Department for
Transport

South East Airports Taskforce: Report

July 2011

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FOREWORD

The Coalition Government has cancelled plans for a third runway at Heathrow and made it clear that it would refuse permission for new runways at Gatwick and Stansted. Our concern for those living around Heathrow has also led us to commit to retaining runway alternation. But we also fully recognise the essential role our three largest airports play in connecting the UK to the rest of the world and in supporting the UK economy.

That is why we established the South East Airports Taskforce (SEAT) – with airport, airline, environmental and consumer representatives – to explore how to improve performance and deliver a better passenger experience by making the best use of existing capacity; in other words, making these airports "better, not bigger". It should be emphasised that the SEAT initiative is just one element of a wider aviation strategy which includes our plans to modernise airport regulation and our consultation on the long term changes needed to deliver a flourishing aviation industry which plays its part in addressing the global and local environmental impacts of flying.

Freeing markets has delivered more choice, better connectivity and cheaper fares for passengers. And we recognise that where regulation is necessary it needs to be proportionate and flexible to deliver the right outcomes, principles which underlie our proposals for reforming the UK's airport economic regulatory regime. It has been apparent through the discussions of the Taskforce that this is the right approach, encouraging industry to be innovative in delivering better infrastructure, more efficient operations and an improved passenger experience.

As this report details, the Taskforce has considered a range of issues, including work to improve security and immigration processes so that legitimate passengers can travel as freely as possible whilst keeping them and the UK safe and secure. But its central focus has been on developing proposals to improve punctuality, increase resilience and reduce delay, particularly at Heathrow which is the busiest and most constrained of the three main London airports. This work suggests there is real scope to deliver benefits in terms of better resilience, fewer unscheduled night flights, reduced emissions and less stacking through more flexible operation of runways during the day, albeit on an occasional and limited basis and in prescribed circumstances with safeguards to ensure these additional operational freedoms can only be used to improve resilience and deal with disruption.

On that basis, I have agreed that these proposals should be taken forward under the leadership of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the independent aviation regulator, on the clear understanding that before final decisions are taken on changes in permanent operating procedures, there must be a proper, evidence-based understanding of the potential benefits and impacts and consultation with those who might be affected.

I am grateful to the Taskforce members not only for their constructive input into the Taskforce's work over the past few months but also for their continuing commitment to delivering real improvements for passengers. I intend to reconvene the Taskforce in a year's time to review the progress made.

The Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP

Minister of State for Transport

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The South East Airports Taskforce took forward work across seven areas:

- Security - *delivering more efficient, passenger-friendly security*;

- Border Controls - *maximising efficiency and effectiveness of airport border controls;*

- Regulatory Change - *removing barriers to efficient airport operation by cutting red tape and unnecessary regulation;*

- Punctuality, Delay and Resilience - *delivering more resilient operations, less delay and better punctuality;*

- Surface Access - *better access to airports especially by public transport and low carbon modes;*

- Performance Monitoring - *better information to judge performance and inform consumer choice;*

- Passenger Views - *better ways of making sure passenger views are known and addressed by airports and airlines.*

The Taskforce recognised the significant benefits that can be delivered through effective competition between airports, airlines and other service providers.

The Taskforce recommended a package of proposals to address punctuality, delay and resilience issues at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted:

- A set of *operational freedoms* to allow certain tactical measures to be applied to anticipate, prevent and mitigate disruption and to facilitate recovery. The tactical measures could include, for example, use of temporary departure routes and occasional desegregation of runway operation; but would be subject to safeguards to confine their use to certain defined and limited situations, and an assessment of their environmental impact.

- A *performance charter* for each airport to motivate stakeholders to take decisions based on the best interests of the whole airport system rather than being driven principally by their own individual commercial interest. The charter would set out the level of service that airline customers and their passengers should expect to receive.

- A set of *policy guidelines* to optimise the utilisation of runway resource at each airport.

These proposals will be taken forward at an airport level, but overseen and scrutinised by an Airport Performance Facilitation Group chaired by the Civil Aviation Authority, the independent aviation regulator.

A phased trial will be undertaken of operational freedoms (specifically the extended use of twin arrival streams and the introduction of twin departure streams, both in limited, prescribed circumstances) at Heathrow Airport to better understand the costs, benefits and impacts of the operational freedoms.

BAA will be required to engage fully and transparently with relevant local authorities, communities and other stakeholders throughout the process, particularly on the monitoring of noise impacts. Once assessed, the results of the trial will form the basis for a consultation with local communities which will in due course inform Ministers in deciding whether an operational freedoms regime should be adopted at Heathrow.

There is some scope for exploring operational freedoms at Gatwick moving forward, but currently no strong case for additional freedoms at Stansted.

The Taskforce reviewed and endorsed proposals to move to an outcome focused, risk based approach to aviation security.

The Taskforce engaged with the UK Border Agency to outline industry concerns, understand the Agency's vision for managing the border and take forward specific initiatives at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted to speed up the processing of passengers. In particular, the Taskforce welcomed the opportunity to understand and contribute to the UKBA's programme of work, including:

- Improving partnership working with airports and airlines;
- Rolling out and improving the effectiveness of new technology and automated ways to conduct border checks;
- New working arrangements to strengthen UKBA's ability to deal with peak periods during the airport day;
- Focusing activities and resources on those travellers who pose the higher risks;
- Greater transparency of performance.

The Taskforce recognised that the revision of many aviation related regulations (particularly European regulation) was outside the remit of the group, but noted that in due course the Government's Red Tape Challenge would provide further opportunity for the industry to suggest revisions. The Taskforce agreed to the establishment of an airport specific parking enforcement scheme to reduce congestion on airport forecourts and roads and remitted the issue of baggage reconciliation to the National Aviation Security Committee (NASC).

The Taskforce concluded that the airport community must continue to take the lead on providing evidence and making representations on the importance of surface access schemes. The importance of collaborative working, in particular with public transport providers and planning and highway authorities, was acknowledged as being critical, as was the role of central Government in delivering flagship projects such as HS2, Crossrail and Thameslink.

The Taskforce reviewed and acknowledged the wealth of data that is collected on passenger satisfaction and airport performance and recognised the increasing use of technology such as mobile phone apps and social media to obtain real time feedback. The Taskforce welcomed improvements to some measures in the Service Quality Rebate, in particular the introduction of automatic data collection for security queuing and endorsed the inclusion of specific guidance on passenger representation as part of the update of Airport Consultative Committee guidelines. The Taskforce concluded that the performance data that was most beneficial to the passenger experience was flight punctuality, security queue times and immigration queue times. As a result, an internal performance report on these key performance areas will be trialled at Gatwick Airport (for internal management purposes only) to encourage the airport community to share the operational reasons for poor performance and optimise the use of resources to tackle specific problems.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.2 The Government's objectives for aviation are to secure a successful and sustainable future for the sector, improve the passenger experience at airports, and maintain high standards of safety and security for passengers and freight.

1.3 The UK's aviation industry is a national success story. It is no coincidence that three out of the five leading European airlines are predominately UK based. The industry has responded to the liberalisation of aviation in the 1990s to deliver more choice, better connectivity, cheaper fares for passengers and substantial investment in airport infrastructure over the past decade, including the opening of Terminal 5 at Heathrow in 2008 and the ongoing refurbishment of both the North and South Terminals at Gatwick.

1.4 Innovation has delivered significant benefits to passengers. For example, Ryanair's web check-in and baggage policy has halved bag drop transaction times for those passengers travelling with a check-in bag, reduced the demand for check-in desks by 70% and reduced annual fuel burn by more than 20,000 tonnes per annum[1]. Gatwick Airport has worked in partnership with Norwegian Air Shuttle to successfully trial a scheme where passengers can check-in and tag their own bags, dramatically reducing the potential for queues to build up at check-in.

1.5 However, there is still more that the Government and industry can do.

1.6 In May 2010, the Coalition set out its Programme for Government[2] and in doing so ruled out additional runways at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. Having considered the arguments, the Government has also committed to retaining runway alternation at Heathrow.

1.7 In October 2010, the Government announced that it will develop a long term sustainable framework for UK aviation which supports growth and addresses aviation's environmental impacts. A Scoping Document[3] seeking views from stakeholders on strategic aviation issues was published in March 2011 to inform the development of the framework.

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[1] Figures provided by Ryanair.
[2] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/coalition_programme_for_government.pdf
[3] http://www2.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/2011-09/consultationdocument.pdf

1.8 The Government is also committed to introducing legislation in the second session of this Parliament[4] to reform airport economic regulation to drive investment and improve the quality of service for passengers at designated airports.

1.9 In addition the Government is also taking forward work to:

- modernise the Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) scheme in response to the changing ways holidays are now sold[5].

- include aviation in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) from 2012.

- respond to the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report on options for reducing UK aviation carbon dioxide emissions out to 2050[6].

- consult on a new night flying regime for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted in spring 2012, as the current regime for these airports expires in October 2012.

- improve airspace management through the EU's Single European Sky (SES) programme.

- support the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in the development and delivery of its Future Airspace Strategy (FAS).

1.10 Recognising the very important role Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted play in providing the connectivity the UK economy needs to compete in a global economy, the Government established the South East Airports Taskforce on 15 June 2010. Chaired by the Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP, Minister of State for Transport, the Taskforce was asked to identify and investigate options for making the best use of existing capacity and enhancing the passenger experience to, from and within the airport, whilst having regard to the local environmental implications of any measures.

1.11 The membership comprised representation from each of the three airports, full service and no-frills airlines, the CAA and NATS (provider of national air traffic services) and members representing business, passenger and environmental interests.

1.12 The terms of reference and full membership for the Taskforce can be found at Annex A.

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[4] http://www2.dft.gov.uk/press/speechesstatements/statements/hammond20110303.html
[5] http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2011-17/
[6] http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/aviation-report

1.13 In the course of discussions a number of issues raised by Taskforce members fell outside the remit of the group, but were still regarded by some members as being important to achieving 'better' airports. These included the impact of European regulation on the aviation industry, in particular in relation to passenger compensation[7] and employment rights[8], the separate ownership of terminals at airports and structuring airports around airline business models.

1.14 Some of these issues will be considered by the Department for Transport (DfT) through separate mechanisms, including the reform of airport economic regulation as it progresses through the Parliamentary process, the Government's review of aviation regulation as part of the Red Tape Challenge (see chapter on Regulatory Change) and ongoing work with the European Commission on revisions to the Denied Boarding Regulation[9].

1.15 The Taskforce did not focus exclusively on changes that require government intervention. An important element of its remit was to highlight and share best practice and provide a catalyst for further industry led improvement and to build upon work already undertaken by the airports and airlines to utilise existing infrastructure more effectively. Case studies illustrating this approach are contained within the body of this report.

