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Our ref: ACC/AIS

Your ref:

Date: 09 January 2013

This matter is being dealt with by: **Andrew Shirt**
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TO:- ALL MEMBERS OF THE AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Dear Member

**RE: ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT DONCASTER SHEFFIELD –
AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
ORDINARY MEETING - THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2013**

I write to inform you that the Ordinary meeting of the Airport Consultative Committee will be held on **Thursday 17 January 2013 at 10.30 am in Heyford House, Robin Hood Airport, First Avenue, Doncaster, DN9 3RH.**

Please note car parking is available in Heyford House staff car park; access can be gained by pressing the 'help' button.

The agenda and supporting papers are attached for information.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Shirt
Secretary

Enc

www.rhacc.org.uk

Membership:

Mr A Tolhurst OBE (Chair)

Mr D Armiger (Bassetlaw Development Agency), Mr J Bamford (Nottinghamshire County Council), Mr A Bosmans (FODSA), L Bramall (Sheffield City Council), Mr P Cole (Office of Caroline Flint MP), Mr D Craven (Doncaster MBC), Mrs L Daffern (Robin Hood Airport), Mr J Davies (Doncaster MBC), Mayor P Davies (Cabinet Member for Transport/Doncaster MBC), Mr D Fell (Doncaster Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise), Mr S Gill (Robin Hood Airport), Mr C Harcombe (Robin Hood Airport), Councillor B Hoyle (Doncaster MBC), Mr I Lings (Lincolnshire County Council), Councillor B Mathers (Barnsley MBC), Parish Councillor N McCarron (Blaxton Parish Council), Councillor H McNamee (Doncaster MBC), Ms B Moores (Directions Finningley), Mr P Nears (Peel Holdings (Management Ltd)), County Councillor C Pearson (North Yorkshire County Council), Councillor B Barker (substitute for Cllr Pressley) (Bassetlaw District Council), Councillor D R Pressley (Bassetlaw District Council), Councillor M Quigley MBE (Nottinghamshire County Council), Ms M Di Salvatore (West Lindsey District Council), Councillor P Schofield (Doncaster MBC), Town Councillor P Scholey (Maltby Town Council), Mrs S Scott (Austerfield Parish Council), Councillor T Sharman (Rotherham MBC), Mr A Storey OBE (Ex-Officio), Councillor C Underwood-Frost (West Lindsey District Council), Councillor Y D Woodcock (Doncaster MBC), Parish Councillor J Worthington (Cantley with Branton Parish Council) and Mr R Wright (Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

Purpose of the Airport Consultative Committee

The Committee's purpose is to enable the Airport operator (Peel Airports Ltd), and communities in the vicinity of the Airport, local authorities, local business representatives, Airport users and other interested parties to exchange information and ideas.

ROBIN HOOD DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

ORDINARY MEETING

17 JANUARY 2013

IN HEYFORD HOUSE, ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT, FIRST AVENUE, DONCASTER, DN9 3RH.

AGENDA: Reports attached unless stated otherwise

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ROBIN HOOD DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT

AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

25 OCTOBER 2012

PRESENT: Mr A Tolhurst OBE (Chair)
Councillor L Bramall (Sheffield City Council), Mr P Cole (Office of Caroline Flint MP), Mrs L Daffern (Robin Hood Airport), Mayor P Davies (Cabinet Member for Transport / Doncaster MBC), B Hoyle (Doncaster MBC), P Maddison (FODSA), Parish Councillor N McCarron (Blaxton Parish Council), Ms M Di Salvatore (West Lindsey District Council), Councillor P Schofield (Doncaster MBC), A Shirt (South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat), A Simcock (Peel Holdings Limited), Mr A Storey OBE (Ex-Officio) and Parish Councillor J Worthington (Cantley with Branton Parish Council)

Apologies were received from: Mr J Bamford, Mr A Bosmans, Mr D Fell, Mr S Gill, Councillor H McNamee, County Councillor C Pearson, Councillor D R Pressley, Town Councillor P Scholey and Councillor Y D Woodcock

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed Members to the October meeting of the Airport Consultative Committee. An extended welcome went to Anna Simcock, Development Planner for Peel Holdings Limited.

Apologies for absence were noted as above.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JULY 2012

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Airport Consultative Committee held on 26 July 2012 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- i) That apologies from Andrew Bosmans (FODSA) be added to the minutes; and
- ii) That Paul Maddison (FODSA) be added to the list of attendees present at the meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING

i) Air Passenger Duty

The Chair commented that Air Passenger Duty (APD) was having an inhibiting effect upon UK aviation. There had been some recognition from Government that APD was having an impact upon passengers, however, there was currently no information available to suggest that there would be any changes soon.

The Committee was informed that the Airport Operators Association (AOA) had launched its own integrated policy for UK aviation. From a recent poll over 80% of respondent's believed that Air Passenger Duty should be reduced or frozen.

In a press release, Peter Nears, Strategic Planning Director for Peel Group had stated that he fully supported the proposals, adding that the call from the AOA for consistency in Government policy was particularly important for local airports.

ii) Regional Airports

The Chair informed the meeting that there had been a recent press had suggested that Birmingham airport should be renamed "London-Birmingham" Airport and should be considered part of South East England. This had followed comments made in similar vein by the Chief Executive of Birmingham.

In an attempt to acknowledge the problems faced by passengers navigating across London and the south east, Virgin Atlantic had recently announced that they would be introducing a Manchester to Heathrow connection.

The DfT's were currently consulting on its Draft Aviation Policy Framework. It was noted that Peel Airport Ltd (PAL) would be responding on the draft Policy. The Chair added that he would arrange for the Committee to receive a copy of the comments made by PAL.

iii) Regional Tourism

P Maddison informed the Committee that Bassetlaw District Council had produced a Pilgrim Fathers story. The Chair added that he would discuss the literature with Colin Joy at Doncaster Tourism.

iv) Briefing on Regional Logistics Centre

The Committee noted that the Airport Director would provide a briefing on the Regional Logistics Centre at the January meeting.

4 PRESENTATION BY PEEL ON PHASE 3 OF BUSINESS PARK PROPOSALS AROUND THE AIRPORT

The Committee received an update from Anna Simcock, Development Planner for Peel Holdings Limited regarding proposed developments around the vicinity of Robin Hood Airport.

The Committee were informed that Peel Holdings would be shortly submitting an outline planning application to Doncaster Council regarding its proposals for phase 3 of a business park at the Airport. It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted to the Council prior to Christmas or shortly afterwards. The proposals for phase 3 of the business park related to land at the West of the Airport. There were also proposals for a housing development scheme on land off Hayhurst Lane.

It was highlighted that the protected woodlands would not be encroached upon.

The development of phase 3 of the business park would have a significant linkage with the FARRRS route. The outline proposals for the site would include one large storage and distribution unit and seven smaller units. There had been interest from a company to use one of the units as a public house.

In relation to land off Hayhurst Lane, there would be an outline planning application submitted for 750 new homes (500 homes in the first phases). Peel Holdings were in final processes of signing up house builders Taylor Wimpey and Barratt homes. It was envisaged that work on site would start during 2013.

A Simcock agreed to circulate a copy of the site location plan.

On a separate issue, A Simcock provided the Committee with an update regarding the Hayfield Community Centre and Sports Facility. It was reported that there would be a public consultation event taking place on Wednesday 14 November 2012 in the Lecture Theatre at Armstrong House, First Avenue, Robin Hood Airport.

An outline planning application would be submitted to Doncaster MBC towards the end of November 2012. The outline plans included a community centre on Hayfield Lane and a sports facility on First Avenue.

Parish Councillor N McCarron commented that it had always been stated by Peel that Section 106 funds would be allocated towards the sports facility and playing fields. She asked what had happened to the funds. A Simcock agreed to investigate this and other aspects of the S106 agreement relating to funding.

The Committee thanked A Simcock for her update and requested that she attends the ACC in 6 months' time to provide a further update.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

5 AIRPORT ACTIVITIES REPORT

L Daffern, Head of Terminal Services provided the Committee with an update on behalf of the Airport Director regarding the commercial, marketing and airline performance at RHADS. In summary it was reported that:

- At the January 2013 ACC meeting the Airport Director would provide the Committee with data on aircraft movements as part of his update.
- The Airport's Marketing Development Team had recently attended a "Roots" conference – it was noted that there had been several leads and the Team were currently following these up.
- Both Thomson and Thomas Cook had added extra capacity to their 2013 flying schedules from the Airport.
- Robin Hood had been voted "Best" Airport by Holiday Extras Customers' Awards 2012. A press release would be issued shortly to highlight the Award.

