

## **UNCONFIRMED MINUTES – TO BE CONFIRMED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF GATCOM ON 22 APRIL 2021**

### **Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) held on 21 January 2021 by videoconference.**

Meeting held with pre-booked public attendance of 9 persons to observe proceedings.

<b>Present:</b>	Tom Crowley (Chairman)
Jeff Alexander	Gatwick Diamond Business
Peter Barclay	Environmental and Amenity Groups
Helyn Clack (Vice Chairman)	Surrey County Council
Jonathan Drew	Chair, Gatwick Noise Management Executive Board
Carolyn Evans	Charlwood Parish Council
Malcolm Fillmore	Rusper Parish Council
Mike George	Horley Town Council
Stephen Hillier	Mid Sussex District Council
Angie Hills	ABTA
Alex Horwood	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Alan Jones	Burstow Parish Council
Stephen Jones	London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Liz Kitchen	Horsham District Council
Bob Lanzer	West Sussex County Council
Chris Larkman	Which? representative
Liz Lockwood	Tandridge District Council
Hugh McConnellogue	Airline Operators Committee (AOC)
Michael Payne	Kent County Council
Caroline Salmon	Mole Valley District Council
Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
Samantha Williams	Chair, Passenger Advisory Group

<b>In attendance:</b>	
Stewart Wingate	Chief Executive Officer, GAL
Tim Norwood	Director of Corporate Affairs, Planning and Sustainability, GAL
Andy Sinclair	Head of Airspace Strategy and Engagement, GAL
Alison Addy	Head of External Engagement & Policy, GAL
Arlette Anderson	EHS Director, GAL
Sally Lappage	Crawley Borough Council
Anthony Masson	Crawley Borough Council
Brian Cox	Independent Technical Adviser
Tim May	Department for Transport
Gary Marshall	Department for Transport
Robin Clarke	NATS
Vicki Hughes	ANS
Paula Street	GATCOM Secretariat
Lisa Sampson	GATCOM Secretariat

#### **Apologies for absence were received from:**

Jonathan Sharrock (Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership), Gurinder S. Jhans (Crawley Borough Council), Katie Nurcombe (Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership).

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### **Minutes of the last meeting**

101. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 be approved and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Influencing Build Back Better at Gatwick**

102. The Chairman highlighted that GATCOM's letter to the Minister for Aviation was sent on 2 December and a response is awaited.

103. Jonathan Sharrock, Chief Executive – Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting at short notice, however a [link](#) to the LEP's video on its Building Back Stronger, Smarter, Greener Strategy will be shared with GATCOM. He will be invited attend a future meeting to outline the Strategy.

### **Reports from Sub-Group and Other Meetings**

104. GATCOM received reports summarising the key messages and recommendations arising from the meetings of the GATCOM Steering Group, Passenger Advisory Group, GAL's Noise and Track Keeping Advisory Group, and the Gatwick Noise Management Executive Board (NEX) was considered (copies attached to the signed minutes).

#### GATCOM Steering Group – Chairman's Report

105. The Chairman of GATCOM introduced his report and highlighted key points, including:

- On behalf of GATCOM the Steering Group agreed and submitted GATCOM's response to the Independent Commission for Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) consultation on its emerging view on the future of aviation noise management.
- GATCOM's initial views were submitted to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on its approach to updating the economic regulation of Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL).
- The Steering Group's recommendation on the proposed offer of membership for the two vacant seats for business/economic interests and for airlines interests following the earlier review of its membership.

106. Resolved – That the Sussex Chamber for Commerce and BAR UK be formally offered membership of GATCOM with immediate effect.

#### Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) – Chair's Report

107. The PAG Chair introduced her report and highlighted key points, including:

- On-going engagement with GAL during the pandemic to monitor and enhance the passenger experience of travelling through the airport.
- The outcome of the CAA's Accessibility Annual Monitoring Report which rated Gatwick as "good" and demonstrated GAL's continued commitment to improving the experience for passengers requiring special assistance. Further measures are planned to aim to achieve a "very good" rating for 2021.

108. GATCOM welcomed the Covid screening centre operated by ExpressTest which opened on 30 November in the South Terminal's Long Stay Car Park. Members

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reported positive feedback on the use of the facility and commended GAL's efforts in supporting passengers and the community during a challenging time.

109. Resolved – That:

- 1) GATCOM endorses and commends GAL's continued effort to improve the special assistance services; and
- 2) That GATCOM supports PAG's role as critical friend to the airport and as the passenger advocate, and recognises its contribution to ensuring a positive passenger experience at Gatwick during the ongoing Covid pandemic.

### Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group

110. GATCOM's Lead Member for Noise introduced his report and highlighted key points, including:

- Changes to the distribution of traffic over recent months due to the lower number of aircraft movements and less conflicting traffic in the surrounding airspace. For many communities the quieter airspace and changes in flight profile due to the Covid pandemic had brought a positive impact on usual noise levels experienced, however there were some complaints from areas where the distribution of traffic was different to the historic distribution albeit, particularly for departures, the aircraft were at higher altitudes. NATMAG will keep this under review.
- Concern regarding the number of go-arounds despite the reduction in air traffic movements. This will be referred to Gatwick's Flight Operations Performance and Safety Committee (FLOPSC) for monitoring and improvement.
- Some continuing issues with joining point performance which will be considered by the Airspace Office and monitored by FLOPSC.
- GAL's key monitoring indicators showed a slight decline in Continuous Descent Operations (CDO) achievement performance (for daytime and core night-time) compared to the previous 12 months performance.

### Noise Management Board (NMB) – Chair of NMB Executive Group (NEX)

111. The Chair of NEX introduced his report and highlighted key points, including:

- The NMB Logical Framework (work plan) is being developed with input from the NMB Community Forum (NCF), NMB Delivery Group and NEX. Feedback from the NMB and GATCOM members regarding the format, priorities identified, and questions around target timing will be considered at an NMB Workshop on 10 February. The workshop will seek to agree a simpler and user-friendly format which could be easily understood by the layperson.
- Once the Logical Framework is agreed the NMB's focus is on making real progress on noise reduction as Gatwick builds back business in 2021.

112. The Chairman welcomed the NEX Chair's membership of and input to GATCOM, along with the NCF Chair, as a very positive development. GATCOM will work closely with the NMB as it prepares and implements its work programme and will help support its work in other ways such as when it becomes necessary to lobby Government and other stakeholders on important policy and other issues.

## **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

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113. The Chief Executive Officer's commentary on activity and performance at the airport over the previous quarter was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr Wingate highlighted key updates and information, including:

- The impact of the Covid pandemic continues to significantly affect Gatwick's traffic and passenger numbers with many operations temporarily suspended or reduced to skeleton services during the national lockdown. South Terminal remains closed to flights with all airlines operating out of North Terminal; with such unprecedented low volumes of passengers only a limited number of facilities are available throughout the North Terminal. GAL's focus remains on maintaining health and safety with good sanitation and service levels.
- Norwegian has recently announced it will not resume its long-haul operation from Gatwick, resulting in a further 1,100 job losses at the airport, although its short haul will continue.
- GAL's business re-structure was completed in November with the airport company's workforce reduced by almost 50% to 1800 people in order to protect the business. The on-going pandemic is creating much anxiety for all at the airport, however the team are concentrating on making the business sustainable and have secured a combined borrowing amount of £550million to maintain liquidity. GAL's capital investment programme has been significantly reduced as a result of the pandemic with all but essential projects remaining paused.
- GAL anticipate that increased Covid testing and vaccination roll out will offer confidence and resilience to the travel industry, and support the opening of the Covid screening centre in the South Terminal's Long Stay Car Park. GAL has also offered, without charge its South Terminal facilities as a mass vaccination centre for the locality.
- Work has resumed on preparing GAL's application for the Development Consent Order (DCO) to bring into routine use its northern (standby) runway for some aircraft departures. GAL has outlined to local authorities its indicative timetable leading to the launch of the formal consultation in late summer 2021; responses will then be considered and the DCO application finalised for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in 2022.
- The Supreme Court judgement in December on the Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) confirmed that NPS has legal status again and ruled that decisions taken on planning applications for airport growth must be considered against the prevailing climate change policy and targets in force at the time of the application, which is a significant point of clarification for UK airports.

114. GATCOM thanked GAL for the regular updates on the rapidly changing circumstances at Gatwick over the past few months. GAL's work in continuing to support the response to the pandemic, supporting employment initiatives in the region, and its best endeavours to keep the airport operational and sustainable in extremely challenging times was commended.

115. GATCOM further supported GAL's work in opening the Covid screening centre located in the South Terminal Long Stay Car Park and its offer of the South Terminal facilities for a Covid vaccination centre.

116. A Member commented that it would be understandable given the current financial situation if GAL cannot financially support local authorities to input into the DCO process for the northern runway project and sought reassurance that Kent County Council will still take part in the engagement. GAL confirmed they had recently met local authorities to discuss an approach to funding and will be preparing a draft Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) for the local planning authority and local highway authority to help provide funding for project engagement during 2021. In

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in addition GAL confirmed that the local authorities, including Kent CC, will continue to be invited to topic working group meetings and that the aim was to enable PPA funds to be allocated at the discretion of the local planning and highway authority to support that process.

