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## **GATCOM 15 JULY 2021**

### **KEY MESSAGES AND OUTCOMES FROM MEETING**

The agenda and papers considered at the meeting are available on GATCOM's website at <http://www.gatcom.org.uk/agendas-and-minutes/>

#### **GATCOM MEMBERSHIP**

Changes to [GATCOM's membership](#) were noted.

#### **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

[Helyn Clack, Surrey County Council](#), was appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

#### **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

##### **Gatwick Growth:**

- Statement of Facts - the Environmental and Amenity Groups wished to record that they did not agree with the facts set out in the Secretariat's report to the last GATCOM meeting.
- Secretary of State for Transport, Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP, [response](#) has been received which has given a comprehensive update on the Government's work in reviewing the Aviation Policy Framework. The Chairman has written a [follow-up letter](#) to seek clarification as to whether those policies yet to be addressed by the Government include specifically the ways in which the approach outlined in the Aviation Green Paper "to ensure that necessary conditions are met in respect to infrastructure, community investment and environmental measures" and whether this will address the issue of non-development related growth that falls outside the planning system. The Minister for Aviation's [response](#) has since been received and has been circulated to GATCOM members.

##### **Night Flights Consultation:**

- The DfT has extended the consultation on the review of night flights until 3 September 2021. A Special Meeting of GATCOM has been arranged to take place on 24 August 2021 at 2:00 p.m. to consider the Committee's response to the consultation. In the meantime, two reports are awaited:
  - York Aviation report on "Economic Impact of Night Flying in the UK"
  - CAA's Survey of Noise Attitudes 2014 (SoNA): Aircraft Noise and Sleep Report.
- These will be circulated to GATCOM members as soon as they are available.

#### **REPORTS AND KEY MESSAGES FROM SUB-GROUP & OTHER MEETINGS**

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

- The Steering Group's deliberations as set out in the report were noted.
- The [2020 annual monitoring results](#) from the air pollution monitoring program undertaken on, and in the vicinity of, Gatwick Airport were noted and the views of the Steering Group endorsed.

- The [results](#) of the noise monitoring at Gatwick for the summer period 16 June to 15 September 2020 were noted and the views of the Steering Group endorsed.

### **Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) – Chair’s Report**

- The PAG’s activities over the past quarter were noted.
- GATCOM supported PAG’s role as critical friend to the airport and as the passenger advocate, and recognised its contribution to ensuring a positive passenger experience at Gatwick during the on-going COVID pandemic.

### **Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group**

NATMAG’s activities over the quarter and the key messages to GATCOM were noted.

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

- The NMB Executive Board’s report of NMB activities was noted.
- Given the on-going uncertainty for the aviation sector, there continued to be resource constraints on the industry, government and agency partners to work on the suite of initiatives in the NMB work plan.
- There is an important need to continue to work together on the once in a generation opportunity presented by the FASI-South project to review Gatwick’s flightpath network and how that will affect communities from a noise and overflight perspective and where potential improvements could be achieved.

### **RECOVERY FROM THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

In helping to build an understanding of the impact of the reduced airport operation as a result of the pandemic on Gatwick and the local/regional economy, GATCOM received updates and presentations from:

- **Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL): [Resumption of International Travel](#)** – noting that the Balearics had recently moved from the green watch list back to the amber list. Gatwick is currently averaging 100 flights a day and around 10,000 passengers. Following the end of national restrictions on 19 July, GAL expects flights to increase to around 200 flights a day in August with a commensurate increase in passenger numbers. However, this is still only around 25% of normal levels for a typical August. The Government’s furlough scheme ends on 30 September and going into winter with reduced operations and the many significant fixed costs (such as business rates of around £30m, policing costs, CAA costs etc), GAL’s dialogue with Government continues. The significant downturn and impact continues to pose challenging times for the airport. There is a need to rebuild passenger confidence and the testing (PCR) requirements both in the UK and abroad remain a barrier to international travel.
- **Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): Impact on Airport Towns and the work of Catalyst South** - The key points to note are:
  - Catalyst South is a group of six LEPs (Coast to Capital, Enterprise M3, Hertfordshire, South East, Solent and Thames Valley Berkshire) working together to provide leadership on issues of regional economic importance.
  - An [Airport Towns event](#) was hosted by Catalyst South that morning and this topic was selected because it is of such importance not only locally but regionally and nationally.
  - Six airports were included in the Airport Towns event – Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, Southampton and Southend, with key towns near to those airports selected to measure the impact of the pandemic on local places and communities.
  - Evidence clearly shows that airport towns have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, from being among the most productive and highly employed places in the UK to being among the places with the highest claimant count, especially in Crawley.

