

**Minutes of the meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) held on 30 January 2025**

<b>Present:</b>	
Tom Crowley	Chairman
Cllr Eddie Lord	Burstow Parish Council
Cllr Helyn Clack	Surrey County Council
Cllr Malcolm Fillmore	Rusper Parish Council
Cllr Margot McArthur	Kent County Council
Cllr Mike George	Horley Town Council
Cllr Richard Biggs	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Cllr Nicholas White	Tandridge District Council
Ed Winter	Environmental and Amenity Groups
Igor Bartkiv	London Chamber
Samantha Williams	Passenger Advisory Group
Cllr Steve Waight	West Sussex County Council
Angie Hills	ABTA
Cllr Bob Bowdler	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Christopher Philips	Mid Sussex District Council
Hugh McConnellogue	Airline Operators Committee
Cllr Bob Noyce	Crawley Borough Council
Cllr Margaret Cooksey	Mole Valley District Council
Cllr Lisa Scott	Charlwood Parish Council
Samantha Williams	PAG Chair
Cllr Ruth Fletcher	Horsham District Council

<b>Also in attendance:</b>	
Stewart Wingate	Chief Executive Officer, GAL
Tim Norwood	Chief Planning Officer, GAL
Sam Fulton	Director of Communications and External Affairs, GAL
Alison Addy	Head of External Engagement & Policy, GAL
Matthew Ball	External Engagement Lead, GAL
Andy Sinclair	Head of Noise & Airspace Strategy, GAL
Baroness Margaret Ford	London Gatwick Chair
Monique Smart	GATCOM Secretariat

**1. Apologies and Welcomes**

1.1 Apologies were received from: Jonathan Drew (Chair NMOB), Graham Lake (GATCOM Technical Advisor), Ana Christie (Sussex Chamber of Commerce), Alan Jones (Burstow PC), Fran Downton (Tourism South East), Cllr Liz Kitchen (Horsham District Council), Stuart Pick (London Chamber), Robin Clarke (NATS).

1.2 The Chair offered congratulations to Angie Hills, ABTA's Head of Destinations and representative on GATCOM, who had been awarded an MBE in the King's New Year 2025 Honours List. The award is in recognition of her services to improving health, safety and security standards for British travellers abroad.

1.3 The Chair also offered congratulations to Baroness Margaret Ford of Cunninghame O.B.E, Chair of Gatwick Airport Limited, who has been named a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order (LVO), for her work as former Chair of the Buckingham Palace Reservicing Programme Challenge Board.

## **2. Minutes Of The Last Meeting**

2.1 Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of GATCOM held on 21 November 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

## **3. London Gatwick Chair**

3.1 The Chair welcomed Baroness Margaret Ford of Cunninghame O.B.E. to her first GATCOM meeting. Baroness Ford joined London Gatwick as Chair in late 2023. She is one of the most experienced chairs in the UK having chaired four public companies and acted as senior director on a further four including Buckingham Palace Reservicing Challenge Board, Lothian Health Board, English Partnerships (now Homes England), the Olympic Park Legacy Company and Deloitte UK's Audit Governance Board.

3.2 Baroness Ford thanked GATCOM for the welcome and acknowledged the vital role of Airport Consultative Committees and the diverse range of stakeholder views they provide. She stated that she hoped to attend future in person meetings to hear the views and relay issues back to the Board.

3.3 Baroness Ford also reflected on the American Airlines tragic accident that had happened overnight.

## **4. GATCOM Steering Group – Chairman's Report**

4.1 The Chair of GATCOM introduced his report (copies attached to the signed minutes) of the last Steering Group Meeting that took place on 16 January 2025.

4.2 GATCOM agreed the following recommendation from the Steering Group:

1. For Steering Group, PAG and GATCOM to further review the options for the Passenger/Consumer vacancy after the presentation from TravelCare to GATCOM.
2. GATCOM Secretariat to follow up on the suggestion of a University or College representative for GATCOM and bring the detail of that to a future Steering Group for discussion prior to any recommendation to GATCOM.
3. Include a feature on GATCOM in the next Gatwick 'In Touch' community newsletter.
4. Agree and publish the revised GATCOM Factsheet.
5. Agree the Members handbook and issue to all GATCOM members.
6. Await the outcome of Local Government reorganisation before undertaking any further GATCOM membership review.

4.3 Regarding recommendation 6 above, the GATCOM Vice Chair and member for Surrey County Council briefly explained the process and timescales for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. She explained that the government plans to create

mayors in areas that currently do not have them and in addition to replace the current County, District and Borough Councils with Unitary Authorities. All the County Councils in the GATCOM area have expressed an interest in being in the priority programme for this and an announcement from government is expected soon to confirm which areas will progress first. If identified in the priority programme it is likely that the scheduled May 2025 County Council elections will be postponed for a year. Any new set up will inevitably result in the need for GATCOM to review its membership and ensure we have the right representation. It was noted that the current Town and Parish Councils are set to remain.

