

# UNCONFIRMED MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL/AMENDMENT AT THE NEXT MEETING OF GATCOM

Agenda item no

## GATCOM

Minutes of the meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Present: Mr. N. Maltby (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)

Peter Barclay	- Environmental and Amenities Groups
Keith Blake	- Crawley Borough Council
Trevor Brock	- Burstow Parish Council
Peter Collings	- Tourism South East
Peter Hall	- Passenger Representative
Beryl Healy	- East Sussex County Council
Chris Hersey	- Mid Sussex District Council
Alan Jones	- Tandridge District Council
Elizabeth Kitchen	- Horsham District Council
Isobel Knox	- BATA
Richard Olliver	- Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Susan Parsons	- ABTA
Eddie Redfern	- International Air Carriers' Association
Jeremy Taylor	- Gatwick Diamond Business Association (CADIA)
Derek Whittington	- West Sussex County Council
Jim Woodward-Nutt	- WHICH?
Charles Yarwood	- Charlwood Parish Council

Also present:

Sir David Rowlands – Chairman, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Stewart Wingate – Chief Executive Officer, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Andrew McCallum – Director of Communications, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Ray Melee – Projects Director, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Tom Denton – Head of Environment and Sustainability, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Sean McKee – Head of Public Affairs, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Andrew Walker – Head of Regulation, Gatwick Airport Limited  
James Bradley – Surface Access Manager, Gatwick Airport Limited  
Frank Evans – Department for Transport  
Barry Smith – Deputy Honorary Secretary  
Ros Howell – Technical Adviser  
Paula Street – Assistant Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from: John Godfrey, Barry Ealey, David Elkin, Detlef Golletz and Dorothy Ross-Tomlin.

## MINUTES

94. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009, be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Vice-Chairman.

95. Mrs. Street referred to minute no. 73 and the lessons learned from the emergency exercise that took place at Gatwick on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Gatwick Airport Ltd had provided feedback from the exercise and this was circulated at the meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes).

## THE NEW GATWICK

96. Sir David Rowlands, Chairman, and Stewart Wingate, Chief Executive Officer, and other members of Gatwick Airport Ltd's management team were welcomed. Sir David commented that airports did not always make good neighbours, but Gatwick Airport Ltd intended to improve Gatwick, be a good neighbour and build on the airport's good

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relationship with the local community. He acknowledged that Gatwick could not grow at the expense of the community.

97. He gave an overview of GIP's plans and vision for Gatwick Airport and confirmed that:

- Gatwick was now a major independent airport company and, for the first time ever, it was competing directly with Heathrow, Stansted and Luton, as well as with London City, in a competitive London airports market.
- Gatwick would compete vigorously against all London airports for point-to-point, short-haul and long-haul routes and passengers.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd. wished to grow Gatwick not as a hub airport as that was Heathrow's domain, but as an airport offering a broad range of services and routes. Developing point-to-point routes was a key focus, particularly encouraging long haul traffic.
- Maintaining and building on the good relations with the airport's neighbours was most important and he saw GATCOM having a key role in facilitating dialogue with and between the various interests around the airport. Gatwick Airport Ltd. wished to operate an open book basis, which was essential in taking forward the growth plans for the airport.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd. wished to increase traffic volumes off the single runway to achieve the currently agreed level of passenger throughput of 40 million passengers per annum. The Section 106 planning agreement was most important and it was accepted that growth of the airport could not be at the expense of the local community. He highlighted that there was a legal obligation to further discuss and consult with the local authorities on the airport's future growth plans when the airport reached a throughput of 38 million passengers per annum. Gatwick could not expect to grow without the support of stakeholders and the necessary infrastructure in place.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd. was not currently interested in building a second runway and confirmed that there was enough to do at Gatwick to improve the airport for passengers and airlines. Even if a future Government looked more favourably at the provision of a new runway at Gatwick, Gatwick Airport Ltd. would honour the 1979 legal agreement not to build a second runway before 2019. He would first need to fully consider the investment needed, the financial return and risks before contemplating any planning activities.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd. had inherited the existing level of capital expenditure but advised that there was scope to change the previous owner's planned approach to investment achieving better value and to redirect expenditure to other desirable improvements for passengers and airlines. Any changes to the capital plan would first need to be discussed with the airlines and the regulator, the CAA.
- The current priority was to improve the security process through improved technology and passenger environment, in particular the bringing together of the two security check areas in the South Terminal. Reducing queues at check-in was also a priority through greater use of new technology and more efficient use of check-in desks.

