

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

### **Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) held on 25 February 2021 held by videoconference.**

Meeting held with pre-booked public attendance of 10 persons to observe proceedings.

<b>Present:</b>	Tom Crowley (Chairman)
Jeff Alexander	Gatwick Diamond Business
Matthew Balfour - Substitute	Kent County Council
Peter Barclay	Environmental and Amenity Groups
Helyn Clack (Vice-Chair)	Surrey County Council
Rob Clare - substitute	Sussex Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Drew	Gatwick Noise Management Executive Board
Carolyn Evans	Charlwood Parish Council
Malcolm Fillmore	Rusper Parish Council
Mike George	Horley Town Council
Angie Hills	ABTA
Alan Jones	Burstow Parish Council
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)
Caroline Salmon	Mole Valley District Council
Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
Colin Stewart	BAR UK
Samantha Williams	Chair, Passenger Advisory Group

<b>In attendance:</b>	
Andy Sinclair	Head of Airspace Strategy & Engagement, GAL
Daniel Kominak	Airspace & Noise Programme Lead, GAL
Lee Howes	Airspace & Environmental Performance Manager, GAL
Goran Janovic	Regulatory Lead, GAL
Laura Boccadamo	Noise Management Initiatives Engagement Manager, GAL
Brian Cox	Independent Technical Adviser
Ian Greene	Department for Transport
Gary Marshall	Department for Transport
Paula Street	GATCOM Secretariat
Lisa Sampson	GATCOM Secretariat

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

Anna Christie (Sussex Chamber of Commerce), Stephen Hillier (Mid Sussex District Council), Alex Horwood (Reigate & Banstead Borough Council), Gurinder Jhans (Crawley Borough Council), Katie Nurcombe (Coast to Capital Local Economic) and Michael Payne (Kent County Council).

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

### **Department for Transport (DfT) Consultation: Night flights restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports**

136. The Chairman explained that the Special Meeting had been arranged for GATCOM to consider and agree the Committee's response to the first part of the DfT's consultation on the night flight restrictions for Gatwick, specifically consultation questions 6-12 relating to the proposal to roll forward by two years the current night flights regime to 2024 and the proposal to ban the operation of QC4 aircraft (the noisiest aircraft types) flying at night. He acknowledged that the question of night flights at Gatwick is an important and highly sensitive matter which attracts a diverse, as well as conflicting, mix of views on which GATCOM will need to seek an agreed approach. The Committee was not in a position to either support or oppose night flights at Gatwick and that there was a need to have mutual respect for different views. He also pointed out that in developing a GATCOM position a level compromise will need to be agreed and he encouraged all member organisations to submit their own response to the consultation direct with the DfT.

#### **Usage of existing regime at Gatwick**

137. Andy Sinclair, Head of Airspace Strategy & Engagement, GAL presented an overview of the usage of the existing movements limits and noise quota over the period covered by the existing regime, dispensations granted, the routes served by night flights and the importance of night flights at Gatwick (copy of [presentation slides](#) attached to the signed minutes). Mr Sinclair explained the definitions of the night period (23:00 – 0700) and the night quota period (23:30 – 06:00); the usage of the limits and quotas for the Summer season and the Winter Season; the administration and monitoring of the current regime; the process for and the number of dispensations granted and how the percentage of dispensations granted varied between the seasons; and the benefits and impacts of night flights, including the reductions achieved in the area contained with the night noise contours.

138. No points for clarification were raised by members following the presentation.

#### **GATCOM response to Questions 6 to 12 of the consultation**

139. The Secretariat's paper setting out a suggested draft GATCOM response to consultation questions 6 to 12 relating to the government's proposal to roll forward the existing regime by two years to 2024 and the proposal to ban the operation of QC rated aircraft in the night period was considered (copy attached to the signed minutes).

140. Mrs Street advised that detailed comments on the Secretariat's suggested response had been received from the Environmental and Amenity Groups' representative. These had been circulated to all members for consideration in advance of the meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes).

