

GATCOM

Minutes of the meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee held on 30th April, 2009.

Present: Dr. J. Godfrey (Chairman)

Mr. K. Blake	-	Crawley Borough Council
Mr. G. Blundell-Pound	-	International Air Carriers' Association
Mr. B. Ealey	-	Gatwick Airline Operators' Committee
Mr. R. Feeney (substitute)	-	South London Business
Mrs. T Forbes (substitute)	-	Burstow Parish Council
Mr. N. Hague	-	Charlwood Parish Council
Mr. P. Hall	-	Passenger Representative
Mr. M. Hudson	-	London Chamber of Commerce
Mr. R.A. Jones	-	Tandridge District Council
Mrs. E. Kitchen	-	Horsham District Council
Mr. N. Maltby	-	Mole Valley District Council
Mr. D. McKibbin (substitute)	-	SEEDA
Mrs. M. Myland	-	Surrey County Council
Dr. R. Olliver	-	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Mr. E. Redfern	-	ABTA
Mr. J. Taylor	-	CADIA
Mr. R. Thomas	-	East Sussex County Council
Mrs J. Vogt (substitute)	-	Environmental and Amenities Groups
Mr. J. Woodward-Nutt	-	WHICH?

Also present:

Mr. A. Flower – Managing Director, BAA Gatwick
Mr. A. McCallum – Director of Communications, BAA Gatwick
Ms. L. Trevor – Head of Strategy and Planning, BAA Gatwick
Mr. F. Evans – Department for Transport
Mrs. R. Howell – Technical Adviser
Mrs. P. Street – Assistant Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr. Avis, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Brock, Mr. Ferrin, Mr. Golletz, Mr. Hersey, Mr. Pledger, and Mr. Whittington.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES

76. The Chairman reported that since the last meeting he had met the new Lord Lieutenant for West Sussex, Susan Pyper, to explain the work of GATCOM and that she would be invited to attend a future meeting. He had also met Gatwick Airport Limited's new Head of Security, Geoff Williams.

77. He also informed the meeting that Inspector Jane Rhodes had been appointed as Gatwick Commander, Sussex Police and that she would be invited to attend a future meeting to provide an update on policing at the airport.

78. The Chairman thanked the airport management for the briefing him on the arrangements to greet and process delegates attending the G20 London Summit on 2nd April. He congratulated the airport in successfully managing the arrival of delegates through Gatwick.

Tim Lockwood

79. The Chairman informed the meeting that Tim Lockwood, Gatwick Airport Limited, was after 29 years working for BAA, retiring that day. On behalf of the GATCOM, he thanked Mr. Lockwood for his outstanding commitment to the work of the Committee over the years and wished him well in his retirement.

MINUTES

80. Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2009, be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

GATCOM Steering Group

81. Resolved – That the draft minutes of the GATCOM Steering Group held on 9th April, 2009 be received and noted (copy attached to the signed minutes).

GATWICK STATION AND SOUTH TERMINAL FORECOURT IMPROVEMENTS

82. The Committee received a presentation from Simon Chapman, Network Rail and Liz Trevor and Alison Addy, Gatwick Airport Limited on the plans to improve Gatwick Station and the South Terminal Forecourt.

83. Gatwick Airport Limited outlined the revitalisation plans for the South Terminal forecourt and concourse. The scheme, costing around £92m, would deliver a much improved passenger experience in both the check-in and arrivals areas of the concourse with better wayfinding and flow routes through the terminal. A significantly improved passenger environment would be created on the forecourt where a new central entrance to the terminal was to be constructed. The works for this element of the project would commence in June 2009 with substantial completion of the main forecourt by May 2012. The improvements complemented the scheme being developed by Network Rail for the railway station.

84. Network Rail outlined the revised scheme for the station. Under Network Rail's current regulatory settlement the funding for an integrated transport interchange was not now possible but the revised scheme was compatible with any future interchange scheme. The revised scheme included:

- a new platform (Platform 7) which will enable the Gatwick Express to have a dedicated platform to allow a train to almost always be waiting for departure, and constructed in a way that will allow for the future widening of platforms 5 and 6
- new down sidings
- renewed signalling
- improvements to the platforms and station concourse which included an elevated walkway to the South Terminal's concourse with access to the new platform 7, improved circulation to Platforms 5 and 6 and cosmetic improvements to the concourse to create an improved passenger environment.

85. Mr. Chapman explained that Network Rail currently had £40m to fund the scheme but there was a funding gap of £13m but third party funding was actively being sought. Members noted that in order for the scheme to be delivered in time for the Olympic Games, Network Rail would need to have all the funding and the final option agreed by August 2009 for construction to commence in January 2011.

86. Network Rail and Gatwick Airport Limited were continuing to work together to identify an achievable scheme for the long-term vision for an integrated transport interchange.