98. The need to improve Gatwick Railway Station and rail services, particularly maintaining the Gatwick Express, was discussed. Members highlighted the importance of the dedicated non-stop airport express service in retaining airlines and businesses in the area and the need to create a good first and last impression for passengers travelling to/from the airport by rail. Sir David acknowledged that the American airlines in particular were keen to have a fast rail link into central London and that the current situation with the Gatwick Express was a compromise and the premium service was again under threat of being further eroded. He confirmed that the current Network Rail scheme for the station would only provide some extra capacity on the rail network but did little to improve the current station in terms of passenger experience nor did it provide a transport interchange. He had met with Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport, to discuss the current scheme and the challenge of securing a longer-term vision for the station as local transport interchange. Gatwick Airport Ltd. was most interested in pursuing the long-term vision for the station to make it a world-class interchange facility.

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GATCOM welcomed the approach and openness outlined by Sir David and Mr. Wingate and looked forward to working with Gatwick Airport Ltd. in shaping the new Gatwick.

### **AIRPORT COMMENTARY**

99. 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). He explained that the airport was in a period of transition but the key focus was on the passenger and a core priority was to deliver safe, secure and enhanced customer service.

#### Snow

100. Mr. Wingate reported that snow had resulted in the runway being closed for certain periods for essential snow clearance both before and after the Christmas period. During the most recent snowfall, Gatwick had cleared around 32,000 tonnes of snow from the airfield. GATCOM was pleased to learn that Gatwick Airport Ltd. was reviewing its snow operation to ensure materials were replenished and equipment in place to deal with any future snow situations.

#### Security

101. Mr. Wingate also reported that following the terrorist incident on the Detroit bound aircraft on Christmas Day, Gatwick Airport Ltd. was working closely with the DfT to develop the best solutions for enhanced airport security. Members noted that new and improved measures were being discussed including greater use of new technology and detection equipment, including body scanners, and greater use of explosive detection trained police sniffer dogs. He confirmed that Gatwick Airport Ltd. was keen to ensure the best possible passenger experience and was looking at efficiency and speed of the security operations. Reference was made to the introduction of body scanners at Heathrow and it was commented that the use of the scanners was a much slower process and would impact on passenger queuing times. Mr. Wingate advised that body scanners would be introduced at Gatwick and he had invited manufacturers to the airport so that a whole range of machines could be considered to ensure that they would be right for Gatwick.

#### Traffic Performance

102. Members noted that at year end December 2009, passenger numbers were 5.3% below those recorded in the previous year handling around 32.3 million passengers during 2009. However, during the last quarter, compared to the same period the previous year, passenger numbers rose by 2.5%.

#### Services for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs)

103. Members enquired about the PRM contact as there continued to be significant problems with the service provided to passengers who required special assistance. Mr. Wingate advised that Gatwick Airport Ltd. had served notice on G4S, the contractor for the PRM service, to terminate the current contract. He was now re-evaluating the contract specification and was considering the possibility of introducing competition between the two terminals in the provision of this service. The review was being undertaken in close consultation with the airlines, ground handlers and representatives of the Passenger Advisory Group. GATCOM welcomed the action being taken to improve this service.

### **PASSENGER ADVISORY GROUP (PAG)**

104. GATCOM received the report from the Chairman of the Passenger Advisory Group in respect of activities of the PAG since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr. Hall reported that although the quarterly meeting of PAG had been postponed due to the severe weather conditions, its members had been involved in a number of activities. He welcomed the opportunity to have a dialogue with Gatwick Airport Ltd. on the lessons learned following the recent bad weather and the impact on the Gatwick operation.

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105. Mr. Hall was pleased to report that a representative of PAG had been invited to participate in the evaluation of the tender specification for the PRM service.

106. Mr. Hall also reported that over the last quarter there had been a growing trend in the number of passenger complaints about the attitude of security staff. There was a need for Gatwick Airport Limited to address this matter and to promote greater awareness amongst staff on improving passenger satisfaction levels. He confirmed that PAG would continue to monitor the situation and would work with Gatwick Airport Ltd. to find ways to improve the service.

### **CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING REPORT**

107. 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). Members also noted that the Borough Council had also recently refused the application for an immigration detention centre at the Mecure Hotel site.

### **FLIGHT EVALUATION UNIT (FEU) REPORT**

108. GATCOM considered the quarterly report of the FEU together with the key messages arising from the recent meetings of the Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) and the Ground Noise Committee (copy attached to the signed minutes). It was noted that there had been a rise in the number of aircraft noise complaints during the quarter which was probably a result of the publicity given to the consultation on the draft Noise Action Plan.