117. There was discussion on GAL's Forecourt Drop Off Charging proposals. GATCOM echoed PAG's concerns that there had been insufficient engagement or consultation with passengers ahead of the decision, and that the proposal may not meet the needs of families travelling with young children. Further concerns were expressed regarding local resident use of drop-off for the railway station, particularly in relation to neighbouring areas to the east and west of Gatwick for whom sustainable transport links are very poor, and the increased cost for local taxi services and courtesy transfer services offered by local guest houses. It was acknowledged that drop-off charges are now common practice at UK airports but GATCOM continues to have concerns about its introduction. It was commented whether GAL should refer to the charge as "Forecourt Charge", and members asked that the fee levied should be kept under regular review to ease the burden on users in this difficult financial time.

118. GAL confirmed that the detailed design of the Forecourt Charging proposal is almost complete and work is underway on the signage required to inform drivers of the new charges. Engagement has been undertaken with a wide range of stakeholder and interested parties to build their comments and concerns into the final scheme. GAL confirmed that Blue Badge holders will be exempt from charges, a local Commuter Scheme is being developed for people living close to the airport in areas where there is very limited public transport access and 2 hours free parking in the long stay car parks would be available. The scheme is due to launch in March 2021.

### **Department for Transport (DfT) Consultation: Night flight restrictions at Gatwick airport between 2022 and 2024 and future night flight policy**

119. The DfT [presented an overview of the consultation](#) on the review of the night flights regimes at the three noise designated London airports (copy of presentation attached to the signed minutes). It was announced at the meeting that the DfT has extended the deadline for part of the consultation – questions 13 onwards relating to the night flights policy beyond 2024 will now close on 31 May 2021. The deadline for responses to consultation questions 6-12 relating to the proposed roll forward by two years of the current regime and the proposed ban on QC4 rated aircraft will still close on 3 March 2021.

120. GATCOM sought clarification as to whether the proposed ban of QC4 rated aircraft would also apply to flights granted dispensation to fly into the night period. The DfT confirmed that the granting of dispensations applied to all aircraft types irrespective of the noise classification.

121. The Chairman also sought clarification on whether the DCO proposals for the Northern Runway project will be factored into the DfT's consideration as part of the consultation on the future night flights policy beyond 2024. The DfT confirmed it was alive to this issue and advised that if other night restrictions formed part of the planning process then the DfT would need to ensure the two regimes and the future night flights policy were aligned and did not counteract each other.

122. In discussing the consultation proposals members raised the following points:

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- The need to have a [list of the QC categories](#) by aircraft type to help understand the noise classification of aircraft fleets operating at Gatwick [*subsequently provided to members*].
- As it would take several years for traffic levels to return at Gatwick due to the Covid pandemic it was questioned whether in the short-term there should be a reduced movements limits in order to make the regime meaningful. The DfT advised that with the great uncertainty around trying to predict the level of activity as the industry recovers from the pandemic, and given the need for the Government to make a decision this year to enable airlines to effectively plan for October 2022 when the current regime expires, that there was not time to undertake the further detailed analysis which would be required.
- If night flights were banned what impact would be seen to ticket prices.
- Whether the noise disturbance and impact on health verses the economic benefit is reasonable. It was suggested that further information and evidence be provided on the effect of night flights and noise on health. There was a need to have information/analysis of where people are flying, why they are flying on night flights, and the need.
- Queried why the number of Gatwick's movements in the summer is excessive. The DfT confirmed that the same movements limits have been in place for a number of years, and that this reflects Gatwick's business model and accommodates the peak summer period.

123. GATCOM considered the Secretariat's report and amended process for considering the Committee's response to the consultation (copies attached the signed minutes). The Committee agreed that a Special Meeting of GATCOM should be held on 25 February to consider and agree GATCOM's response to consultation questions 6-12. This should be followed by a Workshop for all GATCOM members and support officers only to explore member organisations' initial views on the night flights policy post 2024, the dispensations criteria review, and to identify common themes to help form the basis of a suggested GATCOM response to consultation Questions 13 onwards. GAL confirmed that as part of its presentation to the Special Meeting on the usage of the current scheme it will also cover the benefits of the current scheme and the points raised by members.

124. The Chairman recognised the differing and conflicting views about the need and benefits of night flights at Gatwick and highlighted that GATCOM's response to the consultation would need to strike a fair balance between protecting local communities from excessive aircraft noise and the associated health impacts and the needs of the industry and businesses where they are of benefit to the regional and national economy. Furthermore, given the wide and disparate views across GATCOM's membership the Committee was not in a position to support or oppose night flights at Gatwick but will instead need to find common ground to seek to minimise the impacts of night flights. The points raised by members will be explored in more detail at the GATCOM members' Workshop.

125. Resolved – That the recommended process for agreeing GATCOM's response set out in amended paragraph 2.3 of the Secretariat's report be agreed.

