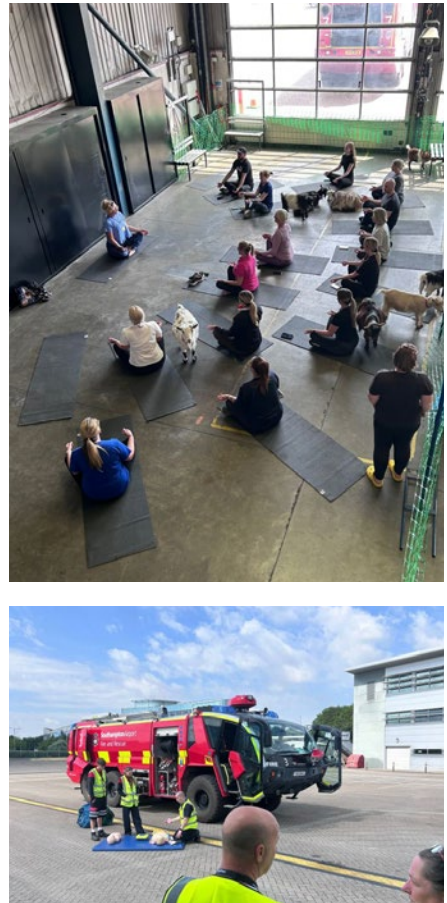


London Biggin Hill Airport



Manchester Airport

Southampton Airport



PETER CAMPBELL

TURBULENCE, TRANSITION AND THE AIRPORT SECTOR: THE POLITICAL YEAR SO FAR AND WHAT LIES AHEAD

As we approach the halfway point of 2025, AirportsUK's head of public affairs and media, Peter Campbell, looks back at what has happened over the past six months, and what is in store for the rest of the year.

Those hoping that 2025 would mark a transition to a period of calmer, more considered, dare I say, boring politics will probably be left disappointed by the continued domestic and international tension that has prevailed for as long as most of us can remember. Instead, political discourse has continued to be dominated by themes of global conflict, economic uncertainty, the decline of public services, and the climate crisis.

For airports, at least, the year started positively, with the chancellor, Rachel Reeves MP, signalling her support for sustainable expansion that can drive economic growth, the central mission of this government. This was clear recognition that as



Peter Campbell

the UK continues to navigate its post-Brexit and post-pandemic trajectory, aviation is both a

symbol and a lever of economic potential, and something on which we have all been engaging with ministers for years.

Several positive announcements have also been made on vital measures such as a new airspace design service to deliver modernised 'skyways', the sustainable aviation fuel mandate and revenue certainty mechanism that will help the sector decarbonise, and planning reforms that, while not as ambitious as we would like, will move the system in the right direction.

At the same time, however, there continue to be several decisions and areas where government has not been as positive or it can take further action to make our



Rachel Reeves MP,
Chancellor of the
Exchequer

airports, the wider aviation sector, and by extension the UK, more competitive and to really drive economic growth. It is on these types of issues that AirportsUK will be focussing in the second half of the year, to support delivery of the stable, sustainable and affordable operating environment that members need.

We will continue to push government to improve the Planning and Infrastructure Bill as it makes its way through the House of Lords. The aim will be to arrive at a piece of legislation that streamlines the process further and expands its scope to cover not just Development Consent Orders, but the wider planning system.

With the Budget coming up in late October or early November, we will be working hard to push government back on any ideas it might have to raise taxes on flying, as well as making the case for measures that will boost growth. Passengers already pay the most burdensome taxes in the world in the form of Air Passenger Duty, while airports themselves are in a

global race to be as competitive and attractive as they can be for international investors. Meanwhile, airports continue to be prevented from establishing arrivals duty-free outlets, which would onshore existing spend, boost domestic production, develop a new revenue stream that will support their activities, and boost economic growth.

At the same time, ministers and officials at the Home Office will be continuing to develop plans for the new border strategy up to 2030, a key period that will see huge innovations in paperless entry and exit, artificial intelligence, and new security challenges. And as well as the border strategy, government is also set to announce its 10-year infrastructure, industrial and international trade strategies, all providing key guidance for airports and other sectors involved in these areas in terms of ministerial priorities.

We will continue to engage closely with our airport members on all these priorities, using your input and guidance to

influence those policies that are still in development and to suggest further improvements as those that are finalised are implemented. Our engagement efforts over the past couple of years mean that we are ideally placed as a trusted source of input and guidance for ministers and officials.

MPs and peers of all parties that sit on the opposition benches, parliamentary select committees, all party parliamentary groups, and in informal interest groups will be briefed on our positions and their support sought to ensure government is held to account. The regional mayors and their teams will also continue to be kept informed about the latest sector wide issues, all in support of members' own engagement with these figures in their respective areas.

All of this joined-up working will ensure that we are able to deliver on our priorities as a sector, and that airports and air travel continue to be at the forefront of decision-makers' minds when it comes to policy decisions. ■



LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT

"THE UK'S FASTEST GROWING AIRPORT" EXPECTS TO CONTINUE GROWING OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Following a 133% increase in flights year-on-year, London Southend Airport is expecting that capacity constraints at other London airports will fuel further growth over the next five years.

The airport's new CEO, Jude Winstanley, told The Airport Operator that he expects London Southend to top 750,000 passengers this year before reaching a million in 2026.

Winstanley, who took on his new role in December last year, believes that the airport will continue to grow to 2030 thanks to continuing capacity constraints at airports across London and the South East and the low cost and high-quality operations that London Southend Airport can offer both existing and new airline operators.

Acknowledging that London Southend had "almost been an airport in hibernation since Covid", he said the airport had "come out of that hibernation and is starting to power up". Paying tribute to the "steely determination" of the airport's front-line team, he said that he had inherited both "a great customer culture" and "a huge amount of potential. The core airport design and the facilities are good. It can take you less than 10 minutes from the train to the gate and I don't think there is any other commercial airport that can do that. The embedded customer experience is phenomenal".

The turning point for the airport came on 31 March this year when easyJet opened its 10th UK base at London Southend, with three A320neo aircraft serving 122 flights per week on 20 routes to leisure destinations across Europe and North Africa and easyJet's CEO, Kenton Jarvis, declaring that the new base "consolidates our position as the UK's largest leisure airline". Winstanley described the base opening as "a significant milestone for both the airport and the local community".

