

# Extraordinary Independent Forum meeting notes: 06/10/2021



**Meeting:** Extraordinary meeting of the Independent Forum  
**Venue:** London Heathrow Marriott Hotel, Bath Road UB3 5AN  
**Date:** 2.00pm on 06/10/2021

## **Present:**

Paul Beckford, Chair, HACAN  
Rachel Cerfontyne, Chair, HCEB (Chair)  
John Holland-Kaye, CEO, Heathrow Airport Ltd  
Shital Manro, Cabinet Member for Good Growth, Ealing Council  
Nigel Mellis, Resident (Southside)  
Perry Phillips, Regional Organiser, GMB  
Bradley Smith, Sales & Marketing Director, Grundon Waste Management Ltd  
Helen Swinburn, Infrastructure Executive, British Airways  
Neil Spurrier, Representative HCNF  
James Swindlehurst, Leader, Slough Borough Council  
Christine Taylor, Resident (Northside)

## **In attendance:**

Lizzie Beale, Community & Charity Partnership Manager, Heathrow Airport Ltd  
Vic Chetty, Senior Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Heathrow Airport Ltd  
Becky Coffin, Director of Communities, Heathrow Airport Ltd  
Rebecca Cox, Executive Assistant to the Chair, HCEB (meeting notes)  
Mark Frost, Secretariat, HSPG  
James Holmes, Local Authority and Business Engagement Lead, Heathrow Airport Ltd  
Mark Izatt, Non-Executive Director, HCEB  
Nigel Milton, Chief of Staff, Heathrow Airport Ltd  
Susan Parsons, HCEB Passenger Services Group  
Heather Pennock, HCEB Passenger Services Group  
Brian Yates, HCEB Passenger Services Group

## **1. Welcome and Chair's Introduction**

- Rachel Cerfontyne welcomed everyone to this extraordinary meeting of the HCEB's Independent Forum whose focus would be the future of stakeholder engagement. Exceptionally, this was closed to members of the public to allow those present to have a free and open discussion.

## **2. Update from the CEO of Heathrow Airport**

- The quarter 2 report from HAL had been circulated prior to the meeting but the focus of John Holland-Kaye's update was current operations and recovery. The airport was now running 700 flights a day, which was 50% of the total pre-COVID. Terminals 2, 3 and 5 were now open and there was greater optimism that recovery was stable. The main challenge presented by the airport coming back to life was that operations were peaky, which in particular created issues for Border Force. As restrictions reduced, bringing the UK in line with the rest of Europe and when the US opened in November, passenger numbers were expected to increase, though were not likely to return to pre-pandemic levels for another 2 or 3 years.
- With regard to jobs, HAL had been encouraging companies across the airport to retain staff once furlough ended. In addition, they were commencing recruitment again in order to ensure sufficient trained staff were available for the anticipated Christmas peak and for next Summer. The management team had seen the biggest reduction as a result



of COVID and more managers were now required in recovery. This offered an opportunity to promote colleagues internally and increase the diversity of the team.

- HAL had been lobbying governments around the world with regard to investment in and policies on sustainability and working closely with airlines to promote sustainable fuels. The refreshed Heathrow 2.0 would focus on carbon in addition to the local community, noise and air quality, and the airport continued to be involved in the Jet Zero Council.
- HAL had been reengaging with Hillingdon Council, a previous gap in community engagement, looking at ways in which they could collaborate in recovery. They were also involved with West London Business looking to address the challenges in relation to skills, employment and infrastructure.

### 3. Q&A session with CEO of Heathrow Airport

- In response to questions and comments the following points were clarified:
  - Freight had performed relatively well during the pandemic, with some planes converted to cargo in order to keep goods flowing, and levels were now at 80-85% of that in 2019. However, the airport was falling behind those in France and the Netherlands and was working on rebuilding to address this.
  - The airport remained committed to the London Living Wage campaign and sympathised in particular with those for which it was due to be introduced in April 2020. Meetings with the Living Wage Commission took place quarterly, but there was not yet a timeline agreed to recommence work on this.
  - The review of Heathrow 2.0 would consider issues related to noise, air quality, low flying planes and late departures to account for the impact of COVID and a final draft would be published early next year. HAL would continue to engage with the HCEB's new body which would have a role in monitoring the 10 key measures it set out. Good progress had been made in reducing late running flights and this would continue to be a focus during recovery.
  - The airport would not be in a position to prevent petrol and diesel vehicles from entering the site for a number of years as there were insufficient public transport alternatives currently, its own fleet was not yet 100% electric, and the government would not be phasing out sales of these new cars until 2030. However, in the meantime the forecourt charge had been introduced and some of the funding from this would be invested in public transport. Companies on the Heathrow site would be encouraged to transition to a 100% electric fleet, and the move from the Compass Centre to the terminals would make it easier for colleagues to travel to work on public transport.
  - The airport had learned a number of useful lessons during the pandemic and had continued its Insights programme to monitor passengers' changing priorities. In addition, it had developed a closer working relationship with the community, local business and in particular the airlines, enabling coordinated messaging to government and transparent conversations in working together to rebuild.
  - The Elizabeth Line would be opening, which would offer fantastic connectivity. Work on the Western Rail Link was ongoing. The Rail Minister continued to move it forward, though HAL were not yet in a position to specify the level of contribution they would be able to make and the government's focus was currently on the north of England. With regard to the Southern Rail Link, a range of options were still being considered and this would not progress until a single option had been agreed. Leadership from Surrey County Council and the Mayor of London would be required to achieve this.
  - HAL recognised that continued uncertainty about the third runway was having a negative impact on some of the local communities. Whilst this uncertainty was likely to persist and some of the impacts resulted from wider problems, the airport was focusing on issues that it could help with, such as engagement with Hillingdon on schools, and building connectivity into the local transport strategy. The HCEB's Sustainable Communities Project had looked at ways in which collaborative working could help find solutions and increase resilience in local



