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MESSAGE FROM TOM CROWLEY, CHAIR OF GATCOM

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Due to the fast-moving COVID-19 pandemic situation across the world, we are all living through very challenging, worrying and unprecedented times. In terms of the impact the pandemic has had on aviation and Gatwick's operation, it is substantial and unprecedented. Many airlines have cancelled flights and some have now suspended all operations in response to governments world-wide closing borders or putting in restrictions advising against all but essential travel resulting in a severe and unparalleled impact on Gatwick's operations, its staff, passengers and businesses.

As we made the decision to cancel the next meeting of GATCOM on 23 April, I wanted to give an update on the outcomes from the GATCOM Steering Group's Skype meeting discussions which took place on 26 March as a way of keeping everybody up-to-date with GATCOM's work and what's happening at the airport.

GATWICK'S RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) is having to take unprecedented measures to protect the health and wellbeing of its staff and passengers as well as protecting the business from the economic impact of the pandemic by significantly reducing its operating costs. Tim Norwood, Director of Corporate Affairs, Planning and Sustainability, GAL explained the airport's response as follows:

- **Passengers** - GAL is working closely with Government and Public Health England (PHE) and implementing all the advised guidance and measures including social distancing and passenger separation at key points including check-in, security, and baggage reclaim. The airport has put in place enhanced cleaning routines, extra staff dedicated to cleaning common use surfaces, touchscreens, handrails, etc, installed banks of hand sanitisers inside the terminals, and prominently displayed information on the website and throughout both terminals. Non-essential retail outlets have closed. The North Terminal sensory room has also been closed. Travel information is also being regularly updated. [Click here](#) to see advice to passengers given on GAL's website.
- **Staff** - GAL is working closely with PHE and the Trade Unions to support staff. GAL is also ensuring that relevant guidance and information is made available to staff via the airport's internal Intranet and the staff "Gatwick Community" app.
- **Operations** - There has been a significant decline in passengers and the number of air traffic movements. At the time of the Steering Group's discussion GAL had temporarily closed operation of flights between midnight and 06:00 and had temporarily closed two of the airport's six piers (Pier 3 and 6) due to fewer passengers. GAL was looking at ways to further reduce the airport's 'operational footprint' including reduced energy

usage. Some contractors, consultants and those employees on fixed-term contracts have been stood down.

Following the GATCOM Steering Group's discussion GAL issued a press release advising that from the 1st April it had consolidated operations into the South Terminal for a month and reduced the use of the runway to operations between 1400 and 2200 for scheduled flights but remained available for emergency landings and diversions only outside these hours – [click here](#) to see press release.

- **Capital Investment Programme projects** - many CIP projects have been temporarily paused as a result of the pandemic given the need to maintain social distancing and to free up staff resource for managing the on-going incident. The Gatwick Station Redevelopment Project is a separate Network Rail / DfT led project and GAL confirmed its continuing commitment and support to this project.

The ripple effect from the substantial reduction in Gatwick's operations has brought into sharp focus the impact this has had on local businesses involved not only in the supply chain of goods and services to Gatwick but other businesses that rely on the airport's operation and global connectivity. How the local and regional economy around Gatwick will recover from the crisis will be a key consideration for GATCOM whilst at the same time looking at opportunities to continue to improve and address the environmental impact of the airport's operation.

On behalf of GATCOM, myself and Samantha Williams, Chair of GATCOM's Passenger Advisory Group, offered thanks and appreciation to GAL's staff for the regular updates and advice provided during this challenging time. All members expressed concern and sympathy for GAL, airlines and business partners working through the current difficulties and emphasised the need to work together towards a recovery plan.

GATWICK AIRPORT NORTHERN RUNWAY PROPOSAL

In light of the situation, GAL has decided that holding a public consultation on the northern runway proposals during the Spring of this year would be inappropriate. GAL has therefore put a short pause on the project and the technical work supporting the consultation.

GAL has emailed all local authorities to advise about the pause in the process and confirmed that it remained fully committed to the project. Where necessary, GAL will remain in contact with key stakeholders throughout the pause period.

In terms of progress GAL had made since the last GATCOM meeting and before the pause, technical work for the preparation of the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report had progressed and the formal consultation with local authorities on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) had been undertaken with the comments received now being analysed. Given GAL is in the early stages of the DCO process, the pause will not affect the validity of the overall process. GAL confirmed that the pre-application consultation will go ahead at an appropriate time in the future.

During our discussion GAL was asked whether it had responded to Crawley Borough Council's Regulation 19 Consultation on the Crawley 2035 Submission Draft Local Plan which included proposed new policies for the land currently safeguarded for a new runway at Gatwick. GAL has responded to the consultation and advised that it had opposed the proposed change in the policy in respect of the safeguarding of land for a new runway.

The Court of Appeal's Judgment on Heathrow's third runway was also discussed. The Judgment had specific relevance to the Government's Airports National Policy Statement relating to the Heathrow third runway proposal but it was recognised that Heathrow Airport may appeal the ruling. The Judgment means that the Airports National Policy Statement will need to be reviewed and amended which was a matter for the Government to address. In terms of GAL's Northern Runway proposal GAL confirmed that climate change impacts were being taken into account and that all large scale infrastructure projects would need to explain how they took climate change into account.

AIRSPACE UPDATES

Route 4

2012 route change - the CAA's period for public comment on the post implementation review (PIR) draft Route 4 decision closed on 3 February 2020. The CAA is considering feedback before formally publishing its decision. Given the COVID-19 crisis, the CAA has paused airspace change activity.

2018 airspace change proposal – GAL is at Stage 2 "Develop and Assess" of the process. The CAA has not yet agreed that GAL may continue to the next stage of the process as more information is required. GAL will consider how to address the questions raised by the CAA and will provide an update in due course. Further explanation for this decision is contained in the 'Gateway Outcome' document which can be accessed from the CAA's Airspace Change Portal - [Click here](#).

FA SI-South – as with other airspace change projects, this project is temporarily paused during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Workshops took place in October/November with county and district/borough councils to develop options. GAL is collaborating with other airports including Heathrow, Stansted, Southampton, Luton and Biggin Hill airports.

In the meantime, the CAA is undertaking public engagement on the proposed criteria that the CAA will use to determine whether to accept the Airspace Change Masterplan which the government established Airspace Coordination Operations Group (ACOG) is required to oversee and develop. The CAA has recently extended the deadline by which stakeholders can comment on the proposed criteria to 27 May 2020. See public engagement exercise at <https://consultations.caa.co.uk/policy-development/airspace-change-masterplan-criteria>

The Secretariat has circulated this information to members and whilst GATCOM will not respond to the consultation, member organisations and other interested individuals are encouraged to respond direct to the CAA.

DFT POLICY UPDATE

Although Tim May, the DfT's representative, was not able to join the Skype Meeting, he provided the following update:

"DfT is currently focusing its resources on the urgent tasks associated with the COVID response and its impact on the transport sector. All non-urgent policy work has been suspended at this time, including planned consultations. We will update on these later in the year".

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Steering Group is scheduled to take place on Thursday 25 June 2020 at 10.00am. This will be kept under review and may be held by teleconference.

In the meantime, the GATCOM Secretariat will keep members updated with developments and other Gatwick news. Given the next GATCOM meeting has been cancelled, this summary of the Steering Group's discussion is available on GATCOM's website.

Keep safe and stay well.

Tom Crowley
Chair
GATCOM