

## **GATCOM Secretariat**

County Hall  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ

Telephone: 033 022 22543  
Website: [www.gatcom.org.uk](http://www.gatcom.org.uk)



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## **GATCOM 28 APRIL 2022**

### **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/>

#### **DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER (DCO) – PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Planning Inspectorate [presented an overview of the pre-application stage](#) of the DCO process and opportunities for interested parties to engage in the process. It should be noted that the Inspectorate's presentation was not intended to cover all aspects of the overarching Planning Act 2008 process. Weblinks to further information about the process are given on presentation slide 11.

The key points to note are:

- The **Pre-Application Stage** is an important stage of the process. It encourages the "front-loading" of information and engagement with local authorities, statutory consultees, stakeholders and other parties such as GATCOM at an early stage to help shape the project. There is limited scope to change a project design once an application has been submitted.
- Once the pre-application statutory consultation has taken place, it does not preclude an applicant carrying out further pre-application engagement.
- Sometimes developers may make changes to the proposed application as result of the response to the pre-application consultation. Depending on the scale of the changes to the proposed scheme design, and whether its fundamentally different to what has already been consulted on, those changes may require further consultation and will need to follow the DCO application guidance. An applicant may also decide to carry out a targeted non-statutory consultation.
- The Planning Inspectorate will engage with others during the pre-application stage and provide section 51 of the Planning Act advice on the process. It is open and transparent in the advice given and publishes it on the relevant project page of the Inspectorate's website – [click here](#) to see advice given to GATCOM Secretariat to date. The Planning Inspectorate also publish meeting notes on the application page of the project website.
- Local authorities have an important role at the pre-application stage in representing their local area; making representations in respect of their authority; entering into planning performance agreements with the applicant; being the community champion and involvement in and the adherence to the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC); providing objective technical evidence, local impact reports, preparing Statements of Common Ground (which may also incorporate areas of uncommon ground); and setting out preliminary thinking on the discharge of potential planning requirements associated with the project and their enforcement. The Inspectorate

emphasised the importance of local authorities feeding in views at the pre-application stage and playing a part in shaping the application.

- The applicant is required to review and has a duty to take into account any consultation response that it considers relevant and important whether it be from a statutory consultee, residents, businesses, organisations and other interested parties such as GATCOM, and will need to demonstrate how views and concerns have been taken into account or not included, details of which should be set out in the Consultation Report that is required to be submitted with the application.
- Once an application is submitted the Planning Inspectorate will assess the information submitted to see if the application is fit for examination and will also consider the Adequacy of Consultation. The Inspectorate has 28 days to decide whether an application can be accepted for examination.
- If the application is accepted for examination, **the Pre-Examination Stage**, the Examining Authority is appointed and it is at this stage when interested parties, which includes town and parish councils, local residents, local businesses and community groups as well as GATCOM, may submit a relevant representation and become an Interested Party – see [Advice Note 8](#). It was pointed out that the Examining Authority may disregard a relevant representation if it considers that it is vexatious or frivolous, or if it concerns the merits of national policy (the role of the Examination is not to debate the merits of National Policy Statements).
- The Pre-Examination Stage conducts an initial assessment of principal issues, host and neighbouring local authorities to bear in mind the likely need for early submission of Local Impact Reports and Statements of Common Ground during examination.
- **Examination Stage** is required to take no longer than six months and is the inquisitorial part of the process. It is at this stage when the merits of project evidence such as carbon emissions, climate change and social, environmental, economic considerations will be considered by the Examining Authority. Host and neighbouring local authorities will need to submit their Local Impact Reports and Statements of Common Ground during examination. The examination is primarily a written process.
- **Recommendation and Decision stage** – the Examining Authority has three months in which to submit its recommendation report to the Secretary of State, together with the recommended DCO, who then has three months in which to make a decision.