109. Mr. Jones, GATCOM's lead member for noise issues, highlighted that the decline in track keeping performance during the quarter was a result of a large number of aircraft being directed off the noise preferential routes (NPRs) for weather avoidance purposes and also due to the change in monitoring performance. He emphasised that prior to October 2008 propeller aircraft and those that had been vectored off the NPRs had not been included in the statistics.

110. GATCOM was pleased to note that the DfT was working with National Air Traffic Services (NATS) to address the overflight of Horley. A report on this would be presented to the next meeting of NATMAG.

111. Reference was made to the transfer of the FEU functions to Gatwick Airport Ltd. It was noted that an FEU team was being established at Gatwick and the structure of the new team would be circulated to members.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE DIRECTIVE: NOISE ACTION PLAN (NAP)**

112. GATCOM considered a paper by Gatwick Airport Ltd. providing an update on the draft Noise Action Plan 2010 (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr. Denton reported that 275 written responses had been received to the consultation on the draft action plan which had been considered by Gatwick Airport Ltd. and amendments made to the draft plan. The final draft plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Transport, for approval. Mr. Evans, DfT advised that the Department would assess the way in which the airport had taken into account the comments received from consultation responses and whether the performance indicators included in the NAP were meaningful and SMART. GATCOM would be kept informed of the outcome of the process.

113. Members enquired whether it was possible to have a copy of the submitted draft plan. Gatwick Airport Ltd. assured members that it wished to have an open and transparent process but that it was important not to create confusion amongst the public as to the status of the draft plan that had been submitted. Gatwick Airport Ltd. therefore agreed to discuss and

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share a copy of the submitted plan with a sub-group of GATCOM members and the Chairman suggested that this comprise GATCOM members serving on NATMAG.

### **NOISE INSULATION SCHEME**

114. GATCOM considered a paper by Gatwick Airport Ltd. providing an update on the number of local residents who had accepted the offer of noise insulation installation at their property (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr. Denton advised that there was a commitment under the terms of the END draft Noise Action Plan that the airport would review the noise insulation scheme during the first quarter of 2011 prior to the current scheme ending in summer 2011. Members noted that GATCOM would be informed of the consultation process and timeframe of the review.

115. Members highlighted that the main concern about the current scheme was where the boundaries of the scheme had been defined as there were instances where some properties in a street had been included but some had not. GATCOM therefore asked Gatwick Airport Ltd. to reconsider the boundaries of the scheme as part of the review.

### **GATWICK RAILWAY STATION**

116. Members considered a report by the Secretariat providing an update on the current position regarding Network Rail's improvement scheme for Gatwick Station (copy attached to the signed minutes). GATCOM welcomed the news that the Regional Transport Board had recently agreed a contribution of £5m from the regional programme towards the cost of the Gatwick Station improvement scheme provided the remainder of the funding gap was addressed by other partners, including an appropriate contribution from Gatwick Airport Ltd. Sir David Rowlands confirmed that improving the station was a key priority and that discussions with Network Rail about committing funds to bridge the funding gap continued. Sir David also believed that the new ownership of Gatwick was a key driver to move the project forward and to realise the longer-term aspiration of developing Gatwick Station into a world class transport interchange facility. Members were most encouraged by the new owner's approach to this important project and confirmed GATCOM's continued support to ensure that the vital improvements to enhance the passenger experience can be secured, such as improving the vertical circulation between the concourse and all platforms.

117. Mrs. Street referred to the independent report entitled "Better Rail Stations" published by the DfT in December which was the subject of consultation with interested parties. She highlighted the report's recommendations in respect of Gatwick Station which proposed that Gatwick be recategorized to a Category B station to better reflect its role as a national interchange station and the proposed long-term vision of becoming a rail/air super hub. GATCOM agreed to respond to the DfT's consultation supporting the recommendations and to emphasise the need to invest in Gatwick Station to achieve the proposed vision of a rail/air super hub.

### **SUSSEX AND KENT ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGIES (RUS)**

118. Mrs. Street reported that Network Rail was to announce the publication of the Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) on 29<sup>th</sup> January. As part of that strategy Network Rail was minded to include a stop on high peak Gatwick Express services at Clapham Junction. Members were most disappointed about Network Rail's intentions and believed that introducing a stop at Clapham Junction or any other station on route to London would further degrade the premium Gatwick Express service. GATCOM was also concerned to learn that Southern, who operated the Southern franchise, had a franchise commitment to install gates at Gatwick Station, including the platform for Gatwick Express services and at London Victoria. It was agreed therefore that the Secretariat would write to the DfT to express concern. GATCOM also remained concerned about Southern's plans to phase out the use of the 460 rolling stock by 2011.

