



Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project

Statement of Common Ground Between Gatwick Airport Limited and Natural England

Book 10

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared in support of the examination phase for the proposed Gatwick Northern Runway Project (NRP). The Application was made by Gatwick Airport Limited (the Applicant) to the Secretary of State for the Department for Transport (the Secretary of State) pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2 The Application comprises alterations to the existing northern runway which, together with the lifting of the current restrictions on its use, would enable dual runway operations. It also includes the development of a range of infrastructure and facilities which, with the alterations to the northern runway, would enable an increase in the airport's passenger throughput capacity. This includes substantial upgrade works to certain surface access routes which lead to the airport. A full description of the Proposed Development is included in ES Chapter 5: Project Description (Doc Ref. 5.1).
- 1.1.3 SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be considered during the Examination. The purpose and possible content of SoCG is detailed in the Department for Communities and Local Government's guidance entitled 'Planning Act 2008: examination of applications for development consent' (2015), stating:
- "A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence."*
- 1.1.4 The SoCGs between the Applicant and the local authorities comprises several documents, to which this document is one. The Statement of Commonality provides details of the structure and status of the SoCG between all the relevant Interested Parties, including the local authorities. Naturally, the level of detail across the suite of SoCG varies to reflect the nature and complexity of the matter, as well as the position between the parties.
- 1.1.5 This document solely relates to matters between the Applicant and Natural England. A summary of the meetings and correspondence that has taken place between the parties is detailed in **Appendix 1** of this document.
- 1.1.6 The engagement between the parties across the breadth of matters is ongoing. Therefore, the SoCG is an evolving document and the detailed wording within it is still being discussed in detail between the parties. Future iterations will be submitted at each deadline; and both parties reserve the right to supplement the matters identified discussions progress, to ensure it is comprehensive and up to date.
- 1.1.7 This SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority (ExA) where agreement has been reached between the parties, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached, and is presented in a tabular form. This SoCG does not seek to replicate information that is available elsewhere, either within the Application and/or Examination documents, referring out where

appropriate. The terminology used within the SoCG to reflect the status between the parties is either:

- “Agreed” to indicate where a matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties.
- “Not Agreed” to indicate a final position where parties cannot agree.
- “Under discussion” to indicate where matters are subject of on-going discussion with the aim to either resolve or refine the extent of disagreement between the parties.

1.1.8 It can be assumed that any matters not specifically referred to in Section 2 of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to Natural England; and therefore, have not been the subject of any discussions between the parties. As such, those matters should be assumed to be agreed, unless otherwise raised in due course by any of the parties.

2 Current Position

2.1. Agricultural Land Use and Recreation

2.1.1 **Table 2.1** sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.1 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Agricultural Land Use and Recreation within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.2. Air Quality

2.2.1 Table 2.2 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.2 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Air Quality within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.3. Capacity and Operations

2.3.1 Table 2.3 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.3 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Capacity and Operations within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.4. Climate Change

2.4.1 **Table 2.4** sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.4 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Climate Change within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.5. Construction

2.5.1 Table 2.5 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.5 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Construction within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.6. Cumulative Effects and Interrelationships

2.6.1 Table 2.6 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.6 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Cumulative Effects and Interrelationships within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.7. Draft DCO and Explanatory Memorandum

2.7.1 Table 2.7 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.7 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to the Draft DCO and Explanatory Memorandum within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.8. Ecology and Nature Conservation