The Planning Inspectorate was thanked for its informative presentation. A couple of county council representatives stated that they were not completely satisfied with the manner in which GAL had conducted the preliminary pre-application engagement prior to the statutory consultation. The Gatwick local authorities had collectively written to the Planning Inspectorate to highlight their concerns about the previous lack of engagement and the sharing of information prior to the pre-application consultation being undertaken. The County Council representatives hoped that going forward there would be improved and meaningful dialogue.

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

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

- **CAA’s New Noise Advisory Functions** were announced on 1 April. The new advisory functions are to be funded by the DfT on an annual basis. The details of the funding arrangement and deliverables for 2022/23 are set out in the [DfT’s letter to the CAA](#). There are a range of important workstreams included in the [CAA’s indicative Sustainability Work Plan for 2022/23](#).
- **Future Secretariat Support** – GAL has agreed with West Sussex County Council the future Secretariat Support arrangements for a full time position fully funded by GAL. Recruitment is underway and the position has now been advertised. The Chairman will be involved in the interview process.

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

- Claire Booth, independent volunteer passenger representative, has been re-appointed as PAG Vice-Chair for a further term of 2 years.
- PAG has recommenced positive engagement with the Independent Gatwick Accessibility Panel (IGAP) and look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the provision of special assistance services at the airport. GATCOM endorsed this engagement and supported PAG’s priorities for accessibility services and facilities.
- PAG is aware there are some issues with the passenger journey and queuing times at Gatwick and continues to closely monitor the situation.
- Border Force would be invited to present on its work at a future GATCOM meeting.
- GATCOM thanked PAG for its work and the engagement it has with GAL.

### **Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG)**

- NATMAG’s key messages to GATCOM were noted.
- GAL’s Airspace Office have continued to engage with airlines through their airline engagement programme using the Airline Noise Performance Table as a guide to target poorer performing airlines. As a result of GAL’s discussions with airlines improvements in performance are becoming evident.
- NATMAG continues to review a selection of actions in the END Noise Action Plan (NAP). NATMAG will be asked to set a date for a Special Meeting towards the end of the year to undertake the “Year 4 review” of the delivery and progress made against each NAP action and whether there are matters that require a particular focus in the last year of the life of the NAP.
- Go-arounds continue to be a concern and GATCOM’s NATMAG members will continue to monitor the situation.
- Low Noise Arrivals Metric is a new nuanced way of looking at the glidepath flown as aircraft join the ILS. Deployment of the metric requires significant cross-industry integration, GAL will keep GATCOM informed as to when the new metric can be implemented.

### **Noise Management Board (NMB) – Executive Board (NEX) Report**

- The NMB Co-Chairs’ report was noted.
- The NEX Chair welcomed GAL’s announcement on further engagement on the proposed noise envelope concept on the basis of the NMB structure. The timescale to progress engagement was short and would likely impact on availability of resource for other NMB workplan projects. All parties involved in the engagement needed to be fully committed to proactively participate in that engagement. The Terms of Reference for the engagement group were being developed by GAL.
- The NMB continues to explore the possibility of voluntary measures for night flights to reduce the night noise impact for communities. The Gatwick Airlines Operators Committee’s response to the NMB’s direct approach is awaited.
- The study outcomes on the Fair and Equitable Distribution (FED) concepts had been independently assessed to help inform NMB stakeholder discussions. GAL has subsequently agreed to commission further work for a stage two study which may then give some options for definitions and some options where there are non-auditory factors such as psychology and perception. This is a nationally ground-breaking study and as such a national approach is needed which can then be applied to Gatwick. The work on the proposed noise envelope concept may however impact on the rate of progress on the FED study work.

