

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) held on 15 July 2021 by videoconference.

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

Present:	Tom Crowley (Chairman)
Jeff Alexander	Gatwick Diamond Business
Cllr. Richard Biggs	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce
Cllr. Helyn Clack (Vice-Chair)	Surrey County Council
Fran Downton	Tourism South East
Jonathan Drew	Chair, Gatwick Noise Management Executive Board
Cllr. Carolyn Evans	Charlwood Parish Council
Cllr. Malcolm Fillmore	Rusper Parish Council
Cllr. Mike George	Horley Town Council, Lead Member for Noise
Angie Hills	ABTA
Cllr. Gurinder S. Jhans	Crawley Borough Council – joined from Item 8
Alan Jones	Burstow Parish Council
Cllr. Liz Kitchen	Horsham District Council
Cllr. Jim Knight	Mid Sussex District Council (sub.)
Chris Larkman	Which? representative
Cllr. Liz Lockwood	Tandridge District Council
Cllr. Claire Malcomson	Mole Valley District Council (sub.)
Hugh McConnellogue	Gatwick Airline Operators Committee (AOC)
Cllr. Margot McArthur	Kent County Council
Cllr. Rupert Simmons	East Sussex County Council
Colin Stewart	BAR UK
Richard Streatfeild	Environmental and Amenity Groups
Cllr. Steve Waight	West Sussex County Council
Samantha Williams	Chair, Passenger Advisory Group
Matt Wragg	Coast to Capital Economic Partnership (sub.)

In attendance:	
Stewart Wingate	Chief Executive Officer, GAL
Tim Norwood	Director of Corporate Affairs, Planning & Sustainability, GAL
Andy Sinclair	Head of Noise & Airspace Strategy, GAL
Alison Addy	Head of External Engagement & Policy, GAL
Rachel Thompson	Head of Sustainability, GAL
Melanie Wrightson	Stakeholder Engagement Manager, GAL
Richard Lennard	Economic Partnerships Manager, GAL
Ian Greene	Department for Transport
Robin Clarke	NATS
Paula Street	GATCOM Secretariat
Lisa Sampson	GATCOM Secretariat

Apologies for absence were received from:

1. Apologies were received from Cllr. Stephen Hillier (Mid Sussex District Council), Cllr. Caroline Salmon (Mole Valley District Council), and Jonathan Sharrock (Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership).

Current Membership List and Representatives

2. Chairman welcomed the new GATCOM members and substitutes. GATCOM noted its membership.

Appointment of Vice-Chair

3. One nomination was received in respect of Helyn Clack, Surrey County Council. Helyn Clack was duly appointed as Vice-Chair of GATCOM for the ensuing year.

Minutes of the last meeting

4. The Environmental and Amenity Groups wished to record that they did not agree with the "statement of facts" set out in the Secretariat's report on Gatwick's Growth [at min. 160. 1)].

5. Secretariat confirmed a [response](#) has been received from Secretary of State for Transport, Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP, 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. A response was awaited.[the [response](#) was received following the meeting on 20 July]

6. Secretariat advised that the Special Meeting of GATCOM to consider the Committee's response to the DfT's Night Flights consultation had been rearranged to take place on 24 August 2021.

7. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Reports from Sub-Group and Other Meetings

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

GATCOM Steering Group – Chairman's Report

9. The Chairman of GATCOM introduced his report and highlighted key points. GATCOM noted the Steering Group's deliberations and agreed that:

- 1) GATCOM notes the [2020 annual monitoring results](#) from the air pollution monitoring program undertaken on, and in the vicinity of, Gatwick Airport and endorses the views of the Steering Group.

- 2) GATCOM notes the [results](#) of the noise monitoring at Gatwick for the summer period 16 June to 15 September 2020 and endorses the views of the Steering Group.

Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) – Chair’s Report

10. The PAG Chair introduced her report, commenting that the previous four months have been difficult for the industry and the airport and it is hoped the autumn season may see increased passenger confidence in travel.

