



COMHAIRLE CONTAE CHORCAÍ

Minutes of Proceedings at Special Meeting of Cork County Council held in Cork Airport on Tuesday 24th October, 2017.

I LATHAIR

Comhairleoir Ó Dúghaill, Leas Méara Chontae

Comhairleoiri MacCraith, Daltúin, Ní Fhúarthain, D. Ó Donnabháin, Ó hEarchaí, R. Mhic Cárthaigh, Ó Colmáin, C. Ó Murchú, Ní Cochláin, Ó' Donnabháin, Críod, Ó Luasaigh, Ó Conbhuí, De Barra, Ó Cadhla, N. Ó Coileán, Uí Thuama, Ó hEigearthaigh, S. NicCárthaigh, Léanacháin-Foghlú, Ní Bhrian, Ó Floinn, Mhic Dháibhí, Ó Sé, G. Ó Murchú, G. Ó Murchú, Ó Cearúill, J. Ó Suilleabháin, Uí hEigearthaigh, Ó hAodha,

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Doyle Deputy County Mayor presided.

Councillors McGrath, D'Alton, Forde, Ó'Donnabháin, Harris, R. McCarthy, Coleman, K. Murphy, Coughlan, O'Donovan, Creed, Lucey, Conway, Barry, O'Cádhlá, N. Collins, Twomey, Hegarty, S. McCarthy, Linehan Foley, O'Brien, O'Flynn, Dawson, O'Shea, Gearóid Murphy, Gearóid Murphy, Carroll, J. O'Sullivan, Hegarty, Hayes,

Deputy Chief Executive, Senior Executive Officer.

Niall MacCarthy, Managing Director Cork Airport, Kevin Cullinane, Head of Communications, Kathleen Walshe and Darragh Hanratty, Cork Airport

Deputy Mayor Councillor Ian Doyle welcomed Members and thanked Niall MacCarthy, Managing Director Cork Airport for facilitating the special meeting. The Deputy Mayor said that following a motion agreed earlier in the year by Cork County Council, it was agreed to hold a special meeting of full council in Cork Airport.

Mr. Niall MacCarthy, Managing Director Cork Airport welcomed Members and the Deputy Chief Executive and congratulated everyone in Spike Island, Cork County Council and Fáilte Ireland on Spike Island being voted as Europe's leading tourist attraction.

Mr. MacCarthy also thanked Cork County Council for the Part 8 project to upgrade of the Airport Roundabout.

Mr. MacCarthy informed Members that Cork Airport recently won a prestigious aviation award when Cork airport was named Airport Council International (ACI) Best Airport in Europe (under 5 million passengers). Mr. MacCarthy outlined to Members details of the new state-of-the-art Fire Training Facility at Cork Airport was officially opened on the 29th September, 2017 and said the new facility costing €1.8 million will ensure the airport's Fire & Rescue Services crew has access to world-class training scenarios and programmes.

Mr. MacCarthy provided an update on Cork Airport and its' future plans to Members, which covered the following topics;

- Red C Economic Outlook and Tourism Industry Confederation Outlook
- Red C specific Cork Airport feedback
- General traffic performance
- National Traffic Trends
- Marketing plans to grow traffic and visitor numbers on transatlantic
- Executive lounge update
- Brexit and aviation/tourism latest update
- Roundabout upgrade

(Full details of the report are included in the appendix attached to the minutes of the meeting.)

Members thanked Niall MacCarthy for his report and said that the presentation was very informative and encouraging.

During a discussion that followed, Members raised the following comments and questions;

- Does Cork Airport have any concerns about the potential implications resulting from Brexit
- Parking charges are quite high in Cork Airport when compared to Dublin Airport.
- There is a lack of availability of taxis for passengers late at night.
- This is a gap needs to be addressed.
- There has been a lot of negative comments from the media about the airport.
- The airport is now performing to the benefit of the entire county.
- Members said the twinning of Scituate in Boston and Skibbereen was imminent and the twinning would be positive for Cork Airport and the entire county.

Mr. MacCarthy responded to the comments regarding car parking charges and said that he refuted that charges are lower in Dublin Airport. Mr. MacCarthy confirmed that car parking tariffs are set locally in Cork and are €5.00 per day compared to €8.00 or €9.00 per day in Dublin.

Mr. MacCarthy said that taxi drivers operate within a free market and acknowledged that the availability of taxis late at night can at times be problematic. Mr. MacCarthy informed Members that the Airport General Manager on duty at any given will attempt source additional taxis whenever they are needed.

Mr. MacCarthy acknowledged that PR surrounding Cork Airport was very negative for a period of time and that it has taken a lot of hard work to turn the Airport's image around and that it is very positive news that Cork Airport's passenger growth is increasing once again.

Members made the following comments,

- What can Cork County Council do for Cork Airport
- Connections between Cork and Bratislava, Brussels and Nice be looked at.
- Were there any updates concerning WOW Air, Norwegian Airlines and US pre clearance in Cork Airport.

Mr. MacCarthy said that Cork Airport and Cork County Council have an established history of working well together, and that we needed to continue marketing together in order to increase the number of passengers visiting Cork. MacCarthy said that he would like to formulate a policy on working and marketing with Cork County Council.

In relation to Members comments regarding Bratislava, Mr. MacCarthy said that Cork Airport has not been able to secure an airline to operate a Cork to Bratislava flight as airline would need to sell 800

seats a week, operating a minimum of two flights per week, and that if routes are not commercially viable, airlines will not operate them.

