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Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee

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28 July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**CAA consultation on Gatwick Airport Limited's proposal to extend the current commitments.**

Thank you for providing GATCOM with the opportunity to comment on Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) proposal to extend the Commitments for a four-year period from April 2025 to March 2029.

GATCOM, the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee, is the statutory advisory body for Gatwick Airport and comprises representatives from local authorities, the aviation industry, passengers, business, environmental interests and other users of the airport. We provide a forum for informed discussion leading to the provision of advice to the Government, Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL), the CAA and other organisations on a wide range of matters concerning the operation and future development of Gatwick.

This response has been compiled after being discussed at the GATCOM Steering Group, the Passenger Advisory Group (PAG) and then at the full GATCOM meeting on 20 July.

GATCOM recognises the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations at Gatwick, GAL's business and the aviation industry has been catastrophic, and we note that GAL is proposing an extension of the duration of the Commitments in response to the impact of Covid-19 and the ongoing uncertainty.

From the perspective of GATCOM's PAG, the contracts and commitments style licence regime has worked well over the last 7 years. The development of GAL's commitments has been a key consideration for PAG in helping to ensure the passenger experience and perspective is fully embraced, particularly in respect of setting core service standards for passenger facing facilities.

We note that your proposal is to extend the Commitments by four years, until 31 March 2029 in their current form and to roll forward the investment commitment at the same level and that all service commitments and corresponding penalties will remain unchanged and will continue to be considered through the ongoing,

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periodic service reviews. GATCOMs PAG did initially suggest that GAL should consider extending to 2027 rather than 2029 to link to the timeframes of the Northern Runway proposals, should it be approved. However, this has been addressed in their final proposal and PAG are content on the extension term and the reasons for it.

PAG looks forward to continuing its input to GAL's review as it is essential that the service standards remain fit for the future reflecting the needs of passengers and other users of the airport. A full-service review will take place in 2023 and PAG welcomes this and looks forward to working closely with GAL on this review. One particular service standard the PAG are keen to review is seating and to bring that in line with other targets. PAG welcomes the two new measures that being put forward for consideration: a new metric on air traffic control performance, and financial incentives for the Special Assistance passenger satisfaction measure.

We also note that GAL will commit to investing at an average annual rate of £120m per year and that the average will now be assessed over the ten years from 2019/20 to 2028/29. Additionally, GAL will continue to commit to funding all future capacity related investment through the extended period. This is welcomed.

A matter that is of interest and importance to GATCOM's membership is the level at which airport charges are set. As highlighted in GATCOM's response to the CAA's consultation in August 2018, there is a need to consider the environmental consequences of the price of airport charges at Gatwick given the concerns of local communities about the impact of traffic growth on the environment, particularly on the noise climate. We note the proposal does refer to Gatwick's own Zero Emission targets and also to Aircraft and Surface Access emissions and that under its structure of charges, there are price signals to incentivise the use of quieter, cleaner and greener aircraft. This is welcomed by GATCOM's membership, and we feel it must be something that continues to be a key area of focus at Gatwick. However, it should be noted that GATCOMs Airline representatives do not support the implication that the pricing of airport charges has environmental consequences.

We hope these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully,

*Monique Smart*

GATCOM Secretariat