11. GATCOM noted PAG’s activities in the previous quarter and its contribution to ensuring a positive passenger experience at Gatwick during the ongoing COVID pandemic. It was agreed that:

- 3) GATCOM notes the work of the Passenger Advisory Group in engaging with GAL as the ‘critical friend’ and supports its role as advocate on behalf of passengers.

Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) Summary Report

12. The report from GATCOM’s Lead Member for Noise was considered and he highlighted the mid-term review of the Noise Action Plan (NAP) will be considered in September.

13. It was agreed that:

- 4) GATCOM notes NATMAG’s activities over the quarter and the key messages.

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

14. The Chair of NEX highlighted key points from recent NMB meetings, including:

- Given the ongoing uncertainty for the aviation sector, there continue 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.

15. It was agreed that:

- 5) GATCOM notes the NMB Executive Board’s report of NMB activities.

Recovery from the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Resumption of Airport Operations

16. GAL provided an overview of the resumption of international travel and the key issues and challenges for the airport, including:

- 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 (e.g. 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. PCR testing requirements both in the UK and abroad remain a barrier to international travel. Positive conversations continue with airlines who are ready to respond to increased passenger demand.

Impact on "Airport Towns"

17. The Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) gave an overview of Catalyst South's project studying the impact of the downturn in aviation activity on airport towns across the South East region. Key points included:

- 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 Government travel restrictions and the green, amber and red travel lists.
- 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.
- 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. Re-skilling of the workforce and flexibility in the use of the apprenticeship levy could be considered.
- 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, and more planning and consistency in changes to travel lists so that the aviation sector and their supply chains can plan and respond to recovery with some degree of certainty. Opportunities to diversify local economies around airports need 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.

Gatwick Economic Value Report

18. GAL provided an overview of the findings of the report which focuses on Gatwick's role in the local economy. 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.

Discussion and Feedback

19. Key points to note and discussion points were raised by GATCOM, including:
- Welcoming the presentations and reports, and supporting the partnership working and Catalyst South initiative in addressing the recovery from significant impact of the reduced airport operation across the southeast region.
 - Highlighting the need to build back better and greener. GAL and many businesses anticipate it will take 4-5 years to recover 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 ending on 30 September will create greater uncertainty for many people in 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. It is also affecting the supply chain of materials, e.g. steel, wood, concrete, electronics, and storage containers, which is impacting construction and manufacturing businesses across the county.
 - Highlighting the shortage of skills as a result of the loss of EU workforce back to Europe. It is essential that re-training and skills development is undertaken in the local workforce and for those who have lost jobs during the pandemic as the airport and the regional economy grows, in order 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 and to provide mentoring of new start-ups with support from local businesses and East Surrey College on apprenticeship schemes. Building back better in terms of wellbeing was promoted.
 - Noting that Covid test kits for businesses are currently free but charges may start to apply from the end of August which will add additional cost for businesses.
 - Noting the impact on young people as education and exchange trips continue to be impacted which reduces experience and opportunities.
 - Gatwick's economic value report highlighted future employment opportunities as the airport recovers and grows, however concern was raised 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.

- Highlighting 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.
- Queried 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.

20. The Chairman thanked members for a good and wide-ranging discussion on recovery, and noted the support across all interest groups to see Gatwick and the local economy recover from the effects of the pandemic. The outcomes of the discussion will be fed into the various partners' work and that of Catalyst South.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

21. The Chief Executive Officer's report 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:

- 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 been much quicker than in the UK, 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 asking for sector-specific support as winter approaches; the prospect of further job losses across the aviation sector is a concern. GAL continues to reduce its operations expenditure and capital investment programme to safeguard the business over the winter.
- 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.

22. GATCOM commented, including:

- A member noted that feedback from the travel industry highlighted that travel through Gatwick is currently positive, with swift and smooth passage through the airport.

