

BLACKPOOL AIRPORT OPERATIONS LIMITED

Joint CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

CONSOLODATED UPDATE NOTES

Wednesday 10 November 2021

Attendees present

Chair
Representatives from:
Blackpool Airport
Enterprise Zone
Lancs Chamber of Commerce
Marton Moss Forum
Blackpool Aviation Society.
Regional Ports Liaison Officer Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW)
NHV Helicopters
County Council
Cllr Angela Jacques
ROAR
Hangar 3

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no absences

2. Approval of minutes

The notes from 7 July 2021 were approved by the Chair

3. Matters Arising

Helicopter operations.

It was noted that NHV offered the representative from ROAR the opportunity to visit the operation. The ROAR representative commented that he had previously visited and was satisfied that they operated as best they can and standards are as they should be.

The ROAR representative commented that ROAR's concerns were about unexpected happenings such as the Glasgow and Leicester City owner incidents, and that fixed wing aircraft have time to take evasive manoeuvres but helicopters do not and that there was no necessity for them to fly over houses.

The representative from Hangar 3 commented that he held a helicopter license and helicopters do not 'fall out of the sky' as they have 2 engines and all pieces of equipment has redundancy equipment on board. It was noted that the occurrences mentioned above were for specific component failure

The likelihood of an incident is minimal

The Airport Fire, Safety and Operations Manager commented that as this is a busy airfield the helicopters have to join into the circuit with other traffic and await their turn to land.

The representative from NHV commented that it is a commercial operation to oil and gas rigs and that all their helicopters have system monitors and all components are checked after every 3 hours of flying

It was noted that the issue had been raised with the CAA and they are satisfied with the operation.

The Chairman stated that this reference in the meeting notes serves as a permanent record of ROAR's concerns.

4. Operations

The Airport Manager updated the meeting on the following areas:

4.1 COVID-19 Update

All staff at the airport continue to take precautions to ensure staff are as safe as possible from COVID. There has been some absence due to this but it has not affected the operation.

4.2 Projects Completed in the Past Year

The Airport Fire, Safety and Operations Manager advised the meeting that there has been substantial work carried out at the airport which includes:

- Runway 31/13 has been resurfaced and markings repainted
- The main runway lighting circuits have been updated and have improved resilience
- A roadway has been built to the NHV heli-pads to reduce vehicle traffic and to reduce the requirement for radio transmissions
- Asbestos works continue and areas upcoming are Hangar 1 and the ANT hangar with some removal, cleaning of the areas and anything remaining will be coated with PVC to seal it.
- A new Global Reporting System has been introduced to monitor the runway contamination and has been rolled out before Manchester or Liverpool Airports. – The representative from Hangar 3 commented that this is reassuring to any new operators wishing to use the airport
- Work on the fuel farm has been undertaken to ensure it fully meets regulations and the tri-scan has been replaced. The fuel farm is now fully approved to the requirements of the 2014/34/EU ATEX Regulations.
- The ATC Tower has had works carried out on the cupola with replacement windows and while this work was being carried out the operation was maintained throughout. In addition work has commenced in the remainder of the ATC Tower building to address some damp and improve the facilities
- Going into winter there has been an increase in gulls due to the Wellington Building not being accessible to clear of nests as the birds transiting the airport on their way to the coast. It is noted that the airport uses decoys, lasers and sirens in the first instance to disperse them - rockets are used as a last resort as the airport

acknowledges that they can affect animals in the area. Unfortunately gulls are difficult and not very intelligent and rockets have to be used to clear the area for inbound/outbound air traffic if no other methods are effective

- In October, the winter bird survey was undertaken on the land off Queensway which is farming land and could attract birds. The Airport does have a good relationship with the farmer and the crop planting plan is discussed to ensure minimum bird attraction in this area
- A pavement survey was commissioned which will be used to plan which areas require attention

4.3 Future Projects

- The Voice Switch project is ongoing and it is anticipated that it will be completed in January/February 2022. Trialling will be carried out and if successful then all documentation will be sent to the CAA for full approval
- The Direction Finder needs replacement prior to March 2022. This piece of equipment takes a bearing from an aircraft transmission showing the ATCO where the aircraft is located.

4.4 The Management Contract and Transition

The meeting was advised that the Transition took place at the end of October 2021. From 1 October 2021, BAOL took over the licenses from RCA giving stability and control to BAOL.

The Board are in the process of appointing a new Managing Director for the Airport to be a focal person to liaise with the Council.