1.16 The Taskforce identified seven priority areas to focus on in its early discussions:

- Security - delivering more efficient, passenger-friendly security;

- Border Controls - maximising efficiency and effectiveness of airport border controls;

- Regulatory Change - removing barriers to efficient airport operation by cutting red tape and unnecessary regulation;

- Punctuality, Delay and Resilience - delivering more resilient operations, less delay and better punctuality;

- Surface Access - better access to airports especially by public transport and low carbon modes;

- Performance Monitoring - better information to judge performance and inform consumer choice.

- Passenger Views - better ways of making sure passenger views are known and addressed by airports and airlines;

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[7] Regulation EC 261/2004 of the European Parliament and of the European Council
[8] The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)
[9] EC 261/2004 of the European Parliament and of the European Council

1.17 The report has been structured around these seven workstreams and details the conclusions and proposals identified by the Taskforce, as well as key discussion points and specific concerns raised by Taskforce members, along with examples of best practice and innovation being taken forward by the industry.

2. SECURITY

Introduction

2.1 It is self evident that an effective security regime to guard against the risk of terrorist attack is an essential component of a modern airport; but the efficiency of security operations is also important. A long security queue can be a real blight on a family holiday, particularly during the summer peak and a regular inconvenience for business passengers.

2.2 Over recent years, airports across the UK, including Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, have been working to address the problem and real improvements have been delivered - see case studies at the end of this chapter. For example, a number of security search areas have been redesigned and rebuilt with better technology and staff levels. But the Taskforce considered that more could be done to tackle not only security queues but the security procedures themselves.

2.3 The Taskforce therefore considered how best to deliver security in a more efficient and passenger-friendly way while maintaining the current high levels of security, or better. It should be noted that a number of specific security regulations were also considered as part of the Regulatory Change work package and are detailed later in the report.

The Existing Framework

2.4 The current legislative framework for aviation security prescribes in great detail the security processes that must be followed by the aviation industry. The DfT (as the relevant regulator) specifies detailed requirements and then verifies adherence to these through a programme of inspections, testing, audit and advice. Aviation security falls within the competence of the EU. The rules which apply to UK airports are therefore based on mandatory EU requirements supplemented with further rules specific to the UK (reflecting individual national circumstances and threat levels).

2.5 The Taskforce noted that, in practice, the existing system does not greatly emphasise internal quality control by the regulated industry. It concluded that the current approach:

- Focuses on inputs and procedures rather than security outcomes;

- Involves reporting requirements which do not give the industry and the regulator a comprehensive picture of the quality of the security work, but instead concentrate on compliance with mandatory processes;

- Gives almost no discretion to industry to deliver security outcomes in other ways that may be better integrated with the way they run the rest of their businesses.

2.6   The Taskforce acknowledged that the prescriptive regulation and close monitoring of inputs has created an environment whereby there is no incentive to drive forward continuous improvement. In addition, it does little to encourage innovation and willing investment in delivering the right security outcomes.

Proposals to Move to an Outcome Focused, Risk Based Model

2.7   The Taskforce expressed support for reforms that would see aviation security governed by a new outcome focused, risk based model to create an aviation security system which:

- maintains and improves security standards;

- promotes a continuous improvement culture by industry;

- is consistent with better regulation principles;

- drives efficiency and innovation;

- provides better integration between security and airport operations;

- improves the passenger experience.

2.8   Such a system would provide scope to move away from a 'one size fits all' approach to security measures (although the framework of EU legislation will continue to place limits on the degree of flexibility which is possible). This would enable airports and airlines to put more focus on designing security processes that improve the passenger experience. For example, airports could potentially find and implement faster and more passenger-friendly ways of screening footwear, so long as they were proved to be effective and deliver the required security objective.

2.9   The new approach would see greater autonomy for operators to deliver a robust security regime. It is centred on the concept of a Security Management System (SeMS) which draws on the success of the Safety Management System (SMS) model in widespread use for regulating

aviation safety. The SMS approach has successfully fostered a far reaching "safety culture" throughout the aviation industry, which has helped drive up standards and generate innovative new ways to protect passengers. The Government believes that introducing a similar system for security could help improve security outcomes.

2.10   The proposed SeMS system includes:

- a security risk management procedure (risk identification; risk assessment and risk mitigation);

- security policy and objectives (management accountability and responsibility; role of security manager; security committee; and security manual – the operational protocols);

- security assurance (reporting – occurrence and rectification, performance, confidential staff reporting; data analysis and review; internal and external audit; covert testing arrangements; arrangements for continuous improvement);

- security promotion (training; communications – establishing a security culture).

- The Taskforce considered the implications of this approach and of the work done by the DfT in collaboration with bodies such as the National Aviation Security Committee (NASC).

Conclusion

2.11   The Taskforce agreed that moving towards an outcome focused, risk based approach to aviation security had the potential to improve existing high security standards. This could also enable the aviation industry to realise savings, deliver operational efficiencies, and improve customer service by giving operators more responsibility and flexibility around the processes they choose to put in place in order to comply with the aviation security regime. The Taskforce also recognised the importance of the Government's continuing engagement with Europe and the US on the potential benefits of the new approach which could help to promote the adoption of outcome focused, risk based regulatory principles more widely.

2.12   Following the endorsement of this approach by the Taskforce, the Government issued a 'call for evidence' on 24 May 2011 directed at a representative sample of the industry to develop an understanding of the impacts, costs and benefits associated with these proposals. The results of this exercise have been incorporated into a full industry wide consultation on 'Better regulation for aviation security' launched

alongside this report. Taskforce members agreed to engage proactively during the formal consultation phase on the proposals.

Case Studies

London Stansted Case Study: Central Search Automatic Tray Return System

To improve security flow, the passenger experience and the working environment for staff, London Stansted introduced an innovative trial of automated tray return systems which utilises technology more effectively to ensure that bags are screened and, if appropriate, rejected for manual search. The system allows the security process to move faster and with more efficiency. Following a successful trial, a programme is in place to replace other security screening equipment at London Stansted.

Gatwick Case Study: Assistance Lanes

Gatwick has become the first UK airport to introduce assistance lanes at security. Through specially trained staff and customised facilities – such as wider x-ray machines – the airport is providing a bespoke security service for passengers with young children and those with restricted mobility. This has been complemented by an improved 'fastrack' service through security, which assists those passengers for whom time is more of an issue. Average queuing time at security is currently one minute and forty seven seconds.

Gatwick Case Study: Investment

In South Terminal at Gatwick, the existing security area will be replaced with a brand new £45 million, 19 lane security zone, using the latest technology and design techniques to further reduce the queues that passengers experience. This will be complemented by a separate £12.8 million project in the North Terminal to ensure that, as the terminal is expanded to cater for additional passengers, queuing time is kept to a minimum.

London Heathrow Case Study: Passenger Focused Security Service Standards

Heathrow has defined a new set of security service standards which combines compliance standards with a passenger focused customer service ethos. These service standards are now being integrated into the airport's recruitment process, induction and refresher training for security officers.

London Heathrow Case Study: Body Scanner Trial

The latest technology in body scanners will be trialled at Heathrow's Terminal 4 later this year. The new equipment uses millimetre wave technology and provides the security officer with a generic human figure marked up with the areas in which the potential threats are on the body. The security officer will then body search those specific areas only.

3. BORDER CONTROLS

Introduction

3.1 The prime responsibility for the UK Border Agency at UK airports is to maintain border security to protect the UK from criminality, terrorism and illegal migration. The challenge is to balance rising passenger volumes and legitimate customer service expectations at our major airports whilst continuing to maintain a safe and secure border.

3.2 The Taskforce recognised the paramount importance of maintaining a safe and secure border, but also sought reassurance that the impact on legitimate passengers is understood by UKBA. The Taskforce urged and supported an approach where UKBA, airport operators and carriers work together in a more co-ordinated way to improve the experience for passengers arriving in the UK.

3.3 The issues raised by Taskforce members included:

- queuing times and pinch points;
- the effectiveness of current queue time targets;
- the flexibility of UK Border Agency staff deployment during busy periods; and
- the extension of the use of technology to speed up processing.

3.4 The UK Border Agency (UKBA) is the body responsible for securing our borders and controlling migration for the United Kingdom. The Agency was created in 2009, through the merger of the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA), part of HMRC and UK visas. It works alongside other law enforcement and industry partners. The development of the Border Policing Command, as part of the National Crime Agency, in 2013 is expected to strengthen further the UK's ability to target crime at the border.

3.5 UKBA engaged very positively and constructively with the Taskforce to explain its strategy for managing the border, and worked closely with individual members on initiatives being taken forward at each of the airports (see case studies).

Performance Measures

3.6   UKBA performance at airports is based upon its ability to secure the border from crime, terrorism, those seeking to circumvent immigration controls and to intercept smuggled, prohibited and restricted goods. UKBA also measures its performance on how effectively it clears passengers through immigration controls. The importance of this measure is evidenced by the fact that it is one of the high level transparency framework indicators published by the Government.   The current performance measures are 95% of EEA passengers cleared within 25 minutes and non EEA passengers within 45 minutes. The current year to date performance is 98% for both measures.

3.7   The Taskforce welcomed the transparency approach but considered that more can be done to develop a shared set of standards, measures and information which are appropriate and accessible to airport users and hold service providers to account.

The Border Challenge

3.8   The primary objective at UK borders is to deliver a secure border in the context of an increasing volume of travel. In addition, UKBA is completing the integration of the customs and immigration sides of its business.

3.9   Each year more than 200 million people cross the UK border and billions of pounds worth of goods are imported and exported – a flow of people and goods which is projected to increase significantly in the future.

3.10   UKBA's priority at the border is to target those travellers who are engaged in criminal activities or who seek to circumvent immigration and customs controls whilst minimising any inconvenience and disruption to the law abiding majority. With that end in mind, UKBA is committed to becoming an increasingly intelligence-led and risk-focussed business. They propose to meet this challenge by delivering improvements around three themes: Technology, People and Targeting the Threat.

Technology and Advance Checks

3.11   UKBA explained to the Taskforce that greater use of advanced technology to facilitate the travel of large volumes of legitimate travellers has the potential to free staff resources to focus on those who present a risk of harm to the UK. This equipment includes ePassport gates and utilising facial recognition software for the efficient processing of holders

of EU/UK chip-enabled passports and emerging commercial automated gate solutions for pre-enrolment services at Heathrow.