He said "there is a real fit here. We understand easyJet. The base captains and the base crew are

all very supportive of Southend. They enjoy being here and many of them are local. We provide real top drawer customer satisfaction for them. We understand very closely how they operate and what is important to them, and we stretch to deliver that and go way beyond. When you look at our airport location, at the freedom we have around our capacity and our capability to respond to pretty much whatever they need, I think that really makes us the obvious choice not just for today but for growing for tomorrow".

Three days after the easyJet base launch, the airport welcomed its first domestic route since 2019, with Eastern Airways inaugurating flights to Cornwall Airport Newquay. Winstanley said it was "great to have a domestic route back on our departure boards",

adding that London Southend is also talking to "a range of carriers and I strongly suspect that we will see some domestic route growth from the airport in the near term".

Reflecting on what he sees as the airport's strengths, Winstanley said "we have got first wave capacity. We are not slot constrained and I think that is huge. I think that certainly in the next four to five years that capacity situation across London is only going to get worse. We absolutely market ourselves to the airlines as low cost and that always helps. We keep a deliberately very low-cost base and that is a discipline that has been hard-won, and we are not going to give up. We are very efficient. Many of our services are in-house and that gives us flexibility. So we make ourselves attractive on price".

The turning point for the airport came on 31 March this year when easyJet opened its 10th UK base at London Southend, with three A320neo aircraft serving 122 flights per week on 20 routes to leisure destinations across Europe and North Africa.





"We have got 8.2m people in our catchment area – Essex, London and East Anglia. You put that together when so many other London airports have got capacity constraints, operational issues and ongoing building programmes and when you actually think about the time, we win".

He also emphasises the airport's "amazing connectivity", 52 minutes on the train from London Liverpool Street. "We have got 8.2m people in our catchment area – Essex, London and East Anglia. You put that together when so many other London airports have got capacity constraints, operational issues and ongoing building programmes and when you actually think about the time, we win. We don't have any air traffic control congestion. You will never find aircraft circling this airport. The taxiing is short. The stands are right by the terminal and our immigration queues are short. You can leave the aircraft, pick up a bag and be in your car in 12 minutes. The quality and the speed that we have in this airport is second to none".

Finally, Winstanley is keen to promote the success of the airport's Jet Centre, its dedicated private aviation facility, which recently extended its opening hours so that it now operates year-round from 6.00am to 1.30am. He said the airport had done that "because it allows us to accommodate sports charters, music tours and some of the business traffic from the US. All those markets want a late-night arrival into London, and we can offer that like nobody else now".

He said that so far in 2025 the Jet Centre has seen a revenue increase of 26% versus last year "and that is in what is really a very mature London market. That is testament to the team, to the facility that we have and to our operation. We are very easy to do business with. It is something we really pride ourselves on".

Without a doubt, Winstanley's favourite Jet Centre client so far this year, was the Avro Lancaster bomber that, not cleared for night flight, parked at London Southend overnight after leading the VE Day flypast at Buckingham Palace, 80



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years after the end of World War Two in Europe. During the war over 7,000 of the RAF's famous and most successful bombers were

built, but Southend's overnight guest is now one of only two in the world still flying. ■

UK AIRPORTS VISIT FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT AND HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH AAIB ON AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS

Members of AirportsUK's Aerodrome Safety and Compliance working group have visited Farnborough Airport and the Farnborough headquarters of the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) to discuss working together after accidents at UK airports.

Jonathan Young, co-chair of the group and Airport Safety and Compliance Manager at Farnborough Airport, who hosted the working group's Farnborough visit, said that the AAIB had been very helpful in creating a bespoke programme. "They gave us a presentation about their work, and they also gave us an extended presentation of what their work looks like from an aerodrome and airports perspective. They shared a lot of good tips for how airports could interact with AAIB in the event of an incident, particularly with very clear communication on what has happened and what the effect on the airport

has been, because that would allow the AAIB to mobilise the appropriate resource to respond".

He said that AAIB inspectors had also shown the group a hangar "where they have a number of the aircraft wrecks and they talked us through several of the investigations that have been concluded and are ongoing. We had some good discussions about the approach to an investigation and on how that interfaces with the airport".

Young, who noted that "at Farnborough Airport the safety of all is paramount", said that after the AAIB visit group members had been given a tour of his airport's terminal



Jonathan Young

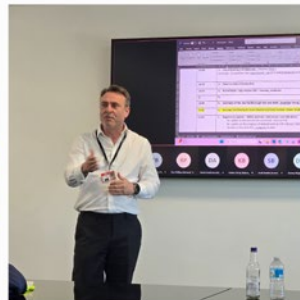
areas, led by Farnborough's Customer Services Manager, Brian McShane, and an overview from CEO, Simon Geere, of Farnborough's history, the contribution of business aviation to the UK economy and Farnborough's role in that.

During the working group's formal meeting, Barry Sargeant, Head of Airport Operations at London Biggin Hill Airport, was introduced as the group's new co-chair, replacing Stephen Muir, Aviation Regulation and Compliance Manager at Edinburgh Airport, who has led the group since its establishment in 2023. Muir gave an update on a recent meeting in Warsaw of ACI Europe's technical and operations safety committee, attended by Edinburgh, Farnborough and Heathrow airports. Talking points at the Warsaw meeting had included artificial intelligence, aircraft arrivals, apron safety, uncontrolled crossing safety and airside driving.

Other Aerodrome Safety and Compliance working group agenda items included an update from the UK Civil Aviation Authority on runway resurfacing and snow clearance from a flight operations perspective, as well as the CAA's regular general regulatory update. NATS led a discussion on runway incursions, noting that there had been a number of incursions involving third parties across various airports. The meeting also considered the Department for Transport's industry engagement session highlighting upcoming legislation. ■



Barry Sargeant



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LONDON LUTON AIRPORT

DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR LONDON LUTON AIRPORT "A TIPPING POINT"

London Luton Airport (LLA) CEO, Alberto Martin, has described the Secretary of State's decision to back expansion at the airport as both "a tipping point" and "a generational opportunity".

He told The Airport Operator that approval of the growth plans of Luton Rising (the airport owner) by Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexander, on 3 April is "a tipping point for the future of the local and national economies" and would also "provide a generational opportunity to further boost Luton Borough Council's investment in frontline public services and local communities". Since 2013 the airport has provided over £0.5bn in concession fee income to Luton Rising.

LLA's expansion application allows for growth from its current permitted cap of 19 million

passengers per annum to up to 32 million. Planned investments include new terminal capacity, additional taxiways and other transport infrastructure, as well as new landside support buildings and surface access adjustments.

