

Unconfirmed minutes - to be confirmed at the meeting of GATCOM on 28 July 2011

Agenda item no.

GATCOM

Minutes of the meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee held on 7 April 2011.

Present: Dr. John Godfrey (Chairman)

Keith Blake	- Crawley Borough Council
Andrew Brock (substitute)	- Mid Sussex District Council
Trevor Brock	- Burstow Parish Council
John Byng	- Environmental and Amenities Groups
Barry Ealey	- Gatwick AOC
Nick Hague	- Charlwood Parish Council
Peter Hall	- Passenger Representative
Liz Kitchen	- Horsham District Council
Richard Olliver	- Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Susan Parsons	- ABTA
Dorothy Ross-Tomlin	- Surrey County Council
Bryan Reynolds	- Which?
Jeremy Taylor	- Gatwick Diamond Business Association (CADIA)

Also present:

Stewart Wingate – Chief Executive Officer, Gatwick Airport Limited
Andrew McCallum – Director of Communications and External Affairs, Gatwick Airport Limited
Sean McKee – Head of Public Affairs, Gatwick Airport Limited
Tom Denton – Head of Climate Change and Environment, Gatwick Airport Limited
James Bradley – Surface Access Manager, Gatwick Airport Limited
Frank Evans – Department for Transport
Barry Smith – Deputy Honorary Secretary
Paula Street – Assistant Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Barnard, Mr. Elkin, Mr. Hersey, Mr. Jones, Ms. Knox, Mr. Maltby, Mr. Lake, Mr. Pledger, Mr. Redfern, Mr. Woodward-Nutt and Mr. Yarwood.

MINUTES

157. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January, 2011 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Hever – Noise Issues

158. Reference was made to minute no. 122 regarding the informal working group involving some local residents, which had been set up to look at noise issues in that area. The group had met twice and its last meeting was scheduled to take place in June 2011. The conclusions of the group would be shared with the local MP, Sir John Stanley, as well as with NATMAG. It was highlighted by a member that the noise issues group had been established due to persistent complaints being logged by one or two local residents from a particular area. It was important to recognise that there were a great number of communities around Gatwick that also suffered from aircraft noise disturbance but did not complain on a regular basis which should not be overlooked. It was also stressed that if slight changes to flying practices were made to offset the noise disturbance in one area could result in increasing the disturbance suffered in another area.

159. Mr. Wingate added that there was a need to look at the governance structure of how noise issues at Gatwick were considered as there was a need to adopt a more coherent and inclusive approach. He hoped to present proposals for change at the next meeting of GATCOM.

Short Stay Car Parking Charges

160. Reference was made to minute no. 123 and the Passenger Advisory Group's request to GAL to review its short stay car parking charges during the evening period. Mr. Wingate was pleased to report that following a review a 'West End Special' car parking product had been

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introduced in the South Terminal short stay multi-storey car parks. Between the hours of 1700 and 0200 the car parking fee would be capped at £12.50. GATCOM thanked GAL for introducing a car parking product that would be of benefit to local residents.

GATCOM STEERING GROUP – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

161. The Chairman introduced his new style report on the issues considered at the meeting of the GATCOM Steering Group on 17 March 2011 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Independent Technical Advice

162. Mr. Wingate was pleased to report that GAL recognised the importance of GATCOM continuing to have access to independent technical advice and had therefore allocated a budget of £10,000 per annum for GATCOM to use to appoint an independent technical adviser. GATCOM welcomed GAL's positive support and hoped that an appointment could be made as quickly as possible. Mr. Smith advised that the specification and role for the position was currently being developed and it was proposed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, GATCOM's lead member for noise issues and the Secretariat, be involved in the selection process and agree the appointment. GATCOM considered the proposed appointment process along with a member suggestion that a small group of GATCOM members be appointed to consider a shortlist of candidates and agree the appointment. However it was felt that process needed to be kept as simple as possible and an appointment made at the earliest possible time.

163. Resolved – That the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, GATCOM's lead member for noise and the Secretariat, select and agree the appointment of an independent technical adviser.

Airport Master Plan

164. GATCOM noted that GAL was undertaking a review of its Airport Master Plan and it was hoped to launch a public consultation during the summer on the draft reviewed plan. The Chairman suggested that, in order to enable members to be appraised of the content of the reviewed plan and ask specific questions, GAL host a seminar on the morning of the next GATCOM meeting. Mr. Wingate agreed this should be possible and the Secretariat would inform members of the arrangements.