Mr. MacCarthy confirmed that the Cork to Brussels flight sold only 6 out of every 10 seats, and that this is attributed to Amsterdam being only 1 hour away from Brussels with a direct rail link. Mr. MacCarthy said that the Cork Nice route should return in due course, operating 2 flights per week. Norwegian Airlines flight out of Cork had performed well during the summer but unfortunately there was a lack of bookings on the route during the winter months.

Mr. MacCarthy said comments about preclearance were irrelevant and passengers travelling from Cork Airport to the US, experience faster post emigration clearance than Dublin Airport's preclearance and passengers travelling from Cork would normally pass through US Customs in Rhode Island, Boston in about 45 minutes.

Mr. MacCarthy explained that the cost of providing US preclearance is extremely high, and changes to US Policy governing preclearance has resulted in airports funding the construction of preclearance facilities which can cost several million.

Members welcomed the launch of the "Visit Cork" tourism strategy and said that tourism is the main industry in West Cork, and asked was there potential to develop new routes from Northern Europe cities to Cork.

Members also raised the following points;

- Cork Airport is a crucial part of the county's infrastructure.
- Facts around preclearance need to be communicated to the public.
- We need to develop a joined up tourism package promoting North, South and West Cork.
- There is no product marketing Cork Harbour and the Crosshaven area.
- Members welcomed the Cork to Dusseldorf route and queried how well the route is operating.
- Cork County Council and the airport should engage to address issues around poor road signage.
- Is there potential for routes to Asia and Australia.
- Will the Open Skies Treaty impact on Cork Airport.
- 80% of Irish air traffic is coming through Dublin Airport which is already at congestion levels.
- This year has seen 300,000 less visitors from the UK.
- We need to tap into the 200,000 visitors from Australia that fly into Amsterdam.
- Is an Aviation Museum still planned at the airport.
- What are the percentages of business and leisure passengers
- How much air freight passes through Cork Airport.
- The French, German and Italian tourist is extremely important and we need to increase growth in these markets.
- Everyone needs to commit to funding the marketing of Cork.
- What are Cork Airport's plans for the old airport terminal and what is the status of the €100 million debt.
- Are there plan to install additional air bridges.

Mr. MacCarthy responded to Members and confirmed that direct flights to Australia and Asia are not on the immediate agenda as Cork Airport's runway is 2.4km and large aircraft flying to these destinations require a 3 km runway. Mr. MacCarthy said there are no issues with connectivity to Asia via Amsterdam and that marketing was key to attracting passenger growth from Asia.

Mr. MacCarthy also confirmed the following;

- The Dusseldorf flight operates twice weekly. Dusseldorf route is very important as Dusseldorf has a catchment area of approximately 18 million people. 85% of passengers availing of the route are German and the airline is selling 7 out of every 10 seats.
- The Open Skies Treaty does pose a threat and this is why a transitional period in Brexit is required. He also confirmed that Cork Airport is working on highlighting how easy it is to travel through Cork to the US and highlighting the number of flight connections through Boston.
- The US market is hugely important and that work is needed to fill the winter flights, this will ensure year long connectivity from Cork to the US. Once we secure this service and increase capacity from 3 to 4 flights in the summer and 2 to 3 flights in the winter, it will open up new routes to the US cities.
- Cork Airport has 40 acres of commercial zones land next to the existing airport business park that will hopefully be brought to the market in 5 to 6 years at a stage when it is economically viable to do so, and that this would be dependent on road access to the site and other necessary infrastructure being in place.
- There are currently no plans to develop an aviation museum at Cork Airport.
- 14% percent of seats sold on flights are business passengers.
- The majority of freight is now transported on ferries as it is the most cost efficient method of transport and freight makes up a small proportion of Cork Airport's business.
- The airport has 2 air bridges. 85% of Aer lingus flights use the air bridges however some regional aircraft cannot use the air bridge due to height restrictions.
- Ryan Air's policy relating to aircraft turnaround times means that they do not use the air bridges.

Mr. MacCarthy confirmed the Cork Airport is now making an operating profit, the airport is solvent and that the €100 million debt is being paid down by the DAA's holding company, DAA plc. Mr. MacCarthy said that the old terminal built in 1961 is defunct and is non compliant in every way and that it would cost approximately €40m to bring it back into service and up to current international standards. He said the old terminal will eventually be demolished to make way for additional parking spaces for aircraft.

The Deputy Chief Executive thanked Mr. MacCarthy and Cork Airport staff for the very positive presentation and confirmed that a letter of acceptance has been sent to the contractor and that works to upgrade the airport roundabout should commence within a month.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated the draft National Planning Framework see a role for Cork as the country's second region and in order for this goal to be achieved Cork will require investment in its infrastructure, and he was hopeful funding will be provided.

The Deputy Chief Executive said Cork Airport is the county's most important piece of infrastructure in terms of tourism and he confirmed that Cork County Council would be happy to engage with Cork Airport in terms of marketing. The Deputy Chief Executive also said that a possible new access route to the airport would possibly feature in due course.

Deputy Mayor Councillor Ian Doyle thanked members for attending the meeting and said that Cork Airport's management team's enthusiasm and courtesy was reflected in every member of staff in the airport.

This concluded the business of the Meeting