

GACC NEWSLETTER

Number 117
June 2020

Dear Members

Airport developments

As many of you will know Gatwick is gradually resuming more normal operations. On Monday of this week the North Terminal, which had been closed since 1 April, reopened and easyJet resumed a very limited service schedule. On the same day the airport's operational hours for scheduled flights were increased to 06.00 to 2200.

In practice the airport is still very quiet. We expect the number of flights using it to remain low whilst the government's quarantine arrangements for arriving passengers are in place. However, flights will increase, perhaps significantly, when quarantine is lifted. Once that happens noise, air pollution and carbon dioxide emission levels will also start to increase again.

Building back better

GACC believes that Gatwick and its airlines should do everything they can to minimise the adverse impacts of their operations as the airport reopens. We have therefore written asking for noise and other environmental improvements to be firmly embedded into the airport's recovery plans. Our letter, which is available here ([http://www.gacc.org.uk/resources/GACC to Stewart Wingate building Gatwick back better June 2020.pdf](http://www.gacc.org.uk/resources/GACC%20to%20Stewart%20Wingate%20building%20Gatwick%20back%20better%20June%202020.pdf)) specifically proposes that:

1. the airport should remain closed at night in order to avoid flights that have the greatest community and health impacts;
2. airlines should prioritise flying the quietest aircraft in their fleets;
3. Gatwick should put in place incentives that encourage airlines permanently to retire older, noisier and more polluting aircraft; \
4. the air traffic control operators should disperse aircraft, achieve higher, quicker, departures and adopt noise-minimising arrival procedures to the maximum extent possible, recognising that airspace will be far less congested; and
5. Gatwick should reconvene its Noise Management Board so it can monitor these measures and consider additional initiatives.

We've also suggested that there should in due course be a fuller process through which all stakeholders can contribute to building back a quieter, less polluting and more climate friendly Gatwick.

As well as writing to the airport we will be raising all these points through Gatwick's Consultative Committee, GATCOM.

Social distancing on flights

A number of members have asked why passengers on flights do not need to maintain social distancing when that is required in the airport and in most other UK contexts.

The short answer is that the relevant European and UK aviation authorities do not require it. The European Aviation Safety Agency, which the UK remains subject to currently, says, “... where allowed by the passenger load, cabin configuration and mass and balance requirements, aeroplane operators should ensure, to the extent possible, physical distancing among passengers ...”.

Aviation safety is not an area in which GACC has particular expertise but we are surprised that the industry considered to have been a significant contributor to the spread of coronavirus and its introduction to the UK is not being required by the authorities to observe the social distancing rules that most of the economy and population is subject to.

Gatwick’s expansion plans

Notwithstanding the immediate and likely longer-term fall in demand for the airport’s services, Gatwick has again confirmed that it intends to continue with its expansion plans and expects to hold a public consultation on its emergency runway development in 2021. We are very disappointed that Gatwick has not yet withdrawn these unnecessary and damaging expansion proposals, and will continue to oppose them at every opportunity.

Route 4 update

The Civil Aviation Authority has reached a decision and published its report on the Post Implementation Review of departure Route 4 RNAV procedures. The report is available here: [CAP 1912 Report on London Gatwick Route 4 RNAV-1 SID PIR \(060520\).pdf](#).

Gatwick Airport has accepted the requirements of the report. However COVID-19 has created circumstances that will delay the implementation of those requirements. GAL has published a response to the CAA CAP 1912 report outlining a proposed timeline for compliance in the current circumstances and that response can be read here: [http://www.gacc.org.uk/resources/GAL Response to CAA Report on Route 4 PIR Decision ext.pdf](http://www.gacc.org.uk/resources/GAL%20Response%20to%20CAA%20Report%20on%20Route%204%20PIR%20Decision%20ext.pdf)

National aviation policy

The desire to ensure aviation is reformed and “builds back better” is not limited to Gatwick. The Aviation Environment Federation and other environmental groups have recently published an excellent briefing (available here <https://www.aef.org.uk/uploads/2020/06/Building-back-better-aviation-.docx.pdf>) that sets out the steps necessary for government to create a more sustainable aviation industry as it recovers from the COVID pandemic.

GACC is also working with a range of other groups nationally to try to ensure that community and environmental views are heard and fully considered as aviation restarts. We believe the pandemic provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a greener, cleaner, less noisy, more responsible and better regulated aviation industry.

