

GATWICK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Consultative Committee held on 21st October, 2004.

Present:

Mr. P.W. Bryant (Chairman)

Mr. G. Blundell-Pound	-	International Air Carriers Association
Mr. J.T. Brock	-	Burstow Parish Council
Mr. S. Buck	-	ABTA
Mr. A. Crane	-	Crawley Borough Council
Mr. C. Hersey	-	Mid Sussex District Council
Mr. M. Hudson (substitute)	-	London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Mr. B. Kendall	-	Horley Town Council
Mrs. E. Kitchen	-	Horsham District Council
Mr. C. Lloyd	-	Crawley Borough Council
Mr. J. Macdonald	-	IATA
Mr. N. Maltby	-	Mole Valley District Council
Mr. J. McCall	-	Environmental and Amenity Groups
Mr. D. Murdoch	-	Crawley Borough Council
Mrs. M. Myland	-	Tandridge District Council
Lt. Col. Pemberton	-	West Sussex County Council
Mrs. D. Ross-Tomlin	-	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Mrs. E. Sampson	-	Surrey County Council
Mrs. H. Sewill	-	Charlwood Parish Council
Mr. J. Taylor	-	CADIA
Mr. R. Thomas	-	East Sussex County Council
Mr. J. Woodward-Nutt	-	Consumers' Association

Also present:

Mr. R. Cato	-	Managing Director, BAA Gatwick
Mr. P. Griffiths	-	Deputy Managing Director, BAA Gatwick
Mrs. C. Nicholls	-	Communications Director, BAA Gatwick
Mr. T. Lockwood	-	Director of Planning and Environment, BAA Gatwick
Mr. P. Grindrod	-	Department for Transport
Mrs. P. Street	-	Assistant Honorary Secretary
Mrs. R. Howell	-	Technical Adviser

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr. D. Dewdney, Dr. P. Ellis, Mrs. K. Hammond, Mr. B. Humphreys and Mr. M. Kendall.

MINUTES

36. Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion of Mr. Thomas in the list of apologies, the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July, 2004 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

General Purposes Sub-Committee

37. Resolved - That the draft minutes of the General Purposes Sub-Committee held on 30th September, 2004 be received and noted (copy attached to the signed minutes).

GATCOM SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

38. The Committee was informed that, following the departures of the Deputy Honorary Secretary, Dr. Godfrey, and the Assistant Honorary Secretary, Mr. Welch, the secretariat support to the Consultative Committee provided by West Sussex County Council had been reviewed with BAA Gatwick and the Chairman. It was noted that Mrs. Ros Howell, the County Council's Aviation Strategist, had become Technical Adviser to the Committee. Mrs. Howell's key task is to advise and report to the Committee in an impartial and balanced way on issues of interest to the Committee.

BRIGHTON MAIN LINE ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGY (RUS)

39. The Committee considered a report by the Honorary Secretary summarising the content of the Strategic Rail Authority's (SRA) consultation on the Brighton Main Line RUS insofar as it affected Gatwick Airport. The report also suggested a form of response to the consultation (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Committee also noted that members of the Passenger Services Sub-Committee had also provided input to the Honorary Secretary's report.

40. Mr. O'Loughlin, Rail Planning Manager, SRA, gave a presentation to the Committee on the key aspects of the Strategy and reiterated that the SRA's proposals would enhance the train service to/from Gatwick Airport. Mr. O'Loughlin emphasised that the SRA had taken into account the future growth of Gatwick Airport and the anticipated passenger demand for rail access, along with the Government's airports policy and the various development plans for the region. He explained there was a desire amongst the various stakeholders to improve services between the south coast and London and the draft RUS had addressed this issue. The Gatwick Express service would increase to six trains per hour with the service being extended to locations along the south coast. The SRA believed that the draft RUS would result in an equal if not better standard of service for airport users.

41. While members acknowledged that the SRA's proposals would result in a general improvement in rail services for all users between London and the South Coast, there was grave concern that this improvement would be at the expense of losing the successful dedicated Gatwick Express service. This was unacceptable to all interests represented on the Committee, with the exception of Surrey County Council. Members commented that the proposals would result in a downgrading of the journey experience for airport passengers as they would not only be required to compete with general passenger traffic to and from Brighton and the South Coast for available seating and luggage space, but the dedicated platforms at London Victoria and Gatwick Airport would also cease to exist. The proposed dwell times at the station were also considered to be insufficient to allow airport passengers adequate time to disembark and alight safely with young families and heavy bulky luggage. It was also questioned whether the proposed dwell times conformed with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. These aspects of the SRA's proposals were considered to be major disincentive for airport users to travel by rail.