2.8.1 Table 2.8 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.8 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
Baseline					
<i>There are no issues relating to the baseline for this topic within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					
Assessment Methodology					
2.8.2.1	Nationally designated sites	We are concerned that air quality impacts to nationally designated sites have only taken into account NOx and nitrogen deposition. Despite ammonia (NH3) being included within the air quality assessment for internationally designated sites, there has been no assessment made for SSSI's. We require NH3 to be included to enable us to make a robust assessment of impacts.	Additional assessment of the impacts to these SSSIs is on-going and will be provided once completed.		Under discussion
2.8.2.2	Nationally designated sites	Natural England recommends that Titsey Wood, Westerham Wood and Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SSSI's are given further consideration in relation to potential air quality impacts, stating clearly the exceedances for NOx, nitrogen deposition and NH3 and a discussion of the likelihood of impacts on the sites. If mitigation is required to negate significant impacts then this should also be proposed.	Additional assessment of the impacts to these SSSIs is on-going and will be provided once completed.		Under discussion
Assessment					
2.8.3.1	Internationally designated sites	Natural England is satisfied that the proposed development is not likely to result in significant effects on The Mens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ebernoe Common SAC and Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC, due to it being unlikely that the project and designated sites are functionally linked given both the distance between them and the core foraging area of bat interest features (12km). In addition, impacts to air quality are unlikely given the proximity of The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC to affected roads and the redistribution of traffic away from Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC.	Noted.		Agreed
2.8.3.2	Internationally designated sites	Natural England agrees that Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) (Ockham and Wisley Common SSSI), Ashdown Forest SAC/SPA, Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Chobham Common SSSI) and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC should be taken forward to Appropriate Assessment on air quality grounds, but that an adverse effect on the integrity of all sites can be ruled out.	Noted.		Agreed
2.8.3.3	Internationally designated sites	There are no other likely impact pathways to notified features of the above sites resulting from the project.	Noted.		Agreed
2.8.3.4	Nationally designated sites	There is currently not enough information provided within the submitted documents for Natural England to assess potential impacts upon Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) from traffic related air quality. Three sites (Titsey Woods SSSI, Westerham Woods SSSI and Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SSSI) show an increase in NOx and nitrogen deposition that is >1% of the critical load/level, however no assessment of potential	Additional assessment of the impacts to these SSSIs is on-going and will be provided once completed.		Under discussion

		impacts to these sites has been made. In addition, impacts upon SSSI's as a result of changes to atmospheric ammonia levels have not been considered. Both of these have been requested by Natural England during pre-application engagement and we are awaiting further information.			
2.8.3.5	Nationally designated sites	It is our opinion that the statement provided in paragraph 9.9.383 (document ref. APP-034) advising that 'no impacts to statutory designated sites within 5km of the Proposed Development are anticipated with all emissions levels below the screening thresholds' is misleading, as it infers that there is no potential impact to any designated sites as a result of air quality emissions. As advised in paragraph 9.9.386 (APP-034) there is an increase in nitrogen deposition at four modelled locations including Titsey Wood SSSI and Westerham Wood SSSI that is >1% greater than the critical load, demonstrating a potential impact to these sites.	Additional assessment of the impacts to these SSSIs is on-going and will be provided once completed.		Under discussion
2.8.3.6	Nationally designated sites	We would also like to highlight that the data presented in Table 2.5. (document ref. APP-167) shows that there will be an increase in NOx of >1% of the critical level at both Titsey Wood SSSI and Westerham Wood SSSI (Eco_217 and Eco_218) in addition to nitrogen deposition. From this data it appears that there will also be a increase in NOx of >1% of the critical level and in nitrogen deposition of >1% of the critical load for Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SSSI (Eco_263). Impacts as a result of these increases have not been assessed or discussed within the Ecology and Nature Conservation chapter, therefore we are currently unable to adequately determine the Projects impact upon nationally designated sites	Additional assessment of the impacts to these SSSIs is on-going and will be provided once completed.		Under discussion
2.8.3.7	Nationally designated sites	We disagree with the conclusion provided in paragraph 9.9.387 (APP-034) that 'the contributions from the Project at these four sites is considered to be of negligible magnitude on a receptor of National importance which is of minor adverse significance', as this is based upon a comparison of the increase against the predicted background. It is our advice that increases in NOx, nitrogen deposition and NH3 should be measured against the critical load/level for that site even if that is already being exceeded, as further increase could prohibit the site remaining at or returning to favourable condition.	Additional assessment of the impacts to these SSSIs is on-going and will be provided once completed.		Under discussion
2.8.3.8	Protected species	We are satisfied that the bat colonies identified within the airports vicinity are not functionally linked to any of the nearby European designated sites, as discussed above. We therefore direct you to our standing advice for protected species to assist you in your decision	Noted.		Agreed
Mitigation and Compensation					
2.8.4.1	Biodiversity net gain	We welcome the commitment to delivering BNG on this project and support the proposal going beyond the mandatory 10% net gain required by national planning policy and the policy proposed within Crawley Borough Council Local Plan draft submission document. We recommend that the target increase in BNG of 22.5% habitat units and 16.7% watercourse units is secured by a suitably worded requirement in the DCO.	Noted.		Agreed