3.12   There will be 63 ePassport gates installed in 15 sites, including Gatwick, Heathrow, and Stansted, by the end of July. They have serviced the arrival of more than 4.5 million people since 2008 and it is estimated that over 20 million passenger crossings will be facilitated by automated gates by 2013/14. By then, the number of ePassport gate users is expected to reach 11 million per annum and by 2016, all UK Passports will be chip-enabled.

3.13   A further element of UKBA's strategy for delivering efficient border checks focuses on advanced screening and pre-checking. This has great potential to improve the passenger experience. The more checking that can be done before a plane offloads hundreds of people returning from holiday, the more likely it is that they can be processed through border controls smoothly and swiftly.

3.14   Early indications from SmartZone trials at Gatwick, Birmingham and Luton have encouragingly demonstrated that processing times at the border can be reduced by around 50%. The trials have shown how, in certain circumstances, advanced checking may support faster passenger clearance without compromising border security. SmartZones utilise data supplied by carriers as part of the e-Borders system. Entire flights of passengers are pre-checked against watchlists at the National Border Targeting Centre prior to arrival before further visual checks are undertaken. The Taskforce was encouraged by the concept of SmartZones but was keen to see that such creative solutions have wide application without creating unnecessary costs for the industry.

3.15   The use of Advanced Passenger Information (API) is critical to the development of the SmartZone concept so that the UKBA can target against threat ahead of arrival into the UK. The use of e-Borders highlights the importance of quality and timely data being provided to enable early checking of passengers and swift intervention at the border or overseas. Airport operators and airlines have an important role to play in this. This demonstrates that a collaborative approach between UKBA and industry partners can be a highly successful component of a strategy for efficient border checks.

3.16   UKBA gave a welcome assurance to the Taskforce that over the next four years, it will to continue to implement established technological solutions and trial new technology.

People

3.17 The Taskforce was particularly keen to ensure that the staffing of the border reflected the demand caused by passenger flows. UKBA explained the work in progress to deliver increased flexibility.

3.18 UKBA highlighted the changing role of the border force officer. As mentioned above it is developing a single border force to cover the integrated responsibilities of customs and immigration. Combining these responsibilities into a single border force enables the role of the Agency at the border to be more efficiently deployed to intervene against higher risks, whilst supporting the fluid movement of legitimate travellers.

3.19 Combining the immigration and customs roles enables a more flexible deployment of staff, alongside the use of technology, to target people and goods earlier in the journey so that intervention can take place sooner. So far, more than 3,000 staff have been cross-trained and undertake a wider range of duties at the border. In the coming months, a clear grading structure will provide passengers and industry partners with greater clarity over roles and responsibilities at the border.

3.20 UKBA is changing its method of rostering and deployment at airports to support a better approach based on team working. This is creating greater opportunities to deploy teams flexibly to meet levels of demand and targets supplied through intelligence.

Targeting the Threat

3.21 Tens of millions of people travel across the UK border each month. UKBA must effectively distinguish between those intent on committing harm or criminal activities from the vast majority of legitimate passengers.

3.22 UKBA will continue to use technology and improvements in targeting and intelligence to target more effectively those who present a threat to border security and support the decision-making at the frontline by fully trained and experienced border force officers.

Partnership Working

3.23 The Taskforce acknowledged that delivering a safe and secure border as efficiently as possible requires UKBA and the industry to recognise each

other's concerns, communicate effectively and work collaboratively to find solutions to the challenges faced and improve customer experience.

3.24 The Taskforce has facilitated greater engagement. In light of these discussions, Gatwick and the UKBA have recently forged a new partnership-based approach to working. As part of an extensive data gathering and evaluation exercise, UKBA and Gatwick have merged and refined criteria for measuring waiting times and performance targets. Gatwick is exploring opportunities to support the UKBA in the 'pre-screening' of passengers on selected flights. UKBA have also contributed to the design of Gatwick's £8 million redevelopment of the South Terminal immigration hall to ensure that the hall promotes an efficient immigration experience.

Olympics

3.25 Taskforce members highlighted the challenges presented by the 2012 Olympics with very high passenger volumes and the potential for heightened risk to national security. UKBA is working in partnership with LOCOG, airport operators and other Government Departments to ensure a safe and secure Olympic Games. In order to ensure UKBA resources meet the demands of increased traffic at the border, and that the arrival of the significant number of VIPs are managed efficiently, UKBA will be part of an Olympic Arrival and Departures Hub which will monitor arrivals and departures hourly. UKBA will train and deploy a significant additional workforce pool and ensure that the maximum number of staff is available for the peak arrival periods.

Conclusion

3.26 The Taskforce welcomed the opportunity to understand and contribute to the programme which is being taken forward by UKBA. In particular:

- improving partnership working with airports and airlines;

- rolling out and improving the effectiveness of new technology and automated ways to conduct border checks;

- new working arrangements to strengthen UKBA's ability to deal with peak periods during the airport day;

- focusing activities and resources on those travellers who pose the higher risks;

- greater transparency of performance.

3.27 It is envisaged that some of these issues could be addressed as part of the work on airport specific performance charters (see Punctuality, Delay and Resilience chapter). Whilst this will help to address the concerns raised, the Taskforce advocated a greater sense of urgency to ensure that solutions are delivered to address existing problems as well as future needs. The overwhelming sense from the Taskforce has been that UKBA, airport operators and carriers have an obligation to work together to create tangible improvement which will be felt by the passenger.

3.28 The UKBA is an organisation in transition and is in the process of introducing new and innovative operating procedures and technologies. The Taskforce recognised that these improvements are critical to improving the passenger experience at airports.

3.29 The engagement undertaken through the Taskforce has strengthened working relationships between UKBA and its stakeholders at our country's three busiest airports. This has been welcomed by the Taskforce and is expected to lead to further improvements in the future. Inter-departmental cooperation between the Home Office and the Department for Transport has also been enhanced.

Case Studies

London Heathrow Case Study: ACS/ePassport Gates

BAA has invested significantly in Heathrow's Automated Clearance gates which are now operational in Terminals 1, 4 and 5, have just been installed in the newly refurbished Terminal 3 and are planned for the new Terminal 2, currently under construction. Up to 2,000 passengers per terminal per day currently use the gates and take up will increase as experience is gained in promoting their usage, as passenger awareness develops and as ever more ePassports are issued.

BA Case Study: SmartZone Assistance

Over the past few months BA has engaged with BAA and UKBA to plan how to implement UKBA SmartZone in Terminal 5. This has involved BA providing operational personnel who are assisting with the design of the new processes and ensuring that they compliment the overall operation in Terminal 5. In the operational phase BA will help provide the passenger data upon which screening decisions will be made.

Virgin Atlantic Case Study: SmartZone Arrivals

At Gatwick, Virgin Atlantic is participating in a trial of SmartZone Arrivals. This commenced in April 2011 and is proving to be a safe and efficient way of moving arriving passengers through the border. Clearance time for each flight is between 12 – 16 minutes for 450 passenger aircraft. Virgin Atlantic is receiving positive feedback from passengers. The displacement of this volume of people is improving the experience of every arriving person as the main queues are subsequently shorter.

London Stansted Case Study: Improvement Project

Stansted and UKBA recently trialled Automated Border Control (ABC) to ascertain the effectiveness of biometric data gates in increasing efficiency and providing improved customer service and border security. As a result of this trial the airport in conjunction with UKBA has decided to upgrade its biometric gates, software and ancillary equipment (cameras, passport scanners) as well as installing entry arches to each gate known as 'ASDAS'. These improvements provide advanced detection and prevent 'tailgating' by

passengers, deliver better facial images, allow significantly improved integration and interface with UKBA and provide face matching solutions.

4. REGULATORY CHANGE

Introduction

4.1   Reducing regulation is a key priority for the Coalition Government. The Prime Minister, in his first major speech[10], spoke of his commitment to bear down on regulation to encourage sustainable economic growth and increase personal freedom and fairness: "It's simple: if you're a Minister who wants to bring in a new piece of regulation, first you've got to find an existing one to get rid of".

4.2   This was followed by Vince Cable, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), announcing on 2 June 2010 an action plan to end excessive regulation. This expanded on the 'One In, One Out' approach and created a Cabinet sub-committee, the Reducing Regulation Committee (RRC), which is leading the Government's drive to reduce regulation. The Better Regulation Committee, which sits in BIS has been tasked with helping implement this policy across Whitehall.

4.3   The Taskforce identified three operational issues at airports governed by regulation where modification or removal could help to improve the efficient running of airports:

- Management of airport forecourts and roads;
- Baggage reconciliation;
- Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM) pre-notification.

Managing Airport Forecourts and Roads

4.4   The Taskforce identified increasing congestion, especially on airport forecourts and to a lesser degree on other roads administered by the airport, as a growing problem. The Taskforce noted that in many cases the management of the forecourt is the first impression of the airport given to passengers.

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[10] http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/transforming-the-british-economy-coalition-strategy-for-economic-growth/

4.5 The purpose of effective forecourt management is to ensure that road access to and from terminal buildings is simple and efficient. At the first meeting of the Taskforce the airport operators highlighted increasing congestion on forecourts and suggested this was due to the existing regulatory regime making it difficult for airport operators to manage traffic through the forecourt.

4.6 The primary impact of this regulatory failure was increased congestion. Airport forecourts were designed as departure drop off points but recently they have been increasingly used to pick up passengers - by friends and family and minicabs - and for the delivery of cars to passengers by off-airport valet parking providers.

4.7 Airport operators also noted three further ancillary effects of this increased use of airport forecourts:

- Safety – Increased congestion on forecourt has resulted in safety issues, including vehicles double parking, which can lead to higher levels of safety risk for road users and pedestrians.

- Environmental –The lack of parking enforcement encourages 'kiss and fly' journeys, meaning up to four vehicle journeys per passenger and increased emissions. Additional emissions and pollution also result from the related congestion on local roads and the airport forecourt themselves.

- Security – There is a concern that congestion on airport forecourts makes it more difficult to spot any security related irregularities.

4.8 Similar issues are encountered on airport road networks, with vehicles parking or waiting at the side of approach roads, on grass verges and in entrances. This can interfere with the free flow of traffic on airport road networks; acts as a distraction to other airport road users; and can result in mud from verges being dragged onto road carriageways with consequential impacts to road safety. Airport operators have sought non-regulatory solutions to mitigate this behaviour with built solutions, but this has a tendency to merely displace the problem rather than solve it.

4.9 The airport operator or the local authority will normally be the responsible traffic authority for airport road networks. In this role they are responsible for putting in place appropriate Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in relation to parking and road use, that aim to provide the regulatory framework for the effective management of airport roads and forecourts. However, the airport operator has no role in the enforcement of these traffic regulations. Depending upon the locality and the nature of the offence, enforcement usually rests with either the relevant police or local authority.

