



Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REVIEW

2022-23

FOREWORD



TOM CROWLEY
CHAIRMAN

FLCOME, to GATCOM's annual review, our first since 2020 as normal business was virtually grounded, due to the pandemic. 2022/23 was a relatively busy year as the airport and our committee were getting back to normal. The South Terminal reopened at the end of March 2022, and passenger numbers, and the airport's revenues, are heading in the right direction. Many of the issues that went quiet during the COVID crisis are back with us and we can look forward to a busy time, as Gatwick's critical friend, over the coming year and beyond.

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 PAG, Helyn Clack, Vice Chair of GATCOM, Paula Street who served us so well as Assistant Secretary for many years until she retired in July 2022 and last, but by no means least, her successor, Monique Smart.









WHAT IS GATCOM?



ATCOM is the Airport Consultative Committee for Gatwick Airport. It is a statutory requirement under Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 for all UK airports "to 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 Queen opened the airport. We currently have twenty eight members including representatives of four county councils, six district and borough councils and four parish councils together with thirteen members who represent environment and amenity 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 also recognise that these come at a cost to people's quality of life and to the environment and we strive to ensure that these impacts are 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 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

ATCOM meets in public four times a year. In the post-COVID era 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 personal contact and exposure to infection. Our agendas and minutes are published on our website.

We also have a Steering Group comprising thirteen GATCOM members. It meets in private four times a year to consider emerging issues. 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 an open recruitment exercise open to anyone living within a reasonable distance from the airport. In addition, five other members of GATCOM serve on PAG. These are the GATCOM Chair and Vice Chair, an airline representative, ABTA and "Which" representatives.

PAG provides feedback, both negative and positive, to GAL and their partners, on all aspects of the passenger experience whilst at the airport. PAG also looks at some ancillary aspects of the airport, such as surface access travel to the airport both rail and non-rail. PAG reports to GATCOM quarterly on its activities and makes recommendations.

Since April 2014, GAL has been licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to operate under a Commitments Framework where Gatwick's service levels and charges are agreed with its airline customers in a set of "Commitments" which are then endorsed by the CAA. These Commitments determine what Gatwick can charge its airline customers for providing services and also define quality standards.

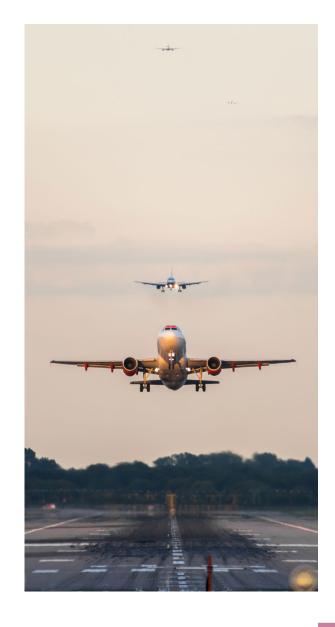
As part of the Commitments Framework the CAA gave PAG a formal role in the airport's consultation processes to input the passengers' perspective in the development of the airport's Capital Investment Plan and resilience planning for the airport. PAG reports its contributions to this process at the quarterly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

More information about PAG and its work can be found on our website.

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

- Noise
- Airspace Modernisation
- · Growth and Sustainable Development
- Community and the Local Economy

More detail about these issues is covered later in the report under my review of GATCOM's activities during 2022/23.













THE YEAR IN CONTEXT

022/23 has seen the airport steadily return to normal after the ravages of COVID. Successive waves of infection, and the consequential lockdowns, saw activity plummet to an almost static level and, as a result, the South Terminal was closed for almost two years. On a tour of the deserted facility, I was reminded of numerous disaster movies and, not surprisingly, the terminal was used as a film set during its closure.

Despite the low level of normal activity during this period the airport played important roles in supporting efforts to tackle the emergency. A number of flights operated bringing in medical supplies and also a COVID testing centre was opened in the long stay car park.

GAL carried out an impressive recommissioning exercise over eight weeks prior to reopening the terminal in time for the peak summer season in 2022. At the time GATCOM was shown a video to help put into context the scale of the operation. It is worth watching: Great to have you back Sierra Tango on Vimeo.

The impact of COVID on GAL's operations can best be seen by the unprecedented reduction in passenger numbers from March 2020. Numbers dropped from a high point of 46.6 Million passengers per annum (mppa) in 2019 to a low of 6.3mppa in 2021.