As part of the Transition process, the airport has recruited a new Air Traffic Engineering and Maintenance Manager (3 days per week) to oversee the maintenance of all the Airport equipment on site and improve service.

5. ATC Update

Movement Figures

November Update

Movement total for the year up to Oct 2021 – 31,310

Same period last year – 16,068

An increase of 42%

	Month			YTD			Full year		
	Oct-21 Actual	Oct-21 Budget	Oct-20 Actual	Oct-21 Actual	Oct-21 Budget	Oct-20 Actual	Budget	Forecast	Budget + Actual YTD
Offshore Helicopters	374	500	511	3,382	3,440	3,539	5,580	5,580	5,522
GA	2,374	2,582	2,626	27,100	17,778	11,875	26,002	26,002	35,324
Other	77	95	82	828	808	654	1,210	1,210	1,230
Total	2,825	3,177	3,219	31,310	22,026	16,068	32,792	32,792	42,076

This has been with restricted hours and minimum controllers and consisted mainly of GA - small aircraft. Jets have had a slow start but figures are starting to improve.

NASP arrangements are now in place and approved allowing the Airport to security process passengers which means that the airport are able to accept flights over 10 tonnes with passengers.

To date we have processed 4 flights and 9 more are booked.

This security function is carried out with no security equipment and therefore has to be 100% hand search for both passengers and their luggage. If this operation is to be monitored and if it is successful and shows a positive increase in income stream, then the purchase of new equipment to assist will be sought.

Training and Recruitment

Currently there are the correct number of heads in the ATC department – this includes 4 full time and 2 part-time ATCOs,

It is anticipated that a further ATCO will validate in February/March, another in April and the final one in October 2022, which will give a full complement of 7.

It is hoped that in the New Year operational hours will be reviewed and will revert to 07:00 – 21:00 instead of 08:00 – 20:00

RFFS

It was noted that the increase in fire category to CAT4 full time has given additional flexibility within the business

6. Future Airport Developments and EZ

The representative from the Enterprise Zone updated the meeting on various points as follows:

- Meetings are being held with Lancashire County Council to discuss the water flow on the East side of the airport as the main ditch going into Lytham is blocked.
- The new sports field is in operation. New changing facilities and a 198 car, parking facility will be operational in March 2022.
- P2 car park is being considered as a location for an Aviation & Transport Museum & War Memorial.
- Outline planning proposals for changes to the highway have been submitted and were available for public consultation from 16th November 2021.
- Increased access to the airfield is being considered near the JMAX facility.
- The development of a solar farm on the South Side of the airfield is being considered.
- The website will be looked at to make it more interactive
- The potential of using a virtual air traffic control tower has been investigated however currently the technology is not sufficient and would require physical back up

7. Any other Business

- 7.1 The representative from Counter Terrorism advised that further to a restructure from January 2022 Blackpool Airport will fall under Merseyside instead of Heysham and information will be circulated with contact details. However if anyone observes any suspicious behaviour then they should call 999.

It was raised for awareness that there had been protests at other airports – including the blocking of junctions at Manchester Airport.

The meeting was advised of ACT (Action Counter Terrorism) – an ongoing initiative to provide guidance regarding what to look for in the local communities regarding suspicious things - there is an online course available.

- 7.2 Air Racing – The representative from Blackpool Aviation Society advised he had been contacted by British Air Racing advising that they are trying to reinvigorate air racing after a period of decline, and are looking for new ideas and new venues. Having seen the article that was produced by Blackpool Aviation Society on the 1991 event, he wondered if Blackpool might be interested in hosting one again following the last race that had been held in 1991 which could perhaps be tied alongside the Blackpool Air Show. It couldn't be advertised as part of an air show, as display authorisation rules come into play (governed by CAA document CAP403) which would disqualify many prospective participants

It was noted that the Air show is managed by Blackpool Council and contact will be forwarded to the British Air Racing.

- 7.3 It was suggested that the college be contacted as a potential venue for the meeting should the attendee numbers increase.

- 7.4 It was agreed that the notes from the meeting will be reinstated online

8. Date of meetings in 2022

- Thursday 10 March 2022 at 11:00
- Thursday 7 July 2022 at 11:00
- Thursday 10 November 2022 at 11:00.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

AFTN	Aeronautical Fixed Telecommunications Network
ATZ	Air Traffic Zone
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATCO	Air Traffic Control Officer
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
DME	Distance Measuring Equipment
RFFS	Rescue & Fire Fighting Service
OSS	Operational Support Service
SATCO	Senior Air Traffic Control Officer
VCR	Visual Control Room