2.8.4.2	Biodiversity net gain	We acknowledge that the biodiversity baseline provided is based upon all land within the development's order limit (735ha), however the net gain shown within the metric is based only upon land impacted during the project (230.09ha). This was agreed with GAL at the pre-application stage due to the constraints associated with providing a 10% gain on the full site, particularly when comparing it to the size of the site actually lost. This is in line with Luton Rising's BNG proposal for the London Luton Airport Expansion project.	Noted.		Agreed
2.8.4.3	Biodiversity net gain	The inability of the BNG proposal to meet habitat trading rules, rules that are established to ensure losses are compensated for through creating or enhancing habitats on a 'like-for-like' basis, was also discussed at pre-application stage. We consider the rationale given by GAL for not meeting the trading rules to be satisfactory, given that it is in the interest of aircraft and public safety that new areas of woodland should not be planted within the order limit.	Noted.		Agreed
Other					
2.8.5.1	Protected species	Natural England is still awaiting submission of draft protected species licence applications for review. Without draft protected species licence applications we are unable to issue Letters of No Impediment, which we understand may be required by GAL for Badgers. We will work with GAL and our wildlife licensing team to ensure that we have the required information to obtain these when needed.	Draft licences are being produced and will be provided to Natural England once completed.		Under discussion

2.9. Forecasting and Need

2.9.1 **Table 2.9** sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.9 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Forecasting and Need within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.10. Geology and Ground Conditions

2.10.1 Table 2.10 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.10 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Geology and Ground Conditions within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.11. Greenhouse Gases

2.11.1 Table 2.11 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.11 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Greenhouse Gases within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.12. Health and Wellbeing

2.12.1 Table 2.12 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.12 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Health and Wellbeing within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.13. Historic Environment

2.13.1 Table 2.13 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.13 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Historic Environment in this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.14. Landscape, Townscape and Visual

2.14.1 Table 2.14 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.14 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
Baseline					
<i>There are no issues relating to the baseline for this topic within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					
Assessment methodology					
2.14.2.1	Nationally designated landscapes	We welcome the use of the CPRE tranquillity report in the assessment of tranquillity upon nationally designated landscapes and are broadly satisfied with the methodology used. However we would encourage the examining authority to engage with the High Weald AONB Unit in relation to the methodology, as we note that this landscape has the greatest potential for impacts to tranquillity given the increase in flight numbers as a result of the project.	<p>Various communications have taken place with the High Weald AONB regarding the methodology and outcomes of the tranquillity assessment. We have been in contact with the High Weald National Landscape Unit advising them of the Natural England Relevant Representation, and they have indicated that they do not wish to engage further with us on the Project.</p> <p>The Applicant is happy to discuss these issues further during the TWG's and provide further information required as part of the SoCG process.</p>		Under discussion
2.14.2.2	Nationally designated landscapes	Natural England will continue our discussions with GAL around potential impacts on the tranquillity of the High Weald AONB to ensure that a robust assessment of noise has been made and that a worst case scenario with regard to a quieter aircraft fleet has been used.	<p>Various communications have taken place with the High Weald AONB regarding the methodology and outcomes of the tranquillity assessment. We have been in contact with the High Weald National Landscape Unit advising them of the Natural England Relevant Representation, and they have indicated that they do not wish to engage further with us on the Project.</p> <p>The Applicant is happy to discuss these issues further during the TWG's and provide further information required as part of the SoCG process.</p>		Under discussion
2.14.2.3	Nationally designated landscapes	It is implied in the Landscape, Townscape and Visual Resources chapter (document ref. APP-033) that tranquillity has been assessed in conjunction with information provided within the Noise and Vibration chapter (document ref. APP-039), however Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) have made Natural England aware that tranquillity impacts have instead been assessed on the increase in overflights as a result of the project (20% increase)	<p>The CAA's CAP1616 Airspace Change Guidance provides a methodology to assess effects on the perception of tranquillity where the proposed airspace change may increase the number of overflights of nationally designated landscapes.</p> <p>The definition of an "overflight" uses the CAA CAP1498 criterion as explained in ES Appendix 14.9.2: Air Noise Modelling.</p> <p>The tranquillity assessment has been informed by data presented within ES Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration – please see commentary to issue 9.35 below.</p> <p>The numbers of overflights have been calculated and mapped for the 2019 baseline, and then for a 2032 future baseline and 2032 with Project, using simplifying assumptions in ES Chapter 14 to represent air traffic growth.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 8 Landscape, Townscape and Visual [APP-033]</p> <p>Figures 8.6.3 to 8.6.7 of ES Chapter 8 Landscape, Townscape and Visual Figures – Part 1 and Part 2 [APP-060 and APP-061]</p> <p>ES Appendix 14.9.2: Air Noise Modelling [APP-172]</p>	Under discussion