42. The traffic model and base indicators used by the SRA were also questioned as many members had first hand experience of the congestion on the station platforms and on board trains, particularly at peak times.

43. The Committee stressed that without a dedicated Gatwick Express service there was a serious threat to the achievement of BAA Gatwick's 40% modal split target of airport traffic travelling by public transport. Mr. Cato advised that BAA plc had been in discussions with the SRA in the development of the draft RUS but had opposed the proposal to restructure the Gatwick Express service. BAA was in the process of considering the full implications of the proposals and its response to the SRA.

44. Members also commented that the SRA's Strategy only covered a ten years time frame whereas BAA Gatwick was operating within the 30 years period identified in the Air Transport White Paper. The Government's policy encouraged public transport providers to work with the airport operators to secure surface access improvements to meet future air transport demand. It was felt therefore that the Committee's concerns should be brought to the attention of the Secretary of State for Transport and to seek his views. Members also urged the SRA to re-consider the draft RUS in a way that retained the dedicated Gatwick Express service.

45. Resolved –That

- (1) That the Committee finds the totality of the proposals set out in the draft RUS unacceptable because of the removal of the dedicated Gatwick Express Service;
- (2) That the SRA should think again about some of the ways in which service enhancements could be achieved without removing the dedicated Gatwick Express service between London and Gatwick;
- (3) The SRA reconsiders its capital investment programme to explore ways in which improvements could be made in a way that retains the Gatwick Express service;
- (4) That the Honorary Secretary responds to the SRA reflecting the comments set out above; and
- (5) That a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Transport setting out the Committee's concern about the loss of the dedicated Gatwick Express service.

AIRPORT COMMENTARY

46. The Committee received the Managing Director's commentary on activity at the airport since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members were informed that Mr. Cato was moving on to other duties within BAA plc. prior to his retirement in 2005. Mr. Paul Griffiths, currently Deputy Managing Director, would succeed Mr.Cato with effect from 1st January, 2005.

47. Mr. Cato gave an update on the new services operating from Gatwick and a copy of "on Route", which provided further information on BAA Gatwick's successes in developing new routes, was available at the meeting. Traffic continued to grow and Gatwick was now handling around 31 million passengers per annum.

48. Members were pleased to note that BAA Gatwick, with its business partners, had effectively managed the handling agent strike action. Out of the 121 departures handled by Servisair only two flights had been delayed. More strike action was planned for that weekend.

49. Mr. Cato and Lt. Col. Tex Pemberton were pleased to report on the success of Fastway which had carried 1.8 million passengers in its first year of operation. Lt. Col Pemberton advised that although the funding for the next stage of the scheme was still being sought, West Sussex County Council was committed to completing the project earlier than programmed. The Committee congratulated the County Council and its partners on the success of the scheme and welcomed the efforts being made to complete it ahead programme.

50. Reference was made to the Gatwick Welcome Arch which was now in place. Comments were made about the need for improvements to the general signage on the approach roads to the South Terminal and wayfinding in the terminal.

BAA CONSULTATIONS ON SCHEMES TO PROTECT PROPERTY VALUES AND IN RELATION TO NOISE

51. The Committee considered two consultation documents issued by BAA Gatwick outlining its proposed schemes to protect property blight and to address current airport noise for communities close to the airport (copies attached to the signed minutes). The Committee also considered the Honorary Secretary's report suggesting a form of response to the consultations (copy also attached to the signed minutes). Members noted that BAA plc was also undertaking similar consultations at Heathrow and the Scottish airports.

52. Mrs. Nicholls informed members of the amount of publicity being given locally about the consultation exercise and a telephone help line had been set up. Where requested, visits have been made to local people to help with details of the scheme.

53. Members welcomed the intent by BAA plc. to address the problems facing local communities in respect of generalised blight and the affects of aircraft noise. However, whilst it was acknowledged that the proposed schemes in relation to aircraft noise had been developed using the 69 dBA Leq and the 63 dBA Leq contours as recommended in the Government's Air Transport White Paper, members were concerned that there were very few properties that fell within the boundaries of the schemes. Some members suggested that the boundary of the 57 dBA Leq contour might be more appropriate at Gatwick where the ambient noise level was lower and the impact of aircraft noise levels more pronounced.

54. The Committee also commented on the maximum limit of £10,000 for the home relocation assistance scheme. It was felt that £10,000 would not provide a great incentive to residents to relocate as the maximum limit would not adequately cover expenses incurred in moving house.

55. Members endorsed the comments of the General Purposes Sub-Committee and urged BAA plc to give more generous consideration to the boundaries of the Gatwick schemes and hoped that the difference in situation and circumstances between Gatwick and Heathrow would be taken into account and reflected in the published schemes. Members were also anxious that Gatwick would not be bound by the Stansted schemes and that Gatwick would be considered on its own merits.