This inevitably had a disastrous impact on GAL's finances turning a profit of £152m in 2019 to a loss of £465m in 2020. 2021 saw a marked improvement but GAL still recorded a considerable loss of £370m.

To mitigate the impact on its finances GAL cut costs by cancelling or delaying much of its capital programme and through staff redundancies which were mostly voluntary. This saw headcount reduce by almost fifty percent. Whilst the Government's COVID business support package, including furlough payments, helped it was still necessary to take these steps. However, GAL maintained surplus staff resources during this period to ensure that it would be in a better position to respond when demand returned.

The airport is a major driver of the local, regional and national economy. At the peak of the pandemic the emergency stop that was inflicted on aviation caused significant difficulties in the wider area. Unemployment levels (and in particular youth unemployment) around the airport grew rapidly and places such as Crawley, which have for decades had strong local economies based partly on direct and indirect employment at Gatwick were devastated.

Vaccination programmes in the UK and around the world have enabled a return to international air travel. The relaxation of travel restrictions and removal of

rules was rapid and in parts of the UK, some airports struggled and often failed to keep up with demand. Whilst some challenges were experienced over the May bank holiday in 2022 at Gatwick, a commendable approach adopted by GAL in June 2022 saw the airport agree capacity limits with airlines which limited growth in the peak summer months of July and August so passengers could expect a good level of service.

Passenger throughput in 2022 totalled 32.8 million, or 70.4% of the 2019 figure. Recovery in activity brought with it much improved financial performance. GAL's 2022 results showed a profit of £196.5m

Improvements in GAL's fortunes as 2023 dawned also meant that the challenges, issues and opportunities that had been very much on their agenda and ours before COVID returned to prominence. Restoration to near pre-pandemic levels of activity means a return to the airport's impacts as well as benefits and the focus will once again be on efforts to minimise and mitigate adverse effects. And beyond that attention will increasingly be focussed on GAL's proposed development plans.

GATCOM'S ACTIVITIES DURING 2022/23

URING the pandemic, apart from a brief period at the outset, we continued to meet but, like much of the rest of the world, had to get used to doing so via Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Video conferencing, an idea much discussed but seldom used before 2020, suddenly came of age. We maintained close contact with the senior team at GAL during the pandemic and were regularly briefed by Stewart Wingate, GAL's CEO, and his colleagues. On behalf of the committee. I wrote expressing support and understanding and I also wrote to the Secretary of State urging more airport specific financial support.

A vital part of our work – promoting the interests of passengers – is undertaken by the Passenger Advisory Group. As activity started to pick up in 2021, their Chair, Samantha Williams, was keen to restart the work that PAG does on the ground in the terminals to assess the quality of the passenger experience. For understandable

reasons this was not possible in the depths of the lockdown but from August 2021 Samantha and her colleagues were granted full access again.

We are fortunate to have the support of Stewart Wingate and his senior team on a day-to-day basis and at our meetings. Stewart has never missed a GATCOM meeting in his fourteen years at Gatwick.

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

Significant issues on our agendas during the year included the following matters.



PASSENGER ADVISORY GROUP (PAG)
VISITING THE AIRFIELD



GATWICK'S PLANS FOR EXPANSION

E ARE regularly updated on GAL's proposals for major expansion which would involve bringing into routine use the existing emergency/standby runway.

GAL intends to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application, under The Planning Act 2008, to the Planning Inspectorate in the summer of 2023.

At our April 2022 meeting GAL presented an update on the results of the DCO pre-submission consultation. Over 6500 responses had been received from statutory and other organisations and individuals. They included the identification of both the positive and negative aspects of the proposal including economic benefits and environmental and other impacts.

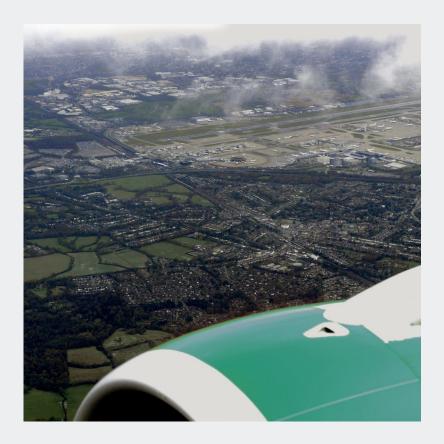
At the same meeting The Planning Inspectorate presented an <u>overview of the DCO process</u> and explained how interested parties can engage in the process.