CAA Update

165. Mrs. Street reported that the CAA had now issued a consultation on the role, membership and work of the new Aviation Consumer Advocate Panel (ACAP). One of the issues to be addressed is how the ACAP should interact with other consumer organisations and the passenger groups of airport consultative committees. As the deadline for responses was 30 June before the next meeting of GATCOM, it was agreed that the Secretariat would seek the views of all members and the suggested draft response be considered and agreed by the GATCOM Steering group at its meeting on 30 June.

166. Mr. Evans also added that the DfT was continuing with its review of the guidelines for airport consultative committees and he hoped to present a paper providing an update on the review at the annual meeting of UKACCs in June. Members asked if a copy of the paper could also be considered by the GATCOM Steering Group. Mr. Evans noted the request.

AIRPORT COMMENTARY

167. GATCOM received the Chief Executive's commentary on activity at the airport since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Improving Customer Service

168. Mr. Wingate was pleased to report that half of GAL's front-line staff had achieved a City & Guild Level 2 Award in 'Delivering Excellent Customer Service' through the airport's partnership working with Tourism South East. The remaining 750 staff would complete their training by October this year.

Immigration Initiatives

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169. GATCOM welcomed the airport's engagement with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and the joint working arrangements that had been agreed to improve operational efficiency and the experience for passengers arriving at Gatwick. The length of time passengers had to queue at Immigration had been an area of concern to GATCOM for a number of years and GAL's paper presented to the South East Airports Taskforce was supported particularly the initiatives to improve queuing times. Reference was made to the pre-screening support initiative which was exploring the feasibility of GAL security staff conducting a "pre-immigration step" in the process to help support UKBA staff in eliminating queues. Mr. Wingate emphasised that the initiative would need careful consideration but it was hoped that a trial could be conducted in the near future. He would keep GATCOM informed of progress.

Passenger Queuing - General

170. Reference was made to a number of areas throughout the airport where passengers experienced queuing such as at check-in, the boarding gate and in some retail outlets. It was questioned whether GAL was also working with the handling agents/airlines and retailers to address the issue. Mr. Wingate advised that GAL was promoting its passenger commitments and seeking third parties' active endorsement across all areas of the airport's operation. As an example he informed members that GAL was intending to work with a Formula 1 team to help improve efficiency of aircraft turnaround procedures, the results of which would benefit airlines, passengers and GAL.

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING'S REPORT

171. GATCOM noted the report by Crawley Borough Council's Director for Environment and Housing on planning applications determined and outstanding in respect of Gatwick since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes).

PASSENGER ADVISORY GROUP

172. GATCOM received the report from Mr Hall, the Chairman of the PAG, in respect of activities of the PAG since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes). GATCOM noted that since the publication of his report, PAG members had been invited to participate in a further meeting with GAL's security project team to discuss the proposed new security autogates.

173. Mr. Hall was pleased to report that following a request from PAG in January, new facilities for young passengers and families had now been installed in both terminals and much positive feedback was being received. GAL had commissioned some market research to take place over the busy Easter break to establish whether the new facilities were right and addressed the key needs for travelling families. PAG would be kept informed of the results of the market research and any other issues arising.

174. Mr. Hall also thanked GAL for the significant involvement PAG had had in the design of the new waiting facilities for passengers requiring special assistance.

175. GATCOM also noted that PAG's continued engagement with Southern Railways to secure improvements to the accessibility of the Gatwick Express rolling stock.

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR UK AVIATION: SCOPING DOCUMENT

176. GATCOM considered a report by the Secretariat giving details of the Government's recently published "Developing a Sustainable Framework for UK Aviation: Scoping Document" (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mrs. Street advised that there was a six months consultation period and outlined a suggested programme for GATCOM to consider its response.

177. Mr. Evans highlighted that in the Secretary of State's Foreword to the Scoping Document it advised that promoting sustainable aviation was one of the five reform policies of the DfT with a specific objective of adopting a sustainable framework for aviation in the UK by 2013. The Government wished to take a fresh look at aviation and how it operated. Mr. Evans drew members' attention to some of the key questions posed in the consultation document, particularly in relation to local impacts and the question of dispersal or concentration of flight paths, the

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concept of better managing aircraft noise disturbance and balancing the economic, social and environmental interests.

