



Meeting note

Project name	Gatwick Airport Northern Runway
File reference	TR020005
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	11 February 2022
Meeting with	Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) Quod RPS
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project update

The Applicant provided an update on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of arrivals in the airport. With Government travel restrictions lifting, flights are expected to return to about 70% of pre-pandemic levels by early summer 2022, to over 30 million passengers. The Applicant informed that the consultation period ended in December 2021 and that the feedback received would feed into the design evolution of the proposed application. The Applicant was aware of the different planning decisions being taken in respect of other airports and will be taking these into consideration when preparing the application for submission.

Development Consent Order (DCO) schedule update

The Applicant shared a detailed project timeline with the Inspectorate. The Applicant confirmed its intentions of submitting the DCO application in early 2023. The Inspectorate requested notice prior to submission; the Applicant confirmed it would inform the Inspectorate a month prior to submission. The Applicant also suggested that some additional targeted consultation may be carried out prior to submission but this would not affect the submission date.

Consultation

The Applicant confirmed that over 6,500 responses to consultation were received, indicating a good level of engagement. The Applicant gave a summary of the key issues raised in the consultation:

- Local Planning Authorities (LPA) questioned whether the approach to statutory consultation was appropriate;
- The wider public queried whether the project was compatible with government commitments in term of climate change;
- Whether Gatwick Airport could handle the increase in passengers indicated in the baseline without the DCO submission;
- Whether there was enough demand post-pandemic to justify the need for the project;
- Whether car parking location and quantity was appropriate;
- Impacts from ammonia deposition at sensitive sites;
- Whether the consultation regarding noise envelopes was appropriate and how it may interact with the Future Airspace Strategy Implementation South (FASI-S);
- Whether the project is compatible with future water supply constraints; and
- How housing and local infrastructure would be affected by the development, including whether there would be an increase in the demand for local facilities.

All these matters are now the subject of careful review as GAL processes the feedback.

The Applicant explained its virtual consultation approach. A Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was published on the 25 August 2021 in four local papers and on the Applicant's [project webpage](#). Hard copies of the documents were available in 18 deposit locations and several awareness-raising activities and advertising campaigns were launched as part of the process. A notice of the proposed application was submitted on 9 September 2021.

As an alternative to the virtual consultation approach, members of the public with no access to an internet connection were provided with USBs and tablets, as well as access to a consultation freephone to request documents, make appointments to participate in the process and have topic-based telephone surgeries. A total of over 7,500 visitors attended the virtual exhibition.

Ongoing scheme development

Highways design

The Applicant gave an update on the design of the proposed highways amendments to the north terminal entrance and car parking provision in response to the consultation responses and stated that it was working closely with National Highways (NH) on design evolution. It is now proposed that the north terminal junction will consist of a new roundabout with a flyover, as opposed to the traffic light junction proposed at consultation. The Inspectorate queried whether the highway changes would still constitute a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) in their own right. The Applicant confirmed this would be checked at the conclusion of the current design stage but that it was likely that the changes to the highway network still constituted an NSIP

that would be included in the overall DCO. The Inspectorate enquired whether the changes to the highways would involve any works to or relocation of pipelines. The Applicant confirmed that, to the best of its current knowledge, this was not the case.

The Inspectorate queried what prompted the decision to change the junction. The Applicant responded that after working with the Safety, Engineering and Standards (SES) team in NH, this layout was considered to improve highways safety and standards compliance. The Applicant confirmed that the environmental impacts of the altered designs would be assessed, although effects are not anticipated to be dissimilar to those of the previous design. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that the new proposal would involve changes over the Brighton main line, so Network Rail would be consulted.

Parking

The Applicant indicated that the future demand for car parking was inherently uncertain and GAL would only build additional car parking if necessary, as indicated in the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The proposals in the PEIR indicated an additional 18,500 spaces, however the Applicant was reviewing this number as a result of consultation feedback received.

Flood alleviation schemes

The Applicant advised that updated figures provided by the Environment Agency (EA) in relation to future river flows had been incorporated into the project design, resulting in one flood alleviation scheme being likely to be removed and the other two reducing in size, with an associated reduction in the level of spoil generation and potentially also off-site transport.

Biodiversity

Discussions around biodiversity net gain requirements and the potential for biodiversity net gain/balance are ongoing. The Inspectorate queried whether there were any additional areas of biodiversity mitigation. The Applicant stated that it anticipated entering an option agreement with a landowner which could provide additional land for this purpose by voluntary agreement if it proved necessary.

FASI-S interface update

The Applicant shared a timescale of the future airspace strategy and its engagement with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regarding the Gatwick section of FASI-S. Stage 2A is almost complete, with 50 options proposed. In stage 2B, to be submitted in November 2022, the list would be reduced to a smaller number, following community engagement and preliminary environmental assessment. In stage 3A every option in the previous stage would be fully appraised and in stage 3B in 2024, after examination of the consultation responses, the final route changes would be selected. The Inspectorate queried whether the use of the northern runway would open up any new routes as part of the DCO. The Applicant confirmed that both runways use the same existing departure routes. The final outcome of the FASI-S changes are therefore likely to be unknown during the submission and examination of the project although, potentially, there might be scope to consider the relevance of the short list of options during examination and any influence this would have on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and its

conclusions, with particular reference to the noise assessment, provided that there was adequate information to do this and that the number and range of options remaining would make the exercise meaningful.

Heathrow third runway

The Applicant explained that due to further and ongoing delays in the application for the development of a third runway at Heathrow, it concluded that it was no longer appropriate to include this scenario as part of the main EIA cumulative assessment. However, the Applicant still intends to describe a sensitivity case including the third runway in the Environmental Statement (ES). The Inspectorate queried what the sensitivity case would address in relation to the EIA assessment and how would it be presented, ie additional assessment or support to another assessment. The Applicant responded that it is currently intended that it would present a sensitivity test to the cumulative assessment to also consider the potential effects of the third runway where reliable information is available to enable this to be done.

Engagement to date

The Applicant confirmed that a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) has been agreed in principle with the LPAs covering phase 1 (from consultation start to 1 July 2022). A project manager had been appointed by Crawley Borough Council (CBC) to organise responses on behalf of the LPAs. The Applicant explained that Topic Working Groups were held in 2020 and 2021, both before and during the consultation period to explain to the key local authorities the main impacts arising from the development.

The Applicant noted that it was intending a series of further working groups with the authorities and had currently put a proposal to Crawley Borough Council for how this might operate effectively.

The Applicant asked the Inspectorate for examples of well-conceived joint working arrangements with several authorities. The Inspectorate noted that whilst the Statement of Common Ground example currently available on its website is not very recent, it is still considered to be a good example however it will look to publish other examples as they become available.

Any other business

The Applicant advised that it was proposing to use a file sharing website to make the DCO submission and agreed to use this method to upload key draft documents in advance of submission.