

GACC NEWSLETTER

Number 134

June-July 2022

Dear Members

Our AGM was held on 16th May and all committee members standing were elected.

The formal matters of the meeting were preceded by a highly informative presentation from

Tim Johnson of the Aviation Environment Federation on both Jet Zero and on the experiences of other airports community groups with expansion plans.

Minutes of our AGM are available [here](#).

DCO Consultation - Supplementary Consultation

Gatwick continues to move forward with its expansion application via the Development Consent Order process to bring its emergency (or northern) runway into regular use. The consultation responses in 2021 have been analysed (there were over 6000 responses). Gatwick have now issued a supplementary consultation that reflects some of the design proposals for highways, surface parking and local infrastructure. Whilst there is reference to the challenges raised in the original consultation concerning noise, pollution and the economics of the project the latest press release suggests these will be addressed when the formal application is made. The date of submission of the formal DCO application has shifted to early Spring 2023 rather than the end of this year.

The latest consultation and related statement are here: [Consultation](#) [Statement](#)

GACC will be releasing a briefing on this latest consultation once our technical advisers have studied the content. It is thought that the main body of this consultation will be of interest to local authorities in the vicinity of the airport rather than the wider area.

Noise Envelope

In our last Newsletter (133) we gave some detail of the “Noise Envelope” Gatwick has proposed as part of its expansion plans. Since then it has begun a short engagement process with councils and community groups on those proposals.

We are participating in that process because it is the only engagement that Gatwick has offered on a future noise envelope. However, with other groups, we have written to Gatwick's CEO to set out the many deficiencies in its process. We have made clear that the engagement proposed is wholly unsuitable given that the noise envelope is by far the most important noise management development at Gatwick for many years. We have also put on record the fact that Gatwick is not complying with the Civil Aviation Authority's advice on noise envelope development in many respects including the time being allowed and the lack of an independent chair or advisers.

The process to date suggests that Gatwick's engagement is largely for presentational purpose and is not a serious attempt to achieve agreement on a future noise envelope.

Airspace Modernisation – FASI South Workshops

The next series of workshops have commenced and once the data presented is reviewed we'll publish an update on progress. We are seeing some positive response to our feedback made following the last workshop but there's a way to go yet. We know people are anxious to see what's proposed but it is unlikely, because the process is so complex and involves so many stakeholders, that there will be a full public consultation until Q1 2024.

Noise Management Board

It is clear from the Noise Community Forum meeting on 25th May that a voluntary reduction of night flights is something that the industry is not prepared to consider. Objections focus on the claim that any voluntary restriction will take two years to implement and will overlap with the consultation planned for the summer of 2024 and that in the meantime quieter aircraft will be introduced. In our view neither of these arguments withstands scrutiny, and we will continue to press the industry and the NMB's leadership to take all possible steps to reduce the number of night flights. Recent proposals from the aviation industry to increase the number of night flights to cope with the delays at airports will exacerbate the problem.

Further work on Fair and Equitable Dispersal (FED) is planned in the form of focus groups with 12 different communities involved, suffering different levels of noise. These are due to start in July, funding permitting, and will consider issues that are geographically agnostic, trying to build an evidence base that can be applied to Airspace Change Proposals (ACPs) nationally. GACC has argued strongly that the outcomes must also deliver practical and applicable solutions for Gatwick.

Discussion of airport charging has been delayed and Gatwick appear to be reluctant to engage with communities on this issue, which could be used strategically to reduce noise. We are unlikely to learn about the focus of charging for next year until September but understand it will focus on environmental issues rather than noise.

Gatwick Operations

You will no doubt have seen the press reports of the problems airports are

having managing flight programmes due in the main to labour shortages – both airport and airline staff. To help resolve this Gatwick have introduced a daily cap on the number of flights operating over the summer. This will reduce flights from the expected 900 per day to 825 in July and 850 in August.

Many people will be surprised at those figures but in 2019 Gatwick did achieve over 950 flight per day on some summer days – with the associated negative impact on our communities.

To support airports UK wide the Department of Transport (DfT) has temporarily lifted restrictions that insist slots allocated to airlines at each airport have to be used. This will remove the risk of so called 'ghost' flights and possibly reduce the overall number of flights operating – but only marginally.

Night Flights

Night flights whilst having a seasonal cap (11200 summer, 3250 winter) are not being proportionally capped by Gatwick and in fact we are seeing nearly 100% utilisation of summer night allocations.

Some of you will have seen the story in last weekend's Sunday Times that the Government is considering a temporary relaxation of night-flight restrictions to ease the chaos at airports this summer. Together with the Aviation Environment Federation and community groups at Heathrow and Stansted, GACC has written to the Secretary of State and the Aviation Minister to make clear that any relaxation in night flights limits and rules would be grossly inequitable and wholly unacceptable given the issues at airports are entirely of the industry's making. Our joint letter is [here](#).

Government Future Strategy

The Government was due to publish a new aviation strategy in 2019 which would define its ambitions for the industry through to 2050. Obviously the pandemic has impacted its publication and we've now been presented with a strategic framework for the next 10 years called 'Flightpath to the future' ([link here](#)). Our view is that the policy virtually ignores environmental impacts. The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) has published a sound critique of the paper ([here](#)) that matches our views.

Joining GACC: please spread the word

Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to join GACC and help protect the interests of communities around the airport and under flight paths. Information on how to join is on our website [here](#)

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