

GATCOM

31 JANUARY 2013

GATCOM STEERING GROUP – MATTERS CONSIDERED

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN

This paper summarises the matters considered by the GATCOM Steering Group at its meeting on 10 January 2013.

1. AIRPORTS COMMISSION AND THE CAPACITY DEDATE

1.1 The Steering Group has noted the terms of reference and the operating protocol of the Independent Airports Commission set up by the Government (see agenda item 5(a) for the Secretariat's paper). The DfT advised that the Commission was still in "start-up" mode with the Panel of Experts, as well as Secretariat staff, still to be appointed. The Commission is to issue a series of working papers on thematic issues with the first paper on aviation demand forecasting due for publication in January 2013.

1.2 Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) explained that in contributing to the work of the Airports Commission it would be looking at the issues of airport capacity and hub connectivity for London and the South East as well as the issue of a second runway at Gatwick. It was not yet known as to the level of detail GAL would need to include as part of any submission to the Commission and the Commission's guidance note, to be issued at the end of January 2013, would hopefully set out how and when submissions can be made and the factors that the Commission will wish to take into account in considering evidence.

1.3 In considering the options for a Gatwick second runway, GAL will use the Gatwick Master Plan and the existing Air Transport White Paper as a starting point. GAL will look at options for one new runway (to include the following: short, long, wide-spaced and staggered) within the current area of safeguarded land (the area of land is shown in the Airport Master Plan). It was also confirmed that GAL was considering only one new runway and was not looking at any options for a new runway to the north of the airport.

1.4 The Steering Group emphasised that there was a need for GAL and other interested parties to consider all the benefits as well as disbenefits resulting from an additional runway at Gatwick and the impacts of growth on the region's supporting infrastructure including (but not restricted to) surface transport, housing, hospitals, schools and labour markets. The need to treat the consideration of options sensitivity so as to avoid as far as possible creating anxiety amongst local communities and property blight was highlighted.

1.5 In considering how GATCOM should interact with the Commission and GAL's work, the Steering Group noted the response GATCOM had submitted to the previous Government's consultation on options for a second runway at Gatwick as part of the SERAS study ([GATCOM's resolution](#) is available on the GATCOM website at <http://www.gatcom.org.uk/>). The Steering Group believed that GATCOM's role is to help disseminate information to interested parties and the wider community on the process and the issues being discussed as well as assisting in building an understanding of the options being considered by GAL, the implications and impacts through constructive discussion. It is clear that there will be differing views across the membership of the Committee and it is essential for all interests to have mutual respect of views expressed at meetings when exploring options and, where possible, to build a consensus on those matters/issues where the Committee can agree.

1.6 Once the Airports Commission had issued its work programme, GAL will consider with the Secretariat the timetable of GATCOM (and its sub-groups) meetings.

2. CIVIL AVIATION ACT 2012

2.1 The key elements of the Civil Aviation Act 2012 were noted. The new legislation will enable the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to replace the current fixed price cap regulation of airports (currently Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports) with a lighter touch of regulation and to introduce airport licences. There is also a new power to enable the CAA to promote

better public information about airline and airport performance and better public information about the environmental effects of aviation and measures taken to mitigate adverse effects, enabling passengers to make informed choices.

2.2 A copy of the [report](#) considered by the Steering Group is available on the GATCOM website at <http://www.gatcom.org.uk/> .

Future Regulation of Gatwick

2.3 The current system of economic regulation was designed around the then BAA's historic near monopoly of London's airport system. Under separate ownership, GAL explained that it has been competing vigorously with other airports and believes there is no longer a need for Gatwick to be subject to economic regulation. GAL would like to have more freedom to make quicker investment decisions to meet the needs of its individual airline customers and compete more effectively with Heathrow and the other London airports. GAL also believes that the cost of regulation outweighs the benefits.

2.4 GAL reported that it will launch its new business plan in early February which has been developed in conjunction with the airlines through the constructive engagement process. The new business plan, which will be submitted to the CAA as part of the process for preparing for the next regulatory period, Q6, will feature a proposal to move away from economic regulation and to instead put in place a range of voluntary commitments moving away from the current RAB base pricing system with a more flexible pricing structure covering a longer period than the current 5 years regulatory period. The Steering Group noted that the CAA had recently proposed that Stansted Airport should continue to be subject to regulation as it was felt that Stansted still held market power and because of the capacity constraints in the London airports market which restricted competition. It is not yet known if the CAA has changed its view in terms of Gatwick.

2.5 The Steering Group was reminded that GATCOM had stated in its response to the CAA's consultation about the rationale for the economic regulation of airports, that it believed the current price cap regulation was inflexible and costly and that it was not appropriate for Gatwick going forward but felt that a lighter touch regulation for a period of time beyond 2014 may be needed. If Gatwick was to be de-regulated GATCOM had hoped that GAL would enter into some form a voluntary agreement with airlines and handling agents setting out service quality and performance standards for a range of services. Whilst a decision has yet to be made about the future regulation of Gatwick, the Steering Group noted the continuing process and looked forward to being consulted on GAL's proposed commitments.

CAA's New Information Powers

2.6 The CAA is currently developing its draft statement of policy on its requirements for the publication of information. The CAA is talking to a number of stakeholders to obtain initial views on what information would be helpful for consumers/the public to enable them to make informed choices on which airport/airline to use and environmental performance. The CAA aims to issue the draft statement of policy for consultation next May.