4.10   The Taskforce recognised that the current range of enforcement options available (e.g. by the police and local authority or the establishment of private parking places) were not providing airport operators with the level of control and flexibility necessary.

4.11   Airport operators expressed a strong preference for the existing local authority civil parking enforcement (CPE) scheme to be extended to airport operators because it would deliver a more flexible operational response and be financially more efficient than the existing arrangements. Under CPE, local authorities are responsible for enforcing on-street parking contraventions instead of the police, which provides them with greater control over the level and allocation of parking enforcement patrols to deal with local circumstances.

4.12   The Taskforce examined the case for extending the CPE regime to cover airport operators. It concluded that, although extending CPE could bring some operational benefits to airports, the scheme would not be appropriate for use by privately owned airport operators.

4.13   The scheme was designed specifically for use by local authorities and enables them to retain any surplus revenue received from the CPE penalty change notices they issue for parking contraventions, which they may use to fund certain transport-related and environmental improvements.

4.14   It was concluded that an airport specific parking enforcement regime should be established. The DfT is currently developing a bespoke airport parking scheme that incorporates the benefits of CPE, such as being self-financing and giving airports control over the level and allocation of parking enforcement resources, but makes specific provision for any surplus revenue - after all relevant costs of operating the scheme have been accounted for - to be returned to HM Treasury, rather than being retained by airport operators. The scheme will be available to any airport that wishes to make use of it and should be operational at Heathrow and Gatwick during 2012.

Other Regulation

4.15   *Baggage Reconciliation:* The Taskforce looked at the removal of the UK requirement to perform additional screening to a higher standard for bags that have become separated from passengers during periods of mass disruption. The Taskforce agreed that the main priority was for the passenger to be taken to their destination and that rescreening further delayed the transportation of their baggage. The Taskforce agreed that development of guidelines should be taken forward by the National Aviation Security Committee (NASC).

4.16 *Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM)*: The Taskforce also considered the issue of price differentiation for airlines who fail to pre-notify the airport operator where assistance is required for persons of reduced mobility (PRM). Gatwick Airport has already implemented higher charges where airlines fail to do so and Heathrow implemented a similar system in April. Early notification was felt to be essential if passengers with reduced mobility were to be well looked after, although it was also recognised by the Taskforce that passengers sometimes failed to pre-notify airlines of their PRM needs. This initiative was highlighted by the Taskforce as a piece of best practice that should be shared more widely.

4.17 The Taskforce recognised there would a further opportunity to consider aviation regulations as part of the Government's Red Tape Challenge[11]. This is an ongoing process and all aviation related regulation is scheduled for publication in March 2012 when stakeholders and the public will have the opportunity to suggest revisions.

Conclusion

4.18 The Taskforce acknowledged that a complete overhaul of regulation relevant to airports and airlines was beyond the scope of its work. It noted that the Government's Red Tape Challenge would provide an opportunity for wider consideration in due course. With regard to the limited regulatory issues considered by the Taskforce, it was concluded that an airport-specific parking enforcement regime should be established and that further work on baggage reconciliation would be taken forward through the NASC.

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[11] http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index/

5. PUNCTUALITY, DELAY AND RESILIENCE

Introduction

5.1 Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports account for over 90 per cent of the passenger traffic at South East airports, more than 50 per cent of the total traffic for the UK as a whole and more than 60 per cent of the UK's international passengers.

5.2 Heathrow is operating near to its capacity every day and Gatwick does so in the peak summer period. Near capacity operation provides an ongoing challenge to airport operators in their efforts to deliver a reliable service to their airline customers and, through them, to passengers. Incidents can have an impact which lasts throughout the day. A late arriving passenger can cause an aircraft to be delayed. In maximised capacity operations, re-scheduling a flight provides a serious challenge to airport operators. If a short period of low visibility or high winds delays take-offs and landings, aircraft on the ground face queues to get to the runway; aircraft in the air may need to be placed in stacks awaiting clearance to land. With limited spare capacity and the paramount importance of maintaining safe aircraft separation at all times, recovery from these incidents can take several hours.

5.3 This means that over the course of a year Heathrow operates normally for around three hundred days ('green days'), experiences moderate disruption on around 50 days ('amber days') and severe delays on 15 days where on-the-day recovery is not possible. The airport continues to make significant investments to minimise disruption.

5.4 The Coalition took steps to improve operations at Heathrow in September 2010 by confirming the ending of the Cranford agreement[12]. At the same time, the Government set out its commitment to the

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[12] The Cranford agreement is the name given to an informal but long-standing agreement not to use the northern runway at Heathrow for departures when the wind is in the east (roughly 30 per cent of the time). The agreement dates back to the 1950s and was introduced to protect residents in Cranford close to the runway from aircraft noise on departure.

continuation of runway alternation at the airport[13]. A key part of the remit of the Taskforce was to consider what more could be done to improve operational efficiency and resilience within current capacity constraints.

Punctuality, Delay and Resilience sub-group

5.5 To take forward this element of its work, the Taskforce established a technical sub-group led by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and composed of senior operational managers from the three airports, NATS, four airlines and Airport Coordination Ltd, together with appropriate representatives from the DfT.

5.6 The sub-group was asked to consider what action could be taken to improve punctuality, tackle delays and strengthen resilience at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. The terms of reference for the sub-group can be found at Annex B. Key technical terms were defined as follows:

- *punctuality* of a flight is the difference between the planned off- or on-blocks time as defined in the schedule and the actual off- or on-blocks time;

- *delay* for a flight is the time lost through holding in queues while it is waiting to safely access infrastructure and/or airspace. These queues take various forms, including airborne holding stacks, taxiway queues and being held on stand awaiting clearance from air traffic control (ATC);

- *resilience* is defined as the ability to anticipate, withstand and recover from disruptions caused by adverse conditions.

5.7 The sub-group focused on options which would help Heathrow to deal better with the 50 days of moderate disruption typically experienced each year.

5.8 The sub-group's findings have been published alongside this report. These set out a package of proposals which the sub-group believes would improve the operational performance of the three airports, based on the following themes:

- A set of *operational freedoms* to allow certain tactical measures to be applied to anticipate, prevent and mitigate disruption and to facilitate

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[13] The runways at Heathrow operate in segregated mode in which, at any one time, one runway is normally used for arrivals, while the other is used for departures. In addition, a system of 'runway alternation' has operated since 1973 under which, in westerly operations, arrivals alternate between the northern and southern runways on cyclical pattern to provide predictable periods of relief from the noise of landing aircraft for communities under the final approach tracks to the east of the airport.

recovery. The tactical measures could include, for example, use of temporary departure routes and occasional desegregation of runway operation; but would be subject to safeguards to confine their use to certain defined and limited situations, and an assessment of their environmental impact.

- A *performance charter* for each airport to motivate stakeholders to take decisions based on the best interests of the whole airport system rather than being driven principally by their own individual commercial interest. The charter would set out the level of service that airline customers and their passengers should expect to receive.

- A set of *policy guidelines* to optimise the utilisation of runway resource at each airport.

5.9   In addition, it was noted that each airport and its operational stakeholders already have a number of local improvement plans under way which should be strengthened within the recommended framework.

Operational Freedoms

5.10   The operational freedoms identified by the sub-group could enable airports to respond to severe weather or other disruptions by the flexible deployment of measures which temporarily increase the number of take offs and/or landings in a given period of time.

5.11   At Heathrow, Tactically Enhanced Arrivals Measures (TEAM) have been used for a number of years. TEAM is a system under which for the first hour of the day (i.e. between 06.00 and 07.00), when conditions require it – and at other times when there are severe arrivals delays – both runways may be used for landings. This is a way of clearing the backlog of early morning long-haul arrivals and reducing the number of planes that would otherwise be held in the "stack" awaiting permission to land. It is not the same as "mixed mode" which would involve planned arrivals and departures on both runways. Tactically Enhanced Departures Measures (TEDM) would involve the use of both runways for departures which could also have efficiency and resilience benefits.

5.12   The Taskforce considered how punctuality, delay and resilience could be enhanced at Heathrow by the further use of TEAM and the introduction of TEDM and concluded that the deployment of these operational freedoms could potentially deliver:

- significant benefits for passengers by improving the resilience and reliability of the airport; and

- environmental benefits, with fewer unscheduled night flights, lower emissions and less stacking (where planes queue up to land).

5.13 The work of the sub-group indicated that there would be a net environmental benefit from the deployment of these measures (particularly in terms of the potential to reduce the number of unscheduled flights during the night period). However, it is acknowledged that the occasional and limited redistribution of noise when measures are applied would mean there would be a mix of positive and negative impacts for different parts of the local community. In particular, on the occasions when these freedoms operate, some people would experience aircraft noise during current respite periods.

5.14 The Taskforce recognises that a stronger evidence base needs to be established before a properly informed decision could be made on whether to allow the use of the operational freedoms envisaged by the sub-group. Further work needs to be done to establish with confidence what their impact on local communities would be and the extent of the passenger and environmental benefits they could deliver. Before any final decision is made on whether these freedoms become a long term change to Heathrow operations, engagement and consultation with the communities affected and other stakeholders would need to take place.

5.15 The Taskforce accepted that well defined safeguards would need to be placed on these freedoms to ensure that they could only be used on a limited number of occasions (over and above Heathrow's existing usage of measures like TEAM) in order to strengthen resilience and prevent or recover from disruption and did not become a routine part of airport operations. There would be no increase in the number of flights at Heathrow which would remain capped at current levels.

5.16 These operational freedoms would need to be subject to a strict and transparent monitoring regime to ensure that they were not misused, with appropriate sanctions to secure compliance with the rules. Further work is needed to devise the right set of rules to limit the use of operational freedoms.

5.17 The work carried out by the sub-group indicated that there was some scope for exploring minor adjustments at Gatwick moving forward, but currently no strong case for additional operational freedoms at Stansted.

5.18 In light of the Taskforce's conclusions:

- BAA, the CAA and other relevant parties will conduct further work on the impact of operational freedoms at Heathrow;

- Heathrow Airport will engage with the local communities potentially affected by these proposals[14] in preparation for a trial of a specific set

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[14] It is envisaged that this process would be similar to that followed in preparation for the closure of Heathrow's northern runway for critical maintenance work in September and October 2010.

of operational freedoms at Heathrow starting in the autumn of 2011 in order to measure their costs, their benefits to airport operations and their impact on local communities and assess whether the safeguards designed to limit their operation were sufficiently robust.

