

Independent Forum meeting notes: 09/09/2020

Meeting: Independent Forum – held virtually on Zoom

Date: 09/09/2020

Joining:

Tony Booker, Director, Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company
Rachel Cerfontyne, Chair, HCEB (Chair)
Robin Clarke, Community Relations Manager, NATS
Steve Curran, Leader, London Borough of Hounslow
John Holland-Kaye, CEO, Heathrow Airport Ltd
Nancy Lalor, Operations Director, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Nigel Mells, Resident (Southside)
Perry Phillips, Regional Organiser, GMB
Steve Sargeant, Director, Beck Theatre
Howard Simmons, Commissioner, ICCAN
Bradley Smith, Sales & Marketing Director, Grundon Waste Management Ltd
Wendy Matthews, Representative HCNF (deputising for Neil Spurrier)
John Stewart, Chair, HACAN
James Swindlehurst, Leader, Slough Borough Council
Christine Taylor, Resident (Northside)
Martin Tett, Leader, Buckinghamshire Council (New Unitary)

In attendance:

Paul Atkin, Non-Executive Director, HCEB
Kris Beuret, Non-Executive Director, HCEB
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)
John Davies, Non-Executive Director, HCEB
Martyn Hurst, Technical Consultant, HCEB
Mark Izatt, Non-Executive Director, HCEB
Guido Liguori, Company Secretary, HCEB
Sam Matthews, Head of Communications and Strategy, HCEB
Anna O'Rourke, Executive Director, HCEB
Lydia Strawson, Deputy Director Airport Policy, DfT

Apologies:

Neil Spurrier, Representative HCNF, sent deputy
Colin Kemp, Surrey County Council

1. Welcome and Chair's Introduction

- Rachel Cerfontyne welcomed all those joining the call and outlined the format for the discussions to follow.

2. Update from the CEO of Heathrow Airport

- The Q2 report on day to day operations and operational impacts had been circulated to attendees prior to the meeting. John Holland-Kaye summarised the continuing impact of COVID-19 on the airport, which had lost £1.1 billion in the past six months. In response to this, three key workstreams had been established:
 - ◇ *Protecting the business to ensure survival* – this involved a number of cost cutting measures, including furlough; paused salary for and reduction of those in management roles; voluntary redundancies; and renegotiated contracts within the supply chain. Through these, capital expenditure had been reduced from £100 million to £20 million a month, though this would not be sustainable in the long term. During this period of low air traffic, the airport had invested in the refurbishment of the southern runway. It was recognised that this had caused disruption to some local communities, but that it was less disruptive than undertaking the work during normal operations.
 - ◇ *Recovery* - the cleanliness and safety measures put in place aimed at increasing passenger confidence in flying were described, along with the community engagement work the airport was carrying out in food banks, local schools and hospitals. A number of skills and training sessions had also been run, led by Lord Blunkett. The airport continued to lobby government for the introduction of a COVID testing regime. Methods for providing this privately at Heathrow were being explored through the trialling of three different testing solutions.
 - ◇ *Building back better* – work was being undertaken to look at how to engage most effectively with local communities going forward. Whilst resources were currently constrained, structures were being put in place to improve community engagement in the future. The airport remained committed to achieving sustainable aviation and its 'Target Net Zero' plan. It was working closely with the government, encouraging it to establish the Jet Zero Council, and other airports and organisations internationally.
- In response to the CEO's report, the following comments and clarifications were made, and questions raised:
 - ◇ That while the safety measures implemented by the airport were generally very effective, it would be helpful to have more colleague intervention in arrivals to ensure social distancing once passengers had disembarked.
 - ◇ That while the airport had increased its cargo flights during the pandemic, they were still 30% down and Heathrow had lost its position as the busiest airport in Europe.
 - ◇ That while residents appreciated the need to undertake work on the southern runway, the airport's communication to local communities about the impending work had been inadequate and there was a feeling that no effort to mitigate the disruption had been made.
 - ◇ That there were concerns that cuts such as the loss of the independent advisor to the HCNF; the reduction in the airport's community engagement team; and the uncertainty about the future funding of the HCEB would have a negative impact on local communities and be detrimental to levels of trust in the airport. John Holland-Kaye recognised this as a significant challenge at this time when financial cuts were necessary and resources limited.
 - ◇ That the impact of job losses and reduction in hours for employees at the airport and across the supply chain had been significant. Both GMB and the airport were continuing to lobby the government for a support package for aviation and the work being undertaken to support those who had lost their jobs was outlined.

3. Presentation from Oxford Economics on HCEB commissioned research on the impact on local economies of reduced activity at Heathrow airport

- A presentation was received from Neil McCullough, Associate Director of Oxford Economics, which focused on the economic contribution of the airport to the local area



pre-lockdown, the impact of reduced activity due to COVID-19, and the characteristics of those workers who were most vulnerable.

4. Update on the work of the Heathrow Recovery Forum

- A presentation was received from Becky Coffin, Director of Communities and Vic Chetty, Senior Stakeholder Engagement Manager at Heathrow Airport. This outlined the aims and priorities of the newly established Recovery Forum, its activities to date and the proposed next steps.

5. HCEB Chair's Update and Closing Remarks

- The Chair thanked all attendees and presenters for joining the meeting and stated the HCEB's interest in being involved in the work of the Recovery Forum going forward. Members were invited to contact the team should they have any feedback or suggestions for future agenda items.

The agenda and papers, quarter 2 report from Heathrow Airport, full Oxford Economics report, the presentation on the Recovery Forum and the video of the meeting in full can be found [here](#).