141. Mr Greene, DfT, explained that the Government's proposed rollover allows time between now and 2024 to undertake and consult on a comprehensive review of the existing night flights policy. To enable a new regime to take effect from October 2024 would require the Government to announce new restrictions in July 2023 to enable the industry to plan for a changed regime. Between now and July 2023 the DfT is gathering evidence, will undertake full analysis and develop an understanding of the long term effect of the pandemic on the aviation industry and will then need to undertake a further 3 months consultation on detailed proposals for changes to the

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

regime. It was not possible to undertake all this work and announce a new regime by October 2022 when the current regime would expire.

142. Members noted the current situation and the DfT's programme of work. However, whilst a few members indicated their support for the proposed roll forward of the existing regime and the suggested response, the majority of members expressed disappointment that the DfT had proposed another roll forward of the regime and were deeply concerned that there had been no fundamental review of the night flights regime since 2006. There was much concern that a roll forward would not encourage the industry to take the opportunity to build back better from the pandemic and it was feared that as the airport recovers over the next few years the status quo will return. A member pointed out that in Summer 2020 the small recovery saw the night flights increased to 16% of total flights operated at Gatwick which in normal times night flights comprised around 6% of total flights. It was difficult for communities to accept the Government's justification for the proposed roll forward by a further 2 years. The majority of members were of the view that the Government should instead consider putting in place interim restrictions over the next 2 years to better reflect the current operation of the airport as it recovers from the pandemic.

143. There were also some members who sought a ban on night flights at Gatwick and nationally.

144. During the discussion members also raised the following points:

- The Movements Limits and Noise Quotas need to be lowered to the same level as those at the other designated airports.
- GATCOM should seek interim restrictions over the next 2 years to better reflect the current operation of the airport as it recovers from the pandemic.
- The need to consider introducing at Gatwick a quiet period at night such as between the hours 0130-0530.
- There was scope now to lower the existing Noise Quotas.
- There was a need to address the underuse of the Winter season movements limits and noise quotas now.
- Airlines needed to review their business model and the number of rotations they planned to help reduce the need for the number of flights in the night quota period as these had the greatest impact on sleep disturbance and health.
- The need for more emphasis on the health impact of night flights to be included in the GATCOM response.
- Summer months night flights cause most disturbance when residents wish to have windows open at night.
- The need to commence now an assessment of the benefits and costs of night flights so the analysis can inform the Government's Stage 2 consultation on a new regime post 2024.
- The need to clarify the response to question 8 relating to the need to properly assess the impact of the loudest individual noise events at night.
- Passengers should pay more for night flights.
- The need for greater recognition in the GATCOM response that the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was critical for airport, tourism, hospitality and associated trades as well as creating innovation and attracting new industries. It was vital not to down play the importance of economic recovery.
- Do not advocate using activity in 2020 as part of any averaging of usage of the regime at Gatwick.

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

145. In concluding the discussion the Chairman advised that the key points raised by members as set out above would be reviewed against the suggested draft response to ensure the points are captured and revised where new points have been raised or different emphasis is needed. Given the deadline for responses to this part of the consultation, the final draft response would be agreed in liaison with the Chairman, Vice-Chair and GATCOM's Lead member for Noise prior to submission. There were no dissenting comments from members on this approach other than the Environmental and Amenity Groups' representative requesting to be involved in agreeing the final response. This request was not agreed by the Chairman as all member organisations would need to be offered the same opportunity and there was not time available to further consult all members before the deadline of 3 March.

146. Resolved – That

(1) GATCOM adopts a position that it neither supports nor opposes the principle of night flights at Gatwick; and

(2) subject to the inclusion of the points raised at the meeting, the Secretariat agrees the final response with the Chairman, Vice-Chair and GATCOM's Lead Member for Noise for submission to the DfT by the consultation deadline of 3 March 2021.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 3.15 p.m.