5.19   The trial will be in two phases to enable evidence to be gathered for both winter and summer operations. Following engagement with local communities, the first phase will run from November to February, followed by a four month period of initial assessment and further engagement on how the regime might be refined to mitigate any impacts of particular concern and deliver additional benefits. The second phase will run from July to September, providing the added benefit of enabling greater resilience during the London Olympic and Paralympic Games when the UK's airports will be under even more pressure than normal. In conducting the trial, BAA would be required to engage fully and transparently with relevant local authorities, communities and other stakeholders, particularly on the monitoring of noise impacts.

5.20   Once the trial is completed, the Government and CAA will assess the results. Before any final decision is made on the use of these freedoms at Heathrow, a full consultation with the communities affected and other stakeholders would need to take place. Following this consultation, the Government will take a view on whether the adoption of an operational freedoms regime at Heathrow, along the lines set out, would be sufficiently balanced between passenger, reliability and environmental benefits and the impact on surrounding communities to be acceptable. A decision to introduce operational freedoms would need to be reflected in the airport's Noise Action Plan[15].

5.21   It is envisaged that these proposals would be in the context of airspace projects already underway in the form of collaborative working between Government, the CAA and industry on the Future Airspace Strategy (FAS)[16] and efforts to improve performance across Europe. Some initiatives might improve operational performance relatively quickly while others are more long term projects. For example, the NATS[17] led London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP) to help restructure the use of London's airspace should greatly improve the efficiency with which the congested airspace in the South East of England is utilised. This would deliver significant improvements in terms of environmental impact and average delay performance.

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[15] http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/noise/environmental-noise/action-plans/
[16] http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/2065/20110630FAS.pdf
[17] NATS Ltd is the leading air navigation service provider in the UK.

Performance Charter

5.22   The passenger experience at an airport is in the hands of a number of different operators – airlines, airports, ground handlers, control authorities and others. The Taskforce felt that there was scope to improve the efficiency of the airport through improved collaboration between the different organisations involved with the passenger journey through the airport – to get all the relevant people working better together as a coordinated system. A number of airports have successfully taken forward such schemes (for example, Gatwick Airport has established a set of passenger commitments in conjunction with its stakeholders[18]), but it was felt that formalising arrangements in a performance charter would produce a real push for improvement and enhanced transparency and accountability. For example, it is expected that the charter would cover a performance management regime for improving punctuality and reducing delay throughout the airport, including targets and reporting mechanisms.

5.23   Each of the three airports will lead on the development of its own performance charter in partnership with airlines and other stakeholders based at the airports. There is likely to be some relation between matters covered by these charters and by the Government's proposed new legislative framework for the economic regulation of airports. However, it is felt that performance charters can play a role which is complementary to formal regulation and will provide valuable additional pressure for higher standards. The regulatory regime is focused on the designated airport (as the regulated entity) whereas the performance charter can help to deliver 'buy-in' from airlines and others as well. In some instances, it may also be possible to agree remedial measures under performance charters more rapidly than using formal regulatory intervention.

5.24   The introduction of airport-specific performance charters should help ensure the entire airport community is focused more strongly on working for the benefit of the airport as a whole and in the best interests of passengers, both on a day to day basis and during periods of disruption. It will provide the opportunity for more clearly defining the minimum standard of service that airlines and passengers can expect. It will also make it possible to review regularly whether the airport community has the capability to deliver the agreed service standards. These measures should go a long way towards ensuring that airports and airlines are better equipped to improve the performance of operations at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. In particular, it should mean that our major

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http://www.gatwickairport.com/Documents/business_and_community/General%20PDFs/41999_%20Gatwick%20Charter_v10.pdf

airports are better able to cope with events such as severe weather of the kind experienced in November and December 2010.

Policy Guidelines and Capacity Management

5.25 In any transport system, there are trade-offs to be made between capacity and reliability (since maintaining safety standards is not negotiable). There is a growing recognition that the constrained environment at Heathrow in particular requires a new approach to capacity management, with a greater emphasis on resilience and recovery compared to efforts in the past to try to squeeze ever more flights into the airport.

5.26 The Taskforce's focus has given impetus to work carried out at Heathrow by BAA and the airlines. In the last few weeks, the Heathrow airport community have agreed to a winter schedule with some lower hourly capacity limits (in effect reducing the peak hourly pressure on the airport) that is more focused on delivering resilient operations.

5.27 The sub-group identified that further work at all three airports is necessary to determine the operational capacity and schedules that will achieve an acceptable level of resilience.

5.28 The airport operators will work with Airport Coordination Limited (ACL), taking into consideration work already planned or underway at the airports, to develop guidance which gives greater weight to resilience when establishing airport capacity and operating schedules. This work, which will need to be compatible with EU Slot regulations, will address best practice amongst airport and airline operators, including how to ensure more flights are "operated to flight plan".

Winter Resilience

5.29 Following the adverse weather and subsequent disruption in November and December 2010 which resulted in the closure of both Heathrow and Gatwick airports, the Taskforce considered the issue of winter resilience at its January meeting. As a result, the Punctuality, Delay and Resilience sub-group was asked to consider some specific snow-related operational issues as part of its work:

- the degree to which the major airports in the South East of England (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) were adequately equipped to deal with the snowfall in terms of their stocks of snow-clearance equipment and de-icer; and

- what general lessons could be learned from the execution of the airports' plans for managing capacity during such extreme events. In particular their plans for deciding on and communicating flight information before, during and after periods of disruption.

5.30 The sub-group is expected to publish the results of its additional work later in July 2011.

5.31 As part of this work, the sub-group was asked to take into account, and avoid duplicating, the work being undertaken in other enquiries into the snow event, including:

- The BAA Heathrow Winter Resilience Enquiry (report of March 2011)[19]

- The House of Commons Transport Select Committee inquiry (report of May 2011)[20].

- The CAA's ongoing work on the passenger experience during the disruption.

5.32 The Taskforce was advised of the significant investments made by Heathrow and Gatwick in order to avoid a repeat of the wide scale disruption suffered by passengers as a result of the winter weather. These include increasing the snow clearing fleet at Heathrow from 47 vehicles in December 2010 to 166 vehicles and at Gatwick from 47 to 95 vehicles. In addition, BAA has increased its Heathrow snow response team, which now has 269 people available and trained to support snow clearing operations, compared to 117 in December.

5.33 The Heathrow Winter Resilience Enquiry report made recommendations for improvements to airport snow plans, provision of additional snow clearing equipment, increases to staff resources and improving crisis management and command and control arrangements. The Taskforce supported the inclusion of the sub-group's CAA Chair as an independent observer on the Enquiry to ensure a coordinated approach with the Taskforce and to assess whether the scope of the actions identified was sufficient. In particular the report recommended:

- BAA should lead work, together with airlines and other airport stakeholders, to agree an enhanced Heathrow snow plan and establish review processes to ensure it remains fit for purpose in the future;

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[19] A copy of the Report can be found on the BAA website, at:
http://www.baa.com/assets/Internet/BAA%20Airports/Downloads/Static%20files/BeggReport220311_BAA.pdf
[20] http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/transport-committee/news/awc---report/

- BAA would work with airlines and other relevant stakeholders to review and improve Heathrow's aircraft de-icing processes and infrastructure to ensure the airport can maintain its flow rate in inclement weather;

- BAA should dynamically maintain its stock of anti/de-icing media at levels to meet forecast weather conditions; and

- BAA, together with airlines and retailers would establish and maintain sustainable passenger welfare plans, along with systems to provide accurate information on flight and airport status.

5.34 BAA has accepted the report's findings and is taking forward an action plan to implement all 14 recommendations.

5.35 The adoption of the performance charters recommended for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted by the sub-group could also play a key role in their and, through sharing best practice, other airports' preparations for extreme winter weather, as they are expected to cover areas such as:

- The resource and equipment levels required to prevent airport closure across a range of scenarios e.g. the snow clearance machinery and de-icer required for winter disruption;

- The airport community's strategy for revising schedules in response to disruptive events such as extreme weather and for resuming a full schedule in the fastest possible time;

- The airport community's plans for looking after customers during severe disruption, including service information, welfare arrangements and statutory rights.

5.36 Heathrow Airport has already taken steps to implement a performance charter. The airport community recently unanimously agreed to capacity contingency plans being enforceable through the airport's local rules. The plans will be initiated during periods of temporarily reduced capacity to deliver an effective schedule. The implementation of these plans requires the airport operator to define the number of aircraft that are able to operate and the airlines to align their schedules to this declared capacity. This ensures that the airport operates as effectively as possible in adverse conditions, preventing further disruption, unnecessary cancellations and the provision of accurate flight information to passengers.

5.37 The effectiveness of this process was demonstrated when Heathrow deployed its plan in anticipation of potential disruption due to volcanic ash in May. The airport community showed it was well prepared to respond to the situation and align airline schedules to airport capacity in a rapidly changing environment.

Conclusion

5.38 The Taskforce identified that the more flexible use of tactical operational freedoms at Heathrow to combat the impacts of severe disruptions, the delivery of new performance charters and the development of new policy guidelines on the use of spare capacity have the potential to unlock considerable gains in the delivery of reliable airport operations.

5.39 To facilitate progress across operational freedoms, performance charters and capacity guidelines, the CAA has been asked to chair an Airport Performance Facilitation Group responsible for gathering and sharing information on the progress made, in particular emerging best practice, and reporting back to the Government. Recognising that a number of the lessons learnt from the Taskforce may be applicable to major airports outside the South East, representatives from other airports will be invited to join the Facilitation Group. It is anticipated that the Board will issue a first report in the first half of 2012, in time to report on the performance of the first phase of the operational freedoms trial. A final report on the scope for adopting the operational freedoms will be issued by the end of 2012.

5.40 In addition the knowledge and evidence built-up by the sub-group, together with the recent inquiries into the impact of the snow disruption, have provided an unprecedented level of understanding of the nature of the problem as well as a high degree of consensus amongst stakeholders as to the way forward. The constitution of the Taskforce has been founded on the principle of cooperation between industry, regulator and Government. To be fully successful, implementation of these initiatives will require a continuation of this approach, particularly as it will be important that the knowledge and momentum built up by the Taskforce sub-group in this area is not lost as the process of implementing its recommendations gets underway. In addition, it will be important that the appropriate linkages are made to other wider initiatives aimed at performance enhancement, namely implementation of the FAS and implementation of the National Performance Plan under the Single European Sky (SES) initiative[21].

Case Studies

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[21] www.caa.co.uk/npp

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London Stansted Case Study: CHROMA

London Stansted is introducing new flight information and stand planning software to help reduce delays and the amount of time aircraft are running their engines by minimising runway holding and taxi times. Systems are being built to a specification set out by the airport and will have a brand new stand planning rule database as well as many other enhancements. This is planned to go live in October 2011.

