

Minutes of the virtual Special Meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) held on 24 August 2021 by videoconference.

Meeting held with pre-booked public attendance of 4 persons to observe proceedings.

Present:	Tom Crowley (Chairman)
Jeff Alexander	Gatwick Diamond Business
Chris Carter	Airlines UK
Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce
Cllr. Helyn Clack (Vice-Chair)	Surrey County Council
Jonathan Drew	Chair, Gatwick Noise Management Executive Board
Cllr. Malcolm Fillmore	Rusper Parish Council
Cllr. Mike George	Horley Town Council, Lead Member for Noise
Angie Hills	ABTA
Alan Jones	Burstow Parish Council
Cllr. Liz Kitchen	Horsham District Council
Chris Larkman	Which? representative
Cllr. Liz Lockwood	Tandridge District Council
Hugh McConnellogue	Gatwick Airline Operators Committee (AOC)
Cllr. Margot McArthur	Kent County Council
Cllr. Katie Nagel	West Sussex County Council (substitute)
Cllr. Caroline Salmon	Mole Valley District Council
Cllr. Penny Shoubridge	Charlwood Parish Council (substitute)
Cllr. Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
Richard Streatfeild	Environmental and Amenity Groups

In attendance:	
Andy Sinclair	Head of Noise & Airspace Strategy, GAL
Ian Green	Department for Transport
Gary Marshall	Department for Transport
Richard Connelly	York Aviation LLP
Paula Street	GATCOM Secretariat
Lisa Sampson	GATCOM Secretariat
GATCOM Nominated Substitutes observing:	
Cllr. Matt Furniss	Surrey County Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Apologies were received from Cllr. Carolyn Evans (Charlwood Parish Council), Cllr. Stephen Hillier (Mid Sussex District Council), Stephen Jones (London Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Colin Stewart (BAR UK), Cllr. Steve Waight (West Sussex County Council) and Samantha Williams (Chair, Passenger Advisory Group).

DfT Consultation: Night flight restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports

DfT Update on the Night Flights Regime and the SoNA Aircraft Noise and Sleep Disturbance Report

32. DfT [presented](#) an update on the night flights regime review (copy of presentation slides attached to the signed minutes). Key aspects included:

- The Government's [announcement on 19 July](#) confirmed the existing night noise objective and existing night flight restrictions at the designated airports will be rolled over for a period of 3 years. The roll forward regime will therefore run from October 2022 to October 2025. A ban on QC4 rated aircraft movements at the designated airports, during the Night Quota Period (23:30 – 06:00) would be implemented from October 2022.
- Once the DfT has taken into account responses to Part Two of the consultation, it aims to publish a further consultation on night flight restrictions post-October 2025, during 2023.
- Consultation responses received on revisions to the night flight dispensation guidance will be used to revise the guidance for airport operators with a view to providing better clarity. The DfT aims to publish the updated guidance before the new (roll forward) night flight regime takes effect in October 2022.
- The DfT will continue to develop the evidence base in order to support appraisal of future decisions on the design of the night flight regime such as reviewing existing research and engaging with stakeholders e.g. Airlines UK paper on economic benefits of night flights; revisiting previous analysis produced by Systra to overcome previously identified limitations e.g. consideration of wider economic benefits; scoping out a research project to understand how impacts associated with exposure to aviation noise vary by time of night, reviewing existing literature and discussing across government departments and with academics.
- Highlighting the CAA's recently published SoNA report which is an extension of SoNA 2014 (CAP1506) and looks at the subset of sleep questions asked within the main SoNA 2014 questionnaire. This further report concluded that there is insufficient evidence to change the metrics currently used for noise exposure in UK assessments.

33. GAL confirmed that it welcomed the stability the roll over regime would bring during a period of significant uncertainty for the industry.

34. The Environmental and Amenity Groups' representative reported the many community noise groups have expressed strong disappointment about the roll forward of the regime and the lack of Government research between 2017 to 2020 on the economic and health impacts of night flights and emphasised the importance of the review of future night flights policy considering the health and environmental impacts with equal importance as the recovery of the industry from the pandemic. Members highlighted the impact of night flights on the local population, particularly in the summer months, was significant and restrictions on night flights would bring benefits to the well-being of those residents who experience disturbance from aircraft overflight at night.

35. More information about the DfT's further research following the outcome of the CAA's SoNA sleep report was sought with members highlighting the need for all benefits and costs (disbenefits) as well as variance between summer and winter months and other noise sources being captured as part of the research. It was also important the study report contains an executive summary which explains in an easily understood, non-technical way the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

36. The DfT stated that there is currently no clear rationale for changing the metrics currently used for night noise. However, it confirmed that it has commissioned the CAA to conduct further analysis on the original 2014 SoNA data, including on alternative metrics for night noise around awakenings and sensitivity. The CAA is expected to report later this year. Separate to that work, the DfT is looking at the disturbance experienced at different times of the night. ICCAN is also conducting a noise and annoyance study and the DfT will ensure the two studies work together. The DfT noted

the importance of the timing of reporting the research outcomes to inform the 2023 consultation.

