

c/o London Docklands Development Corporation
Great Eastern Enterprise
Millharbour
London E14 9TJ

MINUTE of a special meeting of the London City Airport Consultative Committee held on Monday 19th March 1990 at 5 p.m. in the Boardroom at London City Airport.

Present:

John Adshead
Stuart Innes
Noel Edwards
Bill Dunlop

Dave Cooper

Andy Todd
Robert Hardless
Tony Auld
Jonathan Wilson
Mike Dash
Carlo Englebert
William Charnock
Mike Heraty
Dave Simpson
Brian Axon-Boyes
Jeff Mendham
John Bearman
Anne Jerney

Chair
Honorary Secretary
Beckton Residents Association
Andrew Street Tenants and Residents
Association
Thameside Tenants and Residents
Association
Brymon Airways
Brymon Airways
Brymon Airways
London City Airways
London City Airways
Flexair
London City Airport
LEN
LDDC
ABTA
PLA
Newham Docklands Forum
LCCI

In Attendance:

Jon Horne
Rev. Peter Duncan
Sharon O'Callaghan
Malcolm Ginsberg
Gillian Crawley
Immy v. Steenoven

London City Airport
Airport Chaplain
Docklands Consultative Committee
Brymon Airways
Newham Recorder
Flexair

Apologies:

Lewis Moss
Cllr. Julia Garfield
Bruce Unsted
Graham Hall

LDDC
LEN
London City Airport
PLA

1. LONDON CITY AIRWAYS - SERVICE AND STAFF REDUCTIONS

Jonathan Wilson said that London City Airways had called together their staff on the previous Wednesday evening to inform them of the following measures on which decisions had just been taken:-

- The withdrawal of services to Amsterdam with effect from the end of the month.
- Halving of the services to Paris (from 6 rotations per day to 3 rotations).
- These reductions in services would make it possible to reduce from 4 to 2 the number of aircraft required by the airline.
- One of the surplus aircraft would be leased to another company within the Airlines of Britain Group. The other would be wetleased with the air crew, to Brymon Airways, who would commence Amsterdam services from the end of March.
- Most of the administration of the airline would be taken over by the appropriate departments of British Midland Airways at Castle Donington with only a frontline presence at London City Airport.
- The services to Brussels and the summer services to Jersey would not be affected.

These decisions had been taken with great reluctance. The airline had for some time been looking for partners to share the development costs of their London City venture and discussions are still in progress. However, there is no-one ready immediately to invest in the venture and decisions on steps to contain the present losses of the Airline could no longer be avoided.

The Airline had been very disappointed over the lack of progress in securing the infrastructure of the area (especially those projects concerned with improved ground access) and in securing other developments in the Royal Docks which, when the airline took its initial decisions to invest in services from London City Airport, had been "just round the corner". There was also great concern over the lack of a clear timetable for the introduction of the BAe 146 which was now subject to a Public Inquiry which seemed to be unnecessary, bearing in mind that local opinion seemed to be heavily in favour of this development. London City Airways remained absolutely confident in the future of London City Airport in the longer term. These present reductions were to be regretted but they were necessary to make the present losses manageable until the situation improved.

It was not possible at this stage to give definite information over the number of employees who would lose their jobs. It had been decided to inform staff of the proposed reductions before they had been worked out in detail to avoid staff becoming aware of them through rumour. Efforts were being made to find positions for some members of staff within the Airlines of Britain Group and others might be absorbed by Brymon Airways. At present it looked as if the reductions would affect about 80 jobs but after redeployments etc. had been taken into account this might be reduced to a net figure of about 40.

Tony Auld confirmed that Brymon Airways would, from the end of March, be taking up their licence to operate services to Amsterdam. They had held such a licence from the beginning of their operations at London City Airport and, now that their services to Paris were profitable, the time was ripe for Brymon to develop their services further. This had always been envisaged as a step-by-step process. Brymon would also be providing engineering services for London City Airways and, no doubt, some of the staff involved would be absorbed. Brymon would not be able to take over any of the administrative staff of London City Airways since their administrative services are provided at the Headquarters of Brymon at Plymouth.

For London City Airport, Bill Charnock said he regretted the reductions which London City Airways had felt compelled to make at this stage, but he was very pleased that Brymon had taken over the Amsterdam services. He said that Mowlems had within the last two months reaffirmed its commitment to London City Airport. There is, however, serious concern about the problems of surface access to the Airport. This related not just to the immediate area of the Royal Docks but also to the need to secure the easier movement of traffic on the A13. The airport needed the support of the LDDC, the LEN and other agencies to secure improvements to this key route.

There followed a period for questions and discussion during which the following points were made:-

- Jonathan Wilson denied absolutely that these decisions had been taken at this stage to create an atmosphere of crisis in the run-up to the Public Inquiry as part of a strategy to secure a favourable result. The reductions had been made to make the company's losses more manageable until the time is ripe for new services to be expanded and developed. It was a step back to secure the long-term future of the investment.
- For the LDDC, David Simpson said that although he recognised that there are problems of access in the short-term, the infrastructure programme is in fact proceeding much as the LDDC had planned and, indeed, some of the projects have been started ahead of schedule. He was not clear what weight should be given to each of the factors mentioned by Jonathan as being the reasons for the decision to reduce services?
- Jonathan Wilson said he thought that Brymon's connections with British Airways and thus with KLM might allow Brymon Airways to operate the services to Amsterdam more successfully than London City Airways had been able thus far to achieve. The wholehearted involvement of the national flag carrier was a key ingredient in a successful service.
- Reference was again made to the serious effect which temporary prohibitions and restrictions for roadworks were having on the ability of passengers to reach the Airport. These appeared to be poorly co-ordinated and managed and the signing arrangements are less than adequate.

- It was pointed out on behalf of Brymon Airways that the present planning application would allow for aircraft other than the BAe 146 including quiet new generation turbo prop aircraft like the ATR 42 and the Dash 8 which it was likely that Brymon would wish to operate from the Airport if planning permission is given.
- Reference was made to a radio programme during which a spokesman of Mowlems is said to have indicated that the Airport would never make a profit. Bill Charnock said this was not Mowlem's view and he could not imagine how anyone connected with Mowlems could have made such a statement.
- In reply to a question by Peter Duncan about on-site counselling for affected members of staff, Jonathan Wilson said that the Personnel Director of Airlines of Britain had made himself available with members of his staff to assist in the process of helping those members of staff affected by these decisions. Apart from redeployments within the Airlines of Britain Group, and possibly the transfer of some members of staff to Brymon Airways, efforts were being made to introduce affected staff to other airlines who might have vacancies for staff with airline experience.
- Brian Axon-Boyes said that Thomas Cook might have openings for experienced staff of this kind and offered to raise the matter with their Director of Human Resources.
- Brymon Airways confirmed that the forward bookings of LCA's Amsterdam passengers would be honoured at the fares set by London City Airways.
- Robert Hardless of Brymon Airways said that these events needed to be seen in context. The effect on the staff of London City Airways was very much to be regretted but in terms of services to passengers, the net effect would be to reduce the daily services to Paris by 3 rotations. The airport would continue to offer 10 such rotations per day and this represented a very good service. Over the past few months, new routes had been added including the Flexair services to Rotterdam and the Air France services to Lille and Strasbourg. There were charter services to Chamberg and Air France expected soon to introduce a weekend service to Nantes. So it was important not to give way to feelings of gloom. In spite of all the present difficulties, the Airport had a very bright future, and notwithstanding the present setback the Committee, and everyone concerned with the Airport should look to the future with confidence.

The Committee noted that Jonathan Wilson had resigned from the Airlines of Britain Group and would be leaving his present post at the end of the month. Members expressed their regret at his departure. He had been diligent in forging links with the local community and in participating in local affairs. His contribution would be sorely missed. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Jonathan for his contribution to the work of the Committee which had always been constructive and helpful.

2. PUBLIC INQUIRY

The Committee noted that the Secretary of State for the Environment had appointed Maurice Astrinsky as the Inspector to take the Public Inquiry into the proposed expansion of the Airport. He would sit with Air Vice-Marshal C.G. Maughan as Assessor in relation to the Airport applications and as the Inspector for the Inquiry into the East London River Crossing. The Inquiry is expected to commence early in July 1990.

3. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 9th May 1990 at 7 p.m. in the Boardroom at London City Airport.