Gatwick Case Study: Improving On-Time Performance

Ensuring an aircraft departs on time involves many different agencies from the airport, ground handlers and cabin crew through to air traffic control. In December 2010, Gatwick established a joint performance team to facilitate regular, productive engagement between them. The team works with on-airport partners to develop a clear path to drive better airfield performance over the long term. Performance is now scrutinised on a daily rather than monthly basis creating a sense of urgency when issues arise. This enables the airport and its partners to identify recurring problems and encourage faster response times to rectify issues which slow down aircraft turnaround performance. There has been significant improvement, with over 85% of flights now departing on time.

Case Study: Airport-Collaborative Decision Making

Airport-Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) is the foundation stone of the Single European Sky Air Traffic Movement Research (SESAR) project. The key aim of A-CDM is to facilitate the sharing of operational data to allow better informed decisions to be made. Every major airport in Europe, including Heathrow and Gatwick is required to develop, or purchase, an A-CDM information technology platform in order to participate in SESAR. A key principle of A-CDM is to optimise the turnaround process in order to assure the best possible coordination of resources and the best use of available airport infrastructure. As a result, taxi times, runway holding times and, through that, new opportunities to improve on-time performance have been created.

Virgin Atlantic Case Study: Crisis Team

Virgin Atlantic has a crisis team (designated as 'Amber') to deal with operational and customer care issues in special situations. In addition to the Amber team, the Corporate Security and Resilience Department is an operational unit which continually monitors incidents around the world that have the potential to adversely impact Virgin Atlantic's staff, assets and operations. The Amber team responds to significant events which go beyond business as usual and this includes extended periods of disruption to our operations at all of our airports including Heathrow and Gatwick. Examples include the snow disruption in December and Japanese earthquake in March 2011. Virgin Atlantic's 24/7 Integrated Operations Control Centre is the first point of contact at the onset of any potential incident, including significant operational disruption and can initiate the activation of the company's Emergency Response Plan. The Resilience team acts as a centre of excellence to support all areas of the business to develop contingency plans to manage the response to major incidents affecting safety, security and business activities.

BA Case Study: Microwave Landing System

BA has invested in fitting microwave landing system (MLS) Category 3 landing capability to the Airbus A320 fleet in addition to the instrument landing system (ILS) Category 3 system that is already fitted to the aircraft. This has helped to improve the resilience and punctuality of the BA operation during low visibility weather conditions. MLS has greater precision and has offered BA the potential for an improved airfield approach capacity of up to 30% during such weather conditions, translating into an increase of up to 6 movements per hour. This is brought about by reduced separation of aircraft during low visibility from 8 nautical miles on the ILS system to 5 nautical miles for the MLS system. It also enables a reduction in the time between clearance for take off and clearance to land. BA has fitted a number of its A320/A321 fleet with MLS and is now able to benefit from reducing separation. Work to modify the A319 fleet is ongoing.

6. SURFACE ACCESS

Introduction

6.1   The Taskforce recognised the importance of surface transport links to major airports and the crucial role the public sector must play in their delivery. The Government has recognised this through the DfT's strong funding settlement in the Comprehensive Spending Review. Despite the tough economic times, this settlement will enable the delivery of important infrastructure improvements, both at airports and elsewhere. These will include improvements to the strategic road network on the M25, M1 and A23 and significant funding to support capital maintenance and infrastructure investment in rail, including Crossrail and Thameslink which will improve rail access to South East airports.

6.2   Surface access issues submitted by airport operators to the Taskforce were considered under three broad headings:

- Policy and Financing;
- Roads;
- Rail and Underground.

Policy and Financing

6.3   The Taskforce considered the potential for developing a long-term policy framework for surface access, an update of the DfT's Guidance on Airport Transport Forums and Airport Surface Access Strategies[22] and the potential for a new approach to determining private sector funding contributions to Government led surface access schemes.

6.4   The Taskforce acknowledged that the DfT is taking forward several strategic initiatives which are relevant to the overall policy on surface access to airports. In May, the DfT published a response to its consultation on proposed changes to the criteria for strategic national

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http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/airports/guidanceonairporttransportfo2840

corridors to promote connectivity between the capital cities of the UK. This work recognises the importance of international gateways such as Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. In due course the DfT will consult on a draft National Policy Statement for national networks (road and rail). It is also envisaged that surface access will be covered in the Government's sustainable framework for UK aviation. The Scoping Document[23], published in March, asks for responses on how to improve surface access to airports.

6.5   The Taskforce recognised that an overriding principle for deciding funding contributions for transport infrastructure projects continues to be the beneficiary pays (although airport-related schemes have also attracted significant public sector funding as set out below). The arrangements for specific schemes will continue to be considered on a case by case basis. Furthermore, the costs and benefits of transport schemes have to be appraised across relevant catchment areas and not just in the context of the benefit to airport passengers. However, there is scope for airport operators to redress the balance by paying for services or infrastructure, which they feel are critical to the airport. Gatwick Airport's investment in Gatwick station is a good example of this (see case study) and this type of collaborative approach is encouraged.

6.6   In April, the Government announced reforms to the way decisions are made on which transport projects to prioritise. This includes a new approach to producing business cases that support ministerial decisions. This new approach includes a 'strategic case' element, which should provide a greater opportunity to illustrate the potential benefits of surface access schemes to international connectivity.

Roads

6.7   The Taskforce discussed measures to improve access to the airports from the strategic road network including active traffic management, removable barriers, and widening and resilience measures. Other issues examined included local authority management of off-airport parking and integrating airport electric car charging points with Government sponsored national schemes.

6.8   It was acknowledged that there were a number of schemes being taken forward on the strategic road network that would benefit access to the airports.

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[23] http://www2.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/2011-09/consultationdocument.pdf

Rail and Underground

6.9 The Taskforce reviewed the potential to safeguard capacity on the Great Western, South West and London to Brighton Main Lines, specifying airport priorities in Route Utilisation Strategies and Franchise Agreements, station investment and smarter ticketing.

6.10 The Taskforce understood that in terms of the new franchising policy for rail (announced in January 2011), the onus is on the airport community to engage with franchise operators and bidders to secure services they feel are necessary to the airport. Issues relating to surface access to airports will be carefully considered by the DfT when decisions are made on franchise terms.

6.11 It was also noted that the Government is pressing ahead with significant public investment in rail that will benefit passengers travelling to the airports:

- Crossrail will improve public transport connections with Heathrow and has been made possible by the substantial funding contribution from industry, including more than £200 million from BAA, in agreement with its airline customers.

- The Thameslink Programme will provide additional capacity on one of Europe's busiest stretches of railway and will to improve the service to Gatwick and Luton Airports from London.

- The HS2 consultation is considering the integration of the proposed new line with Birmingham Airport and a connection to Heathrow via Crossrail at a new Old Oak Common station. The plans for phase 2 of the project include a spur line to Heathrow.

Best Practice

6.12 The Taskforce asked airport operator members to identify examples of surface access best practice that could be disseminated across the sector more widely. All three airports cited the partnership working that had been enabled through their Transport Forums as examples of best practice. Heathrow and Gatwick noted that their public transport levies had helped them to invest significantly in public transport schemes.

6.13 Stansted Airport also highlighted its Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS) (which is supported by the Airport Travel Plan, the Bus and Coach Strategy and a Cycling and Walking Strategy). The work of the Transport Forum and the ASAS has contributed to Stansted being the first UK airport to achieve environmental certification under both the ISO140001 and Carbon Trust Accreditation.

6.14 Gatwick Airport identified its continuing investment in surface access facilities as part of its five year capital investment programme and partnership working with stakeholders to enhance rail access. For example, the airport has a development plan with its principal train operator, Southern Railway, to encourage modal shift.

6.15 Heathrow Airport noted the success of the Heathrow Express service in leveraging private finance to support rail investment and enhance the passenger experience. The airport's contribution to Crossrail was also noted as a good example of Government and industry collaboration to deliver a flagship project.

Conclusion

6.16 The onus is on the airport community to make representations and provide evidence on the importance of airport surface access and the need for enhanced services during the course of relevant consultations, for example, on rail Route Utilisation Strategies (RUS).

6.17 The underlying theme from the Taskforce's discussions was that maintaining and extending partnership working on surface access was essential; better engagement with public transport providers and planning and highway authorities was considered to be particularly important. However, it was the responsibility of individual airports and other local stakeholders including local authorities and public transport operators to take the initiative to drive this forward through stakeholder groups such as Airport Transport Forums.

6.18 This was also brought out in terms of the best practice identified by airport operators, with all three airports citing their Transport Forums as delivering essential improvements in surface access.

6.19 The Taskforce recognised the strong alignment between the work of Transport Forums and the DfT's Low Carbon Transport to Airports project[24], which brought together airport operators and airlines to identify 'soft' measures (i.e. not requiring significant infrastructure investment) to increase the use of low carbon transport to access airports. The project had agreed three priorities for action:

- Best practice forums – DfT and AOA to continue holding regular forums on surface access to facilitate good practice sharing and encourage further collaboration between organisations. It is planned that the next forum will take place in early 2012.

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[24] http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/lcta-project-report

- Better information for passengers – airports and airlines to work together at a local level to improve the level of information provided to passengers. AOA will report back on progress at the 2012 Forum.

- Business travel – DfT to work with the National Business Travel Network (NBTN) to make the most of the opportunities offered by the upcoming NBTN website overhaul, and 2011 Work-related Travel Survey.

Case Studies

Stansted Case Study: Stansted Express Trains

The roll-out of 120 new train carriages for the Stansted Express service began in May of this year. The new rolling stock delivers a significant step change in experience for airport passengers as well as local commuters. In addition London Stansted Airport is funding the 70m extension of Platform 1 in the airport rail station in order to accommodate longer trains on the Stansted Express service in the future. This improvement will be delivered by December 2011.

Gatwick Case Study: Gatwick Station

In September last year, Gatwick and Network Rail jointly announced a £53 million project to upgrade and improve Gatwick station and the local rail infrastructure surrounding it. The scheme includes a new platform, helping to enhance the quality and reliability of the existing Gatwick Express Service. In parallel with that, Network Rail will undertake a major signalling upgrade, helping to keep the 900 trains that arrive and depart from the station every day on schedule and expanding the station's role as a regional rail hub in its own right.

London Heathrow Case Study: Helping Staff Make Better Travel Choices

Over the years, Heathrow has developed a strong brand for its staff commuter programme which is led by the Heathrow Commuter Team. This team is dedicated to developing clear marketing and promotional campaigns and events aimed at pro-actively encouraging staff to change or adapt their travel behaviour. Work has included developing the following initiatives:

- Heathrow has Europe's largest single carshare scheme with over 4,500 signed up members and over 1,600 actively participating;

- The airport helped develop a network of 31 local bus routes that serve the airport and have arranged for three additional routes to come into the airport for 04:00, the first from the West;

- Heathrow staff get a 75% discount on the standard fare on the Heathrow Connect rail service to Heathrow and a 50% discount on the Heathrow

Express service.

