

Tony Kershaw  
Honorary Secretary

County Hall  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ

Telephone 033022 22543  
Website: [www.gatcom.org.uk](http://www.gatcom.org.uk)

---



If calling ask for  
Mrs. Paula Street  
e-mail: [paula.street@gatcom.org.uk](mailto:paula.street@gatcom.org.uk)

29 October 2013

Dear Sir Howard,

### **Emerging Thinking: Aviation Capacity in the UK**

GATCOM has noted with interest the Airports Commission's emerging thinking indicating that at this stage in the process some net additional runway capacity in the South East of England will be needed in the coming decades. In particular GATCOM has carefully considered the issues addressed in your speech of 7 October and the Committee would like to offer additional comments building on its previous response of 27 September. We would be grateful therefore if you could consider the following points:

#### **Surface Transport**

In its response of 27 September, GATCOM highlighted those matters of greatest importance and interest across its membership, essentially in relation to the long term option proposals that have been submitted to the Airports Commission in respect of Gatwick Airport. Having considered your emerging thinking, and given the fact that the Commission's Interim Report will also look at operational improvements to deliver modest capacity and improve resilience of airports for the short to medium, GATCOM wishes to make its views known about the vital need to ensure that surface transport to and from Gatwick Airport is fully addressed and given a high priority by the Government, particularly in respect of the rail infrastructure and services.

Improving surface transport is an integral part of the sustainable growth of Gatwick Airport. Effective, efficient, high quality and resilient surface transport to the airport benefits not just passengers but also the local population. Gatwick provides a transport hub of strategic significance not just for the local population and economy but also for the South East region and indeed the country as a whole. Improved public transport connections also help to manage the airport's overall environmental impact.

The contribution Gatwick makes to the national and regional economy cannot be underestimated. It is important therefore that the work of the Airports Commission supports the work of Gatwick Airport Limited and the aims of the Government's command paper on rail which encourages improving those journeys that matter most for economic growth in the UK including links to international airports. It is vital that Gatwick's growth plans are supported by the rail network thereby helping to maintain and grow the UK's international competitiveness and the contribution the airport makes to the economy of London and the South East.

#### **BY EMAIL**

Airports Commission  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 3BT

Rail is the largest single mode of passenger access to and from Gatwick and there is strong evidence that this demand will continue to grow in the future. However, there is limited capacity on the London to Brighton main line which prevents additional services being introduced to support demand on the part of air passengers. This is a major barrier to the effective provision of rail services to a major airport. Capacity constraints on this busy main line has also meant that service development providing links to regional centres, particularly to the east and west of Gatwick, has been hindered.

The Commission's Interim Report will come at an opportune, but critical time in relation to policy development for rail. The right decisions from Government could help to deliver quality improvements, and the infrastructure development linked to them, that are necessary from a Gatwick perspective to meet the short and medium term needs for air travel in the UK.

GATCOM therefore urges the Airports Commission to support:

- A specification of the dedicated Gatwick Express service in the Thameslink Franchise (due to be let in late 2013/early 2014) as a 30 minute, non-stop service every 15 minutes with on-board ticket sales, better rolling stock with more luggage space; accessible for all passengers including those with reduced mobility, families and passengers with luggage, and more peak period capacity. As the Thameslink franchise process moves forward, GATCOM will fully support bid proposals that meets the key outputs Gatwick Airport Limited has communicated to the Department for Transport and a number of specific items it has identified. GATCOM hopes the Airports Commission can lend its support to Gatwick's efforts in ensuring that this important rail franchise meets the needs of the airport;
- Brighton Main Line additional capacity improvements through incremental improvements brought forward by Network Rail in Control Period 6 (2020-2025) for improvements in the peak period at key pinch points;
- Support for 2 trains per hour from Gatwick to Reading supported by an additional platform at Redhill and peak period capacity via longer trains; and
- Gatwick Station concourse improvements to deliver improved accessibility with lifts and escalators to all platforms, as well as much needed capacity improvements to deliver a higher quality service.

## **Phase 2 Appraisal Framework – indicative timeline**

The Commission's indicative timeline for Phase 2 of its work is noted and the proposed collaborative working between the Commission and sponsors of proposals is welcomed. Working collaboratively is crucial and will help to ensure that only the most viable and feasible options are progressed during Phase 2 of the Commission's work. This approach will also hopefully help to identify, manage and minimise where possible unnecessary property blight for communities around airports/new sites.

GATCOM acknowledges the significant amount of detailed work and assessment the Commission has to undertake over a relatively short timeframe but it must also be appreciated that proposal sponsors also need to undertake detailed assessment work, hopefully in collaboration with its own key local stakeholders, before making submissions to the Airports Commission. It is therefore important to ensure that local work programmes and consultation arrangements are in sync with the Commission's timetable. With this in mind GATCOM asks that the Commission in finalising its timeline takes fully into account the sponsors' ability to work and adhere to the timeline suggested by the Commission.

If in the event that the Commission in its Interim Report maintains its view that additional capacity is needed in the South East and that the options put forward for Gatwick Airport are included on the Commission's shortlist of options to take forward to Phase 2 of its work, it is important that Gatwick Airport Limited is able to undertake the necessary collaborative working and local consultation prior to it making a submission in respect of its detailed assessment work and preferred option for Gatwick. It is understood that the Commission's indicative date for a preferred option submission does not currently align with Gatwick Airport Limited's work and

local consultation programme. GATCOM very much hopes that this issue can be resolved and work programmes can be satisfactorily aligned.

GATCOM trusts its comments will be fully considered.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paula Street". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Assistant Secretary