### **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 are:

- GAL's [Financial Results](#) were published on 9 March. GAL's financial losses narrowed from £465m in 2020 to £370m in 2021. GAL is forecasting to handle approximately 30 million passengers in 2022.
- **Traffic** – In 2021 the airport handled 6.3 million passengers, 40% less than traffic in 2020 (10.6 million passengers) and significantly lower than 2019 traffic levels (46.6 million passengers). There are encouraging signs on the return of passenger volumes for the summer season due to changes to travel restrictions and the change to the slot rules. During April Gatwick is expected to handle between 2.5 – 3 million passengers. There are currently around 600-700 aircraft movements per day which is looking to return to around 800-900 per day during August.
- **Recruitment** - is a key issue for the whole aviation community across the UK but Gatwick is having fewer issues in this area than some other airports. The Gatwick community is working hard to recruit which has included hosting job fairs. There are around 2000 job vacancies to fill for the summer peak.
- **Inbound Tourism Recovery** – Tourism South East highlighted the value of tourism to the regional economy and the important role of Gatwick. Pre-pandemic, the inbound market was worth £2bn to the regional economy. The inbound tourism spend in the region declined by 90% last year but is predicted to go up by 50% this year. The skills gap and recruitment remain key issues for the tourism sector.
- **Public transport** – GAL is pleased to see the return of the Gatwick Express services which will remain as two an hour while the Gatwick Station Redevelopment Project is under construction. Bus and coach operators are also returning as demand returns.
- **Cycle2Work scheme** – was launched in March supporting staff who wish to use active travel to get to work.
- **Biodiversity Benchmark Award** – GAL received its 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive award from the Wildlife Trust. GAL's [Annual Biodiversity Review 2021](#) has also been published.
- **Section 106 agreement** – a light touch refresh of the agreement has been undertaken with the majority of the obligations rolling forward to the end of 2024. The key differences relate to the way funds are calculated, including the agreement now taking account of additional funds through the forecourt charging and red route schemes. The agreement is in the process of being signed by the parties.

## **SOUTH TERMINAL RE-OPENING & OUTLOOK**

- GAL gave an overview of the work involved in preparing for the re-opening of the South Terminal. Although GAL had undertaken some preparation works to the terminal during summer 2021, there was an 8 week lead-in time, following the Government's announcement on the change to the slot rules. The re-opening was equivalent to opening an airport the size of Luton.
- 48,000 passengers passed through the airport during first three days of the South Terminal opening. There were no operational issues and the re-opening attracted significant press coverage.
- GATCOM was shown a video to help put into context the scale of the project "[Great to have you back Sierra Tango on Vimeo](#)"
- GAL was congratulated for the way in which it had managed the re-opening and the transfer of airline operations from the North Terminal. The passenger environment was welcoming. The PAG had made many comments and welcomed the positive engagement with GAL.

## **MAIN RUNWAY RESURFACING PROJECT**

- GAL presented an overview of the main runway resurfacing project.
- GAL started preparation for the resurfacing project in November 2021. Two asphalt batching plants have been established which is where the asphalt will be produced. This will be mainly daytime working.
- The resurfacing work commences in April through to mid-July. During this period the construction teams will be working both day and night shifts. The use of main runway will switch to the use of the northern runway during the night from 21:00 through to

0530 hours each night between Sunday and Thursday. The capacity constraints of the northern runway are being discussed with airlines in order to manage flight schedules during the night operations.

- The main runway will be brought back into operation each morning at 0530 ready for the first wave of departures.
- The works will be dependent on weather conditions.
- GAL has engaged with Crawley Borough Council under the requirements of Section 61 license which takes into account noise impacts from the works, dust and mitigation measures needed.
- Flight performance will continue to be monitored and reported to NATMAG in the usual way.
- There is a water management plan in place to protect the River Mole/watercourse from possible contamination.

### **NORTHERN RUNWAY PROJECT - UPDATE**

- The matters raised in the [Secretariat's report](#) – further engagement on the proposed noise envelope concept and the correspondence with the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign on the carbon cost values used by GAL in its preliminary economic impact assessment - were considered.