Martin said that airline partners would benefit from enhanced efficiency and increased capacity. The expansion would increase consumer choice of airlines and destinations, generate an additional £1.5 billion for the economy each year, create up to 11,000 jobs and involve one of the largest construction programmes in Luton in recent years.



Alberto Martin



He described the airport's partnership with the council as "a standout example of a successful public-private partnership", adding that "our priority now is to finalise a commercial agreement with Luton Council, so together we can deliver on the Government's growth policy, and make the expansion plans a reality as soon as possible".

Martin said that investment already made by the airport's shareholders, AENA and InfraBridge, had underpinned an unprecedented period of growth at the airport, with annual passenger numbers rising from ten million in 2013 to around 18 million today. Looking ahead, "increasing the airport's capacity by 70% sustainably will require an investment and operating partner with specialist skills and expertise". Both shareholders were "committed to building on LLA's track record of success, providing the expertise and capital required to deliver new infrastructure and achieve an ambitious passenger target that closely aligns with the

The investment already made by the airport's shareholders, AENA and InfraBridge, had underpinned an unprecedented period of growth at the airport, with annual passenger numbers rising from ten million in 2013 to around 18 million today.



Government's growth mission".

He was keen to emphasise that the growth plans, proposed by the airport's owners, "balance the significant economic growth opportunity with some of the most robust and comprehensive commitments to sustainability introduced at a UK airport", including a legally binding and independently monitored 'Green Controlled Growth' framework.

Martin said that sustainability is "firmly at the centre of LLA's growth plans", making best use of existing infrastructure and containing "far-reaching and comprehensive commitments". He described the Green Controlled Growth initiative as "a groundbreaking, environmentally focused approach to managing sustainable growth at the airport" that introduces maximum limits for the airport's noise, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality and surface access impacts.

While the initiative relates to the airport's activities, LLA has also been working closely with its major airlines to increase their use of next-generation aircraft. In January this year 56% of all passenger flights were operating using either Airbus A321neos or Boeing 737 8200 (MAX) aircraft, the highest proportion of passenger flights operating using these advanced models at any major European airport. Wizz Air's Luton fleet is now entirely composed of Airbus A321neos and easyJet has also expanded their use. Ryanair has increased the number of Boeing 737 8200 (MAX) aircraft operating from the airport and Jet2 has been operating two neos since launching at the airport in April.

Jet2 has made LLA their 13th UK airport base, launching their first flight on 1 April, with 17 summer and eight winter destinations. Noting that it is the first significant based

LLA's expansion application allows for growth from its current permitted cap of 19 million passengers per annum to up to 32 million. Planned investments include new terminal capacity, additional taxiways and other transport infrastructure, as well as new landside support buildings and surface access adjustments.



carrier to arrive at the airport in more than two decades, Martin described it as "a huge milestone, marking a major expansion of Jet2's operations in the south of England". He said that Jet2 "has had a phenomenal start to life at LLA, which has prompted them to move quickly and announce an expanded programme for summer 2026", adding "our commitment to offering even greater choice and a simple and friendly passenger experience aligns perfectly with Jet2's customer service focus on choice and flexibility".

The airport recently won the Skytrax award for the best UK airport for low-cost airlines, ranking among the top ten airports globally. Martin said that LLA's Airport Service Quality

scores from ACI World are also currently the highest ever, with four out of five passengers rating their experience as 'very good' or 'excellent'. He said the award and the scores "reflect the hard work of the incredible teams across the airport, who are passionate about delivering outstanding value and a simple and friendly passenger experience".

Noting that the Luton and District Association for the Control of Airport Noise has launched a legal challenge to the Secretary of State's 3 April decision, Martin said "we respect the planning process and along with the applicant, Luton Rising, we will, of course, be watching developments closely". ■

AIRPORTSUK ANNUAL DINNER

TRANSPORT SECRETARY TELLS AIRPORTSUK DINNER THAT UK AVIATION CAN BOTH EXPAND AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

By AirportsUK Head of Public Affairs & Media, Peter Campbell

This year's AirportsUK annual dinner took place on the evening of 18 March at the Grosvenor House Hotel on London's Park Lane. Attended by over 700 senior representatives from the aviation sector, media and politicians, the evening was a great success that brought people together to celebrate our achievements of the past year, and to look ahead to the challenges we will face in the year ahead.

Opening the proceedings and welcoming everyone to the dinner, AirportsUK's Chair, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, said that despite global and domestic headwinds in the form of conflict, economic uncertainty and challenging operating conditions,

there is hope. Passenger numbers are up; more routes are opening and the public's demand for business and leisure travel continues to increase.

Baroness McGregor-Smith also pointed to the recent warm words from various officials within the government, about the role airports play, which was well-received by the sector. Airports have long felt that ministers and officials could do more to recognise the positive impact they have on the economy, bringing in investment, creating jobs and increasing prosperity in all areas of the country.

Concluding her remarks, Baroness McGregor-Smith left the assembled audience with a call to arms – to continue

supporting AirportsUK's work. By working together on issues such as planning, regulation and taxation we could ensure that the airports sector continues to thrive, connecting the UK to the world and delivering sustainable growth.

AirportsUK's Chief Executive, Karen Dee, followed Baroness McGregor-Smith and paid tribute to the role everyone in the room had played in delivering a cleaner, quieter, better regulated and supported sector, working closely with government. In doing this we could ensure sustainable growth that would bring in new investment, support thousands more jobs, create billions in wealth and help people and businesses connect with the world.

Focussing on some of AirportsUK's



key workstreams, she spoke about the support being developed to help the industry become sustainable, airspace modernisation, and issues around the tax and regulatory environment. She emphasised the importance of continuing to work collectively and constructively, stressing that this is the best way to achieve progress on all the sector's priorities, helping to overcome the challenges that airports face and continuing to show the world that the UK continues to stand at the forefront of aviation.

Delivering her keynote speech, the evening's guest of honour, the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP, focussed on three important aspects that she said would safeguard the future of UK aviation: namely expansion, modernisation and decarbonisation, and on how the new government is working to support the sector in all of these areas.

"Despite global and domestic headwinds in the form of conflict, economic uncertainty and challenging operating conditions, there is hope. Passenger numbers are up; more routes are opening and the public's demand for business and leisure travel continues to increase".