communities and this would be something that the new body could recommence work on.

#### **4. Presentation from Rachel Cerfontyne on HCEB Legacy Report**

- The HCEB had recently published its [Legacy Report](#). This focused on learnings in relation to community engagement for major infrastructure projects and giving recognition to all those who had contributed to the HCEB's activities. One of the principal recommendations was that for any body set up for this purpose it should be clearly stated what the engagement was for and what the goal was, which would enable success to be measured and be a way of showing the difference made by that body. Also important was the behaviour of organisations, as an external body would not be able to build trust on their behalf. Instead, they needed to demonstrate transparency, openness and accountability. The engagement body could add value through scrutiny, challenge, mediation, consensus building and by commissioning research. Perceptions about the independence of such an engagement board were impacted by its source of funding and it was recommended that a levy should be applied to the applicant at the beginning of the DCO process to provide an independent fund managed by the board. In order to undertake effective consultation, traditional events and methods could not be solely relied upon. In order to gain responses from a broad and diverse group of people, in particular young people, outreach work and an ongoing effort to build relationships and engage were required.
- HAL were fully supportive of the report and were involved in discussions with the DfT as a result of its publication. They asked that the HCEB circulate hard copies to the Aviation Minister and his team.
- The issue of the HCEB not being set up separately from the ACC, the conflict that resulted in trying to carry out a dual role and the challenges this presented was raised.

#### **5. Presentation on Heathrow Airport's stakeholder engagement proposals and update on the future of the HCEB**

- The paper 'The HCEB – the case for change' had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
- Nigel Milton, HAL Chief of Staff with responsibility for carbon, sustainability, communications and communities, began the presentation highlighting how the new body would play a key role in bringing together these issues. HAL were supportive of the paper and were keen to use learnings from both the HACC and the HCEB when moving forward, in particular in establishing effective and genuine engagement. It was hoped that the newly streamlined forums being developed as a result of this year's review would facilitate this and help to avoid repetitive, pointless meetings.
- Becky Coffin, Director of Communities and Sustainability, outlined the next steps. The key issues that had come out of the review were maintaining an independent new body replacing the HCEB; integrating the work of the engagement forums and putting in place a clear process of escalation up to the new umbrella body; and ensuring that the new body had influence and purpose, and that its recommendations were heard and acted upon. The existing forums were to be revamped, with clear and consistent rules of engagement and independent Chairs.
- Mark Izatt, HCEB Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Passenger Services Group, expanded on the review of the HCEB. This had been a collaborative process undertaken in the context of wider changes, unlike the transition from the HACC to the HCEB. With the overhaul and integration of the existing network of forums, the current issues related to duplication of activity and siloing of different stakeholders would be resolved. The introduction of the new structure would facilitate transparent and effective dialogue which was listened to and demonstrably followed up. The views of a number of stakeholders had already been sought, but members were asked to get in touch with any further feedback or suggestions. The process of recruiting a new Chair was just about to begin and the terms of reference would shortly be drafted. The key challenge for the new body would be to secure genuine engagement with a wider breadth and



diverse range of people. This would be particularly important in relation to consultation on proposed airspace changes.

#### **6. Chair's closing remarks**

- John Holland-Kaye thanked Rachel Cerfontyne for the Legacy Report, which offered an excellent overview of the HCEB's activities in different geographical locations and amongst a variety of communities. He also thanked her for all of the work she had undertaken as Chair, which had been done with amazing energy, style and innovation. Heathrow Airport had learnt a great deal from her during this time and as a result of this and the learnings highlighted in the Legacy Report it would not be possible to revert to box-ticking methods of engagement.
- Rachel thanked Heathrow Airport and Forum members for their comments and their challenges, expressing gratitude for the time, commitment and energy they had given to HCEB activities. She would continue to work with HCEB and HAL colleagues until her departure to impact what the future structures would look like, and would watch with interest from the outside as they developed.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.45pm.*