In terms of Airport Development:

- A Sheffield Hallam University student was currently on work placement with Western Aviation and Anglo European helping to link marketing activities between the two companies and the Airport. It was noted that the work placement would also be carrying out analysis regarding the types of freight movements at the Airport.
- With regards to logistics the airport continued to market it's self with the inland port, industries and trade, and also highlight the linkages between rail, sea, road and the airport.

- Enabling works had commenced on the FARRRS route and main contracts had now signed up to the scheme.
- In terms of cargo, during the last 6 months the Airport had more movements than during the whole of 2011. There had been a mixture of freight carried, including race horses which would be taking part in the Doncaster St Ledger Festival.

A Tolhurst provided the Committee with an update regarding the Vulcan which was sited in Hangar 3 at the Airport. It was noted that there were discussions currently taking place regarding the development of an engineering centre. This included utilising the site and centre for an engineering excellence facility linking up with the Advanced Manufacturing Park in Sheffield.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

6 MINUTES OF THE NOISE MONITORING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2012

RESOLVED – That the draft minutes of the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee held on 20 September 2012 be noted.

7 UKACCS PRESS RELEASES

The Committee noted that UKACCS had issued the following press releases:

- UK Airport Frequently reported longer flight delays in April – June 2012: CAA
- BATA Comment on Policy Exchange Aviation Report
- Travel Daily: TUI to close UK Airport information desks
- Airport bosses head for Abu Dhabi World Route Development Event
- Thone and District Gazette: Final talks held over plans to progress with link road
- Daily Telegraph: Travellers fake disabilities to skip airport queues

RESOLVED – That the press releases issued by UKACCS be noted.

8 2013 MEETING SCHEDULE

RESOLVED – That the cycle of 2013 Airport Consultative Committee meeting dates set out below be agreed:

Thursday 17 January 2013 – (AGM and Ordinary)
Thursday 18 April 2013
Thursday 25 July 2013
Thursday 24 October 2013

All meetings will commence at 10:00 am at the Airport.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Trees at Blaxton

Parish Councillor N McCarron enquired if there had been any progress regarding the several trees/hedges which required trimming on Station Road in Blaxton.

L Daffern reported that sub-contracts were now in place to carry out the works; however there had been a short delay due insurance issues which were currently being addressed.

Airport Open Day

A Tolhurst informed the Committee that the Airport was currently considering the Committee's suggestion to hold a possible open day at the Airport during 2013.

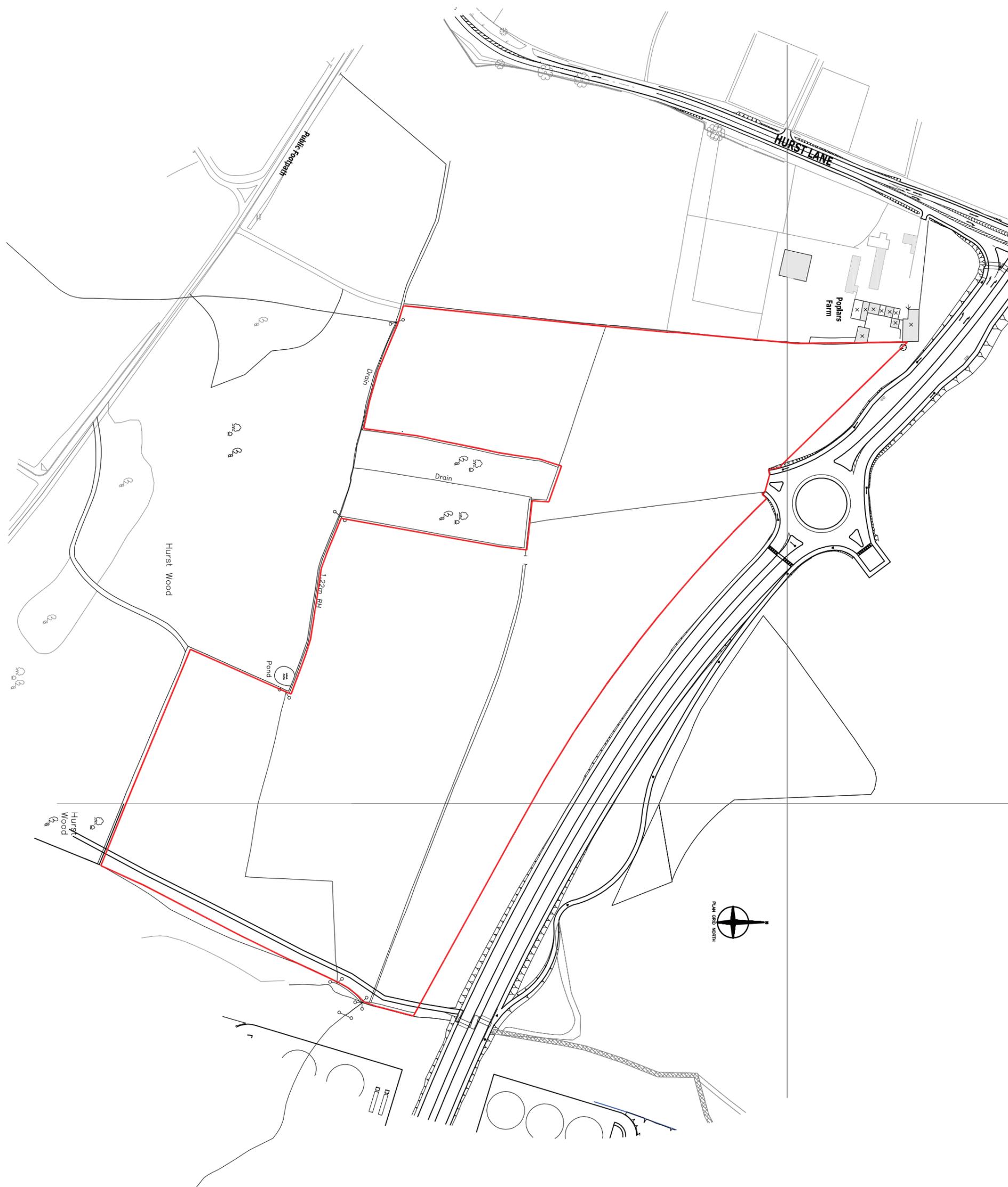
10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That the Annual and Ordinary meetings of the Airport Consultative Committee be held on Thursday 17 January 2013 at 10:00 am.

CHAIR

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Rev	Date	Description	Rev By	Chkd By
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Project Title
**ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT
 DONCASTER
 PLOT 8**

Client
PEEL HOLDINGS LTD

Status
PLANNING

Scale
1:2500

Drawn By
TCSS

Drawing title
SITE LOCATION PLAN

Job-Dwg No
8424M-100

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ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT DONCASTER SHEFFIELD

NOISE MONITORING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Y D Woodcock (in the Chair)
Mr C Barnes (Robin Hood Airport), Mr A Bosmans (FODSA),
Parish Councillor R Brown (Blyth Parish Council),
Town Councillor A Cropley (Bawtry Town Council), Mr J Davies (Doncaster
MBC), Mr A Dutton (Robin Hood Airport), Parish Councillor R Harrison
(Austerfield Parish Council), Parish Councillor M Lindley (Finningley Parish
Council), Parish Councillor M Marrison (Tickhill Town Council),
Parish Councillor N McCarron (Blaxton Parish Council), Mr S Racjan
(Doncaster MBC), Town Councillor P Scholey (Maltby Town Council),
A Shirt (SYJS), Parish Councillor I Swainston (Auckley Parish Council),
Mr A Tolhurst OBE (Chair of the ACC, Ex-officio) and
Parish Councillor J Worthington (Cantley with Branton Parish Council)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Cole (Office of Caroline
Flint, MP), Councillor Councillor T Corden (Doncaster MBC), Mr S Gill
(Robin Hood Airport), Councillor Councillor B Hoyle (Doncaster MBC),
Councillor Councillor P Knight (Doncaster MBC) and
Parish Councillor M Wiles (Wroot Parish Council)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed Members to the December meeting of the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee.

The Chair wished to thank the Sub-Committee for the good work which had been carried out throughout the year and wished everyone a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Apologies for absence were noted above.

2 MINUTES OF THE NOISE MONITORING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2012

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee held on 20 September 2012 be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Hayfield Community Centre – The Committee noted that the business units proposed for the first floor of the community centre were included in the original proposals; however they were no longer contained in the new proposals.

3 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

A Tolhurst asked the Committee for ideas which could be included in on future agendas.

