

GATCOM January 2025

AGENDA ITEM 7 – MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS

Question 1 from Cllr Malcolm Fillmore (Rusper Parish Council)

Given the Government’s wish to encourage Heathrow to go ahead with their third runway, how does he and the Board consider such a development would impact on the viability of the Northern Runway project, particularly in the context of EasyJet stating they would desire to move some of their services there from Gatwick and also the known preference of some of Gatwick’s long-haul airlines to operate out of Heathrow as a hub airport.

Response to Question 1 from Gatwick Airport Limited

Several questions about the LHR R3 scheme were answered during the course of the DCO Examination and the potential impact of Heathrow opening a third runway in the early-2030s was assessed and reported on as part of the DCO submission [[APP-075](#) Section 4]. Therefore, the potential impact of growth at Heathrow is already well understood by the GAL Management Team and its Board.

It should be noted that the Heathrow R3 scheme already has Government policy support in the form of the 2018 Airports National Policy Statement. However, no formal recent public consultation has been carried out, no planning application has been prepared and any application would need to be taken through the examination process. Furthermore, we are not aware of any airspace change proposal to operate the new runway. Therefore, LHR R3 timescales remain very uncertain in contrast to the NRP scheme which has been through the planning process, does not require airspace change and a decision is expected shortly.

DfT aviation demand forecast issued as part of the SAF mandate consultation continue to show a steady increase in demand over the long term out to 2050 further reinforcing the need for additional capacity at Gatwick.

The case for the Northern Runway Project with a capital cost at £2.2bn - a fraction of the cost of LHR R3, bringing significant economic benefits and with significantly lower airport charges attractive to all airlines, is very strong.

Question 2 from Cllr Mike George (Horley Town Council)

As Network Rail withdrew their objection to the DCO over their earlier concerns about lack of capacity on the Brighton Main Line as & when 54% passengers are using public transport to & from the Airport what agreements & remedial actions has GAL reached with Network Rail to overcome their earlier capacity concerns?

Response to Question 2 from Gatwick Airport Limited

GAL held constructive engagement with Network Rail throughout the DCO Examination process and provided additional technical material and clarification related to the assessment of rail demand and impacts contained in the DCO

Transport Assessment [[REP3-058](#)] and relevant appendices [[APP-260](#) and [APP-262](#)]. The clarifications were provided in response to remarks made by Network Rail during the Examination and as part of ongoing engagement. As a consequence of the continued dialogue GAL concluded a Statement of Common Ground with Network Rail which was submitted at Deadline 9 of the Examination [[REP9-092](#)] as well as a Joint Statement on behalf of both parties submitted concurrently [[REP9-125](#)]. The Surface Access Commitments put forward by GAL were also amended during Examination to explicitly provide support and funding for rail-related mitigation, notably in Commitments 14A and 14B [[REP9-043](#)]. Progress with these matters allowed Network Rail to withdraw its objection to the Application before the end of the Examination Period.

Question 3 from Ed Winter (GACC)

GATCOM previously prompted UKACC to raise the subject of Compensation for the effects of Airspace Change with government. GACC are aware that the DfT have responded that an advice note will be going to Ministers in the middle of the year to ensure they are briefed on it when they next consider changes to airspace noise policy.

1. At Gatwick there is an urgent need to address this subject without delay because airspace modernisation at Gatwick is planned to happen before other airports.
2. All the airspace modernisation arrival flight paths Gatwick has shortlisted (and the CAA has approved) would concentrate flights compared to the status quo.
3. There is extensive independent academic evidence that increases in aviation noise reduce property values.
4. In 2017 the then government committed to incorporating airspace changes into the existing compensation policy "*so that compensation policy would be the same for all changes which affect noise impacts regardless of whether they are a result of infrastructure change, or a tier 1 or 2 airspace change overseen by the CAA*".
5. However, the Land Compensation Act 1973, which provides the statutory basis for compensation, requires compensation to be payable where noise has increased as a result of physical works on land (such as runway or apron alterations) but not where there are no associated works (as might be the case with an airspace change).
6. Since 2017 governments have made no attempt to amend the Land Compensation Act, so the commitment made then has not been delivered, despite DfT knowing that the noise effects of an airspace change can be more significant than the effects of physical works at an airport.
7. In 2017 the government also incorporated additional wording in its aviation noise policy to encourage airspace change promoters to consider compensation for significantly increased overflight as a result of airspace changes. As far as we are aware Gatwick has not done so.

Question that GACC would like GATCOM to ask the Government. Why has government not delivered the 2017 commitment to incorporate airspace changes into the existing compensation policy "*so that compensation policy would be the same for all changes which affect noise impacts regardless of whether they are a*

result of infrastructure change or a tier 1 or 2 airspace change overseen by the CAA" and does government believe there is any justification for compensation to be payable in relation to physical changes at airports but not airspace changes, given the noise effects of an airspace change can be more significant than) the effects of physical works at an airports?" At Gatwick there is an urgent need to address this subject without delay because airspace modernisation at Gatwick is planned to happen before other airports.

Response to question 3 from GATCOM

The matter was referred to UKACC by GATCOM as it is a national issue not just one for Gatwick. UKACC then raised the issue at various meetings and followed up with a letter to the DfT to highlight the need for clarity. The DfT responded to UKACC and that letter can be found [here](#) for information .

At recent DfT meetings including Airspace Noise Engagement Group and Airspace Modernisation Stakeholder Engagement Group, UKACC has sought further updates. As a result, the DfT have confirmed that officials are producing an advice note for Ministers later this year.

GATCOM recommends we wait for the outcome of that advice note and any resulting publication from the DfT and also information/certainty on the timing of consultations on airspace change proposals. In the meantime, should it be necessary to raise this issue in responses to any related consultations GATCOM will do so, taking into account the views of all members.