37. Members highlighted the need for greater transparency of the DfT's Project Steering Group's work and its membership. The DfT confirmed that only one meeting of the Steering Group had taken place and steps were being taken to ensure details of its work were published.

The Economic Impact of Night Flying in the UK – York Aviation Study

38. York Aviation LLP [presented](#) the key findings from the study on the "[Economic Impact of Night Flying in the UK](#)" commissioned by Airlines UK in partnership with other aviation stakeholders (copy of presentation slides attached to the signed minutes). As reported to GATCOM in July the study explored only one constituent of the cost/benefit balance - the economic benefits of night flights - in order to address the paucity of evidence of this less well understood aspect and help inform the GATCOM response. It was noted that the costs (disbenefits) of night flying was not covered by the study. It was confirmed that it was the responsibility of the DfT to undertake the full assessment of all costs, benefits and disbenefits of night flights on the economy, environment and health as it progresses its review and before the issue of the Stage Two consultation in 2023.

39. The key points to note from the study results relating to Gatwick were:

- the total GVA impact of night flying at Gatwick in 2019 was £1.45 billion (Direct £225 million, indirect and induced £275 million, wider UK economy £950m).
- the total employment impacts of night flying contributed 18,400 jobs (2,900 direct jobs, 4,600 indirect and induced, and 10,900 jobs across the wider UK economy).
- if night flying became more difficult the impacts would be a loss of destinations served, reduced connectivity, loss of efficiency, and the airline's fixed costs would be divided by fewer passengers resulting in increased fares, lost passengers, and a potential loss of aircraft operating/based at Gatwick.
- If night flying is further restricted at Gatwick the economic impact in terms of total GVA would result in a loss of £2,750 million if there was a total ban on night flights and a loss of 32,500 jobs; a loss of £1,250 million if there was a night quota period ban and 50% reduction in night flights with a loss of 15,500 jobs; a loss of £400 million if there was a ban on night flights in the night quota period with a loss of 5,200 jobs; and a loss of £800 million if there was a 50% reduction in the number of night flights and a loss of 9,900 jobs.
- The study has concluded that night flying is a significant and important part of the air transport market in the UK, is ultimately driven by the needs of users rather than the industry and is an intrinsic part of airline business models that reflect consumer needs.

40. A few members expressed disappointment that the study only examined the positive economic impacts of night flying and that it had been based on 2019 traffic levels rather than predicting future demand and the effect of changing Government priorities in terms of addressing climate change and changed travel patterns as a result of the pandemic. There were also other members who highlighted the potential negative economic impact from reduced night operations. The business interests concurred that ensuring connectivity at different times of the day was hugely important to enable the region and the UK to remain competitive in the global market particularly in respect of time critical goods and potential impacts of the supply chain and future jobs.

Suggested GATCOM response to questions 13 onwards of the consultation

41. GATCOM considered the Secretariat's report and suggested response to the consultation (copy attached to the signed minutes). Paula Street, Deputy Secretary advised GATCOM of the various steps which had been taken in the preparation of the suggested response which now took the form of a covering letter and high-level statement of principle aims that GATCOM could collectively agree for matters it wished the DfT to further explore as part of the review of the night flights policy before issuing Stage 2 of the consultation in 2023.

42. Paula Street also highlighted the suggested amendments that had been put forward by the environmental and amenity groups' representative which had been circulated to all members in advance of the meeting for consideration (copy also attached to the signed minutes). The environmental and amenity groups' representative highlighted their key concerns about suggested draft response at the meeting.

43. GATCOM discussed the suggested draft response together with the comments of the environmental and amenity groups and other points raised by members at the meeting. It was felt that the suggested draft response presented a balanced approach reflecting the disparate views of the various interests on the Committee on such a complex and sensitive topic. It was felt that the draft response only needed to be slightly modified to reflect the following specific points:

- Paragraph 6 of the covering letter - the need for appropriate use of differential fees and charges to discourage demand for night flights to take into account comments made about the polluter pays principle.
- The "Background" section – the need for a better balance between the economic, environmental and health impacts.
- Paragraph 10 – to update reference to the current airport operation.
- Paragraph 14 – amend the reference to well insulated homes. Although many homes have double glazing many do not benefit from other forms of insulation.
- Paragraph 15 – the need to reference the information included in Annex C of the DfT's consultation to reflect the fact that improvements in the night noise climate have not seen the same improvement as those in day.
- Amend the various references for the DfT to engage with industry to engagement with "all stakeholders".
- Paragraph 23 -the need to reference the ambient noise level around Gatwick and therefore the noise impact on communities in rural areas is more noticeable.
- Paragraph 29 – to highlight the importance of the Government taking responsibility for the proper monitoring of the dispensations process as a way of building confidence with communities.

44. Resolved – that:

- 1) The suggested response be amended to include the comments set out in minute no. 43 above; and
- 2) The Chairman and Vice-Chair be asked to approve on behalf of GATCOM the amended draft response before submission to the DfT.

Dates of next meeting

45. Members noted the next meeting of GATCOM will take place on Thursday 14 October 2021 at 2.00pm.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm.