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Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Future Economic Regulation of Gatwick Airport – initial consultation**

Thank you for providing GATCOM with the opportunity to comment on the CAA's initial consultation on the process and timetable for the review of the future regulation of Gatwick Airport.

GATCOM, the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee, is the statutory advisory body for Gatwick Airport and comprises representatives from local authorities, the aviation industry, passengers, business, environmental interests and other users of the airport. We provide a forum for informed discussion leading to the provision of advice to the Government, Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL), the CAA and other organisations on a wide range of matters concerning the operation and future development of Gatwick.

GATCOM is pleased to say that from its perspective, and the perspective of GATCOM's Passenger Advisory Group (PAG), the new style licence regime has worked very well. The experience our PAG is that the commitments framework has brought an enhanced willingness by GAL to engage with our members and serious consideration is given to the PAG's comments and concerns on a wide range of issues both for those areas and requirements that fall within the scope of the commitments framework and for other matters of equal importance outside the scope of the framework. The PAG has also been involved in regular review meetings, Gatwick's Joint Operations Group, with airlines' representatives enabling PAG to have a greater understanding of many operational matters. GATCOM therefore believes it would be beneficial for similar arrangements to continue into the future.

The timetable for the review and the potential issues for consideration – on quality of service and consumer outcomes; how GAL's obligations to develop the airport can be best captured in consumer-focused outcomes; resilience and on-time performance; and risk allocation and value for money - are appropriate and the timeframe for review realistic. However, GATCOM was surprised that there was no specific reference in the consultation document about the input of GATCOM's PAG under the current arrangements or in any future arrangements. GATCOM fully supports a continuing role for PAG into the future and therefore requests that PAG's role be clarified in future consultations as part of the review.

GATCOM very much support's the CAA's view that it expects a renewed commitments framework to be informed by consumer views and preferences of what they want from their airport experience. As part of this GATCOM hopes that the CAA can address the

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broader end to end passenger journey experience. The Committee sees PAG having a key role in helping GAL to identify those matters of greatest importance to passengers in terms of service quality standards, accessibility, resilience and in future airport developments through input to the review of the airport's capital investment programme (CIP).

As you are aware, GAL has already launched a review of service quality standards and rebates and GATCOM is pleased that GAL has sought the input of the PAG from the outset. PAG has already put forward proposals to GAL that, with one exception, the existing standards should continue in a new regime but has suggested improvements to refine some standards and the targets to be achieved. The PAG has also proposed a number of additional measures and appropriate targets which GAL is considering. GATCOM, through its PAG, therefore looks forward to continuing its input to GAL's review as it is essential that the service standards remain fit for the future reflecting the needs of passengers and other users of the airport.

A matter that is of wider concern and importance to GATCOM's membership is the level at which airport charges are set. As highlighted in your consultation document, traffic growth at Gatwick has been higher than expected but GAL has held its airport charges below the CAA's fair price benchmark. It is noted that the CAA has welcomed that achievement. However, there is a need for the CAA to also take into account in determining the fair price benchmark the environmental consequences of holding down the price of airport charges at Gatwick given the concerns of local communities about the impact of traffic growth on the environment, particularly the noise climate.

Also of particular importance to GATCOM is the inclusion of appropriate licence conditions relating to the monitoring and publication of performance and service standards, as well as environmental performance which will benefit passengers and the wider public and communities.

We hope our comments can be taken into account.

Yours faithfully,



Assistant Secretary