

## Gatwick Airport

### Response to GACC presentation to GATCOM October 2019

At the GATCOM meeting in October 2019, Peter Barclay and Charles Lloyd provided a presentation to the Committee on behalf of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, setting out their objections to Gatwick's plans for growth. At that meeting Stewart Wingate agreed that GAL would review the main points set out in the presentation and provide a response at the next meeting of GATCOM.

#### Government Policy

1. It is not immediately clear whether GACC are objecting to Gatwick's plans or in fact objecting to government policy? We, of course, are obliged to abide by government policy.
2. As Charles Lloyd stated at GATCOM, government policy "***supports airports' growth, that's clear.***" In fact, government is clear that there is such a thing as sustainable growth in aviation. Government policy in the current Aviation Policy Framework sets out a "balanced approach" to support sustainable growth, in which the undoubted benefits to the economy of jobs, tourism, trade and increased international connectivity are balanced against aviation's environmental effects. Likewise, the government's emerging new Aviation Strategy considers it sustainable to make the best use of the UK's existing runways because of the importance of aviation to the economy.
3. The government is responsible for regulating the growth and operation of Gatwick airport and imposes noise, night-time and other operating restrictions to ensure that the right balance is struck. Properly undertaken, the government does consider aviation growth can be sustainable and, within that, Gatwick's growth is not immune either from scrutiny or from regulation.
4. For many years, Gatwick Airport has put in place numerous measures to manage and mitigate the impacts of its operation on the environment and on local communities. These issues are covered by our legally binding s106 agreement with Crawley BC and West Sussex CC. In addition, we have an Airport Surface Access Strategy and our ten yearly Decade of Change sustainability strategy which upholds our commitment to operating and developing Gatwick in a sustainable way.
5. In relation to international concerns about carbon and climate change, GACC suggest that policy either is changing or must change. Of course, this is the role of Government and, for our sector, will be addressed in the Aviation 2050 policy.

6. However, GACC should also recognise that the aviation industry is working hard to respond to concerns that we **all** share about climate change. In particular, international airlines have now committed to the first global carbon reduction and offsetting scheme, called CORSIA: a major step forward. They are also leading the way in the development of more efficient aircraft and alternative fuel technologies in order that aviation can play its part in the government's new net carbon zero commitment by 2050.
7. Recent announcements by IAG, easyJet, Airbus and Rolls Royce show the UK aviation industry's commitment in action. The industry is working **with** not against the work of the Climate Change Committee. At Gatwick we are playing our part. We are already carbon neutral for emissions in our control and we will work to become net zero. We are working closely with airlines and manufacturers to develop and test sustainable aviation fuels and we will continue to encourage airlines to bring into Gatwick their most fuel-efficient aircraft (such as the A321 neo's).
8. Government policy is clear that climate change is a **global** issue that needs to be addressed by nations and airlines acting together through initiatives such as CORSIA, not through individual airports going it alone. We support the Government's ambition for the UK to play a leading international role in tackling climate change.

#### **The planning process and need for scrutiny**

9. GACC's proposition is that Gatwick has found a way "to dodge policy and grow without scrutiny". We do of course have planning permission to use our existing runway and, where we can, we will respond to demand by continuing to use it more efficiently - which by definition must be a **more** sustainable solution. As I have previously said, government regulates the use of our airport – and government is clear that the economic benefits of aviation must be secured, within that regulated environment. We also consult with and apply for permission from our local authority for development within the airport which is required either to improve service quality, increase resilience or add capacity. These applications are always subject to scrutiny.
10. Gatwick is **not** shying away from scrutiny – in fact, we are encouraging it both by publishing and consulting on our Masterplan but also by preparing our DCO application for the routine use of the northern runway. That application will be subject to what GACC describes as the full scrutiny of the planning process and we welcome the fact that we will be expected to mitigate the impacts of growth.

11. It is simply not true, however, that the use of the existing main runway will escape scrutiny – that use is regulated already but our DCO application will have to assess and mitigate the impacts of the northern runway growth **on top of** the growth and use of our current runway. That growth doesn't get ignored – far from it, its effects are going to be fully taken into account before we examine areas such as the capacity of the transport networks to deal with more growth, the ability to meet local air quality objectives and the ability to live within acceptable noise contours. It will all be accounted for and our proposals will only be approved if we can show that we can mitigate its effects as well as the effects of the northern runway– and we welcome that examination because we set ourselves high standards in the way we run our airport.
  
12. In its recent policy statement, government believes there is a case for airports making best use of their existing runways. Along with government, we recognise that airport development can have negative as well as positive local impacts. These need to be carefully balanced taking account of all relevant considerations and in particular both the environmental impacts and the economic benefits. Our DCO application will be thoroughly tested through the planning process and everyone will be able to put their points across.