

**THE NOISE AND TRACK MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP (NaTMAG) Extraordinary meeting
Thursday 21 March 2024 (virtual meeting)**

IN ATTENDANCE

Kimberley Heather (Chair)	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Office and Chair of NaTMAG
Richard Lipscomb	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Office and Secretary to NaTMAG
Sam Tull	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Office
Goran Jovanovic	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Change Manager
Kathy Coffin	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Noise Compliance & Reporting Manager
Ian Greene	Department for Transport (DfT)
Gary Marshall	Department for Transport (DfT)
Liz Kitchen	GATCOM
Alan Jones	GATCOM
Mike George	GATCOM
Victoria Chester	GATCOM
Malcolm Fillmore	GATCOM
Peter Barclay	GACC
Leon Hibbs	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Graham Lake	Independent Technical Advisor to GATCOM
Robby Lapointe *Partial*	Acoustic Engineering, Airbus Canada

APOLOGIES

Ed Winter	GACC
Andy Sinclair	Gatwick Airport Ltd - Head of Noise & Airspace Strategy
Rebecca Mian	Gatwick Airport Ltd- Noise Mgmt Initiative Engagement Manager
Adam Dracott	Mid Sussex District Council

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members. Peter Barclay was welcomed to the meeting as a substitute GACC representative for Ed Winter. Graham Lake was also welcomed to the meeting as the Independent Technical Adviser to GATCOM. It was explained that Robby Lapointe, a guest speaker from Airbus would be joining to discuss the ongoing Airbus A220 resonance issue.

NIGHT FLIGHT REGIME CONSULTATION

- The DfT presented on the current night flight restrictions consultation that is underway.
- It was explained that the information contained in the slides is high level and should not contain any information not already available online.
- The consultation has been ongoing since 22 February 2024 and closes on the 22 May, across all the designated airports, and the new regime will begin from October 2025.
- The noise abatement objective for the next night flight regime is:

Final minutes – to be published to the GAL website

“To limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life, while supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of commercial passenger and freight services.”

- The DfT intend to measure achievement against this objective by the following metrics:
 - 1) The area of and number of people in the 48dB LAeq 6.5 hour night contour.**
 - 2) Sleep disturbance impacts associated with night flights, assessed using Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) methodologies.**
 - 3) The average noise of an aircraft (as measured by the average noise Quota Count per aircraft movement over the course of a season).**
- The DfT do not intend to use a “Number Above” metric as a measure of success for the next regime. The DfT will commit to producing them in future.
- The proposal is for a ‘bridging’ night flight regime for 3 years covering October 2025 to October 2028 whilst awaiting evidence from the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey (ANAS). The proposal is to keep the movement limits and noise quota limits in the Night Quota Period (23:30 to 05:59 local) the same for the next regime at Gatwick.
- The DfT have updated their guidance on night flight dispensations, and that there is now a requirement for Gatwick to provide a formal letter at the end of the summer season to explain the number of dispensations and the justification of why these were applied. There is no change to the dispensation guidance on what dispensations can be granted.
- A question was asked about whether this letter and any granular detail will be publicly available. It was confirmed that the letter would be published on the GAL website.
- A point was made that dispensation reasonings such as French ATC strikes and weather happen on a regular basis, and that they can be foreseen each year. It was asked whether these dispensations can be written into year-on-year expectations. It was explained by the DfT that, although you can foresee some of the possible reasons for future dispensations, the specific events that may lead to these are unpredictable.
- Members expressed community discontent with the amount of night flights allowed and explained that the limits are higher than at other London airports. A question was asked to the DfT about whether the night flight consultation was an opportunity to reduce the number of night flights allowed in the summer period.
- The DfT explained that the decision to maintain the current limits was made, as they are still waiting on the results of the Aviation Night Noise Effect (ANNE) study. It was explained that the DfT want to make any changes to the limits based on evidence.
- Members made the point that QC limits are set far higher than are ever used.
- The DfT explained that they recognise there is potential to reduce certain limits, however they want to make any decision based on sound and robust evidence before considering changes. It was further explained that lowering the limits without evidence, would rightly open the DfT to legal challenge.
- Members stated that night flights are increasing, even though overall traffic movements are still at 90% of pre-COVID levels. A question was asked about whether the DfT are aware of this increase. The DfT explained that they are aware and explained that part of the DfT’s Aviation

Night Noise Effects (or ANNE study) study will determine which periods during the night need to be studied in greater detail.

- The CAA are doing some work for the DfT on the effects of night noise, and that the DfT are also to start looking at other noise metrics, in creating policy.

AIRBUS A220 RESONANCE PRESENTATION

- Robby Lapointe from Airbus presented an update on the Airbus A220 resonance issue.
- A straightening of the structure inside the Combustion Chamber has been carried out which has eliminated the noise issue.
- Testing has been carried out on the ground and in-flight, using aircraft fitted with a new and an old engine. Engine sweeps (idle to take-off power) were performed in testing as it was known that the resonance occurs when a change in thrust is applied.
- New engines were supposed to be introduced into service by the end of 2024, however, a revised date is now from November 2025.
- Retrofitting of aircraft already in service will happen over time. They expect to see these changes being completed over the next 2 to 3 years.
- Members asked whether Airbus have received any A220 noise concerns from other countries. Airbus had heard of concerns from Zurich Airport.
- A request was made for the Airbus slides to be circulated.
 - **ACTION:** Airspace Office to follow up with Airbus on the circulation of the presentation slides.

Post meeting note: Airbus will not be able to circulate the presentation slides to NaTMAG.

The DfT urged members to provide feedback to the consultation and requested that these are submitted via the correct channels. [Government launches consultation into the next UK night flight regime - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/next-uk-night-flight-regime)

AOB

- A question was asked about what can be done to stop unnecessary night flight requests. An example was given where an aircraft that needed positioning abroad for maintenance, was moved to Gatwick from another London airport, as night slots were not available from the original airport at the time the aircraft would have needed to leave the UK. This aircraft then departed Gatwick during the night period. Whilst the DfT understood members and community frustration, they explained that a night flight regime is in place to monitor movements and Quota Count, and that as long as the airport stays within their limits, then the reason for the flight is not a concern. It was mentioned that these flights are a health cost to UK PLC, but it was appreciated that businesses may need ad-hoc slots. A point was made that airlines should be managing their overall slot usage, and ad hoc slots should be used responsibly and not relied on.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

GNMG – Wednesday 10 April 2024, 10:00 to 12:00, via teleconference.

NaTMAG – Thursday 9 May 2024, 10:00 to 13:00, via teleconference.

FLOPSC – Tuesday 28 May 2024, 13:00 to 16:00, in person and via teleconference.

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