

GATCOM

10 APRIL 2014

GATCOM STEERING GROUP – MATTERS CONSIDERED

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN

This paper summarises the matters considered by the GATCOM Steering Group at its meeting on 20 March 2014.

1. NIGHT TIME ARRIVALS RESPITE TRIAL

1.1 GAL reminded the Steering Group of the trial aims and respite options all of which were within existing arrivals swathes:

- Every night of the trial no arrivals below 5,000ft and 6,000ft respectively over the identified areas
- During westerly arrivals alternating avoidance within existing swathes and no arrivals below 6,000ft over the identified areas
- During easterly arrivals increased descent profile over the identified areas.

1.2 Following the 56 days trial, the results had revealed that the respite options were operationally feasible with accurate aircraft track keeping. GAL advised that there had been no negative comments received and fewer complaints compared with the previous quarter/same period for the previous year. Positive feedback had however been received from some communities. The technical output data received from the trial would be fed into the London Airspace Management Programme for consideration as part of the wider London airspace changes.

1.3 Members made reference to the request for an independent expert analysis of the trial results as it was important for there to be a proper assessment, measurement and analysis of the effectiveness and impact of the trial, particularly if its results were to inform new routings and use of routes in the future. It was also pointed out the airlines were most interested in the results of the trial but it was disappointing that research had not been undertaken to date on the impacts on the ground and what was considered important to those living under the flight paths. Members felt that if serious conclusions were to be drawn on the effectiveness and impact of the trial more work needed to be undertaken to provide robust evidence on the success of the trial to support changes for the future.

2. ADNID DEPARTURES SEPARATION TRIAL - UPDATE

2.1 GAL updated the Steering Group on the operational departures separation trial. The purpose of the trial is to gather data to help develop national standards for improved efficiency for runway use and to establish whether it is operationally feasible to improve time separation between flights off Gatwick's runway using Performance Based Navigation technology. The trial route is to test the flyability of a smaller angle of divergence from the centre line of the runway allowing increased use of the runway and improved resilience. GAL advised that the trial route had been designed to avoid the overflight of built up areas as far as practicable. However the use of the trial route has generated a significant number of complaints from the Warnham, Kingsfold and Slinfold areas. The trial is due to finish mid-August 2014.

2.2 The Secretariat has also received a number of complaints. Members of the Steering Group and GATCOM's members appointed to serve on the Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) have been informed of the concerns raised by the residents including those of Warnham Parish Council.

2.3 Members were reminded of the Government's policy of limiting and where possible reducing the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise and that in minimising the number of people over-flown at low levels the Government accepts that, in general, the balance of social and environmental advantage lies in concentrating aircraft taking off from airports along the fewest possible number of specified routes avoiding densely populated areas as far as possible. It was explained that the trial route means that several more villages were now experiencing much less overflight. The Government's policy of concentrating aircraft tracks gives cause to a number of significant local issues where the impact on those living under flight paths was greatest.

2.4 The processes involved in making changes to noise preferential routes (NPRs) were also discussed. The DfT confirmed that any changes to existing or new NPRs would require the approval of the Secretary of State for Transport. It was pointed out that aircraft were generally higher than 4000ft over Warnham/Slinfold areas so they would not necessarily fall within the NPR (above 4000ft aircraft are vectored off the NPR) if it was decided at a future date to make such a route permanent.

2.5 The Steering Group felt that the timing of the trial was most unfortunate given the recent close of the London Airspace Consultation and the options being considered for a second runway which has given rise to much anxiety locally about possible changes for the future. It was emphasised that people had purchased properties having researched the position of flight paths and had paid a premium to live in areas with very little overflight. It was important that NATS/GAL seriously considered the impacts on the ground as well as the operational and safety benefits. The location of the route and the angle of divergence was discussed and GAL/NATS was asked to give consideration to slightly changing the angle of divergence or the point of divergence further west along the centre line to route traffic over woodland and farmland.

3. GAL'S RUNWAY 2 (R2) WORK

3.1 GAL reported on its work on developing options for R2, its response to the Airports Commission's consultation on the draft Appraisal Framework and the next steps.

3.2 On 17 March GAL publicly announced on its forthcoming public consultation into the options it is considering for R2 so that people had advanced notification of the official start the consultation (to commence 4 April). GAL explained that the purpose of the consultation is to seek views on its three runway options (including GAL's provisional preferred option – Option 3 a wide spaced runway to the south as cited by the Airports Commission in its short-list). Responses to the consultation will be used to refine GAL's plans and to help make a final decision on the preferred option for submission to the Airports Commission as part of its evaluation process and subsequent advice to the Government. GAL emphasised the importance of ensuring local people were able to influence the development proposals at an early stage.

3.3 The Steering Group felt it was appropriate and honest for GAL to identify its preferred option in consultation document. GAL was asked to consider whether the consultation response form could include a question or means to indicate whether the respondent supported/opposed the construction of a second runway at Gatwick and also the ability to raise other comments. GAL advised that it will not directly seek views on whether there should be a second runway at Gatwick. However, respondents will be able to indicate their preferred option which will include a box "none of these options" and a part for free text where they can express their views.

3.4 The consultation arrangements were outlined including the location of the 16 public exhibitions and the four invitation only workshops, to which representatives of GATCOM would be invited to attend. GAL was conscious that the timetable for consultation, which was being driven by the Airports Commission's work programme, may cause problems for local authorities to respond in view of the local elections in May. GAL hoped however that in providing a variety of mechanisms to engage throughout the process and by allowing a degree of flexibility would help to address timetable and consideration issues for local authorities.

3.5 GAL's recently announced commitment to develop a proposed noise compensation scheme for those properties that would fall within the 57dBA Leq noise contour with a second runway at Gatwick was discussed. GAL was not intending to consult on the detail of the proposed scheme at this stage in the process. If Gatwick was selected by the Government as the location to construct a new runway then GAL would consider undertaking a consultation on the detail at a later date and the possibility of including the commitment in a legal agreement.

3.6 GATCOM's consideration of GAL's R2 consultation was discussed and it was suggested that a special meeting of GATCOM be arranged early/mid May to consider and agree the Committee's response to the consultation. It was felt that whilst GATCOM was unlikely to agree on a preferred option, the Committee would be able to highlight issues of common interest/concern in respect of each option for GAL to consider. The suggested programme for GATCOM's consideration of its response to the consultation is considered at Agenda item 6(c).

4. CHRISTMAS EVE 2013 DISRUPTION

4.1 GAL highlighted the key findings and recommendations of David McMillan's review of the airport's response to the disruption experienced at Gatwick on Christmas Eve as a result of flooding

caused by the unusually high rainfall. Although the terms of reference of the review had a key focus on the response to the events on the day at the airport, David McMillan had brought to the attention of the GAL Board local flooding issues and made specific recommendations to address the potential impacts of flooding at Gatwick on communities upstream and downstream of the airport as part of the urgent new overall assessment of the airport's flood risks.

4.2 The Steering Group was pleased that GAL had accepted all of review recommendations and that it is committed to implementing all the short-term actions which have been recommended by October this year. In recognition of the need to increase resilience, GAL has set aside a resilience fund of £30 million which will be invested as necessary. GAL will also be working closely with the Environment Agency and other relevant agencies, including Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council on long-term flood planning for the airport

4.3 The airline representatives specifically welcomed the recommendations for improved communications and resilience planning and looked forward to being consulted on the development of the resilience and communication plans. The DfT has also advised that its aviation resilience officials will arrange a visit to Gatwick to discuss the McMillan Report recommendations with airport resilience managers.

5. INDEPENDENT AVIATION NOISE AUTHORITY

5.1 Consideration has been given to the Airports Commission's recommendation regarding the creation of an Independent Aviation Noise Authority (IANA). While many member organisations have not yet formed a view on the suggestion as more detail about its intended powers, functions and constitution were awaited, members felt that it important for the DfT and the Airports Commission to be advised of GATCOM's initial views at this early stage in the process.

5.2 It was generally felt that a one size fits all approach in considering local noise impact issues was not appropriate and was best dealt with locally to seek resolution or mitigation. It was often adherence to Government policy that was the root cause of many local noise issues. The usefulness of an IANA to provide specific advice to the Government and the CAA on overarching aviation policy, modelling, the commissioning of research and examining key issues on a pan-airport could therefore be of value. However it was questioned whether this would result in the new expanded powers of the CAA being undermined. There were also questions as to who would appoint and fund such a body to ensure its independence. The issue of funding is fundamental to any such body if it is to have the resources to carry out all its functions in a timely and robust manner.

5.3 The Secretariat was asked to prepare a suggested response for GATCOM to consider (see agenda item 15)

6. CAA STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2011-2016 – CONSULTATION ON UPDATED PLAN

6.1 The CAA has published for consultation its Strategic Plan for 2011-2016 together with three supporting detailed plans for Safety, Consumers and the Environment. A copy of the documentation was emailed to all members on 10 March for consideration and is available on the CAA's website at: <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=1350&pagetype=90&pageid=15890>

6.2 As this was an update of the current Strategic Plan the Steering Group agreed that there were no issues that required a response on behalf of GATCOM.

7. PASSENGER PICK-UP – LOCAL RESIDENT DISCOUNT SCHEME

7.1 Following feedback received on the local residents' parking discount scheme at the January GATCOM meeting, and GAL's further consultation with GATCOM's Passenger Advisory Group, the Steering Group welcomed the changes that GAL has made to the scheme. GAL has increased the pick-up period in the short stay car parks for local residents from 10 minutes to 20 minutes. The charge to be part of the scheme has also been reduced from £80 to £20 for 250 uses per year, and as such there will now only be one option on the scheme. GAL is expecting to begin user testing in April and will go live from June.

CHAIRMAN