

A photograph of a Gatwick Airways aircraft on a runway. The aircraft is red and white, with the tail fin prominently visible. In the background, there is a large terminal building with a glass facade and a walkway. The sky is overcast.

Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REVIEW 2024-25

FOREWORD



TOM CROWLEY
CHAIRMAN

WELCOME, to GATCOM's 2024/25 annual review.

I would like to thank all members of GATCOM and the Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) for their work during the year. Special thanks are due to Samantha Williams and Claire Booth, Chair and Vice Chair of our Passenger Advisory Group (PAG), Helyn Clack, Vice Chair of GATCOM, Mike George, GATCOM's lead member for Noise, Monique Smart GATCOM's Secretary and Graham Lake our independent technical advisor.

Sadly, we lost our longest serving member, Liz Kitchen, who passed away in February. Liz had served on GATCOM since 1982, initially as the representative for Rusper Parish Council and, since 1987, as Horsham District Council's representative. Liz made a very significant contribution to our work over many years and is missed by us all.

At our Annual Meeting in July 2024 Cllr Helyn Clack (Surrey County Council) was reappointed as Vice Chair for a further year. We also welcomed new members to the committee including Cllr Sir Nicholas White (Tandridge District Council), Cllr Christopher Phillips (Mid Sussex District Council) and Cllr Margaret Cooksey (Mole Valley District Council).

In addition, Which? (The Consumer Association), decided to withdraw representation on all ACCs. We therefore lost Chris Larkman, who had been a GATCOM member for several years. At this time PAG had several vacancies and we were pleased that Chris applied for a volunteer position on PAG and was successful. As well as Chris we also welcomed two other new volunteers bringing the number of PAG members to a full quota of sixteen.

2024/25 has seen further substantial progress in the airport's return to normal following the COVID 19 pandemic. Passenger numbers in 2024 reached 43.2 million which was up from 40.9 million in 2023 and 57 airlines served the airport, more than ever before.

Tom Crowley
Chair, GATCOM

WHAT IS GATCOM?



GATCOM is the Airport Consultative Committee for London Gatwick. It is a statutory requirement, under Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, for all UK airports must “provide adequate facilities for consultation with respect to any matter concerning the management or administration of the airport which affects the interests of users of the airport, local authorities and any other organisation representing the interests of persons concerned with the locality in which the airport is situated”.

We were established in 1956, two years before the late Queen opened the airport. We currently have twenty-six members including representatives of four county councils, six district and borough councils and four parish councils together with thirteen members who represent environment groups, local business interests, the travel and aviation sectors and airport employees.

Details of our current membership can be found on our [website](#).

Our members are very much aware that the airport provides significant economic benefits on a local, regional, and national scale but they also recognise that these benefits can come at a cost to local people’s quality of life and to the environment and that these impacts must be minimised and mitigated.

GATCOM acts as a “critical friend” to the airport, in accordance with the principles listed in the Department for Transport’s [Guidelines for Airport Consultative Committees](#). We strive to be: Independent, Representative, Knowledgeable, Transparent, and Constructive.

We regularly consider strategic issues relating to the operation and development of London Gatwick. Wherever possible we aim to work through consensus or, where that is not possible, to agree on what needs to be addressed if a course of action is pursued by the airport.

We aim to:

- Foster communication and build understanding between the airport and its users, local authorities, and interest groups.
- Consider and comment upon the impacts of the airport’s administration, operation, and development.

HOW WE OPERATE

GATCOM meets in public four times a year. After the pandemic we decided to alternate between virtual and in-person meetings. This pattern was agreed in response to the views of some members who wanted to reduce travel and, initially at least, to reduce exposure to infection. It was agreed again this year to continue with this pattern of meetings.

Our agendas and minutes are published on our [website](#).

Key issues that GATCOM regularly address fall under the following headings:

- Noise
- Airspace Modernisation
- Airport growth and Sustainable Development
- Community and the Local Economy

We also have a Steering Group comprising sixteen GATCOM members. It meets in private four times a year to consider emerging issues, review GATCOM's Work Plan and make recommendations to GATCOM. Its deliberations are captured in a report which forms part of the following GATCOM agenda.