- Reiterating the need for sector-specific support as whilst the increased demand of bookings is to be welcomed there is a significant time lag before businesses then receive the income.
- Commenting on the mental health impact on GAL staff, airlines and support staff and highlighted the importance of wellbeing. GAL welcomed the comments and confirmed the team are committed to providing good service.
- In response to a specific member query, GAL agreed to investigate aircraft and altitude levels over Ashdown Forest and a response will be sent to the resident.

Northern Runway DCO – Update on preparing for consultation

23. GAL provided an update on preparing for the pre-application consultation. Key points highlighted included:

- 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; there are a large number of 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.
- The pre-application consultation will comprise:
 - 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.

24. GATCOM commented on the update, including:

- Emphasising 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. 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 (not just summary slides) at the Technical Working Group meetings and ideally in advance of those meetings.
- Questioning the amount of engagement GAL has had with local authority officers on the scheme. GAL reiterated 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 it is important that the information to be provided to stakeholders is accurate and reflected surveys, and that discussions with the local authorities would be on-going throughout the entire DCO process and not just in 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, highlighting that in his personal view the request for an additional three weeks was of great importance for those inputting to the consultation.

- Queried if there is a section106 agreement built into the DCO process. GAL confirmed it is in discussions with West Sussex County Council and Crawley Borough Council to roll-over the existing section106 agreement until a new section106 agreement to replace it is agreed as part of the DCO process.
- 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.

25. The Chairman thanked GAL for the update and welcomed its consideration on the length of the consultation period.

Second Decade of Change Sustainability Policy

26. 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. Key points to note include:

- GAL attaches great importance to delivering its sustainability goals and achieving its KPIs. [Alongside its 2020 Progress Report, GAL has also published](#) a summary of the First Decade of Change, comparing 2019 performance with 2010. It 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 an increased focus on people and community, bringing firmly within the new policy workforce diversity particularly in relation to young people, an increased focus on accessibility in the workforce as well as in the airport, and safety, health and wellbeing.
- There is also an increased focus on emissions including surface access and aircraft emissions, and ongoing focus on on-airport environment issues such as water, waste and biodiversity. It also includes an 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 sustainability reporting.

27. GATCOM commented, including:

- Querying how realistic the Government's Net Zero emissions by 2050 target is and whether technology can advance to bridge this gap. GAL 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.
- Whether night noise contour impact will be measured in the health and wellbeing focus of the Second Decade of Change policy. GAL commented that while it does not undertake the research, this is a matter of national interest and GAL welcomes better information on the health effects of night noise. 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.

- Querying if there is any research or evidence on residents having moved house during this quieter period who will experience more noise from overflight when operations recover. GAL has received a small number of enquiries from potential house purchasers to its service which provides historic overflight data but is not aware of any research on this matter.
- East Sussex County Council expressed interest in discussing whether there are potential opportunities for the provision of electric vehicle charging-points 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

28. GATCOM received the Secretariat's report setting out for approval the appointments to be made to GATCOM's sub-groups and other bodies (copy attached to the signed minutes).

29. Resolved – That GATCOM:

- 1) Appoints members to the GATCOM Steering Group and Passenger Advisory Group as set out in sections 2(A) and 2(B) of the report;
- 2) Appoints 7 members to serve on GAL's NATMAG for a period of two years as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report;
- 3) Asks the Secretariat to seek nominations for the positions of GATCOM's Lead Member for Noise and Deputy Lead Member for Noise from the NATMAG appointees and to seek the endorsement of the Chairman; and
- 4) Nominates Alan Jones, Burstow Parish Council, to serve on the Gatwick Airport Community Trust for a term of four years.

Dates of next meetings of GATCOM and its sub-groups

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

- Tuesday 24 August at 2pm - Special Meeting of GATCOM to consider the Committee's response to the DfT's night flights consultation
- Thursday 23 September at 10am – GATCOM Steering Group
- Monday 20 September at 1.30pm – Passenger Advisory Group
- Thursday 14 October at 2pm – GATCOM.

31. GATCOM noted the next meeting of GAL's Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) on Thursday 5 August at 10am, and the next meeting of the Noise Management Board Executive Board (NEX) on Wednesday 3 November 2021.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 5.02pm.