YOUR LONDON AIRPORT

Gatwick

The £1bn transformation of Gatwick Airport.

An official report for the aviation community 2011.
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The importance of methodology in Airport Systems Integration

Key to the success of any airport systems integration project is a robust and proven methodology; one with demonstrable effectiveness in the delivery of large airport integration projects.

Key aspects of a proven methodology should include:

- On-site integration teams.
- Sound risk management processes.
- Comprehensive interface management, covering physical, organisational and functional interfaces.
- Well established quality processes, certified to ISO9001 standards, including robust change control and version control.

But these alone do not guarantee success. Of particular importance in the delivery of systems integration projects is effective stakeholder and requirements management.

Key elements of this approach include:

- Understanding the stakeholder community early in design.
- Engaging with the appropriate people, at the right time.
- Managing expectations.
- Stakeholder engagement throughout whole project life-cycle.
- Establishing clear and well defined requirements understood by all.
- Managing change to avoid ‘scope creep’.

Ultra Electronics’ own Systems Integration methodology has been tested and refined over the past 7 years and focuses on running individual projects for each major deliverable, each with its own project team and with an overarching leadership team delivering to an overall schedule. A top level management team should be established, with individuals responsible for design, delivery and integration reporting to an overall project manager who would be the first point of contact for the customer. The membership of the teams, which would be set up beneath this structure to implement the various projects, would depend on the nature of the project, but at an early stage the required skill sets should be identified and individuals selected for the identified roles.

The inevitable growth of an airport’s operations should remain well within the tested limits of the integration model for many years to come, with rigorous “stress-testing” to prove solid operation at a simulated flights per hour target of the airport’s choosing. In order to quickly enable new stakeholders to share information with the wider community, Ultra’s approach to well-defined, open standards for data exchange has proven invaluable in reducing implementation risk, time and cost. As an operation evolves, the technology must be flexible enough to move with it, forming new re-usable standards for data exchange as you adapt to the airport’s needs.

For more information on Ultra’s Airport Systems Integration approach and methodology, please visit www.ultra-as.com or contact your local Ultra representative.

Ultra Electronics Airport Systems
Innovation through experience

Masters of Airport Systems Integration

Ultra Electronics Airport Systems is one of the world’s foremost providers of solutions to the aviation industry.

Contact us: sales@ultra-as.com
Foreword

By Sir David Rowlands, Chairman, Gatwick Airport

We are delighted to produce this magazine, in partnership with ACI EUROPE and anna.aero, and share Gatwick’s story with you.

It’s been almost 18 months since Global Infrastructure Partners completed its £1.51 billion acquisition of Gatwick, creating an independent airport and real competition in the South East airport market for the first time in decades. We are now competing directly with the likes of Heathrow, Stansted, Luton and London City, in one of the busiest air transport markets in the world.

We want to drive growth in passenger numbers and can see a clear path towards 40 million passengers per year by the end of the decade with our single runway and two terminals.

Since new ownership, we have seen airlines expand the number of services from Gatwick and actively take advantage of opportunities to switch their services between competing airports. airberlin and Norwegian Air Shuttle have switched from Stansted to Gatwick. easyJet – our largest customer – has introduced 18 new routes since new ownership, and BA is expanding its point-to-point route network here having recently moved its long haul leisure destination to Mauritius from Heathrow to Gatwick, and returned its Malaga service to Gatwick from Heathrow. This demonstrates the competitive environment in which we now operate.

Our key source of competitive advantage will be to deliver great service every day, so that airlines and passengers regard Gatwick as London’s airport of choice.

I am proud of the remarkable efforts shown by each and every employee of Gatwick over the past 18 months, who are working relentlessly to drive higher service standards for our passengers. Their efforts are delivering results. Queue times are down, with passengers now spending on average just 1 minute and 47 seconds in security. Complaints have fallen by a staggering 50% since 2010 and compliments have doubled, a demonstrable sign of improving customer service.

Gatwick is changing, and at a great pace. 81% of our £1 billion investment programme is currently under construction, and passengers are already reaping the benefits of new and improved facilities.