Members suggested the following areas:

- Presentation about airport services, for example the Fire Station.
- Presentation about air field services (ground side)
- A technical briefing on noise
- How complaints are dealt with by the airport (from start to finish)
- The Airport Master Plan and how noise profiles may change over the coming years
- Visit to air traffic control
- Energy sector – wind turbines

4 AIRPORT SUMMARY

Wizz Air

A Dutton informed the Committee that Wizz Air had signed a five-year agreement with Airport which would see the continuation of its established route for the next five years.

It was noted that 1.2 million passengers had travelled with Wizz Air through Robin Hood Airport since 2006.

Air Traffic Control

The Sub-Committee was informed that there had been a change of ownership in Air Traffic Control services. Previously, Air Traffic Control services had been provided to the Airport by Vantage Air Traffic Services Ltd. The Airport's Air Traffic Control service for on route activity would now be provided by Peel Airports Ltd.

5 NOISE MONITORING AND TRACK KEEPING PRESENTATION

C Barnes presented the noise monitoring and track keeping presentation for the period 1 September 2012 to 31 October 2012.

a) Noise Complaints

The presentation reported on the following:

- i) The number of complaints received by Robin Hood Airport from 1 September 2012 to 31 October 2012.
 - The Sub-Committee were informed there had been 11 complaints received by the Airport on Saturday 15th September 2012, when the Vulcan bomber had departed from the Airport. In comparison, there had been 7 other complaints received for the whole of September 2012.
- ii) Robin Hood Airport's total number of complaints and type of complaints for September to October 2012.

- iii) Number of complaints and individuals for September to October 2012.
 - The Sub-Committee noted that there had been 18 complaints received in September 2012 by 14 individuals. During October 2012 there had been 8 complaints from 2 individuals. One individual made 7 of the complaints.
- iv) Number of complaints and individuals from each area from 1 September 2012 to 31 October 2012.
 - There had been 11 complaints from Moorends residents, 14 complaints from Bawtry residents and 1 complaint from a Costhorpe resident.
- v) The per cent of total complaints from each area from 1 September 2012 to 31 October 2012.
 - The Sub-Committee noted that 54% of all complaints were received from Bawtry residents, along with 38% from Moorends, 4% from Costhorpe. 4% were from unknown individuals.
- vi) Number of complaints and comparison figures for 2011 and 2012 for September and October.
 - The Sub-Committee noted that the number of complaints received for the period September and October 2012 had reduced considerably over the same period in 2011.
- vii) Robin Hood Airport's annual number of complaints from 2005 to 2012.
 - The Sub-Committee noted that the total number of complaints received continued to decline from a high of 968 in 2006 to a low of 526 in 2011, since that date the trend appeared to be continuing downwards. As at 31 October 2012 there had been a total of 262 complaints received.

b) Track Keeping

The presentation reported on the following:

- i) Number of arrivals and departures on each runway from September 2012 to October 2012.
- ii) Number of arrivals and departures on each runway from April 2005 to October 2012.
- iii) Number of night time departures from September 2012 to October 2012.
- iv) Number of Quota Count Points Used and Quota Count Points from April 2005 to October 2012.
- v) Number of non-NPR aircraft departures from September and October 2012.

- vi) The number of QC4 movements from November 2010 to October 2012.
- vii) The number of engine tests for September and October 2012.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

6 SOUND INSULATION GRANTS SCHEME (SIGS)

A Dutton informed the Committee that separate two companies had now been sourced and would shortly be carrying out works to properties. One company would carry out sound proofing and the other installing ventilation.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

7 CARBON MANAGEMENT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Committee received a presentation from C Barnes which set out the energy consumption in the terminal building, airfield and hangers. It was noted that there had been less energy used month by month from February 2011 when the data started to be collected. In terms of energy costs there had been around a 4% saving.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

8 SCHEDULE OF 2013 MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the schedule of 2013 meeting dates as set out below be agreed.

Thursday 21 March 2013
Thursday 20 June 2013
Thursday 19 September 2013
Thursday 5 December 2013

All meetings will commence at 10:00 am at Robin Hood Airport, unless stated otherwise.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Trees at Blaxton

Parish Councillor N McCarron stated that there still had not been any progress regarding the several trees/hedges which required trimming on Station Road in Blaxton, adding that the trees were hanging-over onto the footpath. **ACTION: A Dutton to raise with S Gill.**

S Racjan informed the Committee that in the interim period to make footpath useable he may be able to arrange for the un-paid workers from Hatfield Prison to carry out remedial works.

10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Noise Monitoring and Environmental Sub-Committee will be held on Thursday 21 March 2013 at 10.00 am in Heyford House, Robin Hood Airport.

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Passengers come first in new Civil Aviation Act

Published: 19 December 2012

Policy: [Making sure UK airports and airlines are safe, secure and competitive while reducing their impacts on the environment and communities](#)

Minister: [The Rt Hon Simon Burns MP](#)

The Civil Aviation Act has become law today and paves the way for airports to offer better facilities and information for passengers.

Passengers have today been placed firmly at the heart of UK airport regulation as a new Civil Aviation Act becomes law. The Act paves the way for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to motivate airports to deliver better facilities, provide more information for passengers and give greater incentives for airports to prepare for disruptive events such as severe weather. The Act also makes provisions for future reforms to the Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) scheme, which offers financial protection for holiday makers in the event of their tour operator going bust.

The new Act sees a number of key changes to the powers and responsibilities of the aviation regulator, the CAA, including:

- giving the CAA a single overriding duty, for its airport economic functions, to further the interests of passengers and owners of cargo in the provision of airport operation services
- creating a flexible licensing regime for regulated airports, enabling the CAA to include licence conditions that require airports to respond more effectively when things go wrong (e.g. severe weather)
- allowing the CAA, where appropriate, to replace fixed price caps on airports with lighter touch forms of regulation and removing unnecessary central government involvement from airport regulation
- giving the CAA more effective enforcement powers, allowing it to impose sanctions of up to 10% of an airport operator's annual turnover and daily amounts of 0.1% of turnover for breaching licence conditions
- providing the CAA with a new role in promoting better public information about airline and airport performance levels, enabling passengers to make informed decisions when making travel arrangements
- providing the CAA with a new role to promote better public information about the environmental effects of aviation and measures taken to mitigate adverse effects
- conferring certain aviation security functions currently carried out by the Department for Transport, on to the CAA. Responsibility for aviation security policy, and giving aviation security directions to industry, will remain with the Secretary of State

The new Act also enables Ministers to make future changes to the ATOL holiday protection scheme, including the ability to bring holidays sold by airlines into the scope of the scheme. Earlier this year, the government introduced secondary legislation to update the ATOL holiday protection scheme, making it more relevant to today's market. The new powers in the Act will enable the protection available to consumers to be further strengthened.

Aviation Minister Simon Burns said:

This is an important milestone in our drive to put the passenger experience unequivocally at the heart of how our airports are run. Aviation is vital for providing the UK with the connections we need to do business, travel for leisure and visit our friends and families around the world. I am grateful for the cross-party support this Act has received during its passage through Parliament – ensuring passengers and those sending cargo can enjoy the benefits of this new regime as swiftly as possible.

Now that the Act has received Royal Assent, the CAA will work to bring the new airport economic regulatory framework fully into force in April 2014.

Notes to editors

The Act introduces, and enables, reform in 4 main areas:

- the framework for economic regulation of airports
- the legislative framework of the Civil Aviation Authority
- the Air Travel Organisers' Licensing scheme (ATOL)
- conferring certain aviation security functions currently carried out by the Department for Transport, on to the CAA - responsibility for aviation security policy remains with the Secretary of State

Under the new regulatory regime for airports, the CAA is empowered to carry out a market power test, as set out in the Act, to determine whether an airport operator should or should not be subject to economic regulation. This replaces the designation of airports for price control regulation by the Secretary of State. Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports are currently designated and their current price controls, set under the Airports Act 1986, will continue to run until 31 March 2014. Over the next 18 months, the CAA will determine how to apply the new regime set out in the Act to the airports that are subject to economic regulation after this date.

Under the existing regime, the CAA has 4 duties for the purposes of economic regulation, these are:

- to further the reasonable interests of users of airports within the UK. Users comprises airlines, passengers and other user of air transport services at the airport
- to promote the efficient, economic and profitable operation of such airports
- to encourage investment in new facilities at airports in time to satisfy anticipated demands by the users of such airports
- to impose the minimum restrictions that are consistent with the performance by the CAA of its functions

In addition, the CAA is also required to take account of international obligations notified to it by the Secretary of State.

The measures set out today will replace these with a single primary duty and a number of further duties to which the CAA must have regard in carrying out the primary duty for the purposes of airport economic regulation.

Primary duty

- to further the interests of passengers and owners of cargo (both present and future), in the provision of airport operation services and to do so, wherever appropriate, by promoting competition.