- The event heard from a number of panel speakers, not only about the impact to airports and airlines but to the whole aviation supply chain – including ground crew, car parking companies, retail and catering, IT software companies as well as the education sector.
  - There are positive signs of demand for air travel and wider sector activity, but recovery is hindered by the highly changeable nature of the travel restrictions and the green, amber and red travel lists.
  - A key concern is what happens after the furlough scheme ends on 30 September – it was felt that support is needed for people moving from furlough back into work, whether in the aviation sector or other sectors more widely.
  - Businesses have seen a large decline in turnover, many carrying high level of borrowing and there is a need for continuing Government support for those businesses.
  - The event discussion highlighted suggestions for next steps, such as the continuation of the furlough scheme in aviation towns/industries given recovery is likely to be slower; support for business borrowing; more planning and consistency in changes to travel lists so that the aviation sector and their supply chains can plan and respond to recovery.
  - Opportunity to diversify local economies around airports needs to be embraced to create jobs and address other highly important challenges and drivers for change such as decarbonisation.
  - A report from the Airport Towns event will be produced and will be shared with GATCOM members when available.
  - The event demonstrated the role and strength of LEPs working together as Catalyst South to build a strong case for the South East to Government in the context of the Levelling Up agenda - both on aviation and other important issues facing the region.
- **GAL: [Economic Value Report](#)** – GAL published the [Oxera](#) and [Lichfields](#) reports in May 2021. The outcomes of the reports enable GAL to work collaboratively with stakeholders to identify specific actions and prioritise activity in the region to maximise the economic benefits. In 2020, even in the period of suppressed aviation activity during the pandemic, Gatwick Airport represented a total footprint (Direct, Indirect, Catalytic footprints) of 36,700 to 72,200 jobs and £2.1bn in gross value added (GVA) in the UK.

GATCOM raised the following points:

- the presentations were welcomed and the partnership work and the Catalyst South initiative in addressing the recovery from significant impact of the reduced airport operation across the southeast region is supported. The need to build back better and greener was highlighted. GAL and many businesses anticipate that it will take 4-5 years to recovery from the pandemic.
- Rebuilding passenger/consumer confidence is essential to aid recovery. This is currently hindered by the Government constantly changing at short notice the travel restrictions and quarantine arrangements, as well as the cost of PCR tests. There is also a need to align the Government's travel advice with the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) which is inconsistent with Green List travel advice.
- The Government's furlough scheme comes to an end on 30 September creating greater uncertainty for many people within the aviation sector, supply chains, inbound tourism and the hospitality sector. Crawley currently has around 8,000 people on furlough. GAL is concerned about the impact of ending the scheme on airport businesses both on and off airport. Historically Crawley has never experienced unemployment and does not have the support infrastructure necessary to manage high levels of people claiming benefit. Gatwick's recovery will help the economy to get back on its feet again, which in turn will help the airport.