178. The Chairman recognised that the various interests represented on GATCOM would have differing views on the development of a future aviation policy and but he hoped that members would be able to reach a consensus on some of the issues and questions posed in the Scoping Document, particularly in relation to the questions about the effectiveness of airport consultative committees and some of the local impacts questions.

179. Resolved – That:

- (1) the publication of the Government's aviation Scoping Document be welcomed;
- (2) GATCOM hopes to build a consensus on a range of areas concerning the long-term future of UK aviation; and
- (3) The suggested programme for considering GATCOM's response to the consultation as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the Secretariat's report be approved.

SOUTH EAST AIRPORTS TASKFORCE

180. Mr. Wingate reported on the meeting of the South East Airports Taskforce (SEAT) held on 21 March 2011. GAL had presented the joint paper prepared by GAL and UKBA on how they planned to work together to achieve operational efficiency and improve the experience for passengers at border control. GATCOM was pleased to learn that the paper was well received by SEAT and the DfT as it demonstrated a proactive approach on constructively improving the immigration service. It was hoped that other UK airports would follow GAL's lead on driving forward improvements.

181. GAL was to meet the Minister for Aviation the following week to present case studies that it would like SEAT to take forward which sought improvements across many areas of the airport's operation such as the improvements achieved in arrivals baggage delivery incentivised by the introduction of the airlines performance poster displayed in the baggage reclaim areas.

182. The next meetings of SEAT would take place on 23 May and 14 June. SEAT was due to report to the Secretary of State for Transport in July. Mr. Wingate had welcomed the full engagement of GAL in the work of SEAT over past year.

REFORM OF AIR PASSENGER DUTY – HM TREASURY CONSULTATION

183. GATCOM considered a paper by the Secretariat giving details of a consultation by HM Treasury on proposed reforms to Air Passenger Duty (APD) (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mrs. Street advised that whilst it was recognised that there would be differing views across the interests represented on GATCOM on the banding structure and the level at which APD should be set, the issue of whether a different level of APD should be set for regional airports outside London and the South East was a matter that warranted GATCOM's consideration.

184. Mr. Wingate advised that the industry recognised that it had to contribute to the achievement of climate change goals and economic recovery but there were concerns that this form of taxation disadvantaged the UK aviation industry especially as many EU countries were moving in the opposite direction. The Chancellor's decision to freeze APD at the current rate for a year was welcomed but GAL believed the Government should do more to ease the tax burden placed on UK air passengers and the industry as the current tax regime for aviation was punitive, disproportionate and unsustainable. GAL believed that introducing regional differentials into the system should be resisted as there was no evidence to suggest that it would make a significant difference in rebalancing regional economies.

185. Members considered the points raised in the Secretariat's paper and there was a general consensus that it was fair to include business jets in the taxation structure. As regards the suggestion of introducing a regional differential for airports outside London and the South East, members were unanimous that GATCOM's response should resist any form of regionalisation or a tax that would disadvantage passengers living and businesses located in the South East. Introducing differentials could also have a negative effect on the environment as passengers

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would be incentivised to travel greater distances to an airport outside their area where APD was lower. There was a need to ensure that the taxation structure was kept as simple and fair as possible.

186. Resolved – That:

- (1) the points raised in paragraph 4 of the Secretariat report be endorsed; and
- (2) subject to the inclusion of members' comments, the draft response be agreed via email with members of the GATCOM Steering Group.

FLIGHT EVALUATION UNIT (FEU) REPORT

187. GATCOM considered the quarterly report of the FEU (copy attached to signed minutes). Members noted that track keeping performance had improved slightly and the rolling average for CDA performance was also showing a continuing positive trend of improving. GAL was however continuing to work with the airlines and NATS to make further improvements. Some members commented on those airlines that had a history of poor track keeping performance and non-achievement of CDA procedures which needed to be addressed. GAL was therefore asked to give consideration to publishing performance information for each airline as this could provide an incentive to the poor performers to improve. The Chairman asked GAL to report back on this request at the next meeting.

188. Mr. Denton also reported that to the period 8 January 2011 only 31% of the night noise quota and 37% of the night movement limits had been used. A report on the full usage of the night noise regime for the winter period 2010/11 would be presented to the next meeting.