In June 2022 GAL launched a further pre-submission DCO consultation on updated proposed highway designs and other changes to the project. GATCOM submitted a detailed response on 26 July 2022 covering the following matters:

- · Highway Improvement Plans
- · Airport Surface Access Strategy
- Car parking
- Noise Envelope
- · Climate Change and Carbon
- Employment, skills and business strategy

A copy of our response can be viewed here.

At our October 2022 meeting we were advised that over 550 responses had been received and that engagement with statutory stakeholders would continue as GAL consider the consultation responses and further refine the DCO application prior to submission in the summer 2023.



GATCOM'S ROLE IN THE DCO PROCESS

ATCOM decided at its January 2023 meeting that it will play a formal role as an interested party in the DCO process.

Whilst it has long been recognised that the nature of our committee and our diverse 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 seeking common ground with our membership. Our responses to GAL's previous consultations on their growth plans have stressed the need for measures to minimise impacts, mitigate their effects and to secure appropriate infrastructure.

Once the DCO application is accepted by The Planning Inspectorate we will consider whether the submission has addressed the issues we raised at previous stages during the evolution of the project, to inform our formal response.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITMENTS







N 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.

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.

More details about Gatwick's sustainable development commitments and obligations and its action plans are available on the <u>airport's website</u>.

In 2021 GAL published its Second Decade of Change sustainability policy covering the period to 2030.
GATCOM receives and considers reports on these topics periodically.

THE AIRPORT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

IVEN the important part that the airport plays in the local economy, we periodically discuss the steps that GAL are taking with partner organisations to maximise the economic benefits. The reliance placed on airport operations by the local economy was thrown into sharp focus by the virtual shutdown of activity during the depths of the pandemic.

GAL gave an <u>update</u> on this topic at the July 2022 meeting. The key points were:

- GAL is committed to supporting and growing the local economy, working with local partners and supporting local communities.
- Think local, act local. From June 2022 the catchment area for businesses to register their interest in working with Gatwick was expanded.
- The Airport Economic Zone research was Commissioned by GAL and produced by Coast to Capital LEP. This will provide an evidenced baseline for future consideration and a common approach.
- Following regular round tables with stakeholders GAL will host an <u>Economic Summit</u> in the Autumn 2022.
 The summit was held in November 2022 and another is planned for November 2023.

Then at our October 2022 meeting we received a presentation from Alison Addy (GAL), Fran Downton (Tourism SE) and Angie Hills (ABTA) on how the tourism and visitor economy sector is recovering from the pandemic and how Gatwick works with partners, such as local authorities and Tourism SE, to support the local visitor economy. The presentation can be viewed here.





GATWICK AIRPORT'S JOURNEY TO NET ZERO

TTHE following GATCOM meeting in January 2023, we received a <u>presentation</u> from Mark Edwards, Head of Sustainability at GAL, that detailed GAL's journey to net zero.

The presentation detailed emissions from airport-controlled sources (known as scope 1 and 2 emissions) as well as from other sources (scope 3) related to activities on the airport and work already underway or planned to achieve GALs Decade of Change goal of reaching net zero by 2040. GALs interim target for those area it has direct control was to reduce emissions by 80% by 2030 from a 1990 baseline. However, GAL have since announced that they will bring forward the target to achieve net zero 10 years earlier, by 2030.

The DfT undertook a consultation on the best approach to implementing targets for achieving zero emissions for airport operations by 2040. GATCOM's response to that consultation can be found here.

NOISE

ATCOM considers noise in a number of ways. This includes input to the monitoring and review of the airport's statutory Noise Action Plan, responding to government consultations on night flights and related matters. In addition, GATCOM appoints seven members to the airport's Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG) and receives regular reports back from that body. GATCOM's chairman is also a member of the airport's Noise Management Board (NMB). The chair of the NMB is a member of GATCOM and reports to the committee at each meeting.



NOISE MANAGEMENT BOARD (NMB)

HE Noise Management Board was reconstituted in 2019 following an extensive review of the operation of the previous Board. Under the new arrangements a Noise Management Board Executive (NEX) oversees and coordinates the work of a Community Forum and Delivery Group.