The third key part of our structure is the Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) which is a diverse group of sixteen unpaid volunteers, drawn from all walks of life, who are appointed by Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) after a recruitment process that is open to anyone living within a reasonable distance from the airport.

In addition, four other members of GATCOM serve on PAG. These are the GATCOM Chair and Vice Chair, an airline representative, and an ABTA representative.

PAG provides feedback to GAL and their partners, in relation to all aspects of the passenger experience whilst at the airport. PAG also looks at some ancillary aspects of the airport, such as surface access. PAG reports to GATCOM quarterly on its activities and recommendations.





GATCOM'S ACTIVITIES DURING 2024/25

Typically, our meetings cover a mix of information updates as well as consideration of policy and development matters. Each meeting considers a detailed report from GAL's Chief Executive, Stewart Wingate, about current performance and significant issues at the airport. This generates questions and discussion and provides a valuable opportunity for GATCOM members to engage with Stewart.

In addition, we have a standing agenda item that enables GATCOM members to give notice of questions they wish to raise, about any relevant matter, at the meeting. This encourages and enables members to become even more involved. The questions and answers received under this item during the year can be viewed in the minutes of each meeting [here](#).

In January 2025, GATCOM welcomed the new Chair of Gatwick Airport Limited, Baroness Margaret Ford of Cunningham OBE to our meeting.

Significant issues on GATCOM's agendas during the year included the following matters:

- London Gatwick's plans for growth
- GATCOM's role in the DCO process
- Sustainable development commitments
- The airport and the local economy
- Noise
 - Noise Management Board
 - Fair and Equitable Distribution
 - Night Noise
 - Reduced Night Noise Trail
 - Noise and Track Monitoring
- Airspace Change and Airspace modernisation
- Government and other statutory bodies' consultations



LONDON GATWICK'S PLANS FOR GROWTH



On 27 February 2025, the Secretary of State for Transport issued a “minded to approve” letter for the proposed DCO. On 24 April 2025, London Gatwick responded to the Secretary of State’s letter, which incorporated feedback on key conditions related to noise and public transport. This was open to comment from all interested parties until early June 2025.

The Government is expected to make a final decision on the proposal on or before 27 October 2025.

All the details of the Northern Runway Project can be found on the [Planning Inspectorate’s website](#).

The Planning Inspectorate’s examination of London Gatwick’s Northern Runway plans concluded on August 27, 2024, following several years of consultation and a detailed six-month examination.

Whilst it has long been recognised that the nature of our committee, and the diverse composition of our membership, mean that it is not possible or appropriate for us to pass judgement on fundamental or controversial issues, such as whether

the DCO application should be approved, we do have an important function in explaining the process and in seeking and expressing common ground.

GATCOM received regular updates on progress at our quarterly meetings and I and many other members attended the hearings (some virtually and others in person). GATCOM, as well as submitting a [representation](#) at the start of the process, also agreed a [closing statement](#) that was submitted prior to the end of the process.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITMENTS



In 2001 GAL signed a legal agreement with West Sussex County Council and Crawley Borough Council under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (following consultation with seven other local authorities) which underpins the airport's approved growth plans. The agreement has been renewed on a regular basis and was last updated in 2022 -running through until the end of 2024. It was agreed in 2024 that this would be rolled forward again pending the outcome of the of the DCO application.

The agreement contains obligations which outline how the airport's operation, growth and environmental impacts will be managed responsibly. It underpins the important relationship between the airport and its local authorities with responsibility for planning, environmental management, and highways.

In July we noted the [S106 Annual Monitoring Report](#)

In 2021 GAL published its Second Decade of Change sustainability policy covering the period to 2030. In July 2024, GATCOM received and considered an update report on this topic. It provided an overview of GAL's sustainability activity and performance linked to the annual Decade of Change Performance Summary for 2023. The summary report can be found [here](#).

