



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Gatwick Airport Northern Runway
<b>File reference</b>	TR020005
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	3 February 2021
<b>Meeting with</b>	Gatwick Airport Limited
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

### Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Gatwick Airport

Gatwick Airport Limited (the Applicant) highlighted the main impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Gatwick Airport; principally, a decline in passenger numbers and air traffic movements. Despite this, efforts had been made to ensure the airport remained open with appropriate safety measures in place. In so doing, the airport had been able to facilitate repatriation and humanitarian flights, and the importing of medical supplies.

The Applicant indicated that airport costs had remained high despite the decrease in travel. This necessitated mitigation measures including reducing airport energy consumption. The Applicant maintained a positive outlook for the future of the airport, noting that industry experts were optimistic about the recovery of both the leisure and business markets once coronavirus restrictions were lifted.

### Programme update

The Applicant recapitulated the project's aim of bringing the northern runway into routine use for departures, alongside the continued use of the main runway. The required infrastructure changes were stated to be largely within the airport boundary, save for some necessary changes to the highway network and an area to the northwest of the airport where some habitat mitigation measures could be necessary. The Applicant advised that it had continued to work through junction options for the highway alterations with Highways England (HE). Whilst still subject to input from HE, the Applicant advised that it expected that the Riverside Garden Park would not be

significantly affected by these alterations and would be likely to be outside the scheme's red line boundary.

The Applicant summarised the need for the northern runway project despite the COVID-19 pandemic. It expected passenger levels to return to pre-COVID levels in approximately four years, and airlines were also stated to still be expressing demand for peak slots, resulting in a need for increased capacity and efficiency.

The Applicant advised that its programme had largely paused in March 2020, however the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) had granted airspace change approval for dual runway operation in 2020. This meant that the current airspace design in the Gatwick terminal area could be used. The Applicant had also been engaging with local authorities (LA) about the proposed basis for its cumulative assessment, and had begun strategic road traffic modelling. Moreover, several wildlife and habitat surveys had continued through summer 2020 to ensure sufficient data was produced.

### **Future programme activities**

The Applicant confirmed that it was in the process of formulating its consultation methodology in view of COVID-19, and sought the Inspectorate's advice on running a virtual consultation. The Inspectorate offered to signpost some examples of virtual-only consultation and added that engagement levels across different types of projects did not appear to be significantly declining due to virtual-only events. The Applicant stated that it proposed to reconsult on its Statement of Community Consultation with LAs within the next 6 weeks, and it intended to update its Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for consultation over the next 6 months.

The Applicant presented several forecasts of passenger levels at Gatwick based on different scenarios relating to assumptions in respect of Heathrow's proposed third runway opening. The PEIR was proposed to be based on a "No Heathrow 3<sup>rd</sup> Runway" scenario in order to understand the greater environmental impacts around Gatwick that the additional Air Traffic Movements (ATM) would bring. The Environmental Statement (ES) would consider the "With Heathrow 3<sup>rd</sup> Runway" scenario as part of the cumulative assessment where adequate information was available.

The Applicant explained how it planned to explore the cumulative assessment of several environmental and socio-economic factors, and outlined the scope for each. The Inspectorate noted that the potential for likely significant environmental effects should be shown where possible, even if in the form of a qualitative assessment.

The Applicant noted that the CAA's Future Airspace Strategy Implementation (South) (FASI-S) airspace modernisation programme had been delayed. The Applicant stated that the initial Gatwick FASI-S options may be ready in time to allow a study of the environmental effects to be included in the ES, however the options were unlikely to be confirmed and consulted on before 2024 following the main air traffic management masterplan consultation. As such, the PEIR would not contain a description of the potential impact of FASI-S route changes, and the Applicant confirmed that the northern runway scheme was not dependent on these changes.

### **DCO content and policy context**

The Applicant stated that it would be seeking consent for both an airport and highway Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under one DCO. The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant anticipated any utilities diversions or works that may trigger the NSIP threshold or require the consideration of a National Policy Statement (NPS). The Applicant responded that it did not. The Inspectorate also queried whether the Applicant would be applying for only one highway NSIP. The Applicant confirmed that it was in the process of establishing this.

The Applicant noted that in respect of the airport alterations the Airports National Policy Statement is expected to be an important and relevant consideration, but that s105 of the PA2008 is considered to apply to that part of the development. However, for the highways element, the National Networks NPS is considered to have effect and therefore s104 would apply.