- In acknowledging the view of some interests that there needs to be less reliance on the airport to ensure a diverse economy, the business community is of the view that a successful airport will support diversification in attracting new industry and business to the area.
- The pandemic, coupled with the EU transition, is having a significant impact on inbound tourism markets and economic development, business travel, attracting new overseas contracts, the supply chain, and import and export markets.
- The shortage of skills as a result of the loss of EU workforce back to Europe and the need for re-training and skills development in the local workforce and for those who have lost jobs during the pandemic was essential as the airport and the regional economy grows to ensure those looking for jobs are skilled and trained for new job opportunities. Reference was made to the initiative in Horley to create a commercial hub in the town centre to reskill people, to provide mentoring of new start-ups with support from local businesses and East Surrey College on apprenticeship schemes.
- Covid test kits for businesses are currently free but charges may start to apply from the end of August adding to business costs.
- Education and exchange trips continue to be impacted reducing experience and opportunities for young people.
- Gatwick's economic value report highlighted future employment opportunities as the airport recovers and grows, however there is concern about the demand for additional housing and supporting infrastructure in the immediate areas around Gatwick and in the South East region. GAL highlighted that it is important for local authorities to provide a 5 year housing land supply and consider where people will work and whether, for example, it is more sustainable for people to commute into London for jobs or to create the opportunity to work locally and contribute to their local economy. It was emphasised that airport growth and economic recovery should not be at the expense of social or environmental imperatives and this needed to be balanced with the quality of life for those that live in the Gatwick region.
- In response to a question about GAL's cautious optimism on recovery and the impact this will have on the longer term growth aspirations, GAL confirmed that although recovery to 2019 traffic levels is anticipated to take 4–5 years, there is strong evidence that demand for air travel will continue to grow and as such it will continue to progress its growth plans.
- The need for all interests and partners to work together on initiatives with a view to developing a toolkit to aid recovery across the wider economy to support the aviation and tourism sectors was highlighted.

The outcomes from GATCOM's discussions will be fed into the various partners' work and that of Catalyst South. The Airport Towns report will be circulated to all members when available.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Chief Executive Officer's commentary on activity and performance of Gatwick over the previous quarter was discussed. The Key points to note:

- Activity at the airport during August 2021 is expected to be worse than that experienced in August 2020 despite the success of the roll out of the vaccination programme.
- Recovery of air travel in Europe as well as the USA has returned much quicker than that in the UK, with Gatwick being one of the hardest hit UK airports. Typical passenger volumes in the USA are currently above 80% of those in pre-pandemic times whereas in the UK volumes remain very low with below 10% of the pre-pandemic volumes.
- GAL continues to stand ready to ramp up operations in line with demand.
- GAL continues to make extensive use of the Government's furlough scheme and is calling for sector specific support as winter approaches. GAL is very concerned about the prospect of further job losses across the aviation sector.

- The CAA's new Economic Framework on contracts and commitments for Gatwick came into effect on 6 May which includes new commitments in terms of service quality and improved consultation process on GAL's capital investment plan and a minimum capital investment of £120m per annum.
- A New AirTurn Platform will be launched with ground handlers in July 2021 to improve aircraft turn efficiency and the digitisation of related documentation.
- Jet Blue is starting daily flights between New York (JFK) and Gatwick in September on new Airbus A321LR aircraft.
- GAL is exploring the feasibility of providing immigration pre-clearance checks at Gatwick for passengers on UK-US routes.
- GAL offered to take small groups of GATCOM members around the airport to see current operation – co-ordinate thorough Secretariat.
- In response to a member query, GAL to investigate aircraft and altitude levels over Ashdown Forest and a response will be sent to the resident concerned.

### **NORTHERN RUNWAY - DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER (DCO) – UPDATE**

GAL provided an update on progress made on preparing the DCO application as follows:

- Formal consultation on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) has taken place with local authorities and GAL is considering the responses received.
- Virtual briefing sessions have taken place with parish/town councils and neighbourhood groups to build an understanding of the DCO process and how to get involved.
- Work continues on preparing the draft technical reports, which only commenced after the Project was restarted in February 2021. There are a large number of topics (up to 21 separate topics) that are required to be assessed. Details will be shared with local authorities as part of the Technical Working Groups over the coming month. Invitations to the Technical Working Groups have recently been sent to local authority officers.
- The pre-application consultation will be supported by four key volumes:
  - Summary Document: providing a high level summary of the project and the consultation questions
  - Volume 1: Consultation Overview which will contain information relating to the project
  - Volume 2: Preliminary Information Environmental Report (PIER)
  - Volume 3: containing all the figures, detailed appendices and other reports.
- GAL anticipates the consultation commencing in late summer/early Autumn. As soon as the date is published GAL will advise the Secretariat for onward circulation to GATCOM members.

