

GATWICK AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Consultative Committee held on 24th October, 2002.

Present:

Mr P.W. Bryant (Chairman)

Mrs. C. Blackwell-Gibbs	-	Horley Town Council
Mr. G. Blundell-Pound	-	International Air Carriers Limited
Mr. P. Feltham	-	CADIA
Mrs. K. Hammond	-	Surrey County Council
Mr. R.A. Jones	-	Burstow Parish Council
Mrs. E. Kitchen	-	Horsham District Council
Mr. G. Larcombe	-	Horley and District Chamber of Commerce
Mr. C.C. Lloyd	-	Crawley Borough Council
Mr. N.F. 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
Mr. G. Pixley	-	Passenger Representative
Mrs. D.A. Ross-Tomlin	-	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Mrs. E. Sampson	-	Surrey County Council
Mr. V. Saunders	-	Rusper Parish Council
Mrs. H.M. Sewill	-	Charlwood Parish Council
Mr. A. Skudder	-	Crawley Borough Council
Mr. J. Woodward-Nutt	-	Consumers Association
Mr. J. MacDonald (Substitute)	-	International Air Transport Association

Also Present:

Mr. R. Cato	-	Chairman and 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
Mr. M. Kendall	-	Honorary Secretary
Dr. J. Godfrey	-	Deputy Honorary Secretary
Mrs. P. Street	-	Assistant Honorary Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr. D. Dewdney, Dr. P. Ellis, Mr. C. Hersey, Mr. B. Humphreys and Mr. R. Thomas.

MINUTES

44. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th July, 2002 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

General Purposes Sub-Committee

45. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Sub-Committee held on 3rd October, 2002 be received and noted (copy attached to the signed minutes).

AIRPORT COMMENTARY

46. The Committee received the Managing Director's commentary on activity at the airport since the date of last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr. Cato informed the Committee that for the 12 months to the end of September, 2002, Gatwick's passenger throughput had dropped 9.8% from just over 32m to around 29m, due to the continued impact of 11th September, 2001. The summer season had however seen an improvement in passenger throughput and, at peak times, the airport had been extremely busy. He also referred to the prospect of military action being taken against Iraq and that the airport was in the process of drawing up contingency plans.

47. The Committee was pleased that BAA Gatwick had now received BAA plc corporate approval in principle for the development of Pier 6 and the South Terminal arrivals extension projects, both of which were essential in accommodating the forecast growth at the airport.

48. Mr. Cato also informed the Committee that the airport's fire service would not be affected by the national firefighters' strike, although the neighbouring Fire Brigades in West Sussex and Surrey would be involved in strike action. Some members of the Committee commented that the airport's fire service in the event of a major incident was heavily reliant on receiving support from the surrounding Fire Brigades. They therefore asked the Managing Director to seek reassurance from the Fire Brigade's Union that appropriate cover would be provided in the event of a major incident on strike action days.

49. As regards BAA plc's own pay negotiations, Mr. Cato advised that the four airport unions were currently balloting their members on whether to take strike action. The outcome of the ballot would be known by 6th November.

50. Mr. Cato drew to members' attention to the growth in demand for car parking at the airport following the increase in the number of low cost operators now based at the airport and those airlines' passenger requirements. Similar problems were also being experienced at Stansted Airport. BAA Gatwick was therefore looking at ways of resolving the car parking situation.

51. The Committee noted that Groundstar Limited had been awarded the fourth ground handling licence at Gatwick Airport. Mr. Cato reported that Groundstar, which also operated at eight other UK airports including Heathrow and Stansted, had built an impressive record for the quality and performance delivered to its airline customers.

THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AIR TRANSPORT IN THE UK: SOUTH EAST CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

52. The Committee considered a report by the Honorary Secretary setting out its position in relation to the Government's consultation on the Future Development of Transport in the UK (copy attached to the signed copy of the minutes). An account of the options relating to Gatwick considered during the SERAS study, appended to the report, was noted.

53. The Committee welcomed the Government's statement that it intended to maximise the use of existing runways at the main South East airports. It was noted that a maximum capacity for Gatwick was defined as 46.5 million passengers per annum (mppa). Reference was made to the Sustainable Development Strategy and associated legal agreement which manages the growth of the airport to around 40 mppa by 2008/09 and the Chairman stressed that this did not preclude subsequent growth in passenger throughput.