#### **Proposed Noise Envelope Concept**

- Reference was made to the best practice used by Heathrow Airport Limited in its noise envelope design process.
- Reference was also made to the environmental and amenity groups' request that the principles set out in the CAA's CAP 1129 be used by GAL in evolving the design of the noise envelope.
- GAL confirmed that a thorough process is being followed through the DCO process to obtain comments on the proposed noise envelope concept. The NMB membership will form the basis of the mechanism to take forward further engagement on the feedback GAL received to the proposal in the pre-application consultation document.
- GAL is looking at the detail of how engagement will be taken forward but confirmed that it would follow the planning consent order process guidance, as the CAA's CAP 1129 was not guidance or policy.
- There was a concern about the under-representation of Parish and Town Councils on the NMB. GAL advised that it was aiming to build upon the NMB Community Forum membership to include additional council representation for this engagement process.
- See also the comments from the NMB Co-Chairs report above about timescale and commitment to resource the engagement work.

#### **Carbon Cost Values**

- GAL advised that at the time of the BEIS issuing the new carbon cost values, it had already announced the start of the pre-application consultation and all the consultation material had been prepared for publication. GAL reassured GATCOM that it is not unusual during the preparation of an application for things to change, such as policy or new policy consultations and an example of the Government's consultation on the Jet Zero strategy was given, all of which will need to be taken into account when finalising an application.
- GAL is aware of comments of consultees and different economic analysis prepared by different groups. GAL will use the latest information and values and assessments required when finalising and submitting its application. It will be for the Examining Authority to take a view on the assessments submitted with the application and how they have been carried out.
- DfT advised that it was looking at how the BEIS costings are interpreted for transport projects analysis. It is a complex matter as the DfT has separate guidance - Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) – which is used to appraise transport scheme proposals and as aviation is an international business it is a sector that is already carbon traded

which makes assessments more complicated. This is recognised in the [Government's Jet Zero consultation – see para 2.10](#). DfT confirmed there was no requirement at the current time for transport scheme proposers to update their analysis based on recently issued BEIS cost values.

- GATCOM acknowledged it is a complex area. The following comments were made by a couple of members:
  - there is a need for GAL to give the public the opportunity to consider the new information produced by GAL, as well as by others who have assessed the information, and to be aware of the value of the project to the local community before the application is submitted.
  - GAL needs to be more proactive advising the public of the changed circumstances and of the need to revisit the economic/carbon cost impact assessment as the information currently available as part of the consultation material could be deemed to be misleading.

## **Project Update**

GAL [presented](#) an update. The key points are:

- around 6,500 consultation responses had been received from a wide range of stakeholders, interested parties and local people and community groups commenting on all aspects of the proposed scheme. There were a mix of views from those in support of the benefits the project would bring to those who had serious concerns about the negative impacts. Some responses had requested more information on specific aspects of the scheme.
- all feedback is being analysed with each comment being individually coded with codes relating to a particular response and then with comments being grouped into themes. GAL will consider how the comments can be taken into account and used to develop the project further. GAL will as part of its Report of Consultation explain how it has taken on board feedback.
- GAL explained some of the key themes and feedback coming from the consultation including how the project is compatible with the Government's commitments for climate change and whether or not the project would have an impact on the Government meeting its net zero obligations.
- In response to the themes, GAL's work is currently focused on ongoing studies, assessments and continuing stakeholder engagement, including:
  - Engaging with National Highways on addressing concerns about the North Terminal junction designs. A new concept design is being developed for that junction which will be subject to further discussion and consultation with National Highways and other stakeholders.
  - Progressing the Car Parking Strategy including looking at car parking numbers and locations.
  - Engaging with Natural England on the technical aspects of ammonia deposition and the impact on the sensitive ecological sites.
  - The proposed Noise Envelope Concept and continuing engagement.
  - Updating demand assessments for associated new offices and hotels.
  - Engaging with the Environment Agency on its new forecasts for future river flows which may mean that GAL will have to change its design of water mitigation measures, construction and water management strategy.
  - The location of the proposed recycling (CARE) centre.
  - Assessing requirements under the Environment Act to achieve biodiversity balance.
- GAL intends to undertake a targeted and focused 28 days consultation on the proposed changes to the highways junction design during the summer using the same consultation approach as the main pre-application consultation and in line with the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC). GAL may also use the opportunity to provide an overall project update covering GAL's recent work as GAL finalises the DCO application towards the end of the year.