- As part of the Terminal 5 works, Heathrow has invested in cycling infrastructure such as cycle routes/ paths and parking facilities and intend to introduce a cycle hub facility for cyclists at Heathrow later this year

London Heathrow Case Study: Wider Heathrow Integrated Rail Strategy

BAA is working with BA, Virgin and other airlines based at Heathrow to develop a Wider Heathrow Integrated Rail Strategy (WHIRS). The aim is to identify heavy rail schemes that could serve Heathrow Airport and then to prioritise feasible schemes that maximise increases in public transport mode share. Work has included:

- Analysing future passenger demand;

- Identifying potential rail schemes;

- Analysing schemes and mixes of schemes to determine potential benefits; and

- Prioritising schemes to be taken forward.

The results of WHIRS are being used to consult with stakeholders including the DfT and Network Rail to identify new projects and to determine new opportunities for improving rail access to Heathrow.

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND PASSENGER VIEWS

Introduction

7.1 In a competitive industry where participants must continually seek to improve their business, the ability to identify and measure performance is crucial to the development of products, services, technology, training and long-term infrastructure.

7.2 Given the general alignment between airline and passenger interests, the Taskforce members agreed that it was essential for the industry to understand how customers view their performance. They devote substantial resources to identifying and measuring passenger views and levels of passenger satisfaction and reacting to their findings. However, the data obtained is often commercially sensitive and so dissemination is restricted.

7.3 Data on airport performance is predominately obtained through the independently audited Service Quality Rebate (SQR) overseen by the CAA. This is a set of measures focused on areas within the airport's control and includes some measures of passenger perception based on the Quality Service Monitor (QSM), a survey of arriving and departing passengers.

7.4 In addition, 51 airports in the UK are required by statute to provide local consultation facilities with stakeholders. Typically they have done this by setting up Airport Consultative Committees (ACC).

7.5 The Committees provide a forum to discuss matters concerning the development or operation of the airport which have an impact on its users and the people living and working in areas affected by this. A number of ACCs have set up sub-committees that consider issues affecting the passenger experience. However, these sub-committees have no formal status or guaranteed resources. DfT's existing guidelines for the Committees which seek to help airports and local communities in

facilitating effective local consultation date from 2003 and do not make specific reference to passengers. It is planned to review this guidance later in the year.

7.6   The Taskforce undertook to identify the sources and review the wide body of passenger satisfaction data, consider the information on airport performance and to explore the issue of passenger representation.

Performance and Passenger Satisfaction

7.7   The Taskforce found that passenger satisfaction data is obtained from a wide variety of sources employing the full range of research techniques. From traditional surveys, feedback forms, comment cards and mystery shopping to social networking and mobile technology.

7.8   In assessing the data the Taskforce recognised that many aspects of the passenger experience at the airport are not under the direct control of the airport itself. Passenger experience is affected by the performance of a range of other organisations such as airlines, the UKBA, retail outlets and public transport providers. A bad experience with any one of these can cloud the passenger's view of their overall experience at that airport.

7.9   The Taskforce agreed that the data collected was important to inform improvements in all aspects of airport operation, but from their own experience noted that passengers are most concerned about three performance areas: flight punctuality, border queuing times and security queuing times; and would most welcome access to this information to enable informed choices to be made.

Better Communication with Passengers

7.10   It is clear that the quality of information supplied to passengers can play an important part in their perception of the airport. If disruption occurs, the hassle and upset it causes to passengers can be mitigated if they are given prompt, reliable information on the situation as it develops. Taskforce industry members set out a number of initiatives underway to improve this aspect of customer care, including use of mobile phone apps and social media such as Twitter.

Better Representation for Passengers

7.11   Reforms to the national system of representation for air travellers to give the consumer a stronger voice in the regulatory structure and improve the passenger experience came into effect in March 2011. The Air

Transport Users Council (AUC) complaints handling function is now part of the CAA, and consumer representation will be undertaken by a new body, the Aviation Consumer Advocacy Panel.

7.12   This change follows a comprehensive review by the CAA of passenger representation in the UK within the framework of the Government's commitment to reform non-departmental public bodies.

7.13   The Taskforce recognised that local passenger groups can also provide a valuable insight into particular issues that passengers face at their airport and examined work undertaken by the CAA at Heathrow on improving the passenger experience where the CAA had reviewed the structures in place to represent the passenger interests.

7.14   In extending the CAA review beyond Heathrow to look at local passenger representation across the UK, the Taskforce concluded that the CAA, working with DfT, should develop best practice guidelines for passenger representation, to be used by the passenger sub-committees. The guidelines should cover:

- Objectives of the groups;

- Principles for good passenger representation;

- The data airports should share with the groups (complaints, surveys etc.); and

- Sharing information across the groups and with the CAA.

7.15   The Taskforce recognised that an enhanced role for Airport Consultative Committees could provide a useful, and cost effective, way for the CAA to gain better insight into passenger issues at airports across the UK. Sharing information would also assist the CAA in gaining a better view of the important passenger issues at the airport. Furthermore, in deciding how best they can respond to this new challenge, the Taskforce suggested that ACCs may wish to revisit their current arrangements for considering passenger issues. In particular, ACCs may wish to review existing memberships to ensure passenger interests are fully represented on the committees and so facilitate an effective forum for debate.

Conclusion

7.16   As result of the Taskforce's review, the DfT is considering with the industry the scope for improving the flow of information amongst the airport community on the three key performance areas (airline punctuality, security queuing times and border queuing times). The Department is seeking the establishment of airport specific internal

performance reports that focus on the key concerns of passengers and encourage airport operators and their stakeholders to share the operational reasons for poor performance in order that the airport community can work collaboratively to apply specific interventions and ensure the effective use of resources. A trial of this reporting is being taken forward at Gatwick for internal management purposes only. There is a strong alignment between this initiative and the work on performance charters.

7.17   In addition, the CAA is overseeing improvements to some measures in the SQR. In particular, the introduction of automatic data collection for security queuing which will improve the quality of this measure.

7.18   The Taskforce endorsed the DfT's plans to update and consult on revised guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees, including specific guidance on passenger representation.

Case Studies

Gatwick Case Study: Twitter

Gatwick has invited passengers to give direct feedback whilst on the airport site. Flight information screens prompt passengers to use Twitter, allowing the airport to immediately act on any issues and respond to the passenger in real-time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During the severe weather at the end of 2010, Gatwick's Twitter 'followers' grew from 4,000 to nearly 18,000 in number. It became one of the primary ways to keep them informed with a common message.

London Heathrow Case Study: Mobile Application

A Heathrow mobile application ('Heathrow app') has been developed and has been downloaded by over 300,000 people to date. The airport recently launched a second version, which includes a feedback form users can send direct to Heathrow. The airport is aiming to encourage app users to take advantage of these facilities to provide feedback on their Heathrow experiences.

London Heathrow Case Study: Improving the Passenger Experience

Heathrow have set up a research programme to help understand who their passengers are; what their end-to-end travel experience is and what their perception is of Heathrow, from planning the journey through to the actual flight departure. Findings from passenger research help the airport improve their services, processes and infrastructure. The airport's investment programme has led to passengers rating Terminal 5 as the best airport experience in Europe in 2010 and Terminal 4 as the most improved airport experience in Europe. More passengers now rate Heathrow as "excellent" or "very good" than any other European hub airport - showing a big improvement on where the airport was four years ago.

London Stansted Case Study: Persons of Reduced Mobility

As part of London Stansted's ongoing commitment to improving passenger experience, they have undertaken a complete review of the process by which Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM) are assisted through the Terminal to the aircraft or surface access in 2011. The review produced a number of recommendations which the airport will be implementing in Spring/Summer 2011 with the expectation that these will improve the performance and efficiency of the service for passengers as well as the overall customer service experience.

Virgin Atlantic Case Study: Information Distribution

During the weather disruption last year Virgin Atlantic identified and prioritised passengers requiring special assistance and those stranded far away from home. They handed out letters setting out passengers' entitlements under Regulation EC261 on Denied Boarding, Delays and Cancellations and distributed refreshments, vouchers, hotel accommodation (where required), complimentary beverages and blankets. They also brought in additional staff to support the contact centre to ensure that their passengers received the best possible information.

BA Case Study: Use of Information

British Airways invests considerable resources in understanding the views of its customers to better meet their expectations. They conduct a large-scale monthly survey of passengers, recording the key priorities and concerns throughout the journey experience, including airports and also on board flights. The feedback is then acted on, as with the winter disruption when the survey showed dissatisfaction with the timely provision of information, particularly at Heathrow. BA has since been working closely with key airport operators to learn from these events and ensure customer service during disruption is improved.

Gatwick Case Study: Passenger Commitments

In 2010, Gatwick identified a need for clear, and understandable, benchmarks that passengers could judge its performance against, as well as corresponding mechanisms to take action on areas that directly affect their

experience. This led to Gatwick becoming the first major UK airport to publish a clear, concise and public statement of passenger commitments. The commitments, to "treat all passengers as their guests", "hate queues" and "love to be on time" are supported by a range of specific initiatives that will allow passengers to see exactly what the airport is doing to make their journeys easier and more enjoyable.

Heathrow Case Study: Schedule Key Performance Indicators

Heathrow's Airside team has developed a programme of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that allow a better insight into airport punctuality and delay performance. A number of new metrics have been introduced since Winter 2010, with the aim of building a wider picture of punctuality performance at every stage of the passenger journey. As the Heathrow Schedule KPI program is evolved the airport is working closely with the airlines and air traffic control to monitor and enhance punctuality performance. The KPIs will be revised for Summer 2011 based on feedback.

BA Case Study: Team Working

Introduced in November 2010 the Team Working concept within BA Ramp & Baggage Services has the objective of introducing smaller teams who work in zonal areas of the Terminal 5 operation. This method of working drives ownership for performance down through the organisational structure. Since introducing team working BA have seen improved performance across the range of metrics. During 2011 the team-working concept will be rolled out across the entire British Airways operation at Heathrow.

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8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The South East Airports Taskforce was given a challenging remit. It had 12 months to identify operational improvements at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted that could improve the performance of these airports and enhance the experience of passengers.

8.2 The UK has a highly competitive and innovative aviation sector which has made significant, sustained investment in infrastructure, technology and people and has a culture of continuous improvement. Against this background, the Taskforce did not expect to find easy solutions. Across the seven areas of work it considered, the Taskforce has increased cross-industry understanding of the issues at these airports, fostered discussion, idea sharing and developed a programme which will improve the performance of the airports and give a better experience to passengers.