54. The airline representatives present at the meeting supported the long term future of Gatwick. The Government's maximum capacity figure of 46.5 mppa was therefore welcomed by the airline industry but they questioned whether this level of growth was possible, particularly as it had not been achieved anywhere else in the world at airports with one runway. There was concern that in the long-term, there would be no additional runway capacity provided in the South East south of the Thames. The airline representatives were therefore concerned about the long term future of Gatwick beyond the period of the 1979 legal agreement and felt that the Government should maintain as much flexibility as possible for Gatwick in the future, including the provision of another runway if it was needed.

55. The Honorary Secretary read out an e-mail which had been submitted by Dr. Ellis representing BATA. Dr. Ellis had advised that BATA was of the view that the exclusion of options for additional runway capacity at Gatwick from 2019, was a matter of deep concern to UK airlines. Notwithstanding the SERAS document's aspiration to full use of existing capacity, the longer term prospective for Gatwick would be uncertain, particularly if another airport in the South East (other than the long-established Heathrow), were to have two or more runways. BATA airlines would be particularly concerned if any steps were taken to weaken the protection of the option for a close-parallel runway to the south – they believed such a decision now could be deeply regretted in the light of possible long-term economic consequences for the area.

56. The business community representatives were also concerned about the exclusion of an option for Gatwick from the consultation document and the effect this would have on the economic prosperity of the region.

57. With the exception of Crawley Borough Council, all local authority representatives including those from the parish councils and amenity group representatives, supported the Government's decision to rule out the option of additional runway being provided at Gatwick Airport over the next 30 years, and for honouring the 1979 legal agreement. Crawley Borough Council was however concerned that the Government had excluded Gatwick from the debate and felt that the consultation should have allowed consideration of the case for growth at Gatwick Airport beyond its current capacity, having particular regard

to the possibility of a close-parallel runway post-2019.

58. The Honorary Secretary drew to members' attention the ideas for change which Mr. Cato had put forward for consideration at the seminar held on 10th September. The General Purposes Sub-Committee had considered these ideas at its meeting on 3rd October, and agreed them in principle, although further clarification from BAA Gatwick was needed on the expansion of the route network and changes to the slot allocation rules.

59. Mr. Cato advised that in the case of changes to the slot allocation rules, as the company had little power over the allocation of slots at the airport, there was a need for local rules to ensure that best use was being made of the available runway capacity. Over the past 18 months, the airport had seen the downsizing of airlines' fleets resulting in fewer passengers per aircraft movement. Some routes had been dropped, and others introduced, and a consequence of this was that peak hour arrivals now nearly doubled departures. A more even split was necessary if better use was to be made of peak hour runway capacity. As regards route expansion, to ensure the future success of the airport, there needed to be a good balance and wide range of routes offered. Consideration was also being given to looking at the best way to feed into other major international hubs, particularly in Europe and the Middle East.

60. Reference was made to the forum being promoted by West Sussex County Council to bring all key stakeholders together in securing the long-term future for Gatwick Airport. There was wide support for such an approach.

61. Recognising that Gatwick would continue to have an important role in meeting future demand for air travel, particularly over the next 10-12 years, members stressed the need for the Government and other major transport providers to continue to invest in the necessary infrastructure and surface access developments to accommodate the growth of the airport.

62. In conclusion the Committee was unanimous in its support for ensuring that Gatwick continued to be a successful airport offering high quality facilities to its passengers and airlines. The recommendations set out in the Honorary Secretary's report were considered and agreed with minor modification in that greater emphasis needed to be put on the Sustainable Development Strategy's associated legal agreement and the need to invest in the strategic rail and road networks to accommodate the future growth of the airport. The Committee was also unanimous in urging the Government to set out a clear and ongoing role for Gatwick in the forthcoming Aviation White Paper. In their responses to the consultation document, the organisations represented on the Committee would have the opportunity to explain their views on what that should be.

63. It was agreed that the Honorary Secretary would agree the Committee's response with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and this would be circulated to all members.