87. Whilst members were disappointed that the full transport interchange scheme could not be delivered at the current time, there was full support for the proposed scheme, in particular the provision of a new platform (Platform 7) which would enable the Gatwick Express to have a dedicated platform and would help secure its future. Members also encouraged all parties to work together to help ensure Network Rail secured the necessary third party funding.

88. The Chairman thanked Mr. Chapman and Gatwick Airport Limited for updating the Committee on these important projects.

SALE OF GATWICK

89. The Chairman reported that on 19th March, the Competition Commission had published its decision on the BAA Airports Market Investigation and its remedies to competition issues. Members noted the summary of the decision and the Gatwick information requirements (copies attached to the signed minutes).

90. Mr. Flower updated members on the progress of the sale of the airport. He explained that the BAA Gatwick team was involved in the process and the management of the separation plans. The second round of bids had been submitted on 27th April. This part of the process continued to be confidential and it would be a few weeks before Ferrovial was in a position to make an announcement on the outcome of the process. The timetable for the sale was still on track and BAA was working with the Competition Commission and the Monitoring Trustee, Grant Thornton. The Monitoring Trustee would be reporting back to the Competition Commission periodically throughout the sale process.

91. The Committee thanked BAA Gatwick for continuing to keep members informed of the progress being made.

AIRPORT COMMENTARY

92. GATCOM received the Managing Director's commentary on activity at the airport since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Traffic Performance

93. Mr. Flower reported that the affects of the global recession on the aviation industry were being felt at Gatwick and for the first quarter of the year passenger numbers were down by 14.6% (down 6.9% compared with the previous year). A number of airlines had ceased services at Gatwick and a number were choosing to cut back on capacity. There were however some success as a few airlines had expanded their schedules and new services/airlines introduced.

Swine Flu

94. Mr. Flower reported that Gatwick Airport Limited was participating in a series of meetings led by Sussex Police to prepare for and manage the swine flu outbreak and had taken precautions to order materials that might be needed should the level of the outbreak be raised. Airlines were currently making their own decisions on whether to suspend services to/from Mexico.

Customer Service

95. Mr. Flower was pleased to report that for the first quarter, passenger satisfaction levels were good and there had been 20% less passenger feedback. However there had

also been a 18% reduction complimentary feedback. The most significant area of concern remained the special assistance service, specifically the late collection of passenger on inbound flights.

96. Members were disappointed to note that complaints about security, particularly in respect of poor customer service had increased during the last quarter.

PASSENGER ADVISORY GROUP (PAG)

97. 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).

98. Mr. Hall reported that the key areas of concern to the PAG were check-in queues, cleanliness and the service for persons with reduced mobility. He also advised that the PAG continued to monitor the performance of the extended Gatwick Express service. The PAG remained concerned about the impact of extending the Gatwick Express service to Brighton particularly during the early morning peak. Gatwick passengers were paying for a premium service but often had standing room only on board the peak morning trains. Monitoring of the services had revealed that punctuality and performance had improved over the past month but the rolling stock used by Southern posed problems for passengers with luggage because of the single width external doors to the carriages. He advised that the PAG would continue to work with Southern and the new franchisee to address these problems.

99. A member made reference to the change in traffic distribution using the South Terminal forecourt which had resulted in passengers booking taxis having to move between the upper level and the lower level as the taxi office had not been relocated. This was causing confusion and frustration amongst passengers. Mr. McCallum acknowledged the problems and felt that improvements to wayfinding in the area would hopefully improve the situation. Gatwick Airport Limited would look into the matter.

100. Resolved – That:

- (1) the Chairman of GATCOM and the Chairman of PAG have further discussions with BAA Gatwick and other relevant parties on the proposals to enhance consumer representation and that the final response to the DfT consultation on Reforming the Framework for the Economic Regulation of UK Airports be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of GATCOM and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of PAG.
- (2) GATCOM expresses its continued concerns about the Gatwick Express service when it has communications with the new South Central franchisee.

GATWICK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

101. Members considered a report by the Technical Adviser giving details of the way in which GATCOM could engage on the future delivery of commitments, obligations and action plans under the new reporting and monitoring regime (copy attached to the signed minutes). It was noted that in future the GATCOM Steering Group would consider on a six monthly basis Gatwick Airport Limited's report of progress with a covering summary of key points and exceptions. The Steering Group would report its key messages to GATCOM either through the minutes or, in the event of concern, through a report for GATCOM's consideration.

CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING REPORT

102. GATCOM noted the report by Crawley Borough Council's Director for Environment and Housing on planning applications determined in respect of Gatwick since the date of the last meeting (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Chairman thanked the Borough Council for including in its list those planning applications that had been submitted but not yet determined.

FLIGHT EVALUATION UNIT (FEU) REPORT

103. 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). Mr. Jones highlighted the good progress that had been made in tackling ground noise issues and reported that increased airfield inspections had led to a reduction in the non-compliant use of auxiliary power units (APUs) – the greater use of fixed electrical ground power (FEGP) also had benefits for local air quality.

