

Tom Crowley
Chairman

County Hall
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RQ



Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee

Telephone 033022 22543

Website: www.gatcom.org.uk

If calling ask for

Mrs. Paula Street

e-mail: secretary@gatcom.org.uk

2 December 2020

Dear Mr Courts,

Building Back Better and Greener at Gatwick

Thank you for your response of October 2020 to our letter of 22 July. We are acutely aware of the continuing significant impact the coronavirus pandemic is having on all our lives and that the Government is receiving many calls for assistance and support from all sectors, including from the aviation industry. Your response outlining the Government's various support packages was therefore much appreciated.

The pandemic has brought international aviation to a near-standstill with Gatwick Airport Limited and its airline and business partners experiencing significant financial loss which is undermining the future prosperity of the regional economy and leading to more job losses and high levels of unemployment not only in towns close to the airport such as Crawley, but across the wider Coast to Capital economy and south east region. What is clear is that the impact of the current 'Lock Down 2' will deepen this crisis further for the aviation and tourism sectors and the wider regional economy.

The unique opportunity presented by the catastrophic effect of the pandemic and its dramatic effect on the aviation industry should, with the support of the Government, be used as a catalyst to develop and embed the necessary policies, technology and measures that will enable the industry to recover in a truly sustainable way, including meeting the challenge of climate change.

As mentioned in my previous letter, GATCOM is assisting in building a common understanding across the different interest groups on planning a way forward with Gatwick Airport Limited in a way which addresses the immediate priority of supporting the economic recovery for the region whilst at the same time proposing arrangements that would ensure a truly sustainable recovery which addresses environmental, social and economic imperatives. As you can imagine, there is a mix of strong views, and in some cases conflicting views, across our membership on certain detailed aspects of the approach to recovery but there is mutual support for an approach that ensures Gatwick builds back better and greener, supporting a strong, vibrant, diverse and

By Email

Robert Courts MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Department for Transport

sustainable economy while reducing the environmental and noise impacts of the airport.

Proactive dialogue between all parties to address the immense impact on the airport and the ripple effect this is having across the wider economy is continuing. There is an urgent and immediate need to focus on the recovery of the economy and on the future employment prospects of local people and the significant investment needed in skills development and training that will be required to ensure that local people have the right skills for future jobs as part of the recovery effort, including the specific employment challenges for 18-24 year olds.

GATCOM has recently discussed the collaborative approach needed in building back better and greener at Gatwick and has identified areas where Government assistance and policy direction is needed. Set out below are the key points for your consideration. I would emphasise at this stage that these are high level points on which there is majority support¹ across GATCOM's diverse membership.

The key points for your consideration are:

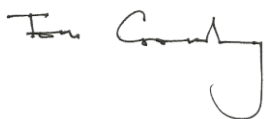
- The urgent need for the Government to recognise that the impact of the pandemic on Gatwick and the ripple effect across the Gatwick region is one of the places most affected economically and socially from the pandemic and to support calls for urgent assistance from the various parties that reflects the unique challenges faced by the airport and the region.
- The need to publish as a priority the Government's Aviation Recovery Plan to set out the national approach for recovery of the sector.
- Help to rebuild passenger confidence in air travel:
 - The introduction of the test to release scheme announced 24 November 2020 which will come into effect on 15 December is welcomed however there is still more work to be done to get more people travelling and help to rebuild passenger confidence.
 - Request that your Department continues to work with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on a regionalised approach to the FCDO travel advice and for the advice to provide clear information on the countries they choose to visit to aid both consumers and businesses to make informed decisions regarding outbound travel.
- The need to encourage and support the resumption of work on the airspace modernisation programme in ways which ensure it delivers safety improvements, and appropriately balanced environmental benefits and operational efficiencies from the deployment of improved technology and airspace design.
- The need to engage with airports and airlines on the impact of the EU's suspension of the 80/20 slot rule with a view to putting in place for Summer 2021 an evidence-based policy that supports recovery for both airports and airlines in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.
- In recognition of the disturbance suffered by local communities and the impact on health, to expedite work on the review of the night flights policy and regime at Gatwick so that all interests (environmental, economic, social, passenger and health) can put their views forward and brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible to enable the industry to effectively plan for any changes emerging from the review.

1. 24 of GATCOM's 26 current member organisations raised no objection to/supported the content of this letter. Whilst the Environmental & Amenities Groups' representative indicated support for the majority of points in this letter there are specific areas where there is divergence from the views stated. The groups representative at GATCOM, the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC), will write under separate cover to set out their concerns with regard to those items. Tandridge District Council could not support the letter as it makes suggestions which promote Gatwick, and its growth, at the expense of local community.

- To continue to ensure that investment by Government, Network Rail and Highways England in the rail and road networks serving Gatwick and green fuels initiatives (such as electric and hydrogen) is forthcoming and that investment is not just redirected to other regions
- To ensure transport improvement schemes already identified can be realised to support Gatwick's Surface Access Strategy targets and the wider regional growth such as the Windmill Junction scheme near Croydon.
- Whilst GATCOM neither supports nor opposes Gatwick's Airport Master Plan growth scenarios, to ensure that the impacts of future growth at the airport are mitigated through investment in infrastructure and other measures.
- To resume the review of the Aviation Policy Framework as soon as possible and to bring forward new policy proposals to provide:
 - Clarity for the industry, local authorities, businesses, communities and consumers on the future policy framework for aviation post Covid which balances the environmental, social and economic imperatives.
 - Direction on achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and which sets stretch targets to drive further improvements to combat climate change.
 - A clear set of measures that all parties and communities can understand and enables environmental improvement performance and progress to be monitored and sets a benchmark of what good environmental management and performance looks like.
 - The possibility of bringing forward new aviation noise policies ahead of the publication of the full strategy review needs to be explored as securing noise reductions and performance monitoring is viewed as a key component in giving impacted communities confidence that the industry as a whole is building back better.
 - A commitment by airports/the industry to fund research into Ultra Fine Particles (UFP) monitoring around airports with the aim of introducing monitoring standards for the UK at the earliest possible time.

I look forward to hearing from you on how you can take on board all the points GATCOM has raised.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Crowley
Chairman

CC to:
Gatwick MPs