			Chapter 14 focuses on the 2032 assessment year, as the predicted changes in air traffic movements (an increase of up to 20%) are likely to be greater than in the opening year of 2029 (See ES Figure 8.6.6).		
2.14.2.4	Nationally designated landscapes	We intend to continue discussions with GAL to determine whether aspects of the noise assessment can be incorporated into the assessment of tranquillity impacts to High Weald AONB, utilising a worse case example of future aircraft fleet and comparing this with the current noise baseline	<p>The Landscape Assessment has had regard for the noise assessments, together with overflight plans, in coming to its conclusions.</p> <p>The noise assessment presents a range of predicted noise effects and reports the information in the form of noise contours and spot noise levels at representative community locations. The slower fleet transition case shows the upper range of these (ie the worst case).</p> <p>There are two limited areas where the noise contours overlap AONBs. These are the N65 20 (daytime) and N60 10 (night time) contours in the vicinity of Penshurst/Hever in the High Weald AONB to the east and just outside Horsham in the western tip of the High Weald AONB.</p> <p>Additionally, Chapter 14 has a discussion in Para 14.9.155 on noise changes in Chiddingstone (just east of Hever) as a Representative Community Location.</p> <p>We would very much welcome further discussion with Natural England regarding how this information can be understood in the context of the assessment in ES Chapter 8 LTVIA.</p> <p>Various communications have taken place with the High Weald AONB regarding the methodology and outcomes of the tranquillity assessment. The Applicant is happy to discuss these issues further during the TWG's and provide further information required as part of the SoCG process.</p>	Environmental Statement - Noise and Vibration Figures - Part 2 [APP-064]	Under discussion
Assessment					
2.14.3.1	Nationally designated landscapes	We agree that the increase in overflights in the Kent Downs AONB, Surrey Hills AONB and South Downs National Park is negligible in terms of magnitude, resulting in a minor adverse impact upon the designated landscapes, and will not require mitigating.	The Applicant notes Natural England's agreement that the increase in overflights in the Kent Downs AONB, Surrey Hills AONB and South Downs National Park is negligible in terms of magnitude, resulting in a minor adverse impact upon the designated landscapes, and will not require mitigating.		Agreed
Mitigation and Compensation					
There are no issues relating to mitigation and compensation for this topic within this Statement of Common Ground.					
Other					
There are no other issues relating to this topic within this Statement of Common Ground.					

2.15. Major Accidents and Disasters

2.15.1 Table 2.15 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.15 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Major Accidents and Disasters within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.16. Noise and Vibration

2.16.1 **Table 2.16** sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.16 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Noise and Vibration within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.17. Planning and Policy

2.17.1 Table 2.17 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.17 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Planning and Policy within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.18. Project Elements and Approach to Mitigation

2.18.1 Table 2.18 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.18 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Project Elements and Approach to Mitigation within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.19. Socio-Economics and Economics

2.19.1 Table 2.19 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.19 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Socio-Economics and Economics within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.20. Traffic and Transport

2.20.1 Table 2.21 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.20 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Traffic and Transport within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.21. Waste and Materials

2.21.1 Table 2.21 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.21 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Waste and Materials in this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

2.22. Water Environment

2.22.1 Table 2.22 sets out the position of both parties in relation to matters.

Table 2.22 Statement of Common Ground Matters

Reference	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Gatwick Airport Limited Position	Signposting	Status
<i>There are no issues relating to Water Environment within this Statement of Common Ground.</i>					

3 Signatures

3.1.1 The above SoCG is agreed between the following:

Duly authorised for and on behalf of Gatwick Airport Limited, The Applicant	Name
	Job Title
	Date
	Signature
Duly authorised for and on behalf of Natural England	Name
	Job Title
	Date
	Signature

Appendix 1: Record of Engagement Undertaken

Date	Form of Contact (meeting or correspondence)	Overview of the Matters Discussed and Key Outcomes
24 May 2021	Meeting	Project update following restart post Covid 19 pandemic. Discussion regarding baseline data gathering and methodology for HRA, and the landscape, townscape and visual impact assessment (LTVIA; including tranquillity assessment).
17 June 2021	Meeting	Further presentation on LTVIA and tranquillity methodologies.
3 May 2023	Meeting	Project update and discussion on HRA methodology.
5 June 2023	Meeting	Discussion on progress with HRA assessment.
29 June 2023	Meeting	Discussion on progress with HRA assessment and SoCG matters.
20 September 2023	Meeting	Review of ecological assessment within the DCO and proposed mitigation and compensation. Review of LTVIA assessment.