### **Crawley Borough Council Local Plan Update**

126. Sallie Lappage and Anthony Masson, Crawley Borough Council (CBC), provided an update on the council's current Local Plan consultation and the key draft policies

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relating to Gatwick airport (copy of presentation attached to the signed minutes). Key points were highlighted, including:

- The Local Plan is currently out for a 6 weeks consultation until 5pm on 17 February 2021. The intention is to review the Plan every five years up until 2037.
- The safeguarding of land for Gatwick impacts upon the ability to provide additional employment space. Whilst safeguarding for airport operational facilities has been reinstated in the Local Plan proposals an employment land opportunity has been identified to the east of the airport.
- The proposed Plan aims to include sustainable transport and takes account of Gatwick's surface access policy. The existing airport approach will be retained and clarified.
- Amended technical standards for aviation development and noise will be included based on the noise contours for the southern runway and those in the Gatwick Master Plan. CBC will continue to consult GAL on any aspect of the Local Plan that will affect the DD5 aerodrome safeguarding policy relating to development building effects on aviation safety.

127. GAL confirmed that many of the comments it had raised in the first consultation on the draft Local Plan had been addressed. GAL particularly supports draft local plan policies DD5 and EC7. In respect of the revised policy GAT2 and new policy EC4, GAL was looking at this in detail to understand the implications of the change to the boundary of the safeguarded land and the impact the Gatwick Green Strategic Employment allocation would have on the safeguarded land for a possible future additional runway.

128. Members queried if the 6-weeks consultation period was thought to be adequate. CBC confirmed this is the minimum period for consultation required by the regulations.

129. The Chairman encouraged members and member organisations to engage with the consultation and respond directly to Crawley Borough Council should they have views they wish to contribute to the review of the Local Plan.

### **Environmental Noise Directive (END) Noise Action Plan (NAP) – Revised Monitoring Report Process and Work Plan Priorities 2021**

130. GATCOM received GAL's paper outlining the revised process for monitoring progress on delivering the END Noise Action Plan Actions (copy attached to the signed minutes). GATCOM also considered a report by the Secretariat seeking GATCOM's endorsement on GAL's suggested list of actions to be progressed in 2021 (copy also attached to the signed minutes). Key information was highlighted, including:

- That Gatwick has been significantly impacted by Covid with work and projects paused so this should be borne in mind when reviewing the progress made over the past year.
- A thorough assessment of GAL's reported status set out in its mid-year 2020 END NAP progress report has been undertaken by GATCOM's NATMAG members alongside the detailed analysis undertaken by the environmental and amenity groups. This found that there were some actions progress where members agreed with the Environmental and Amenity Groups' view, there were some where they agreed with GAL's reported status and a couple where they had a different view altogether.
- GATCOM Steering Group agreed with the NATMAG members' view that the wording of some NAP actions was ambiguous making it difficult to decide on

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progress achieved and whether an action was green/amber as there was no actual target to demonstrate that green had been achieved. GAL is in discussion with the DfT and Defra on ways to remedy the ambiguity.

131. GAL commented that the assessment of progress has been challenging but also useful and the revised monitoring process with a “living document” approach will provide greater transparency on the progress of actions. GAL will continue to work hard to deliver the NAP actions but the significant challenges the airport currently faces in light of the pandemic was highlighted which may affect some progress.

132. The environmental and amenity groups’ representative had put forward in advance of the meeting additional recommendations suggesting that GATCOM ask GAL to ensure all actions are on track by August 2021 and if this is not possible then GATCOM should take additional steps including referring the matter to Defra to take appropriate action. The Committee did not however agree with the suggestion and it was commented that for GATCOM to pursue such an approach and to challenge unreasonably the progress made by the airport given the current crisis would not be appropriate.

133. Resolved – That GATCOM:

- 1) Endorses GAL’s proposed revised monitoring and reporting process for the END NAP;
- 2) Endorses the list of END NAP actions for GAL to deliver in 2021 and the suggested timings of NATMAG’s review of progress of those actions;
- 3) That the inclusion of a mid-term review of overall progress made by GAL in delivering the actions of the NAP be reported to NATMAG in September 2021;
- 4) A “year four” review of actions still requiring attention in the last year of the period covered by the NAP be undertaken; and
- 5) A process flow chart be produced showing the monitoring timeline to append to GAL new process document

### **Dates of next meetings**

134. Members noted the next meetings of GATCOM and its sub-groups are due to take place as follows:

- GATCOM Steering Group – Thursday 1 April 2021 at 10.00am
- Passenger Advisory Group – Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 1.30pm
- GATCOM additional Special Meeting – Thursday 25 February at 2.00pm
- GATCOM - Thursday 22 April 2021 at 2.00pm

Due to the ongoing pandemic, all meetings will be kept under review.

135. GATCOM noted the next meeting of GAL’s Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) on Thursday 4 February 2021 at 10.00am, and the next meeting of the Noise Management Board Executive Board (NEX) on Wednesday 10 March 2021.

Chairman

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The meeting concluded at 4.36pm.