In 2020 GATCOM agreed that the NMB chair should have a seat on GATCOM to strengthen connections between the bodies. The Chair, Jonathan Drew, reports to each meeting of GATCOM.

A summary of the NMB's work this year can be found **here**.

NOISE AND TRACK MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP (NoTMAG)

ATMAG brings together representatives from Gatwick Airport, 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.

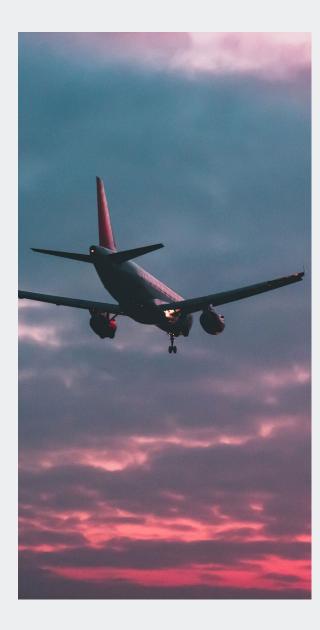
It monitors track keeping performance, continuous descent operations, night engine testing and ground noise and noise complaints. The group meets quarterly, four times a year and the minutes of the meetings and reports are available on the GAL website.

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.

The progress made by Gatwick Airport Limited in delivering the actions contained in the Noise Action Plan is reported quarterly to NaTMAG and annually to GATCOM.

Gatwick's Noise Action Plan is a living document and is reviewed every five years. The current Noise Action Plan, covering the period 2019-2024 is available on Gatwick's website. The revised plan for the period 2024-2028 is currently being consulted on and is expected to be submitted to Defra in September 2023.

NOISE



NIGHT NOISE

N COMMON with Heathrow and Stansted, Gatwick Airport 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 Gatwick for many years.

The DfT launched a review of the night flights regime in December 2020. It is a two-stage consultation process which seeks views on the current regimes at the designated airports beyond 2022, and night flights in the national context.

GATCOM has previously responded to the following consultations in relation to night noise:

- proposal to maintain the existing night flight restrictions for the designated airports from 2022 to 2024. Click here to see GATCOM's response. The Government's decision on this part of the consultation was issued on 19 July 2021.
- seeking early views and evidence on policy options for the government's future night flight policy at the designated airports beyond 2024, and nationally.
 Click here to see GATCOM's response.

The Stage 2 consultation on future night flight restrictions beyond 2025 will be issued during 2023, and it is at that stage that the DfT will set out firm proposals for longer-term policy reform. In preparation for this the DfT has consulted on what a night-time noise abatement objective should be for the noise designated airports from October 2025. Click here to see GATCOM's response to that consultation.











THE PASSENGER PERSPECTIVE - PAG

N 2022 GAL initiated a process to seek the extension of its current contracts and commitments approval with the CAA. GATCOM and PAG (in recognition of the formal role it has under the CAA rules) were consulted. GATCOM's <u>response</u> (incorporating PAG's observations) was submitted to GAL on 17 October 2022.

On 31 March 2023 GAL's Chief Financial Officer wrote to the Chairs of GATCOM and PAG to inform them that the final submission had been sent to the CAA, following the consultation. He said that changes had been made in response to our observations. The full text of the letter can be found here. We now await a consultation from the CAA on the proposals.

PAG also continues to be consulted on the airport's Capital Investment Programme (CIP) to ensure that passengers needs are prioritised as part of GAL's investment plans.

PAG has recently had a review of its working group's structure to ensure the focus of their work is relevant and best placed to advise GAL on passenger concerns and monitor Core Service Standards.

There are currently some vacancies on PAG, and GAL will assist with a recruitment campaign during 2023. Anyone interested in a volunteer role should contact the GATCOM secretariat in the first instance.













AIRSPACE MODERNISATION

FTER the silent skies of the pandemic period those living close to flight paths are now once again experiencing one of the negative aspects of living close to a busy international airport. Changes in the way airspace in the skies above and surrounding Gatwick is managed feature regularly in our work. These fall under the following headings.

FUTURE AIRSPACE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION - SOUTH (FASI-S)

This is a complex, comprehensive and long running programme that sits within the overarching UK Airspace Modernisation Strategy co-sponsored by the DfT and CAA, to modernise the management of airspace across the south of the UK. Through the redesign of the airspace route structure and the application of current and new technologies to air traffic, it is believed that many environmental and economic benefits will be achieved. Gatwick is one of

the key players in this project, given the scale of its operation and location under the most congested airspace in Europe. Further details can be found <u>here</u>.