Further duties

- to ensure that licence holders are able to finance their provision of airport operation services
- to secure that all reasonable demands for airport operation services are met
- to promote economy and efficiency on the part of licence holders in their provision of airport operation services at regulated airports
- to secure that licence holders are able to take reasonable measures to reduce, control or mitigate adverse environmental effects of the airport to which the licence relates and aircraft using that airport
- to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- to have regard to any international obligation of the UK notified to it by the Secretary of State
- to have regard to the principles of better regulation

In addition the CAA will have a duty not to impose or maintain unnecessary burdens.

The expanded regulation-making powers in the Act would allow more holidays to be included in the ATOL scheme and would provide even greater clarity for consumers whilst ensuring a level regulatory playing field for businesses selling flight-inclusive holidays. The government's intention is that such a step would only be taken following full consultation with stakeholders including an impact assessment.

Press enquiries: 020 7944 3108

Out of hours: 020 7944 4292

Public enquiries: 0300 330 3000

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Department
for Transport

Civil Aviation Act 2012 Questions & Answers

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General Q&A

What is the purpose of the Civil Aviation Act?

The Civil Aviation Act 2012 (the Act) is designed to modernise key elements of the regulatory framework for civil aviation in the UK in order to enable the sector to make a full contribution to economic growth without compromising standards. The Act offers a package of reforms to make regulation – and the sanctions which support it – flexible, proportionate, targeted and effective.

The Government wants to see a successful and competitive aviation industry. However, much legislation governing civil aviation dates from the 1980s; it is therefore essential that the legislative framework is updated to reflect the many changes that the civil aviation sector has undergone over the past 30 years. In order to address this, the Act introduces and enables reform in four key areas:

- The economic regulation of airports;
- The legislative framework of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA);
- Aviation security;
- The Air Travel Organisers' Licensing scheme (ATOL).

The Act also gives the CAA powers to disclose, in an anonymised form, medical information it holds on air crew and air traffic controllers for medical research purposes.

Above all, an important theme runs through the Act: putting the interests of the passenger and owners of air cargo at the heart of airport regulation.

When does the Act come into force?

Many of the provisions of the Act are to come into force by commencement order on a day to be specified by the Secretary of State. However, some provisions come into force either on Royal Assent or two months after Royal Assent.

It is intended that the new framework for airport economic regulation set out in Part 1 of the Act will be brought fully into force from the 1st April 2014. Airports that are designated for price control regulation on the date the relevant provision is brought into force will be subject to a transitional period from this date until April 2014.

The Government is currently working to a plan that would aim for the CAA to take on its aviation security functions from April 2014.

With regard to ATOL reform we plan to consult stakeholders on the use of powers. No decision on making regulations under these powers will be taken without a full impact assessment and consultation with all stakeholders.

What does the Act do for passengers and the owners of air cargo?

The main aim of the airport economic regulation reforms is to deliver better outcomes for passengers and air cargo owners in the provision of airport operation services.

At present three airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) are subject to price regulation by the independent regulator, the CAA. Under the Act, the CAA will have more flexibility in choosing how to regulate market-dominant airports, but with a clear overriding duty to further the interests of users of air transport services - passengers and the owners of air cargo. The new system is designed to encourage efficient investment in airport facilities to the benefit of passengers and air cargo owners.

In addition the Act provides a new role for the CAA in promoting better public information about airline and airport performance, as well as about the environmental effects of aviation and measures taken to mitigate adverse effects. This will aid consumers in making informed choices.

What does the Act do to help passengers stranded by adverse conditions such as snow, volcanic ash or industrial action?

The Act requires that the CAA puts passengers' interests at the heart of their decision-making regarding the regulation of market-dominant airports. Specifically the Act allows the CAA to put operational resilience conditions into airport operators' licences, which could place appropriate obligations on airport operators to prepare for adverse conditions. The precise conditions will be determined by the CAA when they prepare the licences for regulated airport operators.

These new powers will not come into force until 2014. What is being done on winter resilience in the meantime?

Since the disruption to air services at UK airports during the winters of 2009 and 2010, the aviation industry has taken significant steps to improve its resilience to severe winter weather. For example, Heathrow has tripled its snow clearance vehicle fleet and quadrupled staff numbers available for snow clearance. The CAA also formalised its compliance monitoring team which is deployed at airports when there is major disruption to aviation operations to monitor the situation and ensure airlines comply with legislation on assisting passengers whose flights were delayed or cancelled.

What does the Act do to help economic growth?

Effective competition is a crucial enabler of growth. Competitive markets are the best way in the long run to deliver goods and services to consumers at minimum cost. Effective competition also incentivises firms to invest and improve efficiency, choice and service quality.

In most sectors of the UK economy, the degree of competitive rivalry between businesses and the threat of competition law is sufficient to protect consumers from the risk of businesses exploiting their market power – for example by charging unreasonably high prices or by providing unreasonably low levels of service quality.

However in some sectors of the economy – typically those which used to be state-owned monopolies and where circumstances limit the prospect for effective competition – economic regulation is needed to protect consumers.

The Act modernises the framework for airport economic regulation. The aim is to enable the sector to make a full contribution to economic growth without compromising standards.

What does the Act do for the environment?

The Act requires the CAA to make available appropriate information to inform the public about the environmental effects of civil aviation in the UK and measures taken to limit adverse environmental effects. Environmental issues include matters such as noise, vibration, emissions and the effects of works carried out at airports.

Furthermore, in conducting its airport economic regulation functions, the CAA is required to further the interests of passengers and air cargo owners in the provision of airport operation services. In doing this, they must have regard to the need to secure that the regulated airport operator is able to take reasonable measures to reduce, control or mitigate adverse environmental effects that are generated by activity of the airport, and aircraft using the airport, to which the licence relates.

An example of a reasonable measure could be an energy saving investment project, such as installing solar powered lighting in terminal buildings, which would lower the airport's future energy costs.

Is the Act related to the issue of airport capacity in the South East or the Airports Commission?

No. The Government's position on new runways in the South East remains unchanged and as set out in the Coalition Agreement, while the Airports Commission, which will report in summer 2015, has been established to identify options to maintain the UK's status as an international hub for aviation. Wider aviation issues will be addressed through the development of a new Aviation Policy Framework, on which the Government has recently consulted, which supports economic growth while addressing the environmental impacts of flying. We plan to adopt the Aviation Policy Framework in spring 2013.

The measures in the Act will, however, help improve the quality of service that passengers and air cargo owners receive at airports and will contribute positively to economic growth.

Is the Act related to the forced sale of Stansted and the break up of BAA?

No. This a matter for the Competition Commission, which is one of the UK's independent competition authorities and carries out investigations independent of Government, industry or other parties. BAA (now Heathrow Airports Holdings Ltd.) was required to sell three of its airports as a result of an independent competition review by the Competition Commission published on the 19th March 2009.

The Government supports competition as an effective way to meet the best interests of users, but it is not for Government to comment on the Competition Commission's independent assessments and recommendations on divestment or on the merits of the airport owner's case.

Airport Economic Regulation – Q&A

Why are airports subject to economic regulation?

In most sectors of the UK economy the degree of competitive rivalry between businesses and the threat of competition law is sufficient to protect consumers from the risk of firms exploiting their market power, for example by charging unreasonably high prices or by providing unreasonably low levels of service quality.

However, in some sectors of the economy – typically those which used to be state-owned monopolies and where circumstances limit the prospect for effective competition – economic regulation is needed to protect consumers. Such regulation has typically capped the prices that dominant companies can charge in order to promote efficiency, while providing them a fair return on their investments.

In the UK, economic regulation is carried out by independent expert regulators in the following sectors: gas and electricity (Ofgem), water (Ofwat), telecoms and post (Ofcom) and rail (Office of Rail Regulation). The CAA has this responsibility for airports and air traffic services.

Airport economic regulation will only apply where regulation is needed. More specifically, the reforms apply to airport operators with substantial market power where the benefits of regulation exceed the costs and where competition law does not provide sufficient protection against the risk of abuse of substantial market power. Currently Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted are designated for price control regulation under the existing regime.

Why are these reforms being introduced and how will they be achieved?

It is widely considered that the existing framework for airport economic regulation did not meet the standards expected from a modern regulatory regime. The existing regime did not permit the CAA to introduce alternative forms of regulation – for example by monitoring prices and regulating certain aspects of service quality – even if this would have benefited passengers and reduce costs for industry.

Reform to the framework of the economic regulation of airports has also been prompted by the significant changes that have taken place in the aviation sector since the existing legislation was brought in. These include large increases in passenger volumes, the expansion of regional airports and entry of low-cost airlines into the market.