In addition, in January 2025, we received an excellent [presentation](#) about the airport's approach to biodiversity from GAL's Senior Ecologist, Darcey Halder. Later in the year members of GATCOM and PAG visited the biodiversity areas around the airport with Darcy.

More details about GAL's sustainable development commitments and obligations and its action plans are available on the airport's [website](#).

THE AIRPORT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Given the important part that the airport plays in the local economy, we periodically discuss the steps that the airport is taking with partner organisations to maximise the economic benefits.

In May we received a presentation from GAL on the economic benefits of the Gatwick region. The presentation contained a [Gateway Gatwick tourism video](#) created with local tourism authorities: VisitBrighton, Visit Surrey, Experience Sussex and Invest West Kent to show the diversity of tourist attractions, landscapes, cultures and venue options whilst using Gatwick as the gateway to this region. In addition, it was mentioned that London Gatwick generated £4.1 billion for the regional economy and supported over 56,570 jobs. This is evidenced in the report [Local economic impact of London Gatwick 2023](#). This [short animation](#), included in the presentation to GATCOM, presents the airport's economic impact by area.

GAL hosted the third annual Economic Summit in November 2024. Stewart Wingate gave the keynote address in which he announced the launch of a new Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone (AEZ), which will promote long-term sustainable economic growth and inward investment, and he also spoke about the future of the airport, including GAL's plans for the Northern Runway. Further details of the summit can be seen [here](#).



THE AIRPORT AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

GAL is active in the local community in numerous ways and periodically their activities are reported into GATCOM.

Details of GALs Education Programmes can be found [here](#). In 2024 the number of students reached by GAL was 192,000; since 2021 this figure is 430,000 students which is well on their way to the 1m student encounters by 2030. The programme is delivered onsite at the [STEM centre](#), which GATCOM hope to visit very soon, one to one student mentoring, careers fairs and [Career Live Broadcasts](#). The students come from across Surrey, Sussex and Kent for a variety of school providers, home education and alternative provisions.

The [VINCI Foundation](#) invites applications each January from charities whose projects align with its core mission. In 2024 two charities received a £5,000 grant from the fund; local charity FreeShop Crawley to provide materials for arts & crafts sessions for children and equipment for their community cafe. Sussex and Surrey Healthcare Trust (SASH) charity also secured the maximum grant of £5,000. This went towards building a new summerhouse providing cancer patients with a sanctuary for quiet time in the garden.

The Gatwick Airport Community Trust (GACT) an independent charity funded by the airport, has awarded numerous grants to local grassroots

charities and social enterprises aimed at improving airport is taking with partner organisations to education, health, wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. These grants have reached communities throughout Sussex, Surrey, and Kent. In 2024 the trust awarded £218,757 to 106 applicants.





NOISE

GATCOM considers noise in a number of ways. This includes input to the monitoring and review of the airport's statutory Noise Action Plan and responding to government consultations on night flights and related matters.

NOISE MANAGEMENT BOARD (NMB)

In September, the NMB third term was launched. The NMB was initially established in 2016 to meet the concerns of local communities about noise from aircraft arriving at the airport. There have been various reviews of the NMB and the current NMB is formed of three groups - the Oversight Board, Community Assembly and Programme Steering Group - each with a specific role to oversee a programme of work, the overall aim of which is to identify, evaluate, and promote the adoption of strategic and innovative ways of managing noise impact. More detail about the NMB can be found on their [website](#).



GATCOM works closely with the NMB. As well as myself as GATCOM Chair, our Independent Technical Advisor and our Lead Member for Noise all sit on the Oversight Board. The chair of the NMB is also a member of GATCOM and reports to the committee at each meeting.

The Community Assembly of the NMB is open to any community members local to London Gatwick. A dedicated Independent Community Representative, Cara Mulholland, chairs the Assembly, and represents the community members at the Oversight Board. Members of the Community Assembly can also attend the Oversight Board and speak.

GATCOM would encourage any individual with an interest in noise around Gatwick, whether they are part of a community group nor not, to consider joining the NMB and the Community Assembly. Details of how to join can be found on the [website](#).

FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

In January, a briefing on the Fair and Equitable Distribution (FED) Project was held and many GATCOM and other community members attended to hear a summary of the published FED report. The concept of FED relates to how aircraft movements resulting from airspace modernisation are distributed over communities. The report 'Exploring the concept of fair and equitable distribution to minimise social unacceptability of airspace design options', along with the PowerPoint presentation from the briefing can be viewed on the [Gatwick NMB website](#). The briefing was very well received and GATCOM welcomes the commitment by GAL to consider FED as well as additional World Health Organisation (WHO) metrics, when taking forward the London Airspace South (LAS) airspace modernisation project.

Compensation for the effects of Airspace Change on newly overflowed communities was an issue raised by the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) at a GATCOM meeting. As this is a national issue, GATCOM agreed to refer the matter to UKACCs (the national body for all Airport Consultative Committees). UKACCs continues to raise this at meetings with the DfT. We understand that the Minister for Aviation had expressed some interest in updated noise policy, including the overarching aviation noise policy statement and compensation but there is no commitment or timing to when this may happen.

NOISE



NIGHT NOISE

In common with Heathrow and Stansted, London Gatwick is designated under section 80 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 for the purposes of the regulation of noise. Noise from aircraft using the 'designated' aerodromes is regulated according to notices and directions made under section 78 of the 1982 Act. This gives the Secretary of State powers to direct aircraft operators using these airports, or the airport operators themselves, to adopt procedures which limit noise and vibration. The Government has imposed restrictions on night flights at London Gatwick for many years.

In May 2024 the DfT attended GATCOM and provided a [presentation](#) as part of the Night Flight restrictions consultation. Following the meeting GATCOM agreed a response to the consultation that can be viewed [here](#).

REDUCE NIGHT NOISE TRIAL

In January 2025, a briefing was provided on the outcomes of the Reduced Night Noise (RNN) Trial. The aim of the trial was to see whether modern aircraft navigation procedures can be used to reduce noise by both keeping aircraft higher for longer and by reducing engine thrust. With support from NATS and airline partners, Gatwick started a six-month RNN trial in January 2024. This was the first trial of its type in the UK. More details of the trial can be found [here](#).

Gatwick have stated that this has provided a leap forward in improving understanding of Performance Based Navigation (PBN) as a tool for noise management. It is a starting point for a follow-on PBN

study focused on utilising more ground-based simulation to optimise flight procedure design for noise reduction, and to inform the wider Future Airspace Strategy Implementation - South (FASI-S) programme.

NOISE AND TRACK MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP (NaTMAG)

NaTMAG brings together representatives from GAL, the Department for Transport, NATS (Air Traffic Control), airlines and local authorities to discuss a wide range of noise and track keeping issues at the airport.

GATCOM appoints seven members to the airport's Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) and receives regular reports back from that body.

It monitors track keeping performance, continuous descent operations, night engine testing and ground noise and noise complaints. The group meets quarterly, and the minutes of the meetings and reports are available on the GAL [website](#).

The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 require airport operators to develop noise action plans designed to manage noise and effects arising from aircraft departing from and arriving at their airport, including reduction if necessary. The guidance states that the airport operator will present its revised action plan to the airport consultative committee for comment after which the airport operator will reflect on comments raised and include them in the [revised](#) plan together with a response to the issues raised.

NOISE

The progress made by GAL in delivering the actions contained in the Noise Action Plan (NAP) is reported quarterly to NaTMAG and annually to GATCOM. The [revised plan for the period 2024-2028](#) was submitted to Defra in September 2023 and published in June 2024.