104. Mr. McCallum also confirmed that following the sale of Gatwick there would be a Flight Evaluation Unit at Gatwick although transitional arrangements would be put in place for a period of around 6 months whereby the services of the BAA corporate noise team would continue to be used.

DfT AIRCRAFT NOISE MONITORING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ANMAC)

105. Members received the summary produced by the DfT of the meeting of ANMAC held on 5th February, 2009 (copy attached to the signed minutes). Mr. Jones advised that Eurocontrol had reported on the draft findings of its independent technical review of Gatwick's arrivals procedures and ANMAC had suggested areas which would warrant further consideration. The final report was awaited. Mr. Evans added that once the final report had been issued to ANMAC, he could arrange for Eurocontrol to present its findings to GATCOM. The Committee agreed that this would be extremely useful.

DEFRA – GUIDANCE TO AIRPORT OPERATORS ON THE PRODUCTION OF NOISE ACTION PLANS

106. GATCOM received a paper by the Secretariat setting out the requirements placed on airport operators to produce a noise action plan as required under the Environmental Noise Regulations (copy attached to the signed minutes). Members noted that the airport operator was required to involve the consultative committee in the preparation of the action plan prior to the formal public consultation. Gatwick Airport Limited had held an event that morning seeking GATCOM views on the pre-consultation draft action plan. Members valued the opportunity to comment on the pre-consultation draft plan and highlighted the following points for Gatwick Airport Limited's consideration:

Proposed Consultation Plan

- The need to define a geographical area within which the public and organisations will be formally consulted, possibly using the Lden noise contour boundary and those areas that immediately abut the contour boundary
- To ensure that the consultation document presents in an easily understood way the technical noise information and an explanation of the different noise measurements used and the different noise contours produced.
- The need to consult on 5 – 6 themes but also to include an open opportunity for the public to express general views
- The need to include the Defra strategic noise maps in the consultation documentation

- To involve press organisations in Surrey
- Not to have an over reliance on existing consultative groups to seek comments.

Draft Action Plan

- To include an action pledging a review of the overflight of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty with other parties such as NATS, the DfT and the CAA
- The need to include smart targets to contain, and if possible, reduce the noise impact
- To use the action plan as an opportunity to seek to influence local planning policy on the development of areas around Gatwick.

107. Mrs. Howell also drew to GATCOM's attention the current Defra consultation on proposed amendments to the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006. One of the amendments related to the requirement placed on the Secretary of State to produce a consolidated noise map from all strategic noise mapping results. The proposed amendment would make this requirement a discretionary power. Individual organisations might therefore wish to submit comments to Defra about the value of producing consolidated maps showing the results of road, rail, agglomeration and airport noise mapping. The deadline for responses was 11th May.

DFT CONSULTATION – REFORMING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ECONOMIC REGULATION OF UK AIRPORTS

108. GATCOM considered a paper by the Secretariat highlighting the key proposals to reform the economic regulation of airports and the suggested form of response to the consultation (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Chairman explained that the GATCOM Steering Group and the Passenger Advisory Group had given detailed consideration to the proposals and their views had been incorporated in the draft form of response.

109. Overall GATCOM felt that the Government's proposals to modernise airport regulation were to be supported in principle and agreed the points to be included in the response to the DfT. Of particular concern to the Committee was the DfT's proposal to give Passenger Focus additional responsibilities to represent the interests of airport and airline passengers. Mr. Hall advised that he and the Secretariat had met Gatwick Airport Limited to discuss the proposals to enhance consumer representation in the regulatory process and locally at airports but it was felt that greater clarification was needed on the impact the proposals would have on the way in which GATCOM, particularly the Passenger Advisory Group, currently worked. Further discussions with the DfT, CAA and Gatwick Airport Limited were due to take place the following week.

110. Whilst recognising the need for a national consumer organisation to represent air travellers, GATCOM did not support the proposal to give Passenger Focus additional responsibilities and was disappointed that no option had been put forward to either enhance the current role and remit of the Air Transport Users Council or to create a new national consumer body for air transport. As further clarification was to be sought to inform GATCOM's response, it was agreed that the response to this element of the proposals would be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of GATCOM and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Passenger Advisory Group. It was also agreed that the Chairman would raise GATCOM's concerns at the Annual Meeting of UK Airport Consultative Committees.

111. Resolved – that:

- (1) The form of response set out in Appendix 1 of the Secretariat's paper be agreed;
- (2) The Chairman, the Chairman of the Passenger Advisory Group and the Secretariat have further discussions with Gatwick Airport Limited, the CAA and the DfT on the proposals to enhance consumer representation; and
- (3) The final response to the DfT's consultation be agreed by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Passenger Advisory Group;

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

112. Members noted the next meetings of the Consultative Committee as follows: -

Passenger Advisory Group – Wednesday 1st July, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.
GATCOM Steering Group – Thursday 2nd July, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.
GATCOM – Thursday 23rd July, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

113. 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 Friday 22nd May, 2009 at 9.30 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. respectively.

Chairman