Ultimately, the main aim of the reforms is to deliver better outcomes for passengers and owners of air cargo. This will be achieved by:

- Providing the CAA with a clear primary duty to further the interests of passengers and owners of air cargo in the provision of airport operation services;
- Providing a more flexible and targeted set of regulatory tools (including a licensing regime);
- Making the CAA's decisions more accountable through a system of appeals;
- Reducing unnecessary regulatory and central government involvement.

Who is affected? Will all the airports currently designated for economic regulation continue to be regulated under the new regime?

The reforms will apply to airports with substantial market power, where the benefits of regulation exceed the costs, and where competition law does not provide sufficient protection against the risk of abuse of substantial market power. Currently Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted are designated for price control regulation under the existing regime.

Under the new regime, the CAA – as the independent expert regulator – will be able to carry out a market power determination to establish whether or not an operator of an airport (or part of an airport) should be subject to economic regulation. It will also be required to carry out a market power determination at the request of the airport operator, or a person who is likely to be materially affected by the decision, where the airport has more than 5 million passenger movements in the preceding year, unless there has been no material change of circumstances since the CAA's last determination.

What tools will the CAA have to combat competition concerns at unregulated airports in the rest of the UK?

The Act gives the CAA concurrent powers to enforce competition law and make market investigation references to the Competition Commission in the airports sector. These provisions will cover all airports in the UK, not just those which are subject to economic regulation.

What role will there be for the Secretary of State in the airport economic regulatory regime?

One of the key criticisms of the existing regime is that the Secretary of State decides which airports should be designated for price cap regulation. To rectify this situation, the Government proposes to empower the CAA to take this decision against clearly specified criteria set out in the legislation. This will align the framework for airport economic regulation with the Government's Principles for Economic Regulation.

This will also ensure that central government is rightly removed from the process of deciding which airports should or should not be subject to economic regulation, and that such decisions are taken by the body that has the expertise and capability to do so. This should provide a more stable and objective framework, enabling those affected by economic regulation to anticipate the context for future decisions and make investment decisions with confidence.

There is a provision in the Act for the Secretary of State to issue guidance to the CAA which the CAA must have regard to when making its decisions. The Secretary of State has no current plans to issue guidance.

What action can be taken to address poor performance from regulated airports?

The Government wishes to equip the CAA with similar tools for enforcing licence conditions as are currently available to other economic regulators.

Under the Act the CAA could impose licence conditions, such as a general licence condition requiring acceptance of a code of practice relating to operational resilience, if it considered it appropriate.

Furthermore, if an airport operator becomes non-compliant with licence conditions, the Act introduces a stepped series of enforcement notifications leading to the imposition of financial sanctions on the airport operator in order to encourage a prompt return to compliance.

Where there is, or is likely to be, an urgent need to address an immediate risk of serious economic or operational consequences of a licence contravention, a fast track process by way of an urgent enforcement order will allow the CAA to seek compliance and remedial action.

Failure to comply with an urgent enforcement order, which has been confirmed by the CAA, may incur a penalty from the CAA and/or may be subject to a third party claim for damages.

The Act provides for a range of financial penalties for licence contraventions. These are:

- A fixed penalty amount not exceeding 10% of qualifying turnover for the qualifying period (both terms are defined in the Act) or
- A daily fine of 0.1% of qualifying turnover for the qualifying period, or
- Both of the above

CAA Reforms – Q&A

Why are these reforms being introduced? What do you hope to achieve, and how?

The Act reforms the CAA in respect of:

- The appointment of board members;
- Criminal prosecution and civil proceedings;
- Charging schemes;
- Efficiency reporting;
- The disclosure of anonymised medical information;
- The provision of information about aviation.

These changes modernise the CAA in line with other regulators and complement other recent reforms to CAA governance, such as the separation of the posts of non-executive Chair and full-time Chief Executive.

These reforms will benefit the CAA through bringing aspects of its management and operation into line with other regulators. Industry will also benefit from better transparency and accountability in the CAA's efficiency measures. Finally, consumers stand to gain from the CAA having a more flexible enforcement toolkit and duties to publish information.

The CAA is being given new powers and increased freedom to appoint its own board members - how will the Government retain an appropriate level of oversight?

The Secretary of State will continue to appoint the Chair, any Deputy Chair and the other Non-Executive members who make up the majority of the board. The CAA's Non-Executive board members will appoint the Chief Executive (with the approval of the Secretary of State) to whom the Executive Directors will report. It follows logically for the appointments of the Executive Directors to be determined by the Chief Executive with the approval of the Chair and at least one other Non-Executive Director.

The Government believes this strikes the right balance between giving an independent regulator the freedom to appoint its own Executive Board, whilst maintaining the Secretary of State's influence over the composition of the board.

Could civil sanctions lead to the CAA taking enforcement action where it currently acts by dialogue and persuasion?

The CAA intends to operate through dialogue and persuasion wherever it is appropriate to do so and to maintain the culture of open reporting.

The Civil Aviation Act enables the Secretary of State, by Order under the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, to allow CAA to impose civil sanctions as an alternative to criminal prosecution for offences where it has an existing enforcement function. The CAA may be given a range of civil sanctions which are designed to lead to a flexible enforcement system.

In due course, the Government intends to bring forward proposals for which civil sanctions will be made available to the CAA by order, and in relation to which regulatory offences. The Government would consult on these proposals before putting the draft Order to Parliament.

What civil sanction powers is the CAA being given access to and what impact are those powers going to have?

The only individuals and businesses that will be significantly affected by either the current powers of criminal prosecution or the future alternative powers of civil sanctions are those that commit regulatory offences. Compliant individuals and businesses will be unaffected.

The Civil Aviation Act makes provisions to allow the CAA to impose the civil sanctions provided for in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, as an alternative to criminal prosecution for offences where it has an existing enforcement function. This will be subject to full consultation and impact assessment before being brought to Parliament. The civil sanctions that may be granted to the CAA following the consultation are:

- Fixed monetary penalties;
- Variable monetary penalties;
- Compliance notices: requirement to take specified steps to ensure that the offence does not happen again;
- Restoration notices: requirement to take specified steps to ensure the position is restored, so far as possible, to what it would have been if no offence had been committed;
- Stop notices: a notice preventing a person carrying on a specified activity until they have taken specified steps;
- Enforcement undertakings: a person may volunteer a resolution by giving an undertaking to take one or more corrective actions.

The availability of civil sanctions will enable the CAA to use such sanctions where appropriate, reserving criminal prosecution for more serious cases.

Will there be an appeals process?

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 makes provisions for an appeals process and the Government intends to provide one in this instance.

What provisions are there to ensure the CAA operates in a more efficient manner?

The Act creates a requirement for the CAA's annual report to include both an efficiency statement by the CAA and an assessment of that efficiency statement by the independent auditors. These provisions will give the CAA a further incentive to secure value for money and to be as efficient as possible in performing its functions.

Disclosing Medical Information – Q&A

What is the purpose of allowing the CAA to disclose medical information it holds on flight crew and air traffic controllers to medical researchers?

The CAA receives medical information on flight crew and air traffic controllers in the course of its licensing functions. The Act provides for the CAA to disclose this medical information, in anonymised form, to medical researchers. This information could be used for important medical research into the health risks to those individuals, for example the risk of heart problems, which in the aviation sector also has serious safety implications.

Is there a risk to the confidentiality of the information which the CAA holds?

The medical information provision includes stringent safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the information concerned. The safeguards include:

- i)** Medical information must be anonymised by the CAA before it is released to medical researchers;
- ii)** Disclosure must be for medical research purposes, approved by a research ethics committee;
- iii)** The CAA must consider if the research is likely to improve the understanding of the health risks to those individuals who are required to provide medical information to the CAA..

Conferring Aviation Security Functions on the CAA – Q&A

Why are aviation security functions being conferred on the CAA?

The Government believes that industry will benefit from the efficiencies that could be gained through having aviation security and safety regulation in one place. The CAA also has valuable experience of safety management systems designed to manage risks as effectively as possible. This move would also mean that the 'user pays' principle is applied to aviation security as it is currently applied to aviation safety and the aim is for the CAA to take on the aviation security function from April 2014.

Who will be responsible for aviation security regulation?

The Secretary of State will remain responsible for giving directions to industry detailing the aviation security measures required in the UK, in addition to the EU common basic standards for aviation security. The CAA will, as it considers appropriate, make recommendations to the Secretary of State about those directions and about the giving of further directions.

The CAA will also:

- Monitor and enforce compliance with UK and EU aviation security requirements;
- Undertake the security vetting of industry staff;
- Provide, when requested, advice and assistance to the Secretary of State;
- Provide such aviation security advice and assistance to industry as it considers appropriate.