56. Resolved – That:

- (1) the Consultative Committee welcomed the intent by BAA Gatwick to address the problem of generalised property blight and the affect of aircraft noise on communities;
- (2) the two property protection schemes, the noise insulation scheme for noise sensitive buildings and the home relocation assistance scheme be noted;
- (3) BAA plc. be urged to give more generous consideration to the boundaries of the Gatwick schemes given the difference in circumstances between Heathrow and Gatwick;
- (4) BAA plc. be urged to reconsider the maximum limit of £10,000 for the home relocation assistance scheme; and
- (5) BAA Gatwick be urged to announce the details of a noise insulation scheme for residential properties as soon as possible.

MASTER PLANNING AND SAFEGUARDING

57. Mr. Lockwood reported that BAA Gatwick would publish for consultation its draft Master Plan statement early in the New Year. It was likely that a consultation period of three months would be given. The full Master Plan would be then issued at the end of 2005. In the meantime, BAA Gatwick was engaging with local authorities in discussions regarding the development of the Master Plan. Members noted that the timetable for producing the Master Plan statement had slipped into the New Year which would mean that the General Purposes Sub-Committee at its meeting on 13th January 2005 would not be in a position to give detailed consideration to its content. A special meeting of the Sub-Committee or the Consultative Committee may therefore be needed to consider the Statement.

58. Mr. Lockwood also advised that the work being undertaken at Heathrow on air quality modelling would not be completed until February/March 2006. The modelling of Gatwick air quality contours, using the methodology emerging from the Heathrow studies, would consequently not be possible prior to publication of the full Master Plan. An emissions inventory would be prepared, and modelled as soon as the modelling methodology has been agreed.

59. The Committee also noted that the draft Gatwick Airport Transport Strategy was close to completion and it was hoped that a final draft would be available by the end of November, 2004. The Transport Strategy would cover the period up to 2012 and would be a component of the Master Plan.

PASSENGER SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE

60. The Committee considered the report of the last meeting of the Passenger Services Sub-Committee held on 2nd September, 2004 (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mrs. Street reported that the Sub-Committee had received an update from Mr. Griffiths, Deputy Managing Director, BAA Gatwick on the vision for Gatwick to the year 2010 and the opportunities to improve customer service, particularly for the more discerning leisure traveller. The Sub-Committee shared BAA Gatwick's concerns about proposed option to restructure the Gatwick Express service.

DfT NOISE EXPOSURE CONTOURS FOR GATWICK AIRPORT 2003

61. The Committee considered a report by West Sussex County Council outlining the results of the noise monitoring at Gatwick Airport during the Summer of 2003, published by the DfT (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members welcomed the inclusion, for the first time, of the terrain height adjustment as it took into account the topography around Gatwick Airport. Although the terrain height adjustment only had a subtle affect on the actual contours, members were disappointed that the contours revealed a slight worsening of the noise climate compared to the previous year's monitoring. Members commented that the noise climate this year had been noticeably worse.

62. Mr. Cato advised that BAA Gatwick continued to work with the airlines to encourage best operating practices. DASair in particular was looking at ways of improving its take-off performance to reduce the noise impact of its operations. The proposed P-RNAV trials would also see a greater concentration of traffic on some of the arrival and departure routes thereby containing the noise footprint.

63. Mr. McCall raised the need to address the issue of disturbance caused by approaching aircraft on local communities. He advised that the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign had requested the Consultative Committee to investigate ways in which the impact could be reduced. The Chairman informed the Committee that BAA Gatwick had been asked to refer the matter to NATMAG for initial examination. The General Purposes Sub-Committee would be kept informed of progress.

DfT CONSULTATION ON NIGHT FLYING RESTRICTIONS AT HEATHROW, GATWICK AND STANSTED AIRPORTS – STAGE 1

64. The Committee considered a report by the Honorary Secretary outlining the DfT's stage 1 consultation on the proposals for the next night flying regime for the three BAA London airports and a suggested response to the DfT (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Committee noted the paper produced by BAA Gatwick setting out the current night flying movements at Gatwick, with particular emphasis on the movements in the early hours of the morning (copy also attached to the signed minutes). The Committee particularly welcomed the Government's intention to bear down on night noise but recognised the need to strike a fair balance between the economic/environmental/local community interests in considering its response to the consultation.