64. Resolved –

- (1) That the progress on the Government's consultation on airports' policy be noted;

- (2) That BAA Gatwick be thanked for presenting its interpretation of the impact of the SERAS options for Gatwick at the seminar on 10th September;
- (3) That the Consultative Committee's position in relation to the options raised in the consultation paper, as set out in paragraph 9 of the report, be endorsed;
- (4) That the Consultative Committee pledges its full support to the Managing Director of BAA Gatwick in ensuring that investment is made available to implement the proposals contained in the Sustainable Strategy, and in accordance with the timetable provided therein;
- (5) That the ideas for change set out in paragraph 15 of the report be agreed provided that they are within the context of the Sustainable Development Strategy and associated legal agreement and had regard to the environment;
- (6) That the Government be requested to identify a clear and ongoing role for Gatwick in the forthcoming White Paper;
- (7) That the reassurances be sought from the Government that Gatwick would continue to receive investment for necessary infrastructure and surface access development to accommodate future growth at the airport; and
- (8) That the proposal to establish a forum, at the earliest possible time, involving all interests to draw up an Action Plan to ensure the future success of the airport be welcomed.

BAA GATWICK AIRPORT'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND LEGAL AGREEMENT

Monitoring Report for Year Ended 31st March, 2002

65. The Committee received a report by the Honorary Secretary (copy attached to the signed minutes), giving details of the outcome of the monitoring and verification process of the Gatwick Airport Sustainable Development Strategy and Legal Agreement. Members noted that during the second year's monitoring process, 25 items had been selected for verification which, for the most part, revealed that BAA Gatwick was meeting its commitments, targets and obligations, although there were three of the audited commitments which had been highlighted as requiring attention.

66. Resolved –

- (1) That BAA Gatwick, Crawley Borough Council and West Sussex County Council be congratulated on the publication of the second Annual Monitoring Report; and
- (2) That the outcome of the monitoring process be welcomed and the Consultative Committee is satisfied that the measures recommended by the external verifier are in hand.

Managing the Delivery of Gatwick's Sustainable Development Commitments

67. The Committee noted a paper by BAA Gatwick setting out the company's processes and governance structure for managing and monitoring the delivery of its Sustainable Development Strategy commitments and legal obligations (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members were most encouraged by the processes and monitoring structure which had been set up by BAA Gatwick.

PASSENGER SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE

68. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Passenger Services Sub-Committee in respect of the meeting held on 3rd September, 2002 (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr. Pixley drew the Committee's attention to the Customer Service Strategy for the airport, an initiative which was most welcomed by the Sub-Committee. The timetable for delivering the Strategy was very ambitious, and it was hoped that there would be sufficient investment to make the improvements necessary to achieve the vision. The Committee recognised the importance of the work of the Sub-Committee in monitoring the quality of passenger services and that it would, in the future, have a key role in ensuring that the airport continued to offer high quality facilities to passengers. Mr. Pixley made reference to the approval of the investment to bring forward the start date of the South Terminal's arrivals extension which was most welcome news and urged BAA Gatwick to make a start on the project at the earliest possible time.

69. Mr. Pixley also made reference to the problems experienced this summer with certain facilities and passenger services at the airport. Mr. Cato advised that in terms of passenger numbers compared with previous months' figures, July and August proved more busy than that expected. Unfortunately, the unexpected demand resulted in problems being experienced with certain passenger services, such as excessive queuing at security and check-in due to staffing numbers, and ground handling. There was also a problem with the transit system to the satellite where one of the tracks was out of action for 4 weeks. Many lessons had been learned and were being acted upon.

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 (NATMAG) meeting on 11th September, 2002 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

71. The Committee noted the continual improvement in the achievement of continuous descent approach by aircraft arriving at Gatwick, both within the night quota hours (around 85/86%) and during the daytime period (around 73%). The Flight Evaluation Unit was now looking more closely at the data being collected and efforts were being concentrated on particular airlines. Members also noted the trial being undertaken by National Air Traffic Services Limited (NATS) to increase the vectoring height of aircraft from 3,000 ft to 4,000 ft. on some of the standard instrument departure routes out of Gatwick. NATS had produced a briefing note of the trial which was available to members on request. It was pointed out however that there may be occasions where track deviations might increase as a consequence of the trial. The trial was expected to last 4 months.

DfT PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTING EU DIRECTIVE 2002/30 ON RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR INTRODUCING NOISE RELATED OPERATING RESTRICTIONS AT COMMUNITY AIRPORTS

72. The Committee considered a report by the Honorary Secretary providing details of a consultation received from the DfT on its proposals for implementing EU Directive 2002/30 (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Committee welcomed, in general terms, the aims of the Directive and the proposals put forward by the Government on how best to implement the requirements of the Directive. The suggested response set out in the Honorary Secretary's report was agreed by the Committee and it was felt that, in view of the elaborate assessment process to be followed (as set out in the Directive) the Government should place more emphasis on encouraging greater use of voluntary agreements and differential charging structures.

