

THE NOISE AND TRACK MONITORING ADVISORY GROUP (NaTMAG) Extraordinary Meeting Noise Action Plan 4th Round Planning 29 June 2023 (virtual meeting)

IN ATTENDANCE

Kimberley Heather (Chair)	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Office and Chair of NaTMAG/Acting Secretary
Kathy Coffin	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Noise Compliance & Reporting Manager
Andy Sinclair	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Head of Noise and Airspace Strategy
Goran Jovanovic	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Change Manager
Sam Tull	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Office
Richard Lipscomb	Gatwick Airport Ltd – Airspace Office
Liz Kitchen	GATCOM
Malcolm Fillmore	GATCOM
Mike George	GATCOM
Alan Jones	GATCOM
Ed Winter	GACC
Leon Hibbs	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Ian Greene	Department for Transport (DfT)
Alex Scaife (observer)	Department for Transport (DfT)
Will Martin (guest)	Noise Consultants Limited (NCL)
Piero Di Stefano (guest)	Noise Consultants Limited (NCL)
Becki Edwards (observer)	Noise Consultants Limited (NCL)
Malvina Gjura (observer)	Noise Consultants Limited (NCL)

APOLOGIES

Adam Dracott	Mid Sussex District Council
Jonathan Drew	Noise Management Board Executive Board (NEX) Chair
Rebecca Mian	Gatwick Airport Ltd - Noise Initiatives Engagement Manager
Gary Marshall	Department for Transport (DfT)
Andrew Burke	NATS
Matt Hadden	NATS
Jonny Petts	easyJet

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

- The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Richard Lipscomb, the new Airspace Office Analyst, who will be taking over as NaTMAG Secretary later in the year. Alex Scaife from the DfT was welcomed as an observer. Several members of NCL, Will Martin, Piero Di Stefano, Becki Edwards and Malvina Gjura were present at the meeting to give an update on the progress of the Noise Action Plan (NAP) Fourth Round plan.

INTRODUCTION

- The Fourth Round of the NAP falls under the Environmental Noise Directive (END) for the period 2024 to 2029. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) issued guidance to Gatwick Airport in December 2022 to review and revise the existing NAP for the next five-year iteration. The deadline for submission of the report to Defra is 1 September 2023.
- Slides from the meeting will be shared with members, as well as the briefing report where members can provide feedback on the proposal for the fourth-round report. Feedback will be welcomed until 13 July 2023.
- NCL have been commissioned to prepare a new document for the NAP by consulting with various stakeholders including NaTMAG and the Noise Management Board (NMB). The role of NaTMAG is the primary consultee on behalf of GATCOM and this has been accepted by Defra.

NAP BENCHMARKING AGAINST OTHER AIRPORTS

- NCL presented their analysis of the benchmarking that they completed against other comparable airports to understand how measures are being implemented at other UK airports and across Europe.
- The airports that were used as a benchmark were Heathrow Airport, Edinburgh Airport, Dublin Airport, Bucharest Airport and Barcelona Airport. Heathrow were noted to be the best in class for noise management and are operating under the same regulatory framework. Edinburgh was selected due to a similar regulatory framework and a similar population exposed to noise (>55 Lden). Dublin, suggested by GAL and stakeholders, was selected due to similar movements and population exposed to noise, and similar geographic setting. Barcelona has a comparable number of annual air traffic movements and Bucharest has a similar geographic setting and competent authority.
- Gatwick Airport has implemented the most common measures for noise management and is working on further measures such as introducing Precision Based Navigation (PBN) on arrivals and departures as part of the FASI-S airspace modernisation. It also offers a relocation scheme for residents suffering from both a high level of noise (63dB(A) Leq or more) and a large increase in noise (3dB(A) Leq or more) through the Property Market Support Bonds and Home Owners Support Scheme.
- Gatwick's Round 3 Noise Action Plan complies with the minimum requirements the END Annex V. It was noted that Gatwick's 2019-2024 Round 3 report was one of the longest with over 200 pages compared with other airports, which are typically 50-70 pages long.
- Most of the comparable airports (4 of 5 selected) have adopted SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed) objectives. Strategic Noise Mapping mid-way through the term is also legally required by the Defra guidance. Although 2021 was an atypical year to produce these contours due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these were submitted, however some airports are now choosing to adopt 2019 as their baseline year.

