

Gatwick Airport Noise Management Board (NMB) Community Forum (NCF) Meeting 2

23rd September 2020 – Meeting Notes

Zoom, 14:00-16:00

1. Welcome and Introductions

The NCF Chair welcomed participants of the meeting.

2. NCF Chair: Opening Remarks

The NCF Chair provided the following opening remarks:

“Good afternoon and welcome to the second meeting of the Noise Management Board Community Forum, and the first held virtually via Zoom. As this is the first one I’ve chaired using this I would be very grateful for some leeway in any difficulties I encounter, but hopefully we can get through this smoothly.

In order to help me, please use the raise hand function (which you can find by clicking on participants) when you would like to speak, and put your microphone on mute when not speaking so that the audio remains clear for everyone. I don’t propose to do introductions at this stage, we should be able to see your name on display, but please state which organisation you represent when you speak.

We do have two observers from ICCAN, the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise joining us today, as part of their standing invitation to follow what we are doing as a Board.

Laura Boccadamo, Noise Management Initiatives Engagement Manager and NCF Secretary, who I think you will all have corresponded with but not met, is here to take minutes and provide support, and assisting with the Zoom management is Tara.

The Covid 19 pandemic has put our work largely on hold for the past six months, and had, as we will hear, an enormous impact on the airport and its operations. As we heard yesterday, the second wave of this pandemic is now with us and no-one knows how it will play out.

I think it is right to pause for a moment just to think of all those in the region who have lost their lives to the virus, and those who have lost loved ones or their livelihoods over the past six months.

The two things we need to establish, as far as we can, in today’s meeting are what’s changed, and what’s next.

From discussions over the past month with many of you in our surgeries, and in discussions with GAL and other stakeholders, it is clear the shutdown has had impacts for all of us.

As we will hear from Andy and Graham, the level of flight activity in and out of the airport is at its lowest for fifty years, and the retirement of larger, noisier aircraft such as the 747 has been brought forward. There has been much reported in the press about changes in flight paths and approach in clearer skies.

Equally, we have heard how, following several months of relative silence, some residents are now more sensitive to aircraft noise and some individual flights are noisier than before.

We’ve been asked how the airport and aviation generally is going to “build back” over the coming months and years, how this will impact on runway use plans at the airport, what this means for airspace redesign, and how we can encourage the incorporation of noise reduction into a future where many in the sector are facing an uncertain economic future.

What's next will encompass any changes to the NMB, our work plan, what is now less urgent and what priorities we need to focus on and pass forward to the Executive Board and Delivery Group for action. Feedback from the consultation exercise I circulated at the first NCF was inconclusive, but feedback via the surgeries gave us some main themes to look at, which will be summarised later. Today is your opportunity to add to or amend those themes, ask questions and set some priorities.

So it is important today that we reset to the new reality around the airport, but also make up for time lost as much as possible, in the new term.

A reminder that under our terms of reference, we are asked to seek a consensus view, but also to represent all views expressed in the Forum, and I will ensure that is the case. Majority and minority ideas, opinions and proposals will go forward to the NEX.

Finally, I'd like to formally propose the appointment of Ruud Ummels as the Independent Vice Chair of this Forum. Ruud will be familiar to some of you as the independent technical advisor to the NMB in its first term, and is Managing Director of To70 aviation consultants who continue to provide you with that independent advice and support".

Ruud Ummels (RU) addressed the forum, thanking Warren and inviting views from the Community Noise Groups. No objections were received. The Chair confirmed Ruud's appointment as Vice Chair of the Community Forum and thanked him for taking on the role.

CAGNE queried the process for utilising To70's independent technical advice and support, and the criteria that will be required, noting a feeling that this was not accessible to all CNGs during the First Term of the NMB. CAGNE also requested to read a statement of fact. The Chair advised that this could be addressed under A.O.B.

3. Update from Gatwick Airport

Andy Sinclair (AS), Head of Noise and Airspace at Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL), provided an overview of the impact that Covid-19 has had on the operation at Gatwick Airport. There has been a significant reduction in airspace movements compared to previous years, with roughly 180-300 air traffic movements a day at the end of the summer period (traffic levels equivalent to Summer 1971) but are far fewer than the same period in 2019 which was roughly 800-950 flights per day. Flights are currently operating from the North Terminal only. As a result, GAL continues to take measures to reduce the size of its business; contractors have been released, a third round of voluntary severance is underway, and it is expected that around 600 colleagues will be leaving the business through a complementary redundancy programme. Following this, it is anticipated that GAL staff numbers will be just over half what they were before the pandemic.

The significant reduction in air traffic movements has had an impact on airspace and noise: airlines are bringing back into service their quieter, more efficient aircraft whilst noisier aircraft, such as the B747, are being withdrawn altogether in some cases. In addition, less congested airspace has enabled: more expeditious climbs (without the need for aircraft to level off at lower altitudes); vectoring of departures to provide more direct routing as aircraft are achieving higher altitudes more quickly which has spread the traffic; and a significantly reduced need for holding aircraft on arrival. AS noted that Gatwick is receiving feedback that some people are experiencing significantly worse noise impacts than ever before or are being overflown when they have not had aircraft fly over them before. The reasons for these actual and perceived changes likely relate to aircraft being vectored - having achieved higher altitudes more quickly - over areas not previously or infrequently overflown and the

stark contrast between the very quiet period of significantly reduced operations at the airport and the increase (albeit significantly reduced compared to historic norms) in the current operation.

The pandemic has also impacted on engagement and resources; the Noise Management Board and other stakeholder meeting were paused, and large numbers within the industry have been furloughed or made redundant. In addition, work on airspace modernisation has paused. Whilst GAL believes airspace modernisation is critical to delivering noise benefits as part of any future plan, it is heavily reliant on DfT and CAA support, as well as the support of other stakeholders including other airports.

Looking forward, the capital investment programme at GAL has been reduced although some work continues such as the investment in the railway station. The Northern Runway project is currently paused awaiting a decision to progress. Gatwick values the contribution of the NMB which it will continue to support as best it can, however, the resources available are reduced and it may be more challenging to secure the right level of industry support in the near term.

The following questions were posed by attendees:

- CAGNE noted that they had emailed AS directly regarding specific noise complaints but had not received a response. CAGNE queried where noise complaints should be addressed in the future. AS requested that all complaints are made through the [formal complaint systems](#) as the system provided some exceptional functionality, good background information on the operation as well as performance and noise data and ensured the Airspace Office was able to track all correspondence and responses. CAGNE said that members had not always received responses, that they promote the use of the website but want to raise specific issues. AS stated that Gatwick aimed to make available as much detail about aircraft operations as is reasonably practical in response to complaints. The Complaints Handling Policy notes that: *Where we have explained the policies and noise measures which affect a complainant's postcode area and supplied sufficient information to the extent that we are unable to further enhance understanding, we will notify the complainant of our intention only to register, rather than to respond to, all future complaints.* AS then reiterated that the complaints system is the most appropriate way to do this and provided a recent example of how feedback received through the system regarding maintenance flights enabled the Airspace Office to identify an issue with the procedure for those flights, query this with the airlines and ANS, and as a result corrective action was taken.
- Plane Wrong noted that the unrestricted climbs on Route 4, due to the quieter skies, had been noticed but not similarly for Route 3, was there a reason for the Route 3 traffic still being restricted in the climb out? AS explained that in normal circumstances, if there was no conflicting traffic, air traffic controllers would naturally endeavour to continue to climb traffic; AS would need Route 3 data to understand if there had been any changes to climb profiles on that route.
- Mole Valley District Council noted the dramatic downturn in traffic but queried the intensity of morning flights and the occurrence of night flights. AS explained that albeit at a much lower frequency night flights were an important factor in ensuring the financial viability of some airline operations. Night-time operations continue and night flight restrictions exist that limit the number of traffic movements at night. Typically, airlines continue to schedule night flights for a number of reasons but the main reason being that the airline operating model requires a level of cost efficiency that relies upon multiple rotations of the same

aircraft and efficient use of crew/engineers. AS noted that there had been around 880 night flights up until Week 25 of the 2020 summer season, for the same period in 2019 there were around 9,100 night flights. Of these flights in 2019 32% were of the newer quieter variants whereas in 2020 we saw this increase to 72% of those night flights. In addition, AS noted that there have been 0 dispensations in the period.