73. Resolved – That the comments set out in the Honorary Secretary's report be submitted to the DfT as the Committee's response to the consultation.

NOISE EXPOSURE CONTOURS FOR GATWICK AIRPORT 2001

74. The Committee received a report by the West Sussex County Planning Officer outlining the results of noise monitoring at Gatwick Airport during the summer period of 2001, published by the DfT (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members were pleased to note that with the increased use of newer and quieter aircraft, the area covered and population affected by significant aircraft noise had reduced since 2000. The general trend was in line with the long-term forecasts published by BAA Gatwick in its Sustainable Development Strategy.

75. Members considered the contours to be a good measurement tool and questioned why the DfT did not include the 54dBA leq contours in its report. The data was available as it had been included in the SERAS documentation. Mr. Grindrod informed the Committee that the inclusion of the 54dBA leq contour had been included in the SERAS documentation at the request of the Reference Groups. The 57dBA leq contour was however considered as being the significant community noise indicator as set out in PPG 24, which was why the DfT based their report around that measurement.

76. Resolved – That:

- (1) the new noise monitoring information be noted;
- (2) the continued reduction in both the area affected by aircraft noise as revealed by the latest contours and the population living in the area, be welcomed;
- (3) BAA Gatwick and the airlines operating from Gatwick be urged to continue their efforts to increase the use of quieter, rather than noisier, aircraft, as set out in the commitments contained in the Sustainable Development Strategy; and
- (4) The DfT be thanked for their prompt publication of the noise exposure contours for Gatwick Airport in 2001.

GROUND NOISE

Ground Noise Committee

77. The Committee noted the minutes of the Ground Noise Committee held on 11th September, 2002 (copy attached to the signed minutes). It was noted that the newly established Ground Noise Committee would now have two meetings a year.

78. The Chairman drew to members' attention the work of National Air Traffic Services (NATS) in minimising the noise and emissions from taxiing aircraft in conjunction with the Air Traffic Control procedures and the Eurocontrol Monitoring System based in Brussels. The Committee was pleased to note that Gatwick was one of the best European airports for minimising taxi time for departing aircraft.

Control of Ground Noise at Airports

79. The Committee considered a report by the Honorary Secretary setting out the responsibilities of Local Environmental Health Officers, the DfT and the airport operator in the control of ground noise at airports (copy attached to the signed minutes). It was noted that there appeared to be an absence of legislation to take enforcement action if the airport operator failed to take steps to mitigate and manage ground noise.

80. Resolved – That

- (1) the DfT be asked to review the issue of enforcement in the control of airport ground noise; and
- (2) the Ground Noise Committee be asked to invite a DfT representative to its meetings as and when the need arises.

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING REPORT

81. The Committee received and noted a report by 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 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

'SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - DELIVERING THROUGH PLANNING'

82. The Committee received and noted a report by the Honorary Secretary providing an update on the Government's proposals for transforming the planning system following the consultation on the Planning Green Paper (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members were pleased to note that the Government had decided not to pursue its original idea of a Parliamentary procedure for taking decisions on the principle, the need for, and broad location of major infrastructure projects.

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

83. The Committee noted the calendar of meetings for the Committee and its Sub-Committees for 2002/03 as set out below:-

Passenger Services Sub-Committee

Thursday, 27th February, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.
Thursday, 5th June, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.
Tuesday, 2nd September, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.
Thursday, 4th December, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.

General Purposes Sub-Committee

Thursday, 27th March, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 26th June, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 2nd October, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 8th January, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Consultative Committee

Thursday, 17th April, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.
Thursday, 24th July, 2003 at 2.00 p.m. (Annual Tour in the morning).
Thursday, 23rd October, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.
Thursday, 29th January, 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

84. Consideration would be given to the finding another suitable date for the April 2003 meeting of the Committee in view of the fact that the 17th April was in the week before Easter.

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

85. The Committee noted the dates of the next meetings of the Consultative Committee and its Sub-Committees as listed below:-

Passenger Services Sub-Committee - Thursday, 5th December, 2002 at 2.00 p.m.
General Purposes Sub-Committee - Thursday, 9th January, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.
Consultative Committee - Thursday, 30th January, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN