

**GATCOM**

**18 APRIL 2013**

**GATCOM STEERING GROUP – MATTERS CONSIDERED**

**REPORT BY CHAIRMAN**

This paper summarises the matters considered by the GATCOM Steering Group at its meeting on 28 March 2013.

**1. AVIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK**

1.1 The DfT gave a brief overview of the Government's recently published Aviation Policy Framework (APF). The APF provides the framework upon which the Airports Commission will make its recommendations on future connectivity and capacity. In terms of the development of a National Policy Statement for Aviation, this will be taken forward by the Government once the outcome of the review of the Airports Commission is known. Members noted that airport capacity issues had been remitted to the Airports Commission.

1.2 The Steering Group noted that the APF recognises that noise is the primary concern of local communities near airports and that noise is to be tackled seriously by the industry. There is still further work to be undertaken, including how landing charges could be used to incentivise the use of quieter aircraft, and a number of matters are to be reviewed by DfT's Aircraft Noise Management Advisory Committee (ANMAC). As regards the development of noise envelopes, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is to produce guidance. The Steering Group welcomed the work to be taken forward and re-iterated the need for research into annoyance.

1.3 The Steering Group has also emphasised the need for the Government to ensure that other impacts of airports and aircraft are also seriously addressed such as improving surface access as well as addressing local traffic impacts and air quality. Members were reminded that GAL's management of air quality, in partnership with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, is continuing and the results of air quality monitoring for 2012 will be reported to the GATCOM Steering Group in June.

1.4 The Government has confirmed that the role of Airport Consultative Committees (ACCs) is to be strengthened. DfT will consult on changes to the guidelines for ACCs later in the year. The Steering Group agreed that it was important for GATCOM to feed into that review.

1.5 The DfT was asked to present the key elements of the APF to GATCOM and to highlight how the framework and the outcome of the Airports Commission will be used to inform the future National Policy Statement for Aviation.

**2. NIGHT FLYING RESTRICTIONS AT HEATHROW, GATWICK AND STANSTED – STAGE 1 CONSULTATION**

2.1 The DfT gave an overview of the consultation document and the new issues posed. A copy of the DfT's [presentation slides](#) are available on GATCOM's website at [www.gatcom.org.uk](http://www.gatcom.org.uk). The Steering Group noted that the responses to the DfT's consultation will be made available to the Airports Commission to help develop its thinking on environmental impacts. The Airports Commission is planning to consult widely on noise and environmental issues during 2012. However the Commission's work will be more relevant for future night flights regimes post 2020.

2.2 It was also noted that the DfT was specifically seeking views of local authorities on expected land use planning developments and exposure to night noise.

2.3 The initial suggested response to the consultation, prepared by GATCOM's Independent Technical Adviser, was circulated to all GATCOM members for initial consideration on 20 March 2012. A few comments were received from members and these were reported to the Steering Group for consideration. A number of points were discussed:

- Carryover allowance – the suggested annual limits were considered sensible, but airlines would not support such a move if it resulted in an overall lower movements limit/noise quota especially if there was no carry over. It was questioned whether the regime should be more flexible to enable Easter to be taken into account in the movements limits and noise quotas set for the summer/winter seasons.
- Scale of incentives – it was felt that the scale has to be proportionate and significant enough to be effective so that airlines are prompted to take action in terms of reducing the noise of their aircraft. It was noted however that the airlines' view was that as no expansion of present movement limits/noise quotas is being sought and that aircraft noise is reducing there was no need to have more generous mitigation schemes.
- Use of the night period - it was questioned whether, if a greater number of night flights were proposed, more use should be made of the night period when people are at their deepest sleep rather than making more intense use of the shoulder periods when people are more likely to be disturbed. There were also views expressed about reducing the limits and quotas in the night period. It was recognised however that a balance needed to be struck.
- Infringements – there were very few at Gatwick and it was questioned whether infringement limits/penalties should be more challenging to greater incentivise the use of quieter aircraft and best flying practice.
- Continuous climb – it was felt that P-RNAV technology could be used to enable continuous climb to help reduce the noise impact.
- Noise Insulation Schemes (NIS) – it was felt that Gatwick's insulation scheme needed to be more generous in terms of the geographic area it applies to, and the scale of the funds available. There was also a need to consider noise events and their frequency, rather than the average noise across an area. GAL's view is that there is potential to look wider than the current NIS contour areas and careful consideration will need to be given to determining an appropriate boundary so that there is a robust scheme in place. In order to help determine boundaries and as to who would be eligible, it was highlighted that research was needed to look into the metrics used for noise insulation and disturbance.

2.4 GAL's response is currently being considered but it is noted that the forecast growth as set out in the Airport Master Plan include assumptions that the current noise quotas and movements limits would continue. There is currently headroom in Gatwick's regime, particularly during the winter season, mainly due to the economic downturn. GAL would like to better utilise the slots in the night period and growth strategies have been based on using night time slots which will be critical in attracting and maximising connectivity opportunities for new long haul routes.

2.5 The Steering Group believed that there is a need to place proportionate but significant incentives on the industry to encourage investment in quieter aircraft and to have in place mitigation schemes which are viewed by communities as fair, and more generous, than the current schemes.

2.6 It was agreed that the initial draft response would be revised to take into account the views received from members and those of the Steering Group for GATCOM's consideration.

### **3. AIRPORTS COMMISSION AND THE CAPACITY DEBATE**

3.1 GAL provided an update on GAL's work in respect of responding to the Airports Commission and the consideration of options for a second runway at Gatwick. GAL has submitted to the Commission and published on its website:

- Letter of intent to submit connectivity and capacity options
- Response to the demand forecasting paper
- Response to the options sifting criteria

3.2 The Steering Group was pleased that GAL was actively engaging with a range of stakeholders to outline its work and vision for the future in terms of UK international connectivity and capacity needs.

3.3 GAL is to make its next submission to the Airports Commission on 17 May when it will set out the company's view on short and medium term measures for making best use of existing capacity and maintaining/enhancing connectivity.

3.4 As regards the Commission's deadline for submissions for outline proposals for the longer term, GAL was waiting for further guidance from the Airports Commission on the extent of the evidence that needed to be provided. The Airports Commission's timetable and sequencing of submissions was discussed. Members stressed the need for the Commission to build into its timetable the opportunity for interested parties to comment on the submissions for long term options so that their views on the options could be fed into the Commission's consideration prior to the interim report being published at the end of the year (the interim report will contain a short list of those options to be taken forward to the next stage). It was also recognised that noise was an issue for local communities and that detailed work and public engagement was to be carried out - although it was not known at this stage the timescales for these activities. It was agreed that these issues be raised with the Airports Commission.

3.5 As the Commission's deadline for long term options submissions is 19 July, the day after the July GATCOM meeting, the Secretariat was asked to look at the possibility of changing the date of the July meeting so that GAL was able to report on the content of its long term options submission to GATCOM. Altering the calendar of GATCOM meetings is avoided where ever possible, but it is felt that in this instance changing the date of the July meeting is justified.

3.6 It is therefore **recommended** that the date of the July meeting of GATCOM be re-scheduled to take place on Tuesday 23 July 2013 at 2.00 p.m.

#### **4. NATMAG – GATCOM'S MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTING PROCESS**

4.1 The Steering Group gave initial consideration to the review of GATCOM's membership and appointing process to GAL's Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG). Members emphasised the importance of endeavouring to achieve a better balance of interests serving on NATMAG and agreed that the current number of seats held by GATCOM for local authority/environment and amenities group representation was appropriate.

4.2 It was felt that the suggested appointing process and specifications for the role of GATCOM members serving on NATMAG and the Lead Member for noise provided a more transparent and fair appointing process. It was felt however that the minimum term of appointment for GATCOM members should be for a period of at least two years in view of the need for continuity and retention of technological knowledge and expertise on NATMAG.

#### **5. END NOISE ACTION PLAN 2010-15**

##### **Monitoring Delivery of the Plan**

5.1 Consideration was given to GAL's [Noise Action Plan \(NAP\) 2013 Progress Status](#) (copy available on GATCOM's website [www.gatcom.org.uk](http://www.gatcom.org.uk)). Members were pleased to note that all actions, except for one, were either completed or on track to be achieved within the timescale. Action 28 - to report in the Annual Flight Performance Team Report - was currently delayed but GAL was addressing this. Quarterly progress reports on the delivery of the NAP would be made to NATMAG and annually to GATCOM.

5.2 The Steering Group questioned whether the NAP provided challenging actions to manage and secure improvements in the noise climate around Gatwick. The DfT was working with defra on providing guidance for the review of NAPs and although only a light touch review was expected, it was acknowledged that smarter targets could be provided to make them more meaningful. GAL added

that in reviewing its NAP it was looking to build on those actions that had been achieved to date and to move forward some of the initiatives that are currently actions to be investigated.

### **Community Noise Disturbance Issues**

5.3 There are still issues relating to the use of the 08 Seaford departure route in the vicinity of East Grinstead but there appears to be a clearer understanding by the different parties of the issues.

5.4 The Steering Group was also made aware of issues relating to aircraft noise disturbance over Smallfield.

## **6. P-RNAV IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

6.1 GAL has submitted to the Director for Airspace Policy (DAP) its proposal for the implementation of P-RNAV on departure routes from Gatwick and the summary report of consultation responses. Initial indications were that the DAP was content with the consultation process that had been put in place at Gatwick. The decision of the DAP was awaited.

## **7. ROTATING RESPITE**

7.1 GAL presented its current thinking on developing a trial for rotating respite during the night period. The suggestion is to conduct a trial over the summer period with the aim of managing noise/overflight within the existing swathes. Normal flight procedures would revert after the trial.

7.2 It was agreed that Steering Group and GATCOM's NATMAG members be asked to submit initial views on the suggested approach to GAL for consideration in the preparation of a paper to GATCOM.

## **8. GAL'S REVISED BUSINESS PLAN TO 2024**

8.1 The Steering Group noted the response that had been submitted on behalf of GATCOM to the CAA following its request for initial views on GAL's Business Plan to 2024 and the airport commitments proposal. GAL provided an update on its continuing discussions with airlines about the content of the business plan and outlined the CAA's consultation programme and opportunities to input over the next few months. GAL intended to publish its final business plan in July. [GATCOM's initial response](#) to the CAA is available on GATCOM's website at: [www.gatcom.org.uk](http://www.gatcom.org.uk)

**John Godfrey**  
**CHAIRMAN**