

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room - Town Hall, Eastbourne on 9 January 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Kshama Shore (Chair), Steve Wallis, Josh Babarinde, Jane Lamb, Md. Harun Miah, Amanda Morris, Hugh Parker and Robert Smart.

Officers in attendance:

Nick Peeters (Committee Officer).

Also in attendance:

Tim Norwood (Chief Planning Officer and Director of Corporate Affairs, Planning and Sustainability), Jonathan Deegan (Northern Runway Programme DCO Lead), Mark Edwards (Head of Sustainability) and Alison Addy (Head of External Policy and Engagement), Christina Ewbank (CEO Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce and David Group Chair of the Transport Group from the Eco Action Network (Carbon Neutral 2030)).

54 Election of a Deputy Chair

Councillor Babarinde, nominated by Councillor Huran Miah and seconded by Councillor Morris, as Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved that Councillor Babarinde be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

55 Apologies for absence / declaration of substitute members

None were received.

56 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct

There were none.

57 Questions by members of the public

There were none.

58 Urgent items of business

There were none.

59 Right to address the meeting/order of business

There were no requests.

60 Scrutiny of Gatwick Airport's Carbon Neutral accreditation and the effect of the development of the Northern Runway on Eastbourne Borough Council's Carbon Neutral pledge for 2030

The Chair, Councillor Shore, introduced the report and outlined the background to the request from Full Council, for the Scrutiny Committee to meet representatives from Gatwick Airport and discuss the Airport's Carbon Neutral accreditation and the effect of the development of the Northern Runway on Eastbourne Borough Council's Carbon Neutral pledge for 2030. Councillor Shore also outlined the procedure for the meeting.

Representatives from Gatwick Airport; Tim Norwood (Chief Planning Officer and Director of Corporate Affairs, Planning and Sustainability), Jonathan Deegan (Northern Runway Programme DCO Lead), Mark Edwards (Head of Sustainability) and Alison Addy (Head of External Policy and Engagement), addressed the committee and provided a presentation (appended to the minutes and available on the Council's website).

The Committee was updated on the background to Gatwick achieving level 3+ Airport Carbon Accreditation and its work towards plans for development of its Northern runway, including: Jobs, growth and community benefits; environmental mitigation and reaching net zero; and the Airport's progress towards obtaining a Development Consent Order from government for the Northern Runway.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the points raised and the representatives responded to a number of questions:

- The reduction of emissions from the 1990 baseline had been achieved through purchasing renewable electricity through certified providers (Including removal of gas and gas boilers), introducing electric charging points in the Airport carparks for staff and customer vehicles and an overall focus on reducing electricity usage. The information on the emissions levels was available on the Gatwick Airport Ltd website.
- An economic analysis was being undertaken at the regional and 'five authorities' level, and would include an assessment of the labour market. Gatwick Airport Ltd had not experienced difficulties in recruiting staff. It would be difficult to predict the employment growth in Eastbourne borough as a result of the Northern Runway development. A prediction at East Sussex level could be provided.
- Gatwick's Airport Service Access strategy would be key in identifying how Gatwick worked with other airports and businesses, to ensure that sustainable travel plans were in place. The Airport's aim was to reach 60 % of people accessing the Airport by sustainable transport. Travel discounts,

electric car charging points and car-sharing were available for staff at the Airport. A forecourt surcharge had been introduced for pick-ups and drop-offs, with the aim of encouraging customers to use public transport. A proportion of the income from the charge was reinvested in sustainable projects at the Airport, such as an improved and larger railway station and an electric vehicle charging station.