AIRSPACE MODERNISATION

Changes in the way airspace in the skies above and surrounding London Gatwick is managed feature regularly in GATCOM's work and reports. For London Gatwick, the airspace change activities currently fall under two headings:

Future Airspace Strategy Implementation – South (FASI-S). This is the complex, comprehensive and long running programme within the overarching UK [Airspace Modernisation Strategy](#) published by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). FASI-South sets out the initiatives and processes needed to update the UK airspace system across the southern half of the UK, through the [redesign](#) of the airspace route structure and the application of new technologies and procedures. This will help to deliver quicker, quieter, and cleaner flights, and will increase airspace capacity helping to reduce delays. London Gatwick, given the scale of its operation and its location below the most congested airspace in Europe, is an important FASI-South stakeholder.

The process is governed by the CAA's CAP1616 airspace change procedures. GAL passed its Stage 2 Gateway (options development and options appraisal) in October 2023. Gatwick's Stage 3 (Consultation Preparation) has been paused until UK Airspace Design

Service (UKADS) is fully formed.

The CAA attended GATCOM in November 2024 to update us on a DfT and CAA consultation about [proposals for creating the UK Airspace Design Service \(UKADS\)](#). The establishment of a UKADS is intended to create a single, central authority for future airspace design, responsible for the modernisation the UK's airspace. Following the presentation and comments from GATCOM members a response to the consultation was agreed in early December and can be viewed [here](#).

In May 2025, the Department for Transport (DfT) and CAA decided to replace FASI-South programme model with UKADS. UKADS will be provided by NATS (En Route) plc (NERL), which currently provides air traffic control services for the 'en route' phase of flight. DfT and CAA are working with NERL to get UKADS up and running by the end of 2025.

In consultation with the CAA, Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) and NERL, London Gatwick has initiated a split deployment of the FASI-S route structure to the south of London Gatwick. The deployment split process has been led, publicly engaged in 2024, and reported by ACOG for publication in the Iteration 3 of the UK Airspace Change Masterplan, which has been accepted by CAA. GAL and NERL are in the process of developing the London Airspace South (LAS) airspace change up to Stage 3 (consult/engage) Gateway in January 2026 as per the CAP1616 process.



NOISE

Route 4 is the departure route for aircraft taking off from London Gatwick's runway 26 and which then turns right to the north of the airport and then heads towards the east. Changes to the route have been under consideration for many years. They are subject to CAA's CAP1616 airspace change process, Stage 2 of which has now been completed, and GAL have progressed to Stage 3 of the airspace change process which requires a full options appraisal and public consultation. Work on Stage 3 is in the final stages and is planned for final submission for Stage 3 Gateway regulatory assessment. Following CAA endorsement (expected in Autumn 2025), GAL aim to conduct a public consultation during 2026.

GAL provide regular updates on these projects to GATCOM, the GATCOM Steering Group, the Noise Management Board (NMB) and the Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NaTMAG).





THE PASSENGER PERSPECTIVE – PAG

The Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) continues to work closely and constructively with GAL.

As part of the [Commitments Framework](#) the CAA gave PAG a formal role in the airport's consultation processes to input the passengers' perspective in the development of the airport's Capital Investment Plan and resilience planning for the airport. PAG reports its contributions to this process at the quarterly meetings of GATCOM.

PAG continues to be consulted on a range of important projects such as the refurbishments of both Terminals, the GEN3 security, and the expansion plans for the Terminal buildings. We were delighted to be involved at an early stage on both and make representations on behalf of the passenger.

Some of the highlights of the year have included:

- Considering consultation about the Capital Investment Plan and therefore having an input in the direction and priority of major projects from our perspective. This is a responsibility which is ongoing.
- Attending forums such as the Transport, IT, Retail, Economic and the Technology Forums.
- Attending regular meetings of The Independent Gatwick Accessibility Panel (IGAP) having an input and making them aware of the work we do.
- Undertaking regular Terminal Review Visits and behind the scenes tours to gain a better understanding of the workings of the airport.

There are currently eight subgroups of PAG, and they meet regularly to critically examine all elements of the passenger journey from surface access to retail, food, and beverage, assisted travel to customer services, car parking to security and UK Border Force. The groups highlight any concerns and make recommendations to GAL as a result of PAGs observations.

PAG's work relies heavily on the engagement of GAL and the dedication of all the group's members who are volunteers. There is a considerable time commitment to the role of a PAG volunteers which deserves recognition here.



GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STATUTORY BODIES' CONSULTATIONS

In addition to all the consultations already mentioned throughout the report, during the year we considered and responded to the following:

GATCOM's response to the CAA consultation on the UK Performance-Based Navigation Regulation can be found [here](#)

GATCOM's response to CAA consultation on the Future Direction of the UK Aviation Environmental Review (AER) can be found [here](#)

GATCOM's response to the CAA further consultation on Gatwick Airport Limited's proposal to extend the current commitments can be found [here](#)

GATCOM's response to the MHCLG Consultation: Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system can be found [here](#)

GATCOM's response to the DFT consultation on Airport Slot Allocation can be found [here](#)

GATCOMS response to The Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) public engagement exercise relating to airspace around London Gatwick Airport can be found [here](#)



UKACCs - OUR NATIONAL BODY



UKACCs brings together 24 airport consultative committees (ACCs) from the UK's largest airports to discuss matters of common interest and to share best practice and concerns. Myself and the Secretariat attended the UKACCs [annual meeting](#), hosted by Leeds Bradford Airport, in November. The meeting was attended by Chairs and Secretaries from sixteen airport consultative committees (ACCs) from across the UK and was a good opportunity to share information and best practise as well as receive updates from UKACCs and representatives from the DfT and CAA.



IMPROVING THE WAY WE WORK



In November 2024 we held our fourth GATCOM awayday. We invited all members, their support officers and senior GAL staff to the event. It was a productive session, and the outcomes were reported back to the subsequent Steering Group and GATCOM meetings.

At the awayday we discussed vacancies on GATCOM as a result of the decision by Which? to withdraw from all ACCs and the transfer of functions from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and options for filling those vacant positions on GATCOM. We also discussed the UKACC proposal to adopt a standard for best practice across a range of ACC activities to sit alongside the DfT Guidelines for ACCs.

GATCOM subsequently agreed a [new Factsheet](#) and a new Members Handbook. It was also agreed that the GATCOM Chair would include articles about GATCOM in the Gatwick 'In Touch' community newsletter to highlight the committee and our work.

On the question of membership we subsequently agreed that no action should be taken in the short term as the Government was considering the creation of Combined Mayoral Authorities across the country and reorganisation of local government. Decisions on these matters will have a significant bearing on future membership of GATCOM.

Full details of the awayday and subsequent actions can be viewed [here](#). We plan to have our next away day in November 2025.

LOOKING AHEAD

We will continue to deal with many of the same issues either because they have a long gestation period or are cyclical in nature. The emphasis and relative priority attached to these matters will shift from time to time and other environmental, economic, social, and political factors might bring new challenges for GATCOM.

Over the coming year much of our work will be focusing on the outcomes of the Northern Runway's DCO. A decision by the Secretary of State is expected by 27 October 2025. GATCOM will need to consider the consequences of that decision.

Other key issues on our agenda during the coming year will include Airspace Modernisation and Airspace Change and considering several expected consultations from the DfT and CAA.

In addition, PAG will also continue its work to monitor the passenger perspective through its working groups covering car parks, surface access rail and non-rail, security and Border Force, Special Assistance, and retail plus the communications group which looks at how the airport deals with feedback and communications.

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions by emailing secretary@gatcom.org.uk



The GATCOM logo is displayed in a white rounded rectangle in the top left corner. The word "GATCOM" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A blue swoosh underline starts under the 'G' and curves under the 'M'.

GATCOM

MORE INFORMATION

GATCOM has 26 appointed representatives from a wide range of interests including local authorities, community and environmental groups, civil aviation, passengers, businesses, tourism and airport employees. Representatives from the Department for Transport, NATS, and Gatwick's Air Traffic Control are also present at the main Committee meetings when needed, together with Gatwick Airport Limited's Chief Executive Officer and his senior management team.

GATCOM meets four times a year and considers issues and questions in connection with the operation and development of Gatwick and its effect on local communities, passengers, airlines and other users of the airport.

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