- As part of the benchmarking exercise, NCL have conducted a review of potential new actions, which follow all pillars of the ICAO Balanced Approach.
- One comment identified the need for a smooth transition from Round 3 to Round 4 with more clearly defined actions and a focus on the objectives. Some actions would be worth consolidating and the wording made clearer. The comment on reducing the number of pages of the new document was welcomed by members.
- It was noted that as it is a public document then any jargon or technical wording must be avoided so that the public can understand what is being proposed.
- Members welcomed the use of the ICAO Balanced Approach being referenced.
- There was concern regarding NaTMAG's role going forward. If there is potential for an independent audit to take place on the new NAP, then NaTMAG may feel like they are taking more of a backseat role. NCL welcomed feedback on how much involvement NaTMAG would like in the process going forward. A similar audit has been undertaken at the other comparable airports; however, the Defra guidance has stated that the Consultative Committee (GATCOM) must be consulted and so it is expected that NaTMAG's role will not change.
- It was suggested by NCL that some of the actions from the Round 3 NAP that are 'continuing' or 'ongoing' actions that are monitored by the Gatwick Airspace Office to be placed in a separate business as usual (BAU) section of the report. There was concern that this could mean these previous actions will be lost in the report and less visible. NCL advised that the BAU section will be very clear, and the report will be easier to interpret with this new BAU section included.
- Another concern was raised that a defined target or overall objective is required in the new NAP. GAL advised that the plan would follow the Decade of Change objective to *'Limit and where possible reduce the airport's impact on local communities by working with partners and stakeholders to create the most noise efficient operation possible'*.
- Land Use Planning (LUP) was discussed. It was asked how realistic it would be to include in the next Round of the NAP. NCL advised that LUP was a focus of the NMB and were in conversations with the DfT regarding LUP controls for local authorities. Despite the high demand for housing in the local area, local authorities are kept aware of the noise contours at Gatwick on an annual basis which aims to limit residential encroachment. A Local Plan called a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) contains specific noise guidance on LUP for local authorities.

NAP BASELINE (PROGRESS/CHANGES OVER ROUND 3)

- It is well-known that the COVID-19 pandemic was disruptive to progress during Round 3 of the NAP.
- Although the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the northern runway programme is progressing into its submission phase, it is outside of the scope of the NAP, however if the DCO is consented and airport development were to occur as a result, the NAP would require revisions.

- It was noted by a NaTMAG member that the DCO should not influence the new NAP at this stage, however it was questioned why FASI-S was not included in the new Round. In the previous Round 3, there were two actions that were focussed on airspace modernisation under the old name of LAMP (London Airspace Modernisation Programme). NCL confirmed that FASI-S will not be excluded, they will find a suitable way to include it by considering how actions impact FASI-S and vice-versa.
- It was suggested that the NAP needs to be made a 'living document' (i.e., a document that can be edited and updated). NCL mentioned that they have looked at the NMB workplan, which works on a different cycle to the NAP, to evaluate the potential to make the NAP a living document.
- It was noted that the Lden contours (55dB) have increased, from Round 2 to Round 3, and NCL welcomed any feedback on why that might be the case. It was suggested that the Round 3 contours could have been overstated. The 92-day summer noise exposure contours have reduced since 2016, likely as a result of improvements in aircraft fleet mixes result as well as the Fuel Over Pressure Protector (FOPP) modification on the Airbus A320 family of aircraft. Significant reductions are observed since 2019, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also noted that the growth of the noise contours began to level off in 2016.

NAP PROPOSED CHANGES, INCLUDING NEW ACTIONS

- The new NAP will be a maximum of 100 pages (document and appendices combined). This was welcomed by NaTMAG members. The order of the document will remain the same, but some chapter headings will be removed, and the document will be made more accessible.
- More infographics are favoured to replace technical industry jargon to help explain actions. Information will be signposted rather than repeated throughout the document. The objectives will also be clearly defined.
- The long-term strategy position will be strengthened. It was noted that the financial information may not be beneficial to include as residents are less concerned with the finances and more about noise. Whilst this is understood by GAL, the Defra guidance has stated that this information must be included in the publication. The approach was welcomed by some members, however the cost of the implications of noise on health is a must. GAL agree, however the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE, pronounced 'annie') study conducted by the DfT is yet to be published so these health costs are not yet clearly defined. Another view was that it would be beneficial to have a cost-benefit analysis of night flights. GAL have confirmed that once the ANNE study is published, GAL will look to act upon the feedback from the research.
- There was concern that due to the number of consultations ongoing, this may have an impact on the timing of the new NAP, especially those relating to night flights and the DCO. GAL confirmed that they would consult with Defra on any significant changes that may arise from the conclusions of the various studies and consultations and whether it is valid to update the NAP to reflect the outcomes. It is noted that the definition of a 'significant change' needs to be outlined.

Defra, as part of the guidance, has said that the NAP can be reviewed at any time, however the concern is that if the report is updated too often then it may lose its value.

- NCL have proposed to reduce the number of actions to 30, to include sub-activities and KPI's (key performance indicators) as BAU. A concern was raised that 28 of these actions were rolled over from the previous Round 3 report and that does not leave much space for new actions, for which two are only allowed if this is the case. NCL advised that not all 28 actions need to be taken forward and would welcome feedback from stakeholders on which they would prefer. A limit of 30 actions is also negotiable, however some of the actions could instead feed into the NMB workplan.
- Objectives should be SMART, and actions should support the achievement of SMART objectives. Obsolete and completed actions from the previous Round 3 report will be removed (e.g., Action Plan Action 9 on banning QC4 aircraft from operating at night was implemented as a voluntary measure by GAL earlier than the DfT restriction in 2021).
- It is a NaTMAG requirement to scrutinise the NAP over the lifetime of the plan, there is a concern that if the NAP is too generic then it may be difficult for NaTMAG to comment on and track progress of actions. NCL advised that the wording will be clearer, but the report won't be too generic.
- A comment was made about including detail on the number of awakenings due to night flight noise and this must be quantifiable.
- The noise envelope work that was recently undertaken as part of the DCO has been suggested to be included as part of the NAP, however it should be kept separate from the NAP.
- It would be helpful to have an appendix with a glossary of acronyms and a section to explain exactly what a noise contour is and how it represents the noise environment.
- As there is a need to measure the impact of noise on local communities, there needs to be actions on engaging with local communities. (Although cross cutting this could be seen as forming the Fifth Pillar of the ICAO Balanced Approach). Also relating to this is the impact on urban versus rural communities. As Gatwick has a large number of rural communities surrounding it, the impact of noise reduction measures should take this into account, as some measures that would work for urban communities around Heathrow will not necessarily be suitable for the Gatwick area and would have an impact on tranquillity.

NEXT STEPS

- The report and slides will be circulated for further commentary and feedback which will be received by the NaTMAG Secretariat and forwarded to NCL for the Draft Report. The deadline for feedback is 13 July 2023.
- The 'skeleton' draft report of the Fourth Round of the NAP, with a focus on actions, will be circulated to NaTMAG members two weeks before the NaTMAG meeting on 3 August 2023 so that the content can be discussed at the pre-meeting. GACC will be invited to the pre-meeting on this occasion.



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- A presentation will be given to GATCOM Steering Group on 7 July and to the main GATCOM meeting on 20 July 2023.
- The August NaTMAG meeting will have a focus on the Draft Report of the NAP and therefore regular agenda items will either be postponed until the November meeting or very brief updates will be permitted. The meeting will remain virtual on Microsoft Teams.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

FLOPSC – Tuesday 25 July 2023, 13:30 to 15:00, via teleconference or, in person Destinations Place.

GNMG – Wednesday 6 December 2023, 10:00 to 12:00 via teleconference.

NaTMAG – Thursday 3 August 2023, 10:00 to 13:00, via teleconference