Baroness McGregor-Smith



David Meade



Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

The Transport Secretary emphasised the need for the UK to get on and build extra capacity, while balancing the economic benefits that this will bring with our social and environmental commitments. She was clear that these are not incompatible with each other, suggesting that it was a false trade off to pit growing aviation against protecting the environment, and that we can, and must, do both.

On modernisation, Ms Alexander thanked the sector for its input into the government's plans for reforming the UK's airspace and said that she is working closely with colleagues to realise the shared goal of having the new UK Airspace Design Service up and running this year. She said that this, along with a new support fund, would help deliver new processes to deliver airspace

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modernisation more quickly and effectively.

Finally, Ms Alexander highlighted the importance to the survival of

the sector of reducing carbon emissions, with Sustainable Aviation Fuel playing a major role. On this, she pointed to the measures already announced by the government, including continuing support for the SAF mandate and a revenue certainty mechanism, both of which will underpin a new UK industry that will be worth billions and create tens of thousands of jobs.

Following the Transport Secretary's well-received remarks, attendees got down to the business of enjoying the dinner, making new acquaintances, renewing old ones, and celebrating what aviation had achieved, lasting long into an extremely successful night, with conversation by the end already turning to the 2026 dinner and another exciting event. ■

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

AIRPORTSUK APPOINTS FIVE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Matthew Hall (CEO, Belfast City Airport), John Irving (CEO, Liverpool John Lennon Airport), Kam Jandu (CEO, AGS Airports), Andrew Macmillan (Chief Strategy Officer, MAG) and Dan Owens (CEO, Belfast International Airport) have joined the AirportsUK board, attending their first board meeting on 29 April.

Matthew Hall joined Belfast City Airport as Chief Executive in August 2021 and serves on its Board of Directors. Before joining the airport, he was Commercial Director of David Lloyd Clubs, with responsibility for all commercial activity across their 122 UK and European clubs. He started his career with United Airlines in 1992 and spent 11 years with American Airlines. He joined London City Airport in 2011 as Chief Commercial Officer, responsible for all commercial, marketing, CSR and communications activity.

Hall said "I'm delighted to have joined the board of AirportsUK this year. I look forward to representing the interests of Belfast City Airport, Northern Irish airports, and all AirportsUK members in helping achieve our vision. To do this we need to positively influence government and regulators to help develop

policies that deliver the right outcomes in critical areas such as safety and security, sustainability, operational excellence, and economic development".

John Irving was appointed as CEO of Liverpool John Lennon Airport in March 2018, having previously worked as Chief Commercial Officer at Newcastle International Airport, working on all commercial and airline aspects of the business. He qualified as a management accountant at Procter and Gamble in Newcastle and served as the Finance Director at Newcastle United Football Club for eight years with responsibility for all business areas at the club.

Irving said "It is great to be back on the Board after a spell away and I am looking forward to working with fellow Board members and Karen and the team on ensuring that the industry continues to be well-represented and heard within Government.

AirportsUK plays a vital role in the industry in many ways, and I am delighted to be able to contribute to that at Board level. There are always key issues that need to be discussed, co-ordinated and resolved within airports and AirportsUK is excellent at facilitating a joined-up approach across all airports to help deliver a positive outcome and I hope to play a role in that over the next few years at Liverpool John Lennon".

Kam Jandu joined AGS Airports as CEO on 29 January 2025 after the airport group was acquired by global airports' investor, AviAlliance. With management responsibility for Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton airports, he is tasked with helping drive the group's plans for sustainable growth and improved services, underpinned by significant investment. He was previously CEO of Budapest

Airport, where he worked for 15 years, having initially been recruited as Aviation Director before being promoted to Chief Commercial Officer and then CEO. Earlier he had worked in the airline industry for over ten years with bmi in London and Star Alliance in Frankfurt in senior sales and marketing roles.

Jandu said "AirportsUK plays a critical role in ensuring all parts of government fully appreciate the vital contribution our airports make to the UK economy. It also ensures the collective challenges and opportunities of our sector are clearly represented and understood. As the new CEO of AGS Airports, I am looking forward to working with Karen, her team and my new Board colleagues to support this important work and help shape a sustainable future for UK aviation".

Andrew Macmillan was appointed MAG's Chief Strategy Officer in September 2024. He leads the Group's work on sustainability, corporate affairs, strategic planning, property and international development. Previously the Chief Commercial Officer at Vertical Aerospace, a UK start-up developing electric aircraft, he also spent more than a decade at Heathrow Airport, working across many areas, including airport expansion, regulation, operations, strategic planning and commercial developments with airlines and other partners. He began his working life at McKinsey & Co, with roles in Tokyo and London focussed on transport and infrastructure.

Macmillan said "MAG is pleased to support AirportsUK through the Board. AirportsUK brings together a diverse set of airports and businesses that serve different parts of the market. That diversity brings strength, and we are all aligned on serving consumers,

creating a sustainable future for airports and aviation and playing our pivotal role in the UK economy and in the lives of everyone who works and lives around our airports. Through AirportsUK we can speak with one voice on the issues that matter for that mission".

Dan Owens holds the position of CEO at Belfast International Airport, having previously held the position of Chief Financial Officer from August 2021 to January 2024. Prior to arriving at Belfast International Airport, he spent nine years at Gatwick Airport, where he held several senior financial positions, including management of the capital investment programme.

The AirportsUK Board is chaired by Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE. Its other members are Nick Barton (CEO, Birmingham Airport), Andrew Bell (CEO, Regional and City Airports), Karen Dee (Chief Executive, AirportsUK), Gordon Dewar (Chief Executive, Edinburgh Airport), Alison Fitzgerald (CEO, London City Airport), Simon Geere (Chief Executive, Farnborough Airport), Vincent Hodder (CEO, Leeds Bradford Airport), Nick Jones (Chief Executive, Newcastle International Airport), Dave Lees (CEO, Bristol Airport), Alberto Martin (CEO, London Luton Airport), Nigel Milton (Chief Communications and Sustainability Officer, Heathrow Airport) and Tim Norwood (Chief Planning Officer, London Gatwick Airport). ■



Andrew Macmillan



Dan Owens



John Irving



Kam Jandu



Matthew Hall

NEW MEMBERS

AIRPORTSUK WELCOMES COGNIZANT AS A NEW CORPORATE PARTNER AND THREE OTHER NEW MEMBERS

Cognizant, Scottish Power Green Hydrogen, OMEX and Medigold Health have joined AirportsUK.