65. The airline representatives advised that the only element of the suggested response they could not support was a total ban on the operation of QC/4 aircraft in the night quota period. It was stressed that a complete operational ban on QC/4 aircraft would have significant implications for airlines and their ability to manage delayed departures and arrivals. Such a ban would also pose difficulties for passengers and the airport management in cases where alternative "permitted" aircraft were not available to relieve delayed flights that extended into the night period. The Committee accepted the difficulties a total ban would create and agreed to support a prohibition on the scheduling of QC/4 aircraft from operating in the night quota period.

66. Reference was made to the underuse of the current noise quota at Gatwick. Some members stressed that in addition to a progressive lowering of the noise quotas generally, the current underuse of the quota needed to be emphasised in the general comments section of the suggested response.

67. Resolved – That

- (1) The analysis produced by BAA Gatwick be noted; and
- (2) The suggested response set out in the Appendix to the Honorary Secretary's report be amended to reflect the views set out above, and following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, be forwarded to the DfT as the Committee's response to the consultation.

AIRCRAFT NOISE AND MONITORING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ANMAC)

68. The Committee received and noted a report by the Vice-Chairman on the meeting of ANMAC held on 29th July, 2004 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING'S REPORT

69. The report from Crawley Borough Council's Director for Environment and Housing on planning applications determined in respect of Gatwick Airport since the date of the last meeting was received and noted (copy attached to the signed minutes).

FLIGHT EVALUATION UNIT COMMENTARY

70. The Committee considered the commentary by the Flight Evaluation Unit on the work of the Unit, headline statistics and the key points arising from the Noise and Track Monitoring Group's (NATMAG) meeting on 10th September, 2004 (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members noted that BAA Gatwick was in the process of tendering for a new noise and track keeping system.

71. Reference was made to the increase in the number of flights arriving before 0601 hours, earlier than their scheduled time of arrival (0601–0630). Members noted that the Flight Evaluation Unit was investigating the matter with one of the airlines concerned.

GROUND NOISE

72. The Committee received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Ground Noise Committee held on 10th September, 2004 (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Chairman expressed his thanks to BAA Gatwick for the attention now being given to ground noise issues.

BAA GATWICK REPORTS 2003/04

73. The Committee received and noted BAA Gatwick's Sustainability Report 2003/04 and the Report of the Flight Evaluation Unit 2003/04. Members' attention was drawn to the deliberations of the General Purposes Sub-Committee and it was noted that BAA Gatwick was considering a website based report for the future. Members emphasised the need for a hard copy version to continue to be published.

DfT CONSULTATION ON THE CRITERIA FOR THE PROTECTION OF REGIONAL AIR SERVICES TO LONDON

74. The Committee received and the noted the response to the DfT's consultation on the proposed criteria for the implementation of the policy to protect existing regional air services to London which was agreed by the General Purposes Sub-Committee at its meeting on 30th September, 2004 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

GATWICK AIRPORT COMMUNITY TRUST

75. The Honorary Secretary circulated at the meeting three expressions of interests received from members willing to serve as the Committee's nomination on the Gatwick Airport Community Trust (copy attached to the signed minutes).

76. Resolved – That Mrs. Claire Vickers be appointed as the Committee's nomination to serve on the Gatwick Airport Community Trust.

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2005/06

77. The Committee noted the calendar of meetings for the Consultative Committee and its Sub-Committees as follows:

Consultative Committee

Thursday 21st April, 2005 @ 2.00 p.m.
Thursday 14th July, 2005 @ 2.00 p.m. + annual tour in a.m.
Thursday 13th October, 2005 @ 2.00 p.m.
Thursday 2nd February, 2006 @ 2.00 p.m.

General Purposes Sub-Committee

Thursday 24th March, 2005 @ 10.00 a.m.
Thursday 16th June, 2005 @ 10.00 a.m.
Thursday 22nd September, 2005 @ 10.00 a.m.
Thursday 12th January, 2006 @ 10.00 a.m.

Passenger Services Sub-Committee

Thursday 24th February 2005 @ 2.00 p.m.
Thursday 19th May, 2005 @ 2.00 p.m.
Thursday 1st September, 2005 @ 2.00 p.m.
Thursday 8th December, 2005 @ 2.00 p.m.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND ITS SUB-COMMITTEES

78. The Committee noted the dates of the next meetings of the Consultative Committee as follows:-

Passenger Services Sub-Committee – Thursday 9th December, 2004 at 2.00 p.m.
General Purposes Sub-Committee - Thursday, 13th January, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.
Consultative Committee – Thursday, 3rd February, 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

MR. ROGER CATO

79. The Chairman informed the Committee that it was Mr. Roger Cato's last meeting as Managing Director of BAA Gatwick. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman paid tribute to Mr. Cato's partnership approach in taking forward the development of the airport over the last three years. The Committee wished him well in his new duties leading up to his retirement in 2005.

CHAIRMAN