

Dear Lindsay

Thank you for your letter. As ever, we value feedback from EANAB and I hope this letter will go some way to easing your Board's concerns.

Let me be clear in stating that Edinburgh Airport has a robust process in place for this Airspace Change process.

It is being advised by the CAA, our regulator, The Consultation Institute, specialists in best practice engagement, and is supported by several expert partners, including Progressive Partnership.

Stage 1b is an initial stage but an important one. The plan we've put in place to engage with stakeholders is to ensure that the creation of design principles is stakeholder-informed, and not only complies with CAP1616 but goes above and beyond what the regulator asks of us.

We have engaged with EANAB as a key stakeholder fully in this process. No other stakeholder organisation has had a separate briefing, a tailored workshop nor a dialogue that saw over 50 questions being answered.

We do this because we seek and welcome EANAB's input.

What we cannot do, however, is to have a process that is in any way perceived to be skewed towards EANAB and therefore unfair to others. Our process I believe, provides accommodation for EANAB's unique and privileged position, whilst maintaining the integrity of the exercise.

I hope that we can agree that balance needs to be struck and that Edinburgh Airport has sought to include EANAB properly in our engagement.

You raised some specific issues in your letter which I will deal with below.

Engagement Workshops

I want to be clear at the outset that these are pre-consultation engagement sessions – this is not yet a full consultation and therefore is governed only by CAP1616 that sets out the guidance in Stage 1B; I'm confident we're surpassing its requirements.

Our objective here is to gather views to assist us in formulating design principles - not consult on our SON, nor consult on particular flightpath options, nor even on the validity of an ACP at all. The opportunity for wider debate on Airspace options comes later in the process laid down by CAP1616; after this 'pre-consultation' under 1B, and after Options Development and Options Appraisal under Stage 2; then comes the Stage 3 Consultation.

Progressive has been commissioned by Edinburgh Airport to conduct elements of our engagement process during this 1B stage of CAP 1616.

We have chosen this external agency model, to ensure its professionalism and objectivity, separated from the airport team. We shall consider their reports as evidence fed in to our 1B process.

As such, I would request that any further queries you have in relation to the process should be directed to EAL as the owners of the process. The best point of contact for this is Anna Light. Any further correspondence to Progressive will be forwarded to Anna.

We assure you that we have a thorough and robust process in place to meet the engagement requirements of CAP1616, regularly reported to CAA and assured independently by The Consultation Institute. The aim of the second round of workshops is to test the understanding and interpretation of all the information and insights we gathered during the initial round of workshops of stakeholders, and focus groups drawn from the general public.

In compiling the invitation lists for the workshops, we ensure there will be broad and varied representation of different stakeholder perspectives. At this stage we are not seeking to discover the views of individual communities; there will be ample opportunity for that in Stage 3, the Public Consultation. Rather, we want to ensure the different types of stakeholder are represented, geographically and sectorally, including aviation interests, local government, currently overflowed, and not-overflowed areas.

We will not be issuing (probably redacted) workshop transcripts until this phase of the exercise is completed, so as not to allow the contamination of later inputs.

The next stage of the process is straightforward. Based on the engagement sessions Progressive Partnership is drafting a longlist of draft design principles and is producing a report on the process, which will be part of our submission to the CAA.

The longlist will be discussed during a meeting attended by the Airspace Change Project team and other internal stakeholders, including our technical experts. At the end of this session, a shortlist of draft design principles will be agreed.

The reasons for merging or discarding any longlist design principles will be carefully recorded and will also form a part of our submission. The shortlist of draft design principles will then be discussed and tested during our two engagement recall sessions, which will include representatives from all geographical areas affected and other sectoral stakeholders. Any feedback from these sessions and any resulting changes to the draft design principles will, once again, be part of our submission to the CAA, and published on its portal.

Statement of Need/Capacity

I understand your concerns with the Statement of Need, however it has already been accepted by the CAA and we're now at a different part of the process.

I also understand your focus on the need for increased capacity and the impacts it, or the lack of it, has on our operation. The appropriate time to explain and discuss this issue is when we consult on possible solution(s), in line with the SON and the yet to be agreed Design Principles, and Options Development/ Appraisal (also yet to be prepared). I look forward to having the discussion at that time, but you will appreciate that time is not now.

You mention our morning peak. Typically in the airport we describe the peak as being between 0600am and 0700am but this does not always translate into movements i.e. passengers moving through security etc. The peak for movements can be between 0600am and 0900am. I think what's important here for the discussion of design principles, is the establishment of the concept of peak.

What I would say on capacity is that we will be clear on the challenges we're trying to address and to show how we assess that pressure now and forecast its impact in the future.

Clearly, as you point out there are other factors to consider – consumer attitudes to climate change, the reaction of governments and regulators, as well as other economic and social factors. We do grapple continually with these issues; however I would suggest we are at an early stage in understanding growth of movements like 'flygskam' and how they will manifest over the coming decades.

In terms of the scope of the ACP and considering airspace above 7000ft, I've been clear with EANAB that we are exploring with NERL how best to take routes down the Forth if possible. It is not something that Edinburgh Airport can do unilaterally.

Climate Change

Part of our preparation and engagement in creating our design principles is to understand better all the factors we need to consider. In doing that we've included the opinions of environmental groups in the process, so this issue can be reflected in our designs; we are also required to take account of pre-existing legislation in this arena and much governmental and regulatory guidance.

The airport has a wider sustainability agenda into which ACP will feed.

The current part of the process is to assist in the creation of design principles. It has been a rich and lively exercise that has given us much to consider.

All of the relevant points you raise will be tested publicly as we go through the process and, as I have said, and as our actions have demonstrated, we wish EANAB to be a key stakeholder as the process progresses.

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Thank you for your participation and I look forward to discussing the resulting design principles and consequential options with you and colleagues amongst thousands of other interested parties, too.

Regards



Gordon Robertson