- There was interest from one member in the geographical spread/location of those responding to the consultation. GAL advised that a comprehensive Report of Consultation will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and it will be for the Inspectorate to decide whether further information was required. The Report of Consultation would not include all the detailed individual responses (unless this was requested by PINS) or the geographical locations of the individual respondents.
- Concerns remain from some members about the impact of the project on the capacity of the local highway network further afield from Gatwick. GAL confirmed that the traffic model takes into account traffic from a wide area around the airport and that GAL is working with National Highways as well as West Sussex and Surrey county councils on the traffic impact assessment.
- There were no matters over and above those matters already raised by GATCOM in its response to the consultation that it wished to raise at this time ahead of the DCO application submission.

## **RAIL SERVICES UPDATE**

GTR [presented](#) an update and the changes to the rail industry and current operations.

The key points to note are:

- GTR has signed the DfT's New National Rail Contract (NRC) on 1 April. The NRC is the interim measure before the move to the new Great British Railways contract, which is expected to be let in around 3 years' time. The NRC can be extended at the discretion of the DfT. In the future train operating companies will move to the new Passenger Services Contract system under Great British Railways.
- Growing passenger numbers, safety, punctuality, accessible and flexible travel are the key focus under the new contract. GTR has a plan to get back on track – they need to have the resources available, they need sufficient capacity to meet current demand and the operation needs to be affordable.
- Pre-pandemic passenger numbers were around 6 million passengers per week and fell to around 250,000 per week during the pandemic. As lockdown restrictions ended passenger numbers started to return and reached approximately 65-70% of pre-pandemic levels in November 2021. Following the Omicron wave and the easing of working from home restrictions, passenger numbers have recovered to, and then plateaued at the levels seen last Autumn. However from the airport perspective, with the opening of the South Terminal GTR is expecting to see passenger numbers grow.
- The current usage of rail travel has changed from pre-pandemic behaviours with weekend numbers recovering faster in percentage terms than during the week, albeit it should be noted that weekend numbers remain lower in absolute terms than on the weekday – e.g 500,000 on a Saturday representing approximately 85% of pre-covid, vs 750,000 on a Thursday representing 70% of pre-covid. Tuesday-Thursday are now the busiest weekdays. This has had an impact on funding and revenues. GTR is not expecting commuter travel to return to pre-pandemic levels which means there is a revenue gap of around £350-£550m per year (based on current usage the rail industry nationally has a £3bn revenue gap). GTR's business model needs to change to reflect what is affordable and is under pressure to reduce its cost base. GTR will need to monitor and review passenger usage over the coming months and implications for future timetables.
- GTR is currently running a timetable which has room for growth and is actively encouraging people to use rail travel, such as participating in the Government's "Great British Rail Sale".
- Gatwick Express resumed operations on 3 April with two services per hour. The frequency of service is determined by the station redevelopment construction works whereby platforms 5 and 6 are not in operation reducing capacity on the main line. GTR confirmed that the 4X Gatwick Express services per hour would be possible in May 2023 once the platform works are complete, subject to demand and funding.

- Workforce and staff availability has been a challenge. 21,000 days of productivity with drivers not being available was lost during the pandemic and there is a backlog of 8000 training days which is currently being addressed.

GTR was invited to update GATCOM again in a few months' time when there was more certainty about passenger travel and work patterns.

### **GATCOM'S INDICATIVE WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23**

GATCOM agreed its indicative work programme for 2022-23.

### **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO SERVE ON NATMAG**

Following a request for nominations, Cllr. Caroline Salmon, Mole Valley District Council, was appointed to serve on NATMAG until July 2023.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of GATCOM will take place on Thursday 21 July 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

**Paula Street**  
**Secretariat**