What expertise and resources will the CAA have to run aviation security operations?

The Department for Transport and CAA are working together to ensure that the CAA will have the necessary aviation security expertise. The CAA has wide experience of risk based safety regulation, which will align well with the aviation security functions that are to be conferred on it. The Act also enables the transfer to the CAA of relevant aviation security staff and property.

The Government believes that the CAA's experience in aviation safety, coupled with the skills and experience of Department for Transport staff, could bring real benefits to the regulation of aviation security in the UK.

Is it fair and proportionate to transfer the cost of regulating aviation security to industry?

Charging industry for the regulation of aviation security will align it with the vast majority of other forms of regulation, including the CAA's regulation of aviation safety.

The aviation industry already meets the costs of providing security (close to £1bn p.a), and the estimated cost of regulation (£4.7m p.a).

Aviation security in the UK is good, how can the public be assured that this will continue to be the case once the CAA takes on its new functions?

Whilst aviation security is a new area for the CAA, the Government will be making sure that the right knowledge and skills are in place and, as part of this, we will be bringing the Department for Transport's experience of aviation security regulation to the CAA. This will compliment the CAA's very valuable experience not just of regulation, but of safety management systems designed to manage risks as effectively as possible.

Furthermore, while the CAA will be undertaking functions previously carried out by Department for Transport, the Secretary of State will remain responsible for aviation security policy.

How does conferring certain aviation security functions on the CAA link to the Government's plans to reform the regulatory framework for aviation security?

There is no direct link. However, the work to develop a Security Management Systems approach for aviation security is drawing on the lessons learned from a similar and successful approach which the CAA has led in the area of aviation safety.

ATOL Reform – Q&A

Why are these reforms being introduced?

There have been major changes over the past 15 years or so to the market in the UK for holidays that include a flight, particularly through the use of the internet to arrange and sell holidays. Some of the new ways of selling holidays did not sit easily within the definition of a 'package', which used to determine if a holiday should be protected under the ATOL scheme.

This has led to a lack of clarity for consumers, the travel trade and the CAA about which holidays are ATOL protected and which are not. Out of two very similar holidays, with the same flight or hotel, one may be ATOL protected, while the other may not, depending on which businesses the holiday was bought from or how it was put together. Consumers may be unaware of this, or seeing that ATOL protection applies to part of their holiday, believe that it covers all of it, leaving them out of pocket if their travel company fails.

How do the reforms made in the Act fit in with wider ATOL reform?

To start addressing this, the Government introduced the Civil Aviation (Air Travel Organisers' Licensing) Regulations 2012 in April that brought 'Flight-Plus' holidays sold by tour operators and travel agents into the ATOL scheme, and also introduced the ATOL Certificate to provide further clarity when a holiday or flight is protected.

However, reforms using regulations made under the existing powers, in section 71 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, can only go so far. The 2012 Act amends the regulation-making powers in section 71 to enable these reforms to go further in providing greater clarity for consumers about what holidays are ATOL protected, and also to provide a more consistent regulatory framework for businesses operating in this market.

What will be brought into the scheme?

The Act will allow new regulations to include the following types of holiday which incorporate a flight in the ATOL scheme:

- i)** Holidays procured on an 'agent for the consumer' basis (where a business technically buys a holiday for, rather than sells a holiday to a customer). By organising themselves in this way, businesses could avoid the obligation of providing ATOL protection for their holidays. These businesses can now be required to come under the ATOL scheme for holidays procured for the consumer in this way;
- ii)** Holidays sold by airlines. Some airlines already voluntarily protect the package holidays they sell under the ATOL scheme, but now all airlines selling holidays (whether a package holiday or a Flight-Plus holiday) can be required to do so, as far as is consistent with EU law;
- iii)** Holidays procured through facilitating businesses (businesses who may argue that they are neither selling a holiday to a consumer nor buying one on their behalf as an agent, but merely 'facilitating' the purchase of a holiday). The powers in the Act mean that this potential way to avoid the ATOL scheme can now be prevented, by requiring such holidays to be ATOL protected.

Who will be affected?

Travel businesses and airlines selling or procuring holidays including a flight may be required to obtain an ATOL licence and to protect certain holidays they sell or procure under the ATOL scheme. Consumers who buy such holidays may benefit from the additional ATOL protection provided, as well as the greater clarity about what holidays are protected.

What do you hope to achieve by this?

The expanded regulation-making powers in the Act would allow more holidays to be included in the ATOL scheme and would provide even greater clarity for consumers whilst ensuring a level regulatory playing field for businesses selling flight-inclusive holidays. The Government's intention is that such a step would only be taken following full consultation with stakeholders including an impact assessment.

Does the Act allow for all flights sold by airlines to be covered by the ATOL scheme?

No. The new powers do not permit all flights sold by airlines to be protected under the ATOL scheme. It would not be possible to do so under the ATOL scheme unless insolvency protection for airline passengers was required at EU level. The European Commission are looking at this issue and we will consider any proposals if and when they are made by the Commission.

The Epworth Bells: Start is delayed on airport link

Friday 26 October 2012

PLANS for a new link road to Robin Hood Airport have hit delays as work was just about to start.

Construction on the Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme known as FARRRS was due to begin this week after being given the green light by councillors earlier this year.

But despite on-site preparation work the project, which will link the M18 with the airport, is still awaiting contractors to move in to get work under way.

However, Doncaster Council bosses behind the multimillion project insist the delays are minor and that work will soon be up and running.

Peter Dale, the council's director of regeneration and environment, said: "Given the scale of the project and its complexity, the finishing touches are still being made to key agreements between the various partners and stakeholders.

"All parties are fully committed to FARRRS and once the imminent deal is complete construction of this important scheme will get under way.

"The scheme opens the door to new investment in the town which will bring many thousands of new jobs and homes and deliver economic growth at a time when it is certainly needed. FARRRS remains right on track."

The project will include a dual carriageway from the M18 towards Rossington supporting the Inland Port before continuing as a single carriageway to the A638 at Parrot's Corner.

There will also be improved links to Rossington and Finningley, making Robin Hood easily connected to the UK network.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced the development as part of a package of road improvements across Yorkshire and the Humber region totalling £32.4 million. The work is aimed at improving road safety and reducing bottlenecks on the northbound carriageway between junction two - the A1(M) interchange and junction three, the White Rose Way turn off.

Announcing the decision earlier this year, mayor Peter Davies described FARRRS as 'tremendous news', adding: "2012 is becoming a monumental year for enhancing the economic prospects of Doncaster. Improvements are going to plan along White Rose Way, the first phase of the civic and cultural quarter is starting to open and plans for this new link road are motoring along nicely."

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BBC: Air passenger duty abolished on long haul flights

6 November 2012

The tax on long haul flights out of Northern Ireland has been abolished.

The Stormont assembly passed the final stage of the Air Passenger Duty Bill on Tuesday.

Duty on direct long haul flights departing from Northern Ireland airports will be reduced to zero from January 2013.

The abolition of the tax was welcomed by finance minister Sammy Wilson as a boost to the Northern Ireland economy.

"Direct air links facilitate local firms in doing business with customers outside the region," he said.

"They are also vital for the local tourism industry and in attracting foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland, both key to growing and rebalancing our economy.

"Abolishing air passenger duty on long haul flights will help to protect and improve our international air access and ensure the competitiveness of our airports."

John Doran, Belfast International Airport's managing director said: "Given the increasing differential with regard to direct long haul air passenger duty levels between the UK and Republic of Ireland, and the very specific problems which this caused for Northern Ireland connectivity, we are grateful to the Northern Ireland Executive and HM Treasury that decisive action has been taken.

"We now look forward with renewed vigour to building upon the success of our direct US air links, as well as reaching out into key additional long haul markets in Canada and the eastern hemisphere, in partnership with the investment and tourism authorities."

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Doncaster Free Press: Council not to oppose Owston Ferry wind turbine plan which Robin Hood Airport says will interfere with radar

Sunday 18 November 2012

CONTROVERSIAL plans to install a wind turbine will not be opposed by Epworth Town Council.

The authority had been asked to consider an application for the turbine on land at Newlands Farm in Owston Ferry, which Robin Hood Airport is opposed to as it claims the mast will interfere with its radar.

It is the second time the plans have gone before the town council. Like the first time members made no formal observations.

Coun Peter Davies could not see how it could do so now, since the new proposal would be for a smaller turbine. He said it should be left to officials at North Lincolnshire Council to make the decision.

Coun Jean Levesley was firm in her opposition. She said the more she saw of individual wind turbines the less she liked them.