2.7 The Steering Group noted that the CAA is seeking initial views of airport consultative committees at this early stage in the process to help with the development of the draft statement of policy and to help inform the discussion at the stakeholder event which was held on 21 January. The Liaison Group of UK Airport Consultative Committees put forward a number of suggestions for member committees' consideration. The Steering Group considered the suggestions as a sensible starting point but highlighted the need to ensure there is no duplication of effort by airports, airlines and the CAA in providing the information and the importance of using data based on the same metrics and measurements. The Steering Group also commented that as there is much information already available across the industry it is important for the CAA as a first step to review what information is available and how this could be used/better promoted. The Steering Group also hoped that in pursuing its new powers the CAA would not duplicate or cut across the work of the Passenger Advisory Group in monitoring the information given to passengers at Gatwick. These views have been forwarded to the CAA for consideration.

2.8 A copy of the [report](#) considered by the Steering Group is available on the GATCOM website at <http://www.gatcom.org.uk/> .

3. P-RNAV DEPARTURE ROUTES PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION - UPDATE

3.1 An update was given on GAL's consultation exercise and the meetings it had held with local representative groups around the airport to give people to the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on the proposal. The meeting at Felbridge was particularly well attended.

3.2 Route 2 (08 – Seaford departure route) which passes west of East Grinstead attracted the most concern. GAL explained the issues of concern and the problems associated with the P-RNAV navigation on the route. The Steering Group noted that the CAA's advice on P-RNAV navigation was that P-RNAV should replicate the centre line of the Standard Instrument Departure (SID). On this particular departure route the P-RNAV track is just to the right of the noise preferential route (NPR) centre line - although the P-RNAV route is well within NPR swathe where aircraft are permitted to fly. It was also noted that there remained much public concern about the P-RNAV routing, including the parish councils whose areas/residents were affected by the concentration of the flight path. There has been much misinformation reported in the local press about the use of the 08 Seaford route.

3.3 The Steering Group therefore agreed that GAL and NATS should explain to GATCOM the current position and the issues relating to Route 2 – 08 Seaford NPR.

4. OVERFLIGHT OF AREAS WEST OF EAST GRINSTEAD

4.1 GAL reported on the current concerns of local communities in the vicinity of East Grinstead and the Three Woods areas – residential areas located either side of the NPR. There continues to be concern about the use of the 08 Seaford departure route and local residents have made direct contact with easyJet, one of the major airlines that uses the route, to try to seek improvements to the way in which the route is flown. The discussions held between residents of East Grinstead and easyJet have been misrepresented in the local press which has created wider concerns amongst surrounding communities.

4.2 Whilst the Steering Group noted the good intentions of easyJet attempting to be helpful and constructive, members were concerned about the anxiety created for the wider communities around Gatwick and the fact that GAL's established noise governance process for handling community noise disturbance issues had been bypassed. The Steering Group felt it important that all airlines operating out of Gatwick should be reminded of GAL's noise [complaints handling protocol](#) and the noise governance process. GAL will therefore address the matter through the Flight Operators' Performance and Safety Committee (FLOPSC).

4.3 The Steering Group felt there was a need for the current use of the 08 Seaford route and the issues to be publicly clarified. GAL was asked to prepare a report for GATCOM's consideration.

5. END NOISE ACTION PLAN 2010-2015

5.1 There is a requirement under the Environmental Noise Directive (END) for airports to refresh their Noise Action Plan (NAP). GAL reported that the updated Strategic Noise Map for Gatwick, published by defra, was due to be issued in the near future and will provide the steer for GAL on what it will need to review in its NAP. The DfT advised that the noise mapping exercise was based on the traffic figures for 2011 and the results of the most recent census data. It was also confirmed by the DfT that their expectation is that airport plans will only require a light touch update and that the DfT intended to publish guidance on how to review/refresh NAPs. GAL hoped to commence its review of the NAP towards the end of 2013 which would involve seeking comments from GATCOM.

5.2 As regards monitoring the delivery of the actions/commitments in the NAP, this was an on-going process and progress reported through NATMAG. GATCOM will receive a copy of the progress report following NATMAG's consideration.

6. ROTATING RESPITE

6.1 GAL reported on the progress made on considering the concept of rotating respite. Discussions with NATS had progressed and a number of ideas were under consideration. GAL is considering conducting a trial of rotating respite during the night period (00:00 – 05:00 hours)

and will consult NATMAG and GATCOM on what the trial could involve and the options. The option concepts will require the use of P-RNAV on arrivals flights. GAL is therefore awaiting the decision of the CAA on the proposed implementation of P-RNAV on departure routes before proceeding to the next stage.

6.2 The Steering Group noted the progress made but expressed caution in not raising expectations amongst communities that the noise and disturbance will significantly improve. Members also highlighted the need for GAL/NATS to clearly define the objective criteria for what needs to be achieved and when is the most important time for respite for locals to help inform the consultation for the trial. In the meantime, members are encouraged to comment direct to GAL/NATS direct on ideas to help inform questions for the consultation.

7. NOISE SEMINAR

7.1 GAL reported on the feedback received from the Noise Seminar held on 7 December. Although the event attracted some positive feedback there were lessons learned which would be taken into consideration in the planning for the next noise seminar. The Steering Group welcomed the opportunity to work with GAL on planning for the next event. The Secretariat would report to GATCOM providing feedback on the event.

John Godfrey
CHAIRMAN