- Plane Justice noted a similar query with regards to night flights and queried other economic factors. AS advised that the number of night flights was down 90% and day flights were down 80%. However, the night flights Quota Count (used to assess noise impacts of individual aircraft) was down by 93%, i.e. showing improved noise performance beyond the reduction in the number of flights. This reinforced the point made earlier that airlines were bringing back into service the newer, quieter and more fuel-efficient portions of their aircraft fleets first.

NCF/02/01: AS (GAL) to investigate the climb of aircraft on Route 3.

4. NMB Workplan and Community Forum Priorities

The Noise Management Board Noise Delivery Group (NDG) Chair provided an overview of the NDG and its membership, and the resource constraints faced by these organisations due to the impact of Covid-19. Eurocontrol data shows that, whilst air cargo has maintained a similar level of activity compared with equivalent days in 2019, low cost and traditional market segments have experienced large reductions in traffic. Globally, flights are down -55% and Airline, Airport and ANSP revenues are substantially below operating costs. These organisations are focusing on crisis management and survival, resulting in large numbers of redundancies and the retiring of older, noisier aircraft. Whilst there is no clear view on when traffic will return, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) suggest that it could take until 2024/2025 to return to 2019 traffic levels.

In light of this the NDG Chair provided a recap of the workplan activities that had been discussed at NCF/1, noting the need for these to be reviewed by the NCF and NEX to determine priorities. Whilst this will be a challenging time for stakeholders, the NDG Chair noted that environmental performance has been gaining more recognition in companies, citing NATS as an example.

The following questions were posed by attendees:

- CAGNE raised the question of continuous climb operations and queried whether the NMB would look at studying the impact of full thrust on people living closest to the runway, referring to the CAA's CAP1062 report. The NDG Chair noted the objective of policy to keep all aircraft in continuous climb, and noted the work undertaken by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), IATA and Sustainable Aviation on this topic. The NDG Chair also referred to the work previously undertaken by the NMB on Noise Abatement Departure Procedures (NADP) 1 and 2. The NCF Chair agreed to raise this at the NEX.
- GACC thanked the NDG Chair and AS for their sobering presentations and queried the status of the workplan circulated. GACC raised concerns, noting that the workplan was unambitious and did not address comments raised previously. They suggested that they would not support this going to the NEX in its current format. GACC suggested that communities should be more involved in, and perhaps author, a future workplan. The NDG Chair noted that the workplan is formulated by the NEX, who are still to meet, considering the views of the NCF. The NDG Chair confirmed that reducing noise is a principle objective of the NDG.

- GON noted support for GACC's comments and noted the need for an effective workplan.

Laura Boccadamo (NCF Secretary/ GAL) provided an overview of the work undertaken on the Airline Noise League Table (now called the Noise Performance Matrix). There was general support from CNGs for a league table. The following points were noted:

- GON and PAGNE expressed an interest in the metrics and the need for guidance from experts such as To70.
- Plane Justice noted the need to be able to see and influence the methodology.
- CAGNE noted the fall in CDO compliance during the Covid-19 period and expressed a wish for this activity to consider wider noise metrics considering noise cones and other ramifications of noise.
- Steve Mitchell (ERM) suggested that he and RU could feed in ideas from all communities on the metrics that could be used to judge each airline's performance.

The NCF Chair noted the intention to progress this work in the near term, with a view to developing it over time, and agreed to highlight these points to the NEX Chair.