8.3 The three airports within the remit of the Taskforce are the busiest in the UK, with Heathrow operating at 98% of its capacity. In these circumstances, relatively small disruptions can have a significant impact, which cause delay to passengers throughout the day and can result in unscheduled flights during the night time period, disturbing local communities. The Taskforce concluded that allowing more flexible use of the runways at Heathrow would help to reduce disruption and facilitate recovery when it does occur; but acknowledged that this freedom must be accompanied by transparent and effective safeguards to limit the use of these tactical measures and protect the local communities potentially affected. A phased trial, starting in November, which extends the use of existing Tactically Enhanced Arrivals Measures (TEAM) and introduces Tactically Enhanced Departures Measures (TEDM) will enable the benefits and impacts of an operational freedoms regime to be fully understood. Extensive engagement will ensure that local communities are fully informed and have the opportunity to express their views before a final decision is taken on extending these measures beyond the trial stage.

8.4 In response to the disruption caused by snow in December 2010 the Taskforce undertook work on various winter resilience issues. This work gave impetus to the adoption of an enforceable capacity contingency plan at Heathrow which fully aligns with the Taskforce's recommendations on performance charters. The plan will help to reduce

disruption, unnecessary cancellations and the provision of accurate flight information to passengers. The effectiveness of this process was demonstrated when Heathrow deployed its plan in anticipation of potential disruption due to volcanic ash in May 2011.

8.5   Together with the development of new policy guidelines on the use of capacity these proposals have the potential to unlock improvements in the reliability of airport operations. To take these initiatives forward, the CAA has been asked to chair an Airport Performance Facilitation Group responsible for gathering and sharing information on the progress made, in particular emerging best practice, and reporting back to Government. It is anticipated that the Board will issue a first report in the first half of 2012, in time to report on the performance of the first phase of the operational freedoms trial. A final report on the scope for adopting the operational freedoms will be issued by the end of 2012.

8.6   The Taskforce recognised that a robust security regime to protect passengers and airport workers from terrorist attack is a pre-requisite at any airport. Consistent with that core objective, the Taskforce considered how customer service within airport security systems could be improved. The Taskforce agreed that moving towards an outcome focused, risk based approach to aviation security had the potential to improve existing high security standards. This could enable the aviation industry to realise savings, deliver operational efficiencies, and improve customer service by giving operators more responsibility and flexibility around the processes they choose to put in place in order to comply with the aviation security regime.

8.7   Within the airport, the border is the first experience of the UK for foreign visitors and the last check for UK citizens returning from abroad. Ensuring an efficient and effective border is an objective of both UKBA and the Taskforce membership. The Taskforce engaged with UKBA and welcomed the opportunity to understand and contribute to the programme which is being taken forward by UKBA:

- improving partnership working with airports and airlines;

- rolling out and improving the effectiveness of new technology and automated ways to conduct border checks;

- new working arrangements to strengthen UKBA's ability to deal with peak periods during the airport day;

- focusing activities and resources on those travellers who pose the higher risks;

- greater transparency of performance.

8.8 This will help to address the concerns raised, but the Taskforce advocated a greater sense of urgency to ensure that solutions are delivered to address existing problems as well as future needs.

8.9 The engagement undertaken through the Taskforce has strengthened working relationships between UKBA and the three airports. This has been welcomed by the Taskforce and is expected to lead to further improvements in the future.

8.10 The Taskforce acknowledged that a complete overhaul of regulation relevant to airports and airlines was beyond the scope of its work. It noted that the Government's Red Tape Challenge would provide an opportunity for wider consideration in due course. With regard to the regulatory issues considered by the Taskforce, it was concluded that an airport specific parking enforcement regime will be established and that further work on baggage reconciliation would be taken forward through the National Aviation Security Committee (NASC).

8.11 The Taskforce recognised the importance of providing good surface links to airports. The important role played by public sector investment in delivering infrastructure such as Crossrail, Thameslink and motorway improvement was acknowledged and the favourable transport settlement in the Comprehensive Spending Review was welcomed.

8.12 The Taskforce agreed that the airport community must lead representations and provide evidence on the importance of airport surface access. It was also recognised that maintaining and extending partnership working on surface access was essential, particularly through better engagement with public transport providers and planning and highway authorities.

8.13 Understanding what the passenger wants is a core discipline for the aviation industry and considerable resource is invested in obtaining this information. Through a wide range of channels, airports and airlines seek to engage with their passengers to inform the development of new and enhanced services. Taskforce industry members outlined some of the ways they were seeking to improve information flows to passengers, for example by using mobile phone apps and social media.

8.14 The Taskforce reviewed the sources for obtaining passenger views and those used to measure airport performance. As result of this review, the DfT is considering with industry the scope for improving the flow of information amongst the airport community on airline punctuality, security queuing times and border queuing times. A trial is to be undertaken by Gatwick Airport on an internal performance report that focuses on these key concerns. It is hoped this will encourage airport operators and their stakeholders to share the operational reasons for poor performance in

order that the airport community can work collaboratively to apply specific interventions and ensure the effective use of resources.

8.15 In addition, the CAA is overseeing improvements to some measures in the SQR, in particular, the introduction of automatic data collection for security queuing which will improve the quality of this measure.

8.16 The Taskforce endorsed the DfT's plans to update and consult on revised guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees, including specific guidance on passenger representation.

Annex A: Terms of Reference and Membership

Terms of Reference

Recognising:

- the need to promote a competitive aviation industry and to support UK economic growth;

- the Government's commitments to a low-carbon economy and to reducing local environmental impacts of aviation, including noise;

- the Government's policy not to support new runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick airports, but to improve the performance of airports for those who use them;

The South East Airports Taskforce will:

- Review and understand the existing runway, terminal and other capacity constraints at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, taking account of demand for air travel and the Government's commitment to a low-carbon and eco-friendly economy.

- Identify and investigate options for making best use of this capacity, including scope for improving airport efficiency, reducing delays, greater reliability and enhancing the passenger experience to, from and within the airport, whilst having regard to the local environmental implications of any measures.

- Investigate how best to capture and respond to passenger concerns at an airport level.

- Input into separate work already in hand to look at security and border controls.

- Develop a programme of action, whether by Government or the parties, by July 2011, including early action and measures for the longer term.

Membership

The Aviation Minister will chair the Taskforce meetings and the initial membership will include:

- Director, Technical Standards and Assurance, BAA Heathrow
- Managing Director, BAA Stansted
- Chief Executive Officer, Gatwick Airport
- Director Airspace Policy, Civil Aviation Authority
- Managing Director, National Air Traffic Services
- Director of Operations, British Airways
- Chief Operating Officer, Virgin Atlantic
- Group Operations Director, easyJet
- Director of Flight & Ground Operations, Ryanair
- Chief Executive, Air Transport Users Council[25]
- Director of Strategy and Policy, London First
- Director, Aviation Environment Federation
- Chairman, Airport Operators Association

There may be a requirement for further industry and government members as the group's detailed work programme develops.

Other Attendees

- Private Office
- Paper authors – in attendance during discussion of their papers
- Secretariat from Airports Policy Division

Conduct of Business

- Meetings will normally be held every 2 months.
- The deadline for receipt of papers will be five working days before each meeting. A briefing pack will be collated by the Secretariat and circulated to members no less than two working days before the meeting.

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[25] With effect from 9 March 2011, the Air Transport Users Council (AUC) ceased to exist. The AUC's complaints handling function is now part of the Civil Aviation Authority, and consumer representation will be undertaken by a new body, the Aviation Consumer Advocacy Panel.

- Meetings will be minuted and decisions recorded and, once agreed, published on DfT's website.

- When absent, group members may send substitutes where necessary and where reports need representing.

- If unable to attend, the Minister of State will nominate the Director General of International Networks and the Environment or the Director of Aviation to chair the meeting.

- The group may establish sub-groups, as necessary, to handle detailed issues. These groups will have their own terms of reference, as agreed, and report to the Taskforce at each meeting.

- The group will be supported by a secretariat from the Airports Policy Division in DfT.

Annex B: Punctuality, Delay and Resilience Sub-Group Terms of Reference and Membership

Purpose

To explore what further measures, for instance better operating processes or comparable initiatives, both technical and non-technical, might be taken to improve overall airport performance within existing capacity limits and to consider how far such measures are able to contribute towards addressing the problems of punctuality, delay and resilience at capacity constrained airports.

Membership

Initial Membership will include:

- Director Airspace Policy, CAA (Chair)
- Head of Coordination, ACL
- Head of Network Operations, BA
- Airside Director, BAA Heathrow
- Head of Airside Operations, BAA Stansted
- Procurement Director, easyJet
- Chief Operating Officer, GIP Gatwick
- General Manager, ATS Heathrow, NATS
- Director of Flight & Ground Operations, Ryanair
- Head of UK Airport Operations, Virgin Atlantic
- Aviation Regulatory & Consumer Policy Division, DfT

There may be a requirement for further members as the sub-group's detailed work programme develops.

Terms of Reference

The Taskforce sub-group on punctuality, delay and resilience will:

- Define clearly the nature and extent of the problem of punctuality, delay and resilience and how this is manifested at different airports, with a focus on Heathrow and Gatwick initially;

- Assess the degree to which this problem is driven by factors such as established processes, operational practices, airline / airport / other behaviours, or the more 'fundamental' issues of the runway capacity/throughput balance;

- Make an inventory of current and proposed changes to operating processes or comparable initiatives to address the problem of punctuality, delay and resilience at capacity constrained airports and assess the degree to which these changes will improve the operational performance of the airport;

- Consider whether there are any further changes to operating processes or comparable initiatives that could improve further the operational performances of capacity constrained airports in terms of punctuality, delay and resilience, and whose responsibility it would best be to bring such changes forward;

- Assess the likely overall contribution to improving performance capacity constrained airports based on current and possible future changes to operating processes or comparable initiatives; compare the magnitude of this contribution with the scale of the problem remaining as a result of the tight balance of runway capacity and throughput;

Conduct of Business

- Meetings will normally be held monthly, although the frequency of sub-group meetings may be varied depending on its work programme.

- Initial findings will be reported back to the main Taskforce before the end of 2010.

- The deadline for receipt of papers will be five working days before each meeting. A briefing pack will be collated by the Secretariat and circulated to members no less than two working days before the meeting.

- Meetings will be minuted and decisions recorded and, once agreed, published on DfT's website.

- When absent, group members may send substitutes where necessary and where reports need representing.

- The group will be supported by a secretariat from the CAA.