## **5. Passenger Advisory Group**

5.1 The Chair of PAG, Samantha Williams, introduced the report (copies attached to the signed minutes) of the last PAG meeting that took place in December 2024 and activities during the last quarter.

5.2 It was previously reported that PAG had successfully recruited three new members, and Samantha was pleased that all were in attendance at GATCOM today. This brings PAG up to full complement with 16 volunteer members.

5.3 Samantha also explained that PAG had received and reviewed two referrals in the past 3 months. These are complaints where the customer is not satisfied with the response from Gatwick Airport and the PAG volunteers review how the complaint has been dealt with and can result in recommendations to Gatwick Airport.

5.4 Lastly Samantha mentioned that she is working with GAL to ensure that briefings following major incidents that affect passengers, are filtered down to GATCOM and PAG members.

5.5 GATCOM noted:

- 1) the work of PAG and its engagement with GAL as the 'critical friend' and support its role as advocate on behalf of passengers.
- 2) If GATCOM members or the public, see or experience issues to report this at the airport to allow rapid resolution (or report via the Airport Community App for those who have access to this).

## **6. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

6.1 GATCOM received a report from Stewart Wingate, Chief Executive Officer, GAL on activity at the airport over the past quarter (copy attached to the signed minutes). The key points to note are:

- 2024 passenger numbers were over 43 million which is 93% of 2019 numbers.
- A number of new routes have been introduced enhancing travel options for passengers.
- This winter, 11 new services were launched, bringing the total to 2227 destinations from 55 airlines.

- There have been challenges including a security incident, a train fire at Gatwick station and weather including fog and some snow.
- London Gatwick continues to invest in the winter fleet, £17million over the next six years, to ensure resilience.
- London Gatwick, in collaboration with easyJet, is trialling Smart Stand technology that uses AI to help 'turnarounds' and allow the plane to be ready for departure.
- As part of an ongoing £2billion investment programme, a number of key projects were completed in 2024 including the refurbishment of the North Terminal departure lounge, the rapid exit taxiway and a new multi-story car park for the North Terminal. This investment will continue into 2025 with the construction of the Pier 6 extension, refurbishment of the South Terminal departure lounge and the completion of the installation of the next-generation security scanners.
- The Secretary of States decision for the Development Consent Order application to bring the Northern Runway into routine use is due on or before 27 February.
- In relation to economic regulation, the CAA is expected to publish its decision on the London Gatwick proposal to extend the 'contracts and commitments' framework to March 2029. The CAAs initial view is that the proposal is likely to be in the consumer interest.
- Applications for funding from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust remain open until March 31<sup>st</sup>.

6.2 Questions from members as a result of the CEO report, and the responses given, included the following:

- Questioned about the government proposals to increase business rates on Airports. Stewart Wingate responded stating that London Gatwick, like other airports across the UK, are concerned by the impact of the proposed business rates revaluations that could see business rates paid by airports rise from approx £200m per annum to over £1bn per year overnight. London Gatwick, along with other airports, have written to Govt about these proposals, which put long term investment in the sector at risk.

## **7. Member's Questions**

7.1 Three written question were received in advance of the meeting. The questions and responses are included below:

### **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 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 -, 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.

In response to a supplementary question from Ed Winter asking Gatwick Airport Limited if they have compensation, GAL responded stating this had been covered previously at GATCOM and compensation has not been considered but a scheme for insulation is offered and is in excess of current requirements for mitigation.

## **8. Biodiversity Management at Gatwick Airport**

8.1 Darcey Holder, Senior Ecologist at London Gatwick provided GATCOM with a presentation about biodiversity at Gatwick Airport. The presentation can be found [here](#).

8.2 Questions from members as a result of the presentation, and the responses given, included the following:

- Do GAL have any plans to protect the ancient woodland near Charlwood Road from potential nearby housebuilding. Darcy confirmed she is in discussion with the Public Rights of Way Officer and GAL will continue to maintain the footpaths to encourage people to remain on the footpaths. In other areas boardwalks have been used and this could be considered.
- Members were interested to know if any development was planned, as part of the DCO application, on the biodiversity areas identified on the map in the presentation. GAL confirmed that some of the Land East Zone is proposed for water treatment which involves the creation of reed beds which has ecology benefits.

## **9. Gatwick TravelCare**

9.1 GATCOM welcomed Lauren McDaniel, Chair of Trustees from Gatwick TravelCare. Lauren provided a presentation about the organisation and the services they provide and the partners they work with at Gatwick Airport. The presentation can be found [here](#).