5. Future Items for Discussion and Next Steps

Plane Justice suggested establishing a smaller working group comprising of CNG, Council, NEX and GAL representatives to develop the workplan. APCAG, PAGNE and Wealden District Council were in support of this, however CAGNE, the NEX Vice Chair, Tandridge Borough Council, and Mole Valley District Council were not in support of this as it reduced representation. Mole Valley District Council suggested that a simple document, containing what is actioned and what could be actioned realistically, could be circulated to all for input. Plane Justice suggested that a vote could be held to establish the consensus view, however the NCF Chair noted an emphasis on trying to find a way to encompass all views. The NCF Chair concluded that a working group would not be inclusive of all but committed to responding on this point by 2nd October 2020.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council suggested that the number of NCF meetings should be doubled so that more could be achieved from the forum.

CAGNE noted a workstream on landing gear deployment as its priority, followed by the Airline Noise Performance Matrix. CAGNE also called for the review and removal of the [noise information booklet](#), produced in the First Term of the NMB, as it was felt that it de-values homes.

NCF/02/02: NCF Chair to update NCF on discussions regarding a working group by 2nd October 2020.

6. A.O.B

6.1 Night Flights

Plane Wrong queried whether night flying should be on the workplan, both in the context of why there should be night flights if traffic does not recover, and if it does, how it could be deterred. Tandridge District Council concurred, noting that there is currently a cluster of flights around 01:00 and 03:00.

6.2 Noise Action Plan

GACC explained that the Noise Action Plan (NAP) is the only statutory document relating to noise. In GACC's view, there has been significant failure to action initiatives in the NAP and misreporting of

progress. GACC requested that the Chairs of the NMB and GATCOM conduct a review. The NCF Chair agreed to discuss a potential review of the NAP with the NEX Chair and feedback to the NCF.

NCF/02/03: NCF Chair to discuss a potential review of the NAP and respond to GACC.

Open Actions

Action	Description	Responsibility
NCF/01/02	NDG Chair to verify with NaTMAG the details of noise management metrics and reporting regime arising from the growth and noise evaluation by NMB, and will report findings to the NCF.	NDG Chair
NCF/01/03	NCF Chair to investigate plans for consultation regarding FASI(S), in particular how and when CNGs and Councils are expected to be engaged and/or consulted.	NCF Chair
NCF/02/01	NCF/02/01: AS (GAL) to investigate the climb of aircraft on Route 3.	AS (GAL)
NCF/02/02	NCF Chair to update NCF on discussions regarding a working group by 2 nd October 2020.	NCF Chair
NCF/02/03	NCF Chair to discuss a potential review of the NAP and respond to GACC.	NCF Chair

List of Participants

Name	Organisation
ClIrr Caroline Salmon	Mole Valley District Council
ClIrr Liz Lockwood	Tandridge District Council
ClIrr Matt Boughton	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
ClIrr Ann Newton	Wealden District Council
Ian Hare	APCAG
Sally Pavey	CAGNE
Charles Lloyd	GACC
Martin Barraud	GON
Atholl Forbes	PAGNE
Chris Quinlan	Plane Justice
Ed Winter	Plane Wrong
Angus Stewart	TWAANG
Steve Mitchell	ERM
Andy Sinclair	Gatwick Airport Limited
Sam Hartley	ICCAN
Stephen Cooke	ICCAN

Graham Lake	NDG Chair
Warren Morgan	NCF Chair
Laura Boccadamo	NCF Secretary
Tara Whittaker	NCF Secretary Support
Helyn Clack	NEX Vice Chair
Ruud Ummels	NCF Vice Chair

List of Apologies

Name	Organisation
Cllr Catherine Rankin	Kent County Council
Cllr Natalie Bramhall	Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
James Lee	TWANSG

Future NMB Meetings

Meeting	Date
NMB-NEX/1	21 October 2020
NMB Public Meeting and Gatwick Airspace Briefing	03 December 2020