Of the one alongside the M180 she said: "It's the Angel of North Lincolnshire. It could cause an accident as people look at it when they're driving past.

"It is idiotic and horrible and I am against it."

Coun Richard Hall asked members to consider how they would feel if an aircraft were to be brought down as a result of the turbine having been built. He said: "I am objecting because of that."

Council chairman Coun Don Stewart urged the council to consider adopting a policy about wind farm development.

Coun Eddie Mardell said he would far rather have wind farms than a nuclear power station.

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Birmingham Airport Press Release: BA and Virgin say Birmingham Airport will never be international hub

Nov 22 2012

Two of Britain's leading airlines have launched an astonishing attack on Birmingham Airport, saying it will never be a national hub.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic Airways hit out at Birmingham's call for government intervention to encourage airlines to make better use of airports in the north and Midlands.

And they claimed that regional airports such as Birmingham could not provide an alternative to expanding capacity in the South East.

The airlines said:

- Heathrow and Gatwick are full because people want to fly from them. Birmingham isn't because people don't.
- The Government should not intervene to force airlines and passengers to use airports they "do not want to fly from".
- Foreign governments are only interested in Heathrow in talks about opening new air routes and capacity.
- Birmingham Airport could "never" be an alternative destination for London and the South East.

Ministers are grappling with the question of whether to build a third runway at London's Heathrow Airport and have set up an inquiry chaired by economist Sir Howard Davies, which is due to publish its initial findings next year.

Birmingham Airport has launched a campaign to convince ministers that it can provide an alternative to expanding Heathrow without the need for a new runway.

It says it could double passenger numbers from nine million today to 18 million without requiring any new infrastructure, and by extending its existing runway it will be able to serve 27 million people.

But it insists it needs formal Government recognition as one of the UK's national airports to give it the credibility needed to attract more business from airlines in other parts of the world.

Birmingham also wants Ministers to introduce a regional air passenger duty so that passengers pay higher taxes to fly from Heathrow, to encourage airlines to offer services from regional airports.

But its arguments came under fire in submissions from BA and Virgin to the Commons Transport Select Committee, which is holding an inquiry into the Government's aviation strategy.

Virgin rejected calls for regional passenger taxes, stating: “Airlines respond to passenger demand and operate services accordingly. Heathrow is operating at full capacity and Gatwick is full at peak times because passengers want to fly from those airports.

“Stansted, Birmingham and other airports with excess capacity can attract more passengers and airlines by reducing their charges, improving their passenger experience and marketing their services.

“We do not believe the Government should intervene in a well-functioning market by somehow forcing airlines and passengers to fly from airports they do not want to fly from or by distorting the aviation taxation system.

“We need more capacity at airports people want to use. Avoiding this difficult issue by trying to force more people to fly from airports they don’t want to use is not a realistic or long-term solution.”

Foreign governments wanted their airlines to have access to Heathrow – not other airports, Virgin said.

“When we attend bilateral talks between the UK government and other countries, UK officials always promote the other London airports and regional airports, but the response is usually the same: foreign governments are generally only interested in Heathrow.

“When foreign governments are unable to access or increase their own airlines’ access to Heathrow, they are understandably reluctant to open up or increase UK carriers’ access to their airports.”

By failing to increase capacity at Heathrow for foreign operators, the Government was making it harder for British airlines to expand operations overseas, Virgin said.

And it added: “We believe the UK needs one internationally competitive hub airport located where people where to fly to and from.

“We supported the proposal for a third runway at Heathrow because it delivered significant extra capacity at an affordable cost, in a convenient location for passengers, within a relatively short timeframe.”

British Airways also warned that it was up to regional airports to win new business on their own – and attacked calls for the Government to intervene to help them.

It said: “There is no evidence that existing government policy is leading to the under-utilisation of regional airports. Any action to increase the utilisation of regional airports would require intervention in the market which would distort competition.

“British Airways believes that any efforts to support the development of regional airports must not extend to distortive and unfair fiscal incentives, such as variable Air Passenger Duty or the subversion of the economic regulation system to deliver government airport policy outcomes.”

And it added: "While regional airports fulfil an important role in the UK aviation economy, British Airways does not believe that regional airports can ever be an alternative to provision of effective hub airport capacity serving London and the South East.

"Anecdotal evidence from international air service agreement negotiations in recent years suggest that many foreign airlines have no interest in accessing regional airports as an alternative to access to Heathrow."

Birmingham Airport did however enjoy the support of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, which has sent its own submission to the inquiry.

The chamber said: "A regional rate of air passenger duty or equivalent taxation should be introduced whereby the Government would have some mechanism to encourage airlines to operate outside of the South East."

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Travelmole: Industry outcry after Minister's warning about APD campaign

Sunday 2nd December 2012

The travel industry has hit back at the new Tourism Minister after he warned them not to make a fuss about Air Passenger Duty.

Speaking at a VisitBritain event in London, Hugh Robertson MP told the trade its high profile campaign against the tax was hurting the UK's image overseas.

"When the tourism industry criticises APD, it is a message that goes abroad," he said. "We must put our best face in our shop window."

But his comments have caused outcry from campaigners, who say it's the tax itself that is doing the harm.

Simon Buck, CEO of The British Air Transport Association (BATA), a member of A Fair Tax on Flying, said: "The minister says that Britain 'must put our best face in our shop window' when it comes to selling the UK as a holiday destination overseas. We wholeheartedly agree.

"However, the best way to encourage tourism would be to reduce the internationally unprecedented levels of the UK's APD - not take issue with campaigns that highlight the damage the tax is doing."

Mike Carrivick, former chief executive of airline industry association BAR UK, said the minister should heed his own words.

"It's the extortionate levels of APD that make total air travel costs to the UK so uncompetitive which is the turn off for families and other visitors," he said.

"In the same way that visa issues abroad have had to be listened to, so must APD - that lies entirely with government so don't blame the industry for sticking up for itself."

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Doncaster Sheffield Airport: Wizz Air Signs 5-year deal with Doncaster Sheffield Airport

3rd December 2012

Wizz Air, the largest low-cost, low-fare airline connecting Western and Eastern Europe has today signed a five-year agreement with Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield which will see the continuation of Wizz Air's established Doncaster Sheffield route network from the airport for the next five years.

The use of cost and time efficient airports is crucial to Wizz Air and management at Doncaster Sheffield Airport are experts in providing best-in-class service and efficiency, combined with the lowest possible cost base to the low cost airline market. This has been an attractive combination for Wizz Air, who is committed to offering the best value for money for their customers. Wizz Air currently operates to six Eastern European destinations from Doncaster Sheffield Airport, including Gdansk, Katowice, Poznan, Warsaw and Wroclaw in Poland and more recently to Vilnius in Lithuania.

1.2 million passengers have travelled with Wizz Air through Doncaster Sheffield Airport since first choosing to operate from here in 2006. Wizz Air's low cost flights have continued to prove particularly popular with Polish communities across the North of England whilst the success of this year's Euro 2012 football championships co-hosted by Poland is expected to see the numbers of visitors from the UK to Poland increase.

Daniel de Carvalho, Corporate Communications Manager at Wizz Air, said: "Today is a good day both for Wizz Air and for Doncaster Sheffield Airport. Wizz Air delivers low fares combined with excellent customer service and we partner with airports that work by the same philosophy of low costs and good service. Our partnership with Doncaster Sheffield has stimulated low fare air traffic in this region connecting the North of England with six exciting Central and Eastern European cities. With this renewed partnership we expect our passenger volume to grow further."

Chris Harcombe, Aviation Development Manager for the Airport commented: "We have worked closely with Wizz Air since they launched services in the UK market and have been delighted with their performance at Doncaster Sheffield since our partnership began. In recent months we've worked hard with the airline to understand how best to realise their ambitions for the North of England market. Our business model is focused on providing our airline partners with industry leading levels of operational efficiency and the lowest possible cost base whilst giving access to some of the UK's most densely populated areas outside of London. Today's announcement comes in recognition of the strength of that proposition and further reinforces the continued partnership between Wizz Air and Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield."

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MSN: Heathrow 'vital' for air travel

03 December 2012

Heathrow is vital to the future of long-haul air travel to and from Britain, the west London airport's boss has told MPs.

Only Heathrow, as a hub airport, can provide the transfer facilities to enable around 75 long-haul flights to continue, Heathrow chief executive Colin Matthews told the House of Commons Transport Committee.

He added that the west London airport had lacked the necessary capacity "for some 10 years" and that he had had to tell some international airlines there was no room for them at Heathrow.

China Southern, one of the world's biggest airlines, tried for eight years to come to Heathrow and were only recently able to start flights to the UK, Mr Matthews said.