189. Mr. Denton also updated GATCOM on the community noise monitoring programme and advised that the mobile noise monitor at a new site in Hever would be in situ for a period of 12 months. A mobile noise monitor had also been moved from Rusper to a location in North Horley.

DFT NOISE EXPOSURE CONTOURS 2009

190. Members received a report from the Technical Adviser summarising the results of the DfT's noise monitoring for a period of summer 2009 (copy attached to the signed minutes). GATCOM noted that the results of the noise monitoring showed a modest improvement in the 2009 contours compared with the 2008 contours which was welcomed. However it was commented that the decline in traffic at Gatwick had also helped to contain the area covered by the contours. It was hoped that the noise climate would not deteriorate as traffic growth returned. Mr. Denton advised that the END Noise Action Plan (NAP) contained a number of actions to help contain the noise levels and to incentivise small improvements to the noise climate. Mr. Evans added that the END NAP was currently awaiting approval of the Minister.

191. Mr. Evans also advised that the DfT hoped to publish the 2010 contours in May/June 2011.

GATWICK TRACK REMODELLING AND STATION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME – PROGRAMME OF WORK

192. GATCOM received an update on the station upgrade project. The scheme would deliver a new platform, new signalling and changed track layout. The main station concourse would be improved and the additional platform 7 would be built between the current platform 6 and the car parks. The scheme design included new escalators and lifts to platforms 5 and 6 and space would be set aside to enable the widening of platforms 5 and 6 in a future project when funding was available. It was anticipated that the Gatwick Express services would use platforms 5 and 6.

193. Major construction work was planned to start in Autumn 2012, but as Gatwick Airport was a main gateway for visitors to the Olympic Games some elements of the scheme would be delivered prior to the commencement of the Games. These works included:

- Changing the concourse layout to improve passenger flow and reduce congestion

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- Improvements to the customer information screens and customer help point
- Enhancing the retail facilities
- Renewing the floor, ceiling, wall tiles and lighting to provide a better station environment

194. Mr. Hall was pleased to report that Network Rail had invited PAG's involvement in the project group looking at the design of the station concourse. Designs for the concourse improvements were currently being finalised and work schedules were being re-organised to meet the proposed new timescales. It was hoped that work could start in early 2012 for completion by June 2012.

195. The construction of the new platform and the track improvements would commence in Autumn 2012 for completion by the end of 2013.

196. Mr. Chapman, Network Rail confirmed that the current design for the station concourse could be adapted for fully gated, partially gated (not Gatwick Express platforms) and ungated. He explained that the requirement to fully gate the station by December 2011 was a commitment in the Southern franchise agreement.

197. GATCOM welcomed the investment in the station upgrade but there were concerns about the gating proposals. Members viewed the gating of the station as a retrograde step as it would further degrade the premium Gatwick Express service (one of the key selling points for the premium service was the ability to buy a ticket on the train). It was also not clear whether the train tickets sold on aircraft would work the automatic gates. Members also pointed out that equivalent services at Heathrow and Stansted operated ungated services which would impact on Gatwick's competitive position.

198. It was acknowledged that 'fare dodgers' at Gatwick were mainly using the Southern and First Capital Connect services and members felt that the case for partial gating at Gatwick Station should be considered so that the platforms serving the Gatwick Express could remain un-gated. If it was decided to fully gate the station, members urged Network Rail to give consideration to the installation of the wide disabled access style gates so that passengers with large amounts of luggage could negotiate the gates with greater ease.

199. Mr. Chapman confirmed that Network Rail was working with Southern so that the train operating company could fulfil its franchise obligations but consideration was being given to gating/partial gating options. Mr. Wingate confirmed that GAL would meet with Network Rail and Southern within the next month to discuss this.

200. The Chairman thanked Mr. Chapman for the update and invited him to attend a future meeting with a representative of Southern Railways once a design for the concourse had been agreed.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

201. Members noted the next meetings of GATCOM as follows:

GATCOM Steering Group – Thursday 30 June 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Passenger Advisory Group – Thursday 7 July 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

GATCOM – Thursday 28 July 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

202. GATCOM also noted that the next meetings of Gatwick Airport Limited's Ground Noise Committee and Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) would take place on Thursday 19 May 2011 at 9.30 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. respectively.

Chairman