- The answers to the questions requested by Members prior to the meeting had been included in the presentation and would be provided as a written response also.
- Current legislation did not allow for the Airport to refuse the use of aircraft that were not clean in terms of the type of fuel used. However, a differential charging rate was used to encourage and incentivise airlines to use renewable fuel in their aircraft. The Airport was working with a number of airlines on fleet replacement and the procurement process involved. The Airport's aim was to expand the facilities and infrastructure already in place to support wider use of clean aircraft.
- Gatwick had already received flights with aircraft using sustainable aviation fuel. The fuel was more expensive than the kerosene currently used, however, the Government would be introducing a mandate that required all airlines to use a 10 % sustainable aviation fuel mix by 2030. The Government had also pledged to provide 5 plants that would be in construction by 2025, to produce sustainable aviation fuel.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd had looked at Government policy which was to make best use of existing facilities, and on this basis, a planning application would be submitted in Spring of 2023, which would be independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate. The development of the Northern Runway would allow the Airport to grow and meet future passenger demand by attracting and serving more routes. The plans for Gatwick airport were not connected to any plans for Heathrow. The catchment area for business and position of the Airport in the Southeast of England was also a driver for growth.
- It was confirmed that the on-airport development was within the existing Airport boundary. The improvements needed for the highway network were within the highway boundary and adjacent to the existing highway infrastructure.
- The Airport's carbon footprint emissions were published on an annual basis and were publicly available. The scope 1 emissions for 2019 were 12, 223 tonnes of CO₂, scope 2 were 25,343 tonnes and scope 3 were 696,000 tonnes. The 2019 figures were used as the most representative of a 'normal' post-pandemic year. Once the 'Net Zero by 2040' pledge was achieved, the Airport would maintain its position and not burn natural gas, diesel or petrol as part of energy usage on-site. All new Northern Runway assets would be built inline with the Net Zero ethos.

- In reply to a question regarding the status of other airports in the UK, it was confirmed that commercial airports in the UK that offered tourism and international flights would have carbon neutral targets with dates and scopes for achieving targets, and that these varied amongst the airports.
- There had been no incidents of hospitalisation as a result of air quality at the Airport. The Airport was well within any legal limits for air quality. More broadly speaking, staff had access to an occupational health department for any work-related medical condition. Customers had access to a well trained team of first-aiders (including access to defibrillators) and the usual access to emergency services.
- It was expected that regardless of the outcome of the Northern Runway plans, flights at Gatwick would increase, meaning an increase in passengers, and journeys to and from the Airport. However, it was not predicted that carbon emissions would increase commensurately, as decarbonisation across the UK was taking place, including modes of transport.

Christina Ewbank, Chief Executive, Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Committee. Christine considered that:

- The Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce supported the expansion of Gatwick as being vital to support the economy in Eastbourne and reducing dependency on seasonal tourism. The Chamber of Commerce also supported the Council's aims to support carbon neutrality by 2030 and felt that focus should be on other areas, such as shipping pollution.
- An increase in business destinations and freight transport would reduce travel miles on the road network and reduce emissions.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd should continue working with Airlines towards fleet modernisation and a reduction in emissions and noise pollution, as a matter of priority.

David Everson, Group Chair of the Transport Group from the Eco Action Network (Carbon Neutral 2030), addressed the Committee. David considered that:

- The majority of economic benefit from the development would be located around Gatwick Airport and the benefit to Eastbourne would be less than proposed.
- The proposals for development of the Northern Runway and the expected increase in carbon emissions were of great concern, as was the expansion of airports nationally and the increase in flight numbers.
- The lack of influence Gatwick Airport would have on the emissions produced from the landing and take-off cycle of aircraft, and passenger and

staff travel at the Airport's level 3 accreditation, was also a concern. These were not 'direct emissions' and not under the control of Gatwick Airport Ltd.

- The road network around Gatwick Airport was already congested, with high levels of carbon emissions. Any expansion of the airport would add to the levels of emissions.
- The development of sustainable fuel production plants would not be on-stream at a fast enough rate and would not be used in sufficient proportions as a 'fuel mix' to make a difference.

The Gatwick representatives summed up by highlighting the following points:

- Gatwick Airport Ltd recognised the importance of climate change as one of the key issues being faced on a global scale. The Airport was demonstrating its commitment to mitigating carbon reduction through a wide range of measures and would do everything possible to reach net zero before 2040.
- All carbon offsetting by the Airport met the highest possible specifications, currently available. As the airport approached net zero, the offsetting would reduce to a point it would not be needed.
- Information would be provided to the Committee to clarify the figures and terminology referred to during the meeting.

The Chair, Councillor Shore, summed up by referring to the original request from Full Council and considered that, apart from providing specific responses to the questions asked by the Committee prior to the meeting, and clarification on the CO2 figures referred to, the representatives from Gatwick Airport had responded to the questions asked during the meeting.

Members felt that the information requested before and during the meeting should be provided prior to a decision being made. A number of Members felt that enough information had been provided for the Committee to reach a conclusion but agreed to a deferment.

Resolved to note the report and that a recommendation to Full Council be deferred until the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

61 Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was 6 February 2023 at 6:00pm.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Councillor Kshama Shore (Chair)