9.2 Lauren confirmed that TravelCare's strategy over the next few years is to look at where they best seek support and funding from the agencies and stakeholders they support.

## **10. Airspace Update**

10.1 Andy Sinclair, Head of Noise and Airspace Strategy provided a number of updates in relation to airspace and noise.

10.2 The Route 4 airspace change is progressing. In the next few weeks, the pre consultation submission of material and background data will be shared with the CAA ahead of a gateway decision and subsequent public consultation. Subject to CAA approval consultation is currently expected to commence by the end of Quarter 2 2025.

10.3 A consultation on the setting up of a UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) ended in December. Gatwick Airport, as well as GATCOM, provided responses to that consultation and were broadly supportive but did raise questions around governance, local stakeholder engagement and finance. The result of that consultation is expected towards the middle of 2025.

10.4 London Gatwick, jointly with NATS and the Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG), has put forward a proposal for initial deployment of the FASI route structures to the south of the airport, called London Airspace South (LAS).

10.5 It was previously reported that a full public consultation on LAS was expected in early 2025 but that has now been delayed as the GAL team take into account additional World Health Organisation (WHO) metrics and the Fair and Equitable Distribution (FED) report. The earliest a consultation is now expected is 2026. Some GATCOM members expressed support for the delay of the LAS consultation to take into account the additional factors including the FED report.

10.6 The Environment representative on GATCOM was however disappointed that the same was not the case for the Route 4 consultation and also asked whether a future route design was likely to concentrate traffic further down the track of Route 4 compared to today, given the drive for increased systemisation in the airspace. GAL explained that dispersion due to vectoring on Route 4 should continue, as the network beyond Route 4 was not changing and therefore air traffic control vectoring practices would most likely continue as today. In relation to the use of metrics drawn from the FED report, having agreed the methodology for the appraisal of the Route 4 options with local stakeholders during an early stage of the process, it would not be appropriate to change a previously agreed methodology at this stage. Separately it had been agreed with stakeholders during the development of Design Principles that GAL would propose route options within the 3km Noise Preferential Route (NPR) conformance monitoring corridor. Given this geographical constraint, it is not thought that a FED metric assessment would offer a sufficiently different perspective to the existing suite of noise and overflight metrics. However, feedback based on FED could be submitted by stakeholders as part of the public consultation and would be taken on board.

## **11. Noise Management Board**

11.1 The Chair referred members to the NMB update report and work programme (copies attached to the signed minutes). He explained that unfortunately, neither Jonathan Drew nor Cara Mulholland was able to attend GATCOM today.

11.2 The Chair thanked the NMB and GAL for arranging the recent Reduced Night Noise trial and Fair and Equitable Distribution study briefings. He and many GATCOM members and community representatives attended them, and the feedback has been very positive.

11.3 The Chair also highlighted the issue of Land Use Planning that came up at the FED briefing and is also an issue that he and Jonathan Drew have been championing for the NMB and GATCOM. The DfT have recently sent a letter to Local Planning Authorities around Gatwick (and other airports) asking for examples and evidence so they can better understand any concerns that local planning authorities may have around existing guidance in relation to the impact of aviation noise and its consideration in planning decisions. The Chair made a plea to members to encourage their Local Authority to respond to the DfT on this important issue.

11.4 In the absence of Jonathan Drew, Andy Sinclair provided a brief update on the NMB including that the first meeting of the Oversight Board and the Community

Assembly had taken place in December and feedback had generally been positive. Unlike previous terms of the NMB membership is now open to all individuals and they can sign up by visiting the NMB section of the GAL website [here](#).

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

12.1 Mike George, GATCOM's lead member for noise, introduced his report (copies attached to the signed minutes) that summarised the key messages and recommendations arising from recent NaTMAG meetings.

12.2 Mike was pleased to report that Defra have now approved the Noise Action Plan and NaTMAG would start reviewing actions at their upcoming quarterly meeting.

12.3 GATCOM agreed that Cllr Philip Lunn take the place of Cllr Bob Bowdler on NaTMAG until 31 July 2025.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting of GATCOM and its Sub-Groups**

13.1 GATCOM noted the next meetings of GATCOM, and its sub-groups and associated meetings are as follows:

GATCOM - Thursday 24 April 2025 at 2.00pm (Virtual)  
GATCOM Steering Group - Thursday 3 April 2025  
Passenger Advisory Group - Thursday 20 March 2025  
NaTMAG Thursday 13 February 2025

NMB Community Assembly 12 March 2025  
NMB Oversight Board 26 March 2025

It was requested that the times for the NMB meetings be confirmed so that diaries can be updated.

The meeting concluded at 3.42pm.