

Airport update for Berkswell Parish Council 19 November 2020

1. Airport Consultative Committee

There was a virtual meeting of the committee on 17 September. The key part was a briefing by the CEO, Nick Barton, on the severe difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Passenger numbers were back to 1950's levels, 85% down on last year's performance. He was highly critical of the lack of Government support and the restrictions on travel, which he thought were ineffective. The changes in restrictions at short notice had badly damaged consumer confidence.

For the time being, he said the shareholders would continue to support the Airport. They have put further developments on hold, but have completed the upgrade to provide 100% screening of hold baggage and would complete the update of the ILS system

2. Additional briefings

A confidential briefing note from Nick Barton followed on 22 October. Just 5,000 passengers were travelling through the airport each day. The downturn had seen a cash outflow of tens of millions of pounds since April, which was not sustainable. Any chance of a meaningful restart and recovery in the summer months was lost due to the effects of the blunt quarantine policy, and consumer confidence was at an all-time low. The Airport anticipated the next financial year would also be greatly affected, and so was looking to reduce the employee headcount across all departments.

Meanwhile, Car Park 5 is being used as a drive-through Covid-19 testing site.

In addition, Car park 6 within the Airport has been identified under the Town and Country (Border Facilities and Infrastructure) (EU Exit) (England) Special Development Order (24 September 2020) as a potential site for HGV processing.

The SDO provides planning approval similar to outline planning application, and there are many conditions requiring discharging by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. These relate to environmental pollution, aerodrome safeguarding and traffic management. There are also requirements for statutory stakeholder engagement. The Airport is working closely with HMRC to support development of the proposal.

3. Noise subgroup

There was a virtual meeting of the Noise subgroup on 21 October. Statistics for this year will not be very useful because of the downturn. The Airport is continuing work to investigate the noise restrictions at other airports and to benchmark the situation at Birmingham. We were referred to the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise, which aims to provide simple, easy-to-understand information about how aviation noise can be measured, mitigated and managed. The airport intends to make proposals for updates to the noise policies in January 2021.

Richard Lloyd, 16 November 2020