

Aviation Report – June 2023

Alan Jones

Introduction

As you are aware, I did not produce an aviation report for April as there had been no activity to report. However, there has been substantially more in the way of meetings since April as follows:

27th April – GATCOM Teams meeting
2nd May – NATMAG Pre-meeting
11th May – NATMAG
22nd May – ANMAC
24th May – GACT Moderation meeting

GATCOM MEETING – 27TH APRIL 2023

This turned out to be a rather hectic day as so many personal issues took up the first half of the day which made me 10 minutes late for joining this meeting on TEAMS. However, I was pleased to find that Eddie Lord was sitting in on the meeting and was ready to join in if I was unavailable.

END Noise Action Plan (NAP)

The airport has produced these 5-year Action Plans for quite a while and it would seem that Gatwick, through consultation with NATMAG and NMB committees, had produced quite meaningful documents which have to be approved by DEFRA. A presentation was given at this meeting by Rhian Thomas and Cerise Reynolds of DEFRA informing us what was expected in the NAP when the new 5-year term commences in 2024. As NATMAG is the monitoring body at Gatwick of the current 53 actions, we have found some shortcomings which has been agreed will be taken on board in the new iteration. The NMB make their contributions to the document actions as well as members of NATMAG. At each quarterly meeting we have been reviewing three of the actions so, sometimes, we have reviewed some actions more than once. The draft NAP will be consulted on and agreed later this year.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

I attach the Secretariat's summary of the meeting to this report but, briefly, the highlights by Stewart Wingate were:

- The third term of the NMB is due to commence in 2024
- Gatwick currently serving 156 routes which is 92% of the number served in 2019.
- In 2022 the airport made a profit of £196m after the losses in the previous 2 years.
- Company investing £250m to achieve JET Zero by 2030.
- Investment of £65m in 2022, mainly on re-surfacing of the main runway.
- The huge railway station re-building programme is due to be completed and the station fully operational by the end of this year.

Northern Runway DCO Process consultation documents

Tim Norwood gave an update on this process. The number of consultation responses have taken a long time to work through in order to be able to be ready to submit the documents to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of June. When he receives them the Inspector is expected to approve the 200 volumes (approx. 25,000 pages) within 28 days.

Gatwick Airport Charity Partner

SASH (Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust) has been chosen by Gatwick staff to be the airport's charity partner and Andrew Bickerdike addressed the meeting. He stated how important it was to the hospital for this link and the large area that is encompassed by the people who are involved with the airport.

Response to DfT Consultations

GATCOM wished to respond to two DfT consultations whose closing dates were early May. They were "2040 Zero Emissions Airport Targets" due to close on 2nd May and "Night Time Noise Abatement Objectives" due to close on 9th May. I was able to make some contribution to the final consultation submission.

NATMAG MEETING – 11TH MAY 2023

Although I missed the pre-meeting on 2nd May I was able to attend this virtual meeting. It was noted at the beginning of the meeting that Webtrak is not being utilised very much by complainants even though it has so much information on it. Of all the complaints lodged over the three months, only 43 were through accessing Webtrak whilst 1792 were on the web and just 1 (one) by telephone.

There was a briefing on the updated Noise Insulation Scheme (NIS) which identified that the amount available to those applying had now been increased from £3,000 + VAT to £4,300 + VAT in line with RPI.

Airspace Office Report

- We have discussed on many occasions about the number of 'Go-arounds' is an issue that we watch very closely and 'runway occupied' is the main reason why a landing needs to be aborted. The major reasons are 'slow to roll' or 'slow to vacate' the runway. At this meeting we were given a briefing on the proposed Rapid Exit Taxiway (RET) which is being constructed between two of the current exit points from the main runway. This should allow the runway to be cleared more quickly by arriving aircraft and, hopefully, reduce the number of Go-arounds. The work is hoped to be completed for this summer.
- Chairman gave a demonstration of the Aircraft & Noise Information portal (Insightful). This is a very useful dashboard that can be accessed by all but, rather than telling you all about it you can play with it and you will find it delivers a huge amount of accurate information. Although it is 25 minutes behind the incident time, it has gathered all the correct data so that it can be looked at for up to 6 months after the event.
- Later this year we shall be looking at a draft version of the new Noise Action Plan (NAP) that is due to come into operation in October 2024. Once GAL has approved the document to our satisfaction, it will then be referred to DEFRA for their acceptance and the actions will be monitored for the next 5 years.

Other Studies

I have mentioned before about a couple of studies being carried out to improve the noise environment. One of them was the landing gear deployment study and I'm pleased to say that the work is reaching its conclusion. The airport's AIP will probably be modified to take this into operation. There is also a suggestion that cameras may be fitted and it will be NATMAG's responsibility to monitor.

The other work has been on the Low Noise Arrival Metric. Gatwick-based airlines have been consulted and once all of these are on board, they will be widening engagement to other airlines. Once installed, the metric will be operated in 'shadow mode' in Gatwick's NTK system for 12-24 months to allow quality assurance to take place.

ANMAC MEETING - 22ND MAY 2023

This meeting coincided with a medical reason of not being allowed to attend. Having had a heart pacemaker fitted urgently the previous Tuesday I was not permitted to drive or travel on public transport and taxis for 7 days. I was most disappointed as we have not met in this forum at DfT since before Covid.

GACT – 24TH MAY 2023

This is the most important trustees' meeting of the year when we decide who is to receive a grant from us.

There were 158 applications for grants amounting to £683,149 and, of these, 105 received some funding amounting to £168,263. One of the applications that I was given to assess was for Burstow PC so I declared an interest and allowed others to decide so I'm pleased that an award was made.

Future Meetings

29th June – Draft NAP meeting
20th July – GATCOM meeting
25th July – NATMAG pre-meeting
3rd August - NATMAG