"Airlines would choose Heathrow if they could. Unfortunately they are forced out, and choose other airports," said Mr Matthews.

The heads of three other South East airports - Gatwick, Stansted and Luton - told the committee there was spare capacity at their sites.

Gatwick chief executive Stewart Wingate said that in the long term there will be a need for extra capacity and he envisaged a second runway at Gatwick and a second runway at Stansted.

Asked about the so-called "Boris island" Thames Estuary airport scheme championed by London Mayor Boris Johnson, Mr Wingate said: "Estimates suggest it could cost between £50 billion and £80 billion. We don't see it as a deliverable solution."

Stansted managing director Nick Barton told MPs his airport was only around half full, while Luton's managing director Glyn Jones said more peak-time capacity was needed at his airport.

Mr Jones went on: "Resilience is an issue. If you are operating at 95% of capacity and something goes wrong, it goes badly wrong."

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Travelmole: UK airports list lost routes due to APD levels

Tuesday 04th December 2012

More than half of the UK's airports expect passenger numbers to fall in 2013-14 if the Government increases Air Passenger Duty (APD).

A new survey of 26 UK airports, conducted by the Airports Operators Association, has shown how routes have been affected by current APD levels and widespread concern about the anticipated increase.

On Wednesday the Chancellor is expected to confirm a 2.5% increase in APD in his Autumn Statement which will take effect from April 2013.

It follows a double inflation rise for passengers in April this year.

One in four airports say that as a direct consequence of the planned rise passenger numbers would fall by more than 5%.

A further one in four airlines said passenger numbers would fall by between 2-5%.

73% of airports say they are "very worried" by the Government's plans to increase APD.

And 83% of airports say that "current levels of APD are having an impact on whether airlines choose to fly from our airport".

The survey also found widespread evidence of lost routes and the commercial impact the tax is already having. These include:

- Gatwick Airport says that (in March 2012) Air Asia X ceased their route from Gatwick to Kuala Lumpur specifically because of the rising levels of APD.
- Bristol Airport attributes rising APD to reduced domestic services from the airport, from low cost carriers, easyJet and Ryanair, and says APD was one of the reasons the Continental Airlines service to Newark was stopped in November 2010.
- Glasgow Prestwick Airport says the routes which have been lost or severely affected by rising APD include: London Stansted Belfast, Bournemouth, Dublin, Shannon and two Scandinavian routes (Gothenburg, Oslo and Stockholm).
- Southampton Airport says that domestic routes (on which APD is levied twice - for outbound and inbound journeys) have been adversely impacted by APD - including routes to Leeds-Bradford Airport, Glasgow Airport and Edinburgh Airport. It also says that APD has contributed to a loss of services to Brussels.
- City of Derry Airport says that Ryanair have made it clear they will not add any new UK routes or capacity on existing routes due to APD rises.

- Cambridge Airport says that in attracting airlines to start-up new routes to Europe, the high taxes of operating to the UK are leading carriers to explore European markets for new routes rather than the UK.

Nick Barton, managing director, London Stansted Airport, said: "The UK is now only one of six European countries still imposing this tax and we charge twice the amount of the next most expensive country, Germany.

"Instead of increasing APD, Government needs to understand the damage this is doing to UK Plc, freeze the rate immediately and conduct an economic impact assessment."

There is growing pressure for the Treasury to commission an impact-assessment of APD due to the growing Fair Tax on Flying campaign.

200,000 people wrote to MPs this summer calling for an economic impact-assessment of APD. 90,000 overseas travellers have contacted the Treasury directly, with the same message.

100 MPs - including 97 who signed an Early Day Motion - are backing calls for a review.

In a Commons debate on APD on November 1, 35 MPs expressed their concerns about current levels of the tax, and the motion calling for a comprehensive review of APD passed unanimously.

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BATA Comment on Autumn Statement

Media Release

Wednesday 5th December 2012

Responding to today's Autumn Statement, Simon Buck, Chief Executive of the British Air Transport Association , (BATA) said:

"While we welcome the Chancellor's announcement of over a billion pounds of additional investment in UK road transport infrastructure, we regret that the Coalition Government continues to stand in the way of private investment in new runway capacity where it is most needed. As an island, trading nation, International air links are vital for the UK economy if we are to compete effectively for new overseas business and boost tourism. It is shameful that successive Governments have shied away for almost 40 years from taking difficult decisions on permitting privately funded new runway provision in the south east of England where capacity constraints are greatest, resulting in lost business opportunities and jobs to our near Continental rivals who appear to have no such qualms over building new runways. It is essential for the UK's future competitiveness that new runway capacity is permitted, to provide for existing and future needs. I hope that will be the conclusion of the Davies Commission when it reports in the summer of 2015 and that any such recommendations are implemented by the next Government, of.

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eTurboNews: A4A opposes increase in the UK Air Passenger Duty

6 December 2012

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Airlines for America (A4A), the industry trade organization for the leading U.S. airlines, issued the following statement today opposing the United Kingdom's increase to the Air Passenger Duty (APD) by 2.5 percent. The APD is the largest single tax passengers face anywhere in the world, with the increase, amounting to about \$107 for economy tickets and \$215 on all other cabins for flights to the United States.

"Increasing this already oppressive tax depresses the demand for air travel to and from the UK and unfairly penalizes airline customers," said A4A President and CEO Nicholas E. Calio. "Air transportation is an indispensable engine of economic growth, and if the UK wants to encourage travel and tourism spending, it should abolish--not increase--this tax."

Increasing the APD is at odds with the UK government's stated goal of attracting an additional 10 million new passengers by 2020 and to enhance the competitiveness of the UK economy. A4A joins the 300,000 individuals and companies and 100 Members of Parliament in calling on the UK Government to urgently review the APD.

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BBC: Robin Hood Airport explosive failings 'risked safety'

19 December 2012

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) has been criticised for safety failings which could have caused an explosion at Robin Hood Airport.

UKBA staff unsafely unloaded and examined explosives at the airport despite being warned not to, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) said.

The HSE said if the ammunition had been dropped it may have detonated.

UKBA has accepted a Crown Censure, the equivalent of a prosecution of a government body, from the HSE.

A flight carrying anti-tank ammunition had landed at the airport and UKBA workers were told by their manager to carry out checks on the load.

The aircraft pilot warned UKBA staff the crates of ammunition were explosive and should not be examined, the HSE said.

However they opened the crates and partially removed some of the explosive devices from their protective packaging.

A HSE investigation found UKBA had failed to carry out a suitable risk assessment to enable them to complete the checks safely.

A spokesman said: "There was a significant risk that the ammunition could detonate if it was dropped which could have detonated the whole cargo.

"As a result, members of the public, airport workers and nearby aircraft were all put at risk on that day."

By accepting the censure, UKBA has formally acknowledged there were health and safety failings.

A UK Border Agency spokesperson said: "We deeply regret this incident. As acknowledged by the Health and Safety Executive, we have already made significant changes to the way we manage health and safety to avoid a similar incident occurring in the future."

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The Epworth Bells: Wind plan scrapped after airport objects

Wednesday 2 January 2013

Plans to build a wind turbine have been scrapped at the last minute after Doncaster Airport said the structure would interfere with radar equipment.

The airport lodged a last-minute objection to the plans to install of 11kw twin-bladed wind turbine on a landfill site at Scabba Wood, Cadeby Road, Sprotbrough.

Doncaster Council planning committee had been recommended to give the scheme the go-ahead.

An airport spokesman said: "It is a known fact that wind turbines located close to airports can impact on the airport's radar equipment used to assist aircraft navigation, their take-off and landing.

"Due to the location of this particular wind turbine, this would impact on the radar equipment at Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield and as a consequence the Airport objected to this planning application.

"There are some viable, proven ways to mitigate these issues, however to date none have been put forward by the developer."

A spokesman from Doncaster Council said the plans were refused following the objections from Doncaster Airport.

Robin Hood Airport was not the only one to oppose the plans as 26 people objected in writing to the development and two further objections were received from a councillor and a community group.

The primary concerns of these objectors were that the turbine would be detrimental to the rural landscape and local property owners and nearby villages would be disturbed by the noise of the turbine.

This is not the first time Doncaster Airport has raised concerns about proposals for new wind turbines in the area.

An application to build a 29 metre tall wind turbine on land at Newland Farm in Blackdyke Road, Owston Ferry, capable of producing 250Kw of electricity was rejected in May amid fears it could affect vital radar equipment at Robin Hood Airport.

The Owston Ferry plans have since been re-submitted and are now set to go before North Lincolnshire planners for a second time following the concerns from the airport.

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