The following comments/concerns were raised by GATCOM members:

- the need for local authority officers to fully understand the proposals and all the detailed technical information supporting them in order to respond effectively and substantively to the consultation was emphasised. It was commented that no technical reports had yet been shared with local authority officers to help shape the scheme and any mitigation required in advance of the consultation. Other than the consultation on the draft SOCC, no information had been forthcoming since the publication of the Scoping Opinion and the topic working groups held in 2019. There were calls for GAL to share the full reports (and not just summary slides) at the Technical Working Group meetings and ideally in advance of those meetings.
- Members questioned the amount of engagement GAL has had with local authority officers on the scheme. GAL reiterated that it was still working on preparing draft technical information and stated that the Technical Working Groups would have information presented to them as soon as it was ready in order to start the conversations on the detail of the scheme. GAL emphasised that it was important that the information to be provided to stakeholders was accurate and reflected surveys and

that discussions with the local authorities would be on-going throughout the entire DCO process and not just pre-consultation.

- There were calls for the consultation to be a minimum of 12 weeks. GAL advised that the draft SOCC had a minimum of 9 weeks for consultation, which was greater than the minimum required under the Planning Act and also many other local consultations. However, GAL will review all the feedback and comments received on the draft SOCC from the local authorities in finalising the SOCC. GAL will let GATCOM know the length of consultation and when it will start once published. The Chairman asked GAL to keep an open mind on the length of the consultation and highlighted that, in his personal view, the request for an additional three weeks was of great importance for those inputting to the consultation.
- It was commented by a member that GATCOM, as critical friend to the airport, should take a position on the environmental and climate impact of the project as well as the impact of growth from Gatwick's main runway.

## **SECOND DECADE OF CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

GAL [presented](#) the progress made over the past decade in delivery of its sustainability goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) and its Second Decade of Change Policy. The key points to note are:

- GAL attaches great importance to delivering its sustainability goals and achieving its KPIs. [The 2020 Progress Report](#) also included a summary of GAL's achievements in 2019 comparing them with the 2010 policy aims. It was emphasised that while a goal may not be expressed in numeric terms it is measurable in numeric terms through KPIs and that all ten goals had one or more numeric points of comparison between 2019 and 2010.
  - GAL's [Second Decade of Change Policy](#) to cover the next decade to 2030 builds on the first decade. There is however an increased focus on both people and emissions bringing firmly within the new policy workforce diversity, particularly in relation to young people; an increase focus on accessibility in the workforce as well as in the airport ; and safety, health and wellbeing.
  - Increased focus on emissions includes a more specific influencing role for GAL to help the UK be a leader to achieve a net zero economy by 2050.
  - GAL will continue to lead the way on transparency of KPIs and is working on additional KPIs to accompany GAL's annual reporting.
  - It was explained that nationally there was much research and development on engine aircraft technology and airframe design to help achieve net zero and this will need to be scaled up over the decade. The availability and affordability of sustainable fuels will need to be taken forward by Government as part of its net zero policies. The Government has recently launched a [consultation on Jet Zero](#) which provided helpful scenarios for technology uptake and change and of the costs involved.
  - Health and wellbeing impacts from night noise was raised. Although GAL does not undertake the research, this is a matter of national interest. The Government/CAA is due to publish two reports – a second edition of the SoNA study and the outcomes of a survey of noise attitudes in the night period.
  - East Sussex County Council was interested in discussing whether there are potential opportunities for the provision of electric vehicles between key towns without public transport to link to the airport such as Crowborough, Uckfield and Heathfield that would be very helpful. GAL will follow this up directly with the council.

## **APPOINTMENT OF SUB-GROUPS**

GATCOM agreed appointments to GATCOM Steering Group, Passenger Advisory Group, NATMAG and the Gatwick Area Community Trust.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Tuesday 24 August 2021 at 14:00 – Special Meeting of GATCOM to consider its response to the DfT's night flights consultation.
- Thursday 14 October 2021 at 14:00

**Paula Street**  
**Secretariat**