

Edinburgh Airport named airport of the Year – and busiest ever September in the bag

Airport of the Year and busiest month ever – but we talk to CEO Gordon Dewar about the effect of continuing APD.

Last week Edinburgh Airport was named Airport of the Year by the National Transport Awards in London.

CEO of Edinburgh Airport Gordon Dewar said : “This is another excellent reward for everyone at the airport and comes just a few months after we were named Scottish Airport of the Year so to be recognised at both a Scottish and UK level is a fantastic achievement.

“We’ve just had our busiest ever summer, we’ve opened our terminal expansion to improve the passenger experience and this year looks like eclipsing 2017 as our busiest ever year so there is a lot to be positive about at the moment.

“And that is all made possible by the Team Edinburgh staff who work incredibly hard throughout the year to make everyday a big day for someone at our airport. From airlines to engineers, baristas to security and maintenance teams, we all work to the same goal of providing passengers with choice and a positive experience, and each play a role in delivering an airport which flies to more destinations than any other Scottish airport and provides connections to cities across the world.

“I thank everyone across the campus for their role in making

us Airport of the Year in Scotland and across the UK.”

This week Edinburgh Airport also announced that they have just had the busiest September ever.

More than 1.3 million people used Edinburgh Airport which is up 5.8% on the same month last year, although not as many as in July when 1.5 million passengers passed through the arrival and departure halls.

Gordon Dewar Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport put the numbers down to the range of destinations and airlines using the airport. But he says that Scotland is not equalling the results in the rest of Europe as a result of Air Passenger Duty. The Scottish Government had previously said that they would reduce or abolish the aviation tax.



Gordon Dewar CEO of Edinburgh Airport taking questions from journalists at the launch of the new Emirates route

When I spoke to him at the launch of the Emirates flight to and from Dubai, I asked if the fact that Emirates had already scaled back on the number of flights had anything to do with the continuing imposition of APD. Mr Dewar said : "Well there are a few things in there. First of all this is a winter launch which is unusual, and we were delighted that Emirates

agreed to do that. It keeps the continuity with our UAE connections. But of course it is tough to launch at short notice in the winter season which is typically the low season. Plus there is a big bit of runway resurfacing work going on in Dubai in the spring next year, so they would have had to go down to five times a week anyway.

“Quite a lot of the network will have to be trimmed to accommodate that so they have made a perfectly sensible decision that over the winter they will operate mostly five a week, though still a daily service at peak times.

“As soon as the runway resurfacing works are out of the way and we are into the summer next year, we will have the full daily service.

“APD clearly does have an effect. You could argue we would have had this route three or four years ago if it wasn't for APD, and you could argue that it would be double daily by now. APD particularly for long haul is incredibly prohibitive. It is £78 for an economy ticket and double that for business class or above.

“And of course we are an island nation that is incredibly dependent on our connections to the world, and bringing people here so it is a profoundly stupid tax.

“Of course the promise has been there for a number of years now since the last manifesto that it would be halved. Yet we don't have a timetable for it yet. I am delighted that the government still says it is their policy but the airlines will have to see the practicalities and know when it is going to happen. Otherwise how can they plan for that and harvest the benefit of that improved taxation position?”