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119. Mrs. Street also reported that Network Rail had recently published the Kent RUS. She would send to members the weblink to both RUS documents.

### **REFORMING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ECONOMIC REGULATION OF AIRPORTS**

120. GATCOM considered a report by the Secretariat outlining the Government's decision to reform the framework for the economic regulation of UK airports (copy attached to the signed minutes). The report also suggested a form of response to two further consultations that had been published by the Government – promoting the financial resilience for major airports and further proposals to modernise the regulatory framework. Members noted that the Government would need primary and secondary legislation to implement many of the proposed changes.

121. Members also noted that under the proposed new regime Gatwick would be a Tier 1 licenced airport as it was currently a designated airport for the purposes of economic regulation. Gatwick Airport Ltd. was of the view that Gatwick would remain a designated airport in the immediate future and felt that the future regulatory framework needed to have a lighter touch and be more intelligent. Specific reference was made to the proposals for promoting financial resilience and there was concern about the additional costs that the proposed Continuity of Service Plans would impose on the airport.

122. Mrs. Street reported that the Government had commenced the next stage of taking forward the proposed licence regime and was currently seeking advice from the CAA on the drafting of licence conditions. The CAA was engaging with other parties on this piece of work and GATCOM has been invited to participate in a seminar to hear about the project in more detail and to discuss the process for the drafting of the licence conditions. Members agreed that it was important for GATCOM to be fully engaged in this process.

123. Members were disappointed that the Government had decided to give Passenger Focus new functions to represent the interests of air passengers at the national level. As there were implications of this proposal on the work of the GATCOM, particularly the Passenger Advisory Group, members suggested that working with Gatwick Airport Ltd., the DfT and the CAA, discussions be initiated with Passenger Focus to influence proposals on how Passenger Focus' new duties would impact on the work of the Committee.

124. Whilst members welcomed the overall aims of the Government's proposals for reform, there were concerns about the detail of some of the proposals set out in the Government's further consultations. In particular, there were concerns about the CAA's proposed new objectives and members felt that the CAA's safety objective should be of paramount importance. It was also felt that greater acknowledgment needed to be given to the interests of airlines in the CAA's new objectives, an issue raised by GATCOM at the time of the original consultation. There appeared great emphasis on the proposed role of Passenger Focus whose worked was predominantly based on the results of passenger surveys and it was feared that the knowledge and experience of airports and airlines would be overlooked. It was agreed that these concerns would be highlighted in GATCOM's response to the consultation.

125. Resolved – That:

- (1) the Government's intention to consult on the proposed licence conditions for Gatwick Airport be welcomed and that the DfT be advised that GATCOM wishes to be fully engaged in any future consultation on the proposed licence for Gatwick Airport;
- (2) GATCOM accepts the CAA's invitation to participate in the seminar to discuss the process for drafting licence conditions and any future workshops hosted by the CAA;
- (3) the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Chairman of the Passenger Advisory Group and the Secretariat further discuss with Gatwick Airport Limited the implications of the

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Government's decision in the current work of GATCOM/PAG respect of enhancing consumer representation;

- (4) the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Chairman of the Passenger Advisory Group and the Secretariat initiate discussions with Passenger Focus and the CAA on Passenger Focus' proposed new functions and possible future working arrangements;
- (5) the suggested response to the DfT's consultation on Promoting the Financial Resilience for Major Airports set out in Paragraph 5.5 of the Secretariat's report be approved; and
- (6) that subject to the inclusion of the comments set out in minute no. 124 above, the suggested response to the DfT's consultation on modernizing the regulatory framework for aviation set out in paragraphs 5.11, 5.13, 5.15, 5.18 and 5.22 of the Secretariat's report be approved.

### **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

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

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Passenger Advisory Group | – Thursday 11 February 2010 at 2.00 p.m. |
|                          | - Wednesday 7 April 2010 at 2.00 p.m.    |
| GATCOM Steering Group    | – Thursday 1 April 2010 at 2.00 p.m.     |
| GATCOM                   | – Thursday 22 April 2010 at 2.00 p.m.    |

127. Members 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 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at 9.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. respectively.

Chairman