Cognizant

Cognizant (Nasdaq: CTSI) "engineers modern businesses".

The company says that it helps its clients to modernise technology, reimagine processes and transform experiences so they can stay ahead in a fast-changing world. "Together, we're improving everyday life. See how at www.cognizant.com, or @cognizant".

Cognizant, "charting a new course in aviation innovation"

As travel is booming, and airlines and airports are busier than ever, but outdated infrastructure struggles to keep up with passenger growth, causing inefficiencies and delays.

Cognizant says that its mission is "to help airlines

and airports embrace these changes with advanced technologies that enhance passenger experiences, modernise operations, optimise workforce management and ensure optimal use of their facilities, fleets and other assets. Our approach is simple: connect all stakeholders, airports, airlines, air traffic controllers, ground handlers and Border Force, to ensure seamless coordination and peak efficiency".

[Find out more](#)



ScottishPower Green Hydrogen

ScottishPower Green Hydrogen, joining as a Gold Member, is part of the ScottishPower group of companies operating in the UK under the Iberdrola Group, one of the world's largest integrated utility companies and a world leader in wind energy. ScottishPower is the first integrated energy utility in the UK to generate **100% green energy** focussing on wind energy, smart grids, and driving the change to a cleaner, electric future.

At the forefront of green hydrogen development in the UK, ScottishPower is moving forward with plans for three major projects. These have the potential to deliver up to 125MW of electrolyser capacity and lead the way for future projects.

With project plans that could span across multiple allocation rounds, ScottishPower has ambitions for 500MW of green hydrogen production in development. This would cater for over 8% of the UK's 6GW target of electrolytic low carbon hydrogen and produce around 200,000kg of hydrogen every day.

ScottishPower are working in collaboration with industry to help find the most viable solution in each decarbonisation journey, with co-located, or nearby hydrogen production facilities being the priority option. The company says that it is always open to having conversations with industries to advise and discuss how green hydrogen can play a key role in reducing their carbon emissions.



OMEX

OMEX, joining as a Silver Member, describes itself as a trusted partner for UK airport winter operations. A UK-based, family-run group of companies, for nearly 30 years, OMEX has manufactured AMS certified, fast acting and non-corrosive liquid de-icers to the aviation industry, national highways, local councils and building maintenance companies as well as offering high-quality solid de-icer products. Servicing a large proportion of UK airports, OMEX says that it has the experience, skill, and knowledge to not only supply product on time, but also to support airports with tailored training for staff and help and advice on application and best practices.



Medigold Health

Medigold Health, joining as an Associate Member, creates occupational health and wellbeing solutions for employers across the UK. The company says that it offers all manner of things that a caring employer might need to keep their people in work safe and well, including absence management, employee occupational health assessments, help with alcohol and drug issues, a vast array of employee health and wellbeing support and a range of other specialist services.

It works with employers of all sizes, providing tailored solutions across all sectors – whether major blue-chip companies seeking to develop bespoke corporate health and wellbeing programmes, or small businesses with fewer than 250 employees looking to improve the medical and wellbeing support available to their workforce.



From around the sector

EASYJET AND EASYJET HOLIDAYS TO OPEN NEW BASE AT NEWCASTLE AIRPORT

easyJet has announced plans to open a three-aircraft base at Newcastle Airport in March next year, creating 130 jobs for pilots, crew and engineers and supporting around 1,200 jobs in total.

The opening of the airline's 11th UK base will enable easyJet to extend its network from Newcastle and serve an extensive catchment area across the North of England and southern Scotland. A range of new routes and package holidays for next summer are set to be confirmed in the coming weeks. easyJet already offers flights and holidays from Newcastle to Alicante,

Amsterdam, Belfast, Bristol, Geneva, Malaga, Palma de Mallorca and Paris.

Nick Jones, the airport's Chief Executive, said "It is fantastic that easyJet has chosen to open a new base at Newcastle Airport in spring 2026 following such strong demand for flights and package holidays from our passengers. This investment will not only offer greater connectivity with the launch of new routes, but it will also deliver hundreds of thousands of additional low-cost seats and package holidays for our passengers. It will provide a significant boost to the local economy by creating high-quality jobs and

attracting more inbound visitors to the region".

easyJet's CEO, Kenton Jarvis, said the opening of the base in Newcastle would provide critical connectivity for the region, play an important role in enabling economic growth and consolidate easyJet's position as the UK's largest leisure airline, employing over 14,000 people across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

North East Mayor, Kim McGuinness, said "We are backing Newcastle International Airport to grow jobs and our tourism market, so this announcement is brilliant news on both counts. easyJet's new base will provide

more destinations for holidaymakers and help businesses grow and connect with global markets. This expansion further strengthens the airport's position as a major gateway to the world in North East England".

Aviation Minister, Mike Kane, said "This is fantastic news for the North East and Newcastle Airport, as one of our important regional airports. This is exactly the kind of growth we want to see in the sector, so that the UK becomes one of the best places in the world to fly, and we will continue to support industry to make this happen". ■



SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

New legislation to kick start a domestic Sustainable Aviation Fuel industry has been introduced in the House of Commons and is expected to become law next year.

The Sustainable Aviation Fuel Bill is designed to help industry meet its requirements under the SAF mandate introduced in January this year, which specifies that at least 10% of all jet fuel used in flights taking off from the UK from 2030 be made with sustainable fuel, rising to 22% by 2040.

The Bill sets out how

the revenue certainty mechanism, funded by a levy on aviation fuel suppliers, will work. The Department for Transport has promised to continue to engage with industry on the details of the mechanism, including pricing. It said that "the Government's commitments on green fuels will help deliver on its missions to kickstart economic growth via job creation, becoming a clean energy superpower, and will allow the UK to go further and faster with expansion plans, giving a boost to the tourism industry". Speaking on

14 May, Aviation Minister, Mike Kane, said "I want to see a golden age for green aviation and today sees take off for sustainable flights. Aviation continues to be one of the fastest growing and most integral parts of the UK's economy, offering more jobs across engineering, tourism and hospitality – and as we support aviation expansion, we need to move at full throttle towards decarbonisation. We are making the UK one of the best places in the world to produce sustainable aviation fuel, putting the pedal down on growth and boosting

job opportunities across the country".

Duncan McCourt, Chief Executive of Sustainable Aviation, said "We hugely welcome the publication of this important legislation. SAF is a crucial element in the plan to decarbonise aviation as it can be used in existing aircraft with existing infrastructure. The challenge now is to scale the industry, ensuring we have enough SAF to meet the mandate whilst keeping costs low and creating thousands of jobs in the process. This legislation will help to do that". ■

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT ANNOUNCES BIGGEST EVER INVESTMENT PLAN

Birmingham Airport has announced its capital investment plan totalling £76.5m over the next 12 months – equating to around £1.5m being spent each week as the airport gears up for further growth.

The plan includes further retail and hospitality offerings, alongside new lounges and terminal refurbishments. On the airfield, upgrades to the runway, maintenance

bases and the expansion of stand capacity will be rolled out. Back of house, baggage carousels and vehicle replacements all form part of the biggest investment the airport will have seen in a single year.

Birmingham Airport's CEO, Nick Barton, said "Last year over 13m passengers flew through our airport, but 2025 will be even busier. We have already made significant investment in

our terminal and airfield and our most significant spending programme to date demonstrates our confidence in continued growth. Last year we completed 14 openings and refurbishments across the retail and catering estate, and we have overcome the challenges seen in security".

"Now we look ahead" he said "with this year off to a flying start and one that will deliver our busiest to date with up

to 14m forecast to use the airport. With more passengers, we need improved facilities not only for our customers, but for our colleagues too. This significant investment over the next year will ensure we can continue to build on operational efficiency, whilst improving our resilience and offering greater choice. This is an exciting time for the airport, its people, partners and passengers alike". ■



From around the sector



GATWICK AIRPORT AND PARTNERS LAUNCH THE UK'S FIRST 'AIRPORT ECONOMIC ZONE' TO STIMULATE GROWTH

The Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone, launched at UKREiF (the UK's premier real estate, investment and infrastructure forum) in Leeds, is the UK's first aviation-powered economic zone, representing 7% of the UK economy.

The launch, showcasing the region and its strengths to investors and developers from around the world, followed six months of preparatory work by an expert taskforce from the public and private sectors. A delegation of 27 partners attended the forum to promote the

zone and its new brand identity, and to help attract new investment into the region, covering West Sussex, East Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Surrey, Croydon and Kent. The region is home to universities and industry clusters, including aerospace, clean energy, life sciences, creative industries and advanced manufacturing, as well as London Gatwick, the UK's second largest airport.

Next steps for the region include developing an action plan that will help shape its future operating model, defining its strategic objectives, outcomes and funding approach. The taskforce taking this work forward will also

draft and approve terms of reference, define the role and membership of the Board and identify candidates for the position of independent Chair.

Launching the zone at the forum, Stewart Wingate, Chief Executive, London Gatwick, said "A new economic powerhouse has arrived to drive growth and investment across this outstanding region with London Gatwick at its heart. The airport is an economic anchor for the South East and provides seamless access to both global and domestic markets. Forming the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone is part of our plans to deliver economic growth

and give the region a powerful single voice and recognisable identity to help unlock new investment, trade and tourism opportunities".

London Gatwick already contributes 76,000 jobs and £5.5bn to the UK economy every year. If approved, the airport's plans to bring its existing Northern Runway into routine use, would deliver a further 14,000 jobs and £1bn in growth for the regional economy each year. ■



STEWART WINGATE PROMOTED TO OVERSEE BELFAST INTERNATIONAL, EDINBURGH AND GATWICK AIRPORTS

London Gatwick Chief Executive, Stewart Wingate, has been appointed as Managing Director, UK Airports, a newly created role by VINCI Airports and Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP).

In this role, Wingate will oversee the future development and strategic direction of London Gatwick, Edinburgh and Belfast International airports, with the Chief Executives of these three airports reporting into him. Gatwick and Edinburgh are jointly owned by VINCI Airports and GIP, while Belfast is wholly owned by VINCI.

Pierre-Hugues Schmit, currently Chief Commercial and Operational Officer at VINCI Airports and a non-executive director on the London Gatwick board, will succeed Wingate as Chief Executive of London Gatwick. Both appointments will take effect on 1 September, with the two men working together over the summer to ensure a smooth transition.

Nicholas Notebaert, President of VINCI



Stewart Wingate

Airports and Michael McGhee, Deputy Chairman of GIP, said "Stewart is one of the most experienced aviation executives in Europe and we would like to thank him for his outstanding contribution to London Gatwick. During his tenure, passenger numbers have climbed from 30 million in 2009 to more than 43 million, fuelled by significant growth in long-haul routes and strong airline relationships. His broad expertise and strong track record make him an ideal choice for the newly created role of Managing Director for the UK as we look to maximise the opportunities across our



Pierre-Hugues Schmit

UK portfolio".

Wingate said "It's been a privilege to lead the London Gatwick team for over 15 years through a number of very exciting projects such as the seven-year planning process to bring our Northern Runway into routine use. The airport is in a strong financial and operational position with more airlines than

ever before serving our passengers. I am delighted to be handing over to Pierre Hugues and look forward to continuing to be involved with London Gatwick and working with the teams from Edinburgh and Belfast in my new role".

Schmit said "London Gatwick plays a vital role in the UK, by providing seamless access to both global and domestic markets and delivering substantial trade and economic benefits in the South East and beyond. I'm excited to be joining London Gatwick as Chief Executive to lead the airport through the next stage of its growth journey". ■



From around the sector

CAA CONFIRMS UPDATED RULES TO SUPPORT SAFE GROWTH OF DRONE SECTOR

The UK Civil Aviation Authority has confirmed a package of updates to simplify rules for drones and to enhance safety.

The CAA said that the legislative measures it will recommend to the Department for Transport will reinforce its aim "to create a world-leading regulatory environment that balances the need for safety and security with enabling the unmanned aircraft sector to grow".

The updated framework follows a public consultation, which received almost 3,500 responses from the drone community, as well as contributions from the Home Office and the police. Reflecting the feedback, the changes will support the safe expansion of drone use while making it easier for users to understand and follow safety rules.

Recommendations include increased education requirements, with free online mandatory flyer ID

training extended to users of drones over 100g, introduction of drone product standards and implementation of direct remote ID requirements to enable a drone to broadcast identification and location data.

Kevin Woolsey, head of remotely piloted aircraft systems at the CAA said "These changes represent a major step in creating a regulatory framework that is ready for the future – supporting safe, responsible drone use while enabling the sector

to grow and innovate. We've listened carefully to the drone community to develop an approach that simplifies the rules, strengthens safety and security, and helps the entire sector to transition smoothly to new standards".

He added "Our ambition is to establish the UK as a world leader in unmanned aircraft regulation, where users are empowered to operate safely, and the sector has the clarity and flexibility it needs to thrive". ■

GLASGOW PRESTWICK AIRPORT WELCOMES FIRST EVER DIRECT SCHEDULED FREIGHTER SERVICE BETWEEN CHINA AND SCOTLAND

In a development described as a "game changer" by the airport's Chief Executive, Ian Forgie, China Southern Air Logistics has chosen Prestwick as its UK air cargo hub.

Starting in May at four flights a week, but with plans to increase to a daily service, the new China Southern flights mean that the airport will double its previous scheduled freighter movements.

Forgie said "This is welcome news. The airport team has been working hard over the last 12 months to showcase the Prestwick solution as an alternative cargo gateway into the UK, and the Board is delighted that a flagship carrier has established a scheduled service from China to Prestwick. We anticipate this new trade route will grow rapidly this year as Prestwick delivers on its plans and the market responds to an alternative cargo

gateway into the UK and a new direct export route to China from Scotland for high value Scottish seafood and whisky. We are in discussions with other airlines and expect to make further announcements soon".

Colin Dai, Prestwick's Country Sales Director for Greater China, said "The airport has a long history and reputation for handling wide bodied freighters, providing fast aircraft turnaround and cargo handling, delivered through our

in-house team. We are proud to announce this landmark agreement, and I know there is a lot of excitement from both sides to see the success of these flights".

To maximise its capabilities to handle large freighters, the airport has invested £2.3m in equipment in the last 12 months and is continuing to invest in ground handling equipment and cold chain supply facilities, as well as employing more staff. ■

BELFAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND VISIT BELFAST EMBARK ON NEW TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Belfast International Airport and the city region's destination marketing organisation, Visit Belfast, have announced a new strategic partnership designed to boost tourism, support investment and enhance the visitor experience.

Northern Ireland's busiest airport is currently investing around £100m as part of a five-year programme to transform its facilities, improve the passenger experience and accelerate operational and environmental performance. Around 6.8m passengers flew in and out of the airport last year, its busiest to date.

The new partnership aims to drive tourism growth by focusing on shared goals, including enhancing the visitor experience at the airport and highlighting the airport's significant investments through information, promotional support, and branding opportunities across Visit Belfast's global digital and marketing channels.

Dan Owens, the airport's CEO, said "We are committed to enhancing the



passenger experience and our investment and focus in this area can easily be seen by the significant developments already underway. As part of a £100m multi-year investment programme, we're enhancing every area and we're excited by the progress already made. We also recognise the important role we play in driving tourism growth and economic impact for the city and region, which is why we are excited to be agreeing this partnership, and we look forward to working

closely with Visit Belfast in the months and years ahead".

Visit Belfast said the partnership will focus on promoting the city as a leading destination for international leisure and business visitors. The organisation's Deputy CEO, Rachael McGuickin, said "Connectivity is key to driving travel opportunities, visitor numbers and economic growth. Belfast International Airport, our largest international gateway and a major investor in tourism,

is critical to city and regional tourism growth, and we are delighted to be working closely with the team on a range of opportunities. This is a landmark partnership, and we're excited by its significant potential". ■



From around the sector



EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT UNVEILS PLAN TO UNLOCK ITS FULL CARGO POTENTIAL

East Midlands Airport has announced plans that could create more than 20,000 jobs by making land around its runway available for development.

Four sites on the airfield totalling more than 50 hectares have been earmarked as ripe for development to maximise the airport's potential and build on its success as the UK's leading hub for express air freight.

Two of the plots have tax site status as part of the East Midlands Freeport, offering businesses investing in the sites tax incentives and simplified customs processes. Three of the sites would have direct access to

the runway, through new taxiways and space to park up to 18 extra aircraft. The proposals also outline a total of 122,00m² of warehouse space, along with up to 51,000m² of landside yard space and 1,000 parking spaces.

The announcement builds on a recent study by York Aviation/MDS Transmodal, which showed the potential for strong express freight growth at the site, with volumes growing from 370,000 tonnes to 583,000 tonnes by 2043, a growth of 54%. This was based on a number of the airport's key attributes: its central location, fewer restrictions around night flying than other airports, specialising in dedicated cargo aircraft

and its single runway with direct access to cargo integrator hubs, offering fast and efficient aircraft-to-truck times.

Steve Griffiths, the airport's Managing Director, said "East Midlands Airport is already one of the most important airports in the UK, forming the backbone of express freight that powers the growth of advanced manufacturing and other high-value industries. It is the hub that connects much of the country to the world's most important markets for trade".

He added "Analysis shows we have the potential for significant growth in the coming years and to meet this, we have

identified development opportunities to enhance our cargo infrastructure. Our plan for growth will bolster the airport's pivotal role in powering UK trade, with tens of thousands of jobs and billions in economic value set to be unblocked by enhancing our cargo operation. We have four plots, a completely open mind over how those plots should be developed and are open to suggestions for investment mechanisms that would unlock their potential". ■

CUTTING EDGE DIGITAL TRADE TEST CENTRE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT TEESSIDE AIRPORT

Work is underway at Teesside International Airport to create a digital testing ground to make trade easier for business.

Backed by £3.5m of funding from the Teesside Freeport, the 5G-enabled digital trade test bed on the airport's north side will see a private network cover a large stretch of the site to help carry out a wide range of trade, goods movements and digital processes. Building work has begun to create a facility to test freight scanning software technologies.

The collaboration

between Teesside University and the Teesside Combined Authority aims to ease practical problems which hamper operations in customs zones. The idea is that rather than needing dozens of paper documents, digital trade has the potential to drastically reduce the amount of time and expense associated with importing and exporting goods. Administration typically accounts for 15% of trade costs and using digital technology to make these tasks more efficient could save the UK economy billions of pounds.

The only one of its kind in the UK, the project

will look at how new technologies such as AI, machine learning, IoT, geofencing and decentralised digital identities can ease trade.

Professor David Hughes, Associate Dean at the university's school of computing, engineering and digital technologies, said "This project places Teesside at the heart of pioneering solutions for the future of international trade. By combining the university's research expertise with real-world applications at the airport, we're demonstrating how advanced technologies like AI, Internet of

Things (IoT) and digital identities can remove long-standing barriers to global commerce".

Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen, said "It's great to see we have finally got spades in the ground to create this important zone. We are well known as a leader in pioneering technology to attract international investment – and our 5G work and digital prowess is making global companies sit up and take notice. We will be putting Teesside on the international map to remove trade barriers, promoting cutting-edge research, and making it easier to do business nationwide and worldwide". ■

MAJOR MILESTONE AT MANCHESTER AIRPORT AS NEW SECURITY HALL OPENS

Manchester Airport has marked the opening of Terminal 2's new security hall with a ribbon cutting.

The new hall, fitted with state-of-the-art scanners and significantly increasing the capacity of the terminal, opened on 22 May and is described by the airport as "a major milestone" as its 10-year £1.3bn

transformation of the airport nears completion.

The transformation programme began in 2015, with the new extension to Terminal 2 opening in 2021, doubling the airport's overall capacity. Since then the older part of Terminal 2 has been redeveloped to bring it into line with the new part. The opening of the new security hall signals a major step

towards the full opening of the terminal, which will come later this year when the departure lounge and all the shops and bars in it open as well as Pier 2, which will house extra gates.

Manchester Airport Managing Director, Chris Woodroffe said "Seeing the first passengers go into the new security hall is very exciting for everyone here, as it

was one of the major milestones we have been working towards since first announcing the transformation 10 years ago. Here at Manchester Airport, we are proud to connect the North to the world and as we take these huge steps towards completing our £1.3bn transformation it means we're connecting these passengers via an airport terminal that can rival any across Europe". ■



AIRPORTSUK MEETINGS & EVENTS 2025

AirportsUK Board Meeting

AirportsUK Office

23 June @ 10:30am – 1:00pm

Airport Conference: Operations

Raddison Blu, Manchester Airport

24–25 June

Rescue & Fire Fighting Services (RFFS)

Virtual meeting

26 June @ 11:00am – 1:00pm

Aerodrome, Safety & Compliance (ASC)

Virtual meeting

9 July @ 2:00pm – 4:00pm

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

Airspace & Air Traffic Services (AATS)

Virtual meeting

29 September @ 11:00am – 1:00pm

Fire Safety Forum

Virtual meeting

29 September @ 1:30pm – 3.30pm

Aerodrome, Safety & Compliance (ASC)

AirportsUK Office

1 October @ 1:30pm – 4:00pm

AirportsUK Board Meeting

AirportsUK Office

2 October @ 10:30am – 1:00pm

Health & Safety Week Awards

AirportsUK Office

2 October @ 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Planners Forum *(Airports only)*

Virtual meeting

7 October @ 11:00am – 12:30pm

Rescue & Fire Fighting (RFFS)

London Gatwick Airport

24 October @ 11:30am – 4:00pm

Public Affairs Communications Network (PACN) & Policy Committee *(Airports only)*

AirportsUK Office

4 November @ 11:00am – 1:00pm

Health & Safety

Bristol Airport

12 November @ 12:00 midday – 3:00pm



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 – 1:00pm

Security Group**AirportsUK Office**

4 December @ 11:00am – 12:30pm

Security Group (Airports only)**AirportsUK Office**

4 December @ 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Fire Safety Forum**Virtual meeting**

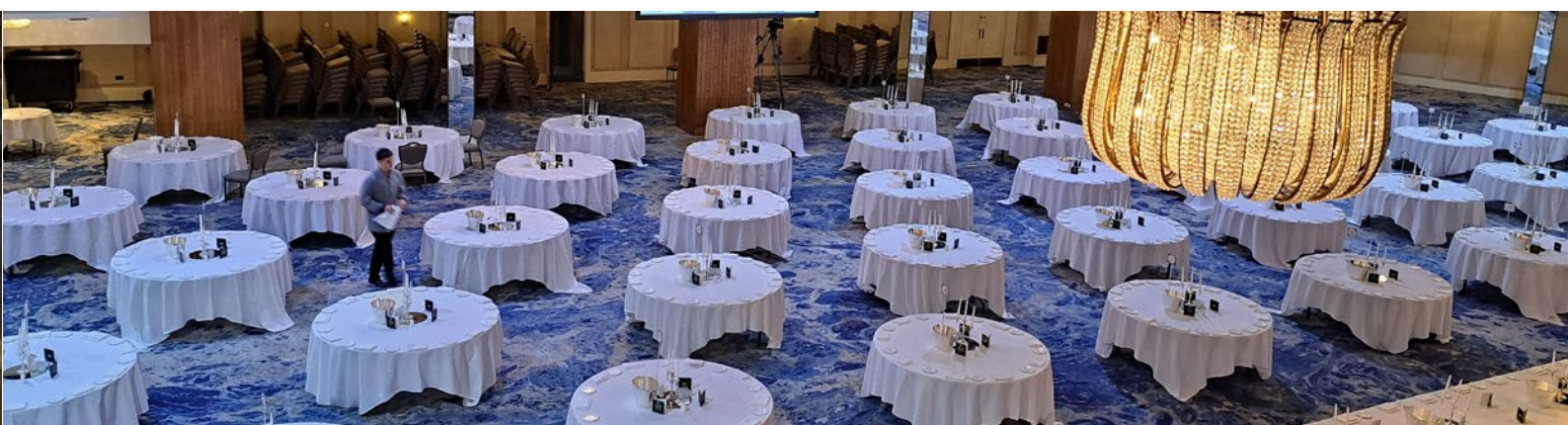
8 December @ 10:00 – 12:00 midday

Annual Conference**Church House Westminster**

9 December @ 9:00am – 5:00pm

(& networking reception)

Launching July/August





AIRPORTSUK WORKING GROUPS & COMMITTEES

• 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 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.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance, AirportsUK

• 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, 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.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance, AirportsUK

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

Christopher Snelling, Policy Director, AirportsUK

• 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 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.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance, AirportsUK

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

Rupinder Pamme, Senior Policy Manager, AirportsUK

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

Christopher Snelling, Policy Director, AirportsUK

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

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.

Peter Campbell, Head of Public Affairs & Media, AirportsUK



AIRPORTSUK WORKING GROUPS & COMMITTEES

• Rescue & Fire Fighting Services Working Group (RFFS)

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.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance, AirportsUK

• Sub-working group: Fire safety management

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.

Adele Gammarano, Head of Regulation & Compliance, AirportsUK

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

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).

Rupinder Pamme, Senior Policy Manager, AirportsUK

• Sustainability Working Group

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.

Christopher Snelling, Policy Director, AirportsUK



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