The process is governed by the CAA's CAP1616 airspace change rules. GAL is currently at the initial options and appraisal stage of its part in this process. Briefings to parish councils - to explain the process and progress so far - took place ahead of a fifth cycle of stage 2 FASI-South engagement sessions, with a broader set of stakeholders, completed in February. A further round of engagement will then take place ahead of submission to the CAA for the Stage 2 Gateway assessment which is expected during Quarter 3 2023.

ROUTE 4

Route 4 is the departure route for aircraft taking off from Gatwick's runway 26 and that then head towards the west. Changes to the route have been under consideration for many years. They are subject to a CAA CAP 1616 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 expected to commence soon. Further information on this can be found here.

The Airspace Office at GAL provide regular updates on these projects to GATCOM, GATCOM Steering Group, the NMB and NaTMAG.





GATWICK AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

T our October 2022 meeting, we received a presentation from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust, an independent charity set up in 2001 that is wholly funded by GAL and provides grants to benefit local communities directly affected by airport operations. Trustees are nominated by local authorities and other groups including GATCOM. The presentation detailed examples of local groups and projects that have been granted funds.











GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STATUTORY BODIES' CONSULTATIONS

N ADDITION to all the consultations already mentioned throughout the report, in January 2023 GATCOM also agreed a <u>response</u> to the DfT consultation on the effectiveness of the CAA.

In formulating our responses to consultations, as well as expressing agreed positions, when appropriate, we also record and convey minority views.



















IMPROVING THE WAY WE WORK

N OCTOBER 2022 we held our second awayday. Prior to 2019, GATCOM had not taken time out of our normal business cycle to consider how the way we work might be improved. Following this inaugural awayday we had intended to hold one on an annual basis, but COVID put paid to that aim until October 2022 when we invited all members, their support officers and senior GAL staff to an awayday. It was a productive session and was written up for the subsequent Steering Group and GATCOM meetings. Full details of the session and its conclusions and resulting actions can be viewed here. We plan to have our next away day later in 2023.







ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

URING the year we have said farewell to a number of our members and welcomed others. Those leaving have included Jeff Alexander from Gatwick Business, Richard Streatfeild from GACC and Liz Lockwood from Tandridge District Council.

It was also with much sadness that we lost ClIr Rupert Simmons, who was the East Sussex County Council on GATCOM for 10 years and passed away in April.

Change amongst the Local Authority contingent is likely because of the May 2023 local elections.

And we also said a very fond farewell to Paula Street. Paula had joined the West Sussex County Council GATCOM Secretariat Team in 1994. She proved so adept at the role that she was later promoted to the Assistant Secretary position. Paula was outstanding and highly respected by all. And we wish her well in her retirement.

Paula was a very hard act to follow but our new Secretariat Support Officer, Monique Smart, has hit the ground running and is proving herself to be a very worthy successor.





LOOKING AHEAD

E 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. In the near future we will certainly be spending time dealing with our response to the airport's DCO submission. At the time of writing, we believe the submission will be in the summer and therefore we are likely to be deliberating on our representations at some point in the autumn.

Other key issues on our agenda during the coming year will include:

- · Input to the review of the Noise Action Plan
- Airspace modernisation
- Responding to further consultations from the Department for Transport on Jet Zero and the Night Flights regime.
- Noise Management Board review The NMB is approaching the end of its current term and GAL is committed to undertaking a review of how it has functioned. We will need to consider our position on this matter to help inform GAL's decisions.

 And a very positive achievement to look forward to – the new railway station which is scheduled to formally open in late 2023. For many years the need to invest in this vital piece of transport infrastructure was a key priority for GATCOM and GAL. It is a fantastic achievement and fine example of public / private partnership to see the new station finally become a reality.

In addition, PAG will be heavily involved in many important issues including:

- Consultation on the current passengers with reduced mobility (PRM) tender process.
- New wayfinding strategy, departure lounge expansions and refurbishments.
- 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, PRM, 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 my annual review. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions by emailing secretary@gatcom.org.uk







MORE INFORMATION

GATCOM has 28 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.

CONTACT

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