I hope, as you read this magazine, that you will see signs of an invigorated Gatwick, committed to improving the passenger experience throughout the airport and uncompromising in its approach to delivering the £1 billion capital investment programme efficiently.
The vision for Gatwick

Delivering great service every day

Since it’s acquisition by Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) in 2009, Gatwick Airport has embarked on an ambitious and wide-reaching £1 billion capital investment programme that aims to provide passengers with a world-class airport experience. Stewart Wingate, the airport’s CEO, spoke to Ryan Ghee about what has already been achieved and what the future holds for Gatwick.

Wingate

“We want to compete and demonstrate that having different owners of the major airports will deliver more innovation, investment and better service for passengers and airlines.”

Investment

To be successful, we need to invest in the right things, at the right time, with a clear understanding of the benefits that will be delivered. For an airport this means being clear about our own ambitions, understanding the goals of our airline customers, and anticipating the future needs of passengers, so that we can efficiently target the investments in infrastructure, assets, technology and people, that deliver the best outcomes.

We’re doing just that with our near £1 billion capital investment programme, which I am confident will transform Gatwick and the service we provide to our passengers and airlines.

In the first few months under new ownership, we re-examined the plan inherited from the previous owner and worked with our airlines to revise the programme to ensure it would meet their goals and ours.

To deliver desired outcomes as cost effectively as possible we’ve removed some projects completely, combined others where synergies exist and, by
focusing on value for money, have been able to add new projects within the overall cost.

One such programme is a new £45 million project to create a state-of-the-art, 19-lane central search area in South Terminal. It will replace the three existing search areas and will open in time for summer this year. Such is our commitment to delivering great service, we have removed a significant area of landside retail space to create the new search area – resulting in a £5 million annual revenue hit.

We have opted to extend pier 6 rather than build a seventh pier – saving £100 million. We combined the replacement of pier 1 with the delivery of a new baggage system in South Terminal – saving £50 million. Across the programme, we are delivering more for less.

Leadership

For too long, poor service performance at airports has resulted in a blame game with various organisations responsible for different parts of the passenger journey. At Gatwick we want every passenger to receive great service, at every touchpoint – to, through and from our airport. And passengers deserve to know what level of service we’re aiming to deliver and how our performance stacks up.

We are committed to driving the performance standards and demonstrating the leadership necessary to realise this ambition. We are working more closely than ever with our airlines, their handling agents and our other airport partners who recognise that we all need to put the passenger first and that we each have an important role to play. Working with the airport community we have identified and signed up to some passenger commitments, which outline the standards of service our passengers can expect.

In headline terms, Gatwick’s passenger commitments centre on three core pledges:

1. We hate queues
2. We’ll get you off on time
3. We’ll treat you as our guest

Three simple pledges capture the essence of what Gatwick passengers tell us they want and what we believe we can deliver. The level of service we provide will ultimately determine our success as an independent airport, underpin our competitive position and compete to attract new airlines.

You will see through this magazine a snapshot of Gatwick’s first year as an independent airport and our relentless focus on delivering great service at Gatwick – and the importance of this to achieving our ambition for the airport. We’ve still got a lot of work to do, but we’re thinking differently, developing stronger partnerships with our airlines, and driving improvements with pace and conviction. This will help us grow and become London’s airport of choice.

There is currently £350–400 million worth of active construction work ongoing at Gatwick, following the completion of £100 million worth of projects during its first year of independent ownership.
As a vital aspect of the overall £1 billion capital investment programme, both the North and South Terminals are currently the subject of major regeneration projects. Ryan Ghee spoke to Raymond Melee, director of capital projects, Gatwick Airport.

Transforming Gatwick Airport

Under the new ownership model, a target was immediately set to identify efficiencies in the planned investment in Gatwick. “The original capital investment programme came in at a projected cost of £985 million, but we challenged ourselves and have managed to reduce this to a projected £900 million. We’ll be delivering the same projects for less money at a higher value,” Melee explained.

“Our focus is on the passenger journey and we’re working with our airlines to create an airport that people choose to travel from. In the South Terminal, a lot of the work is about modernisation and in the North Terminal it’s very much the same, but we’re also expanding the capacity through the south and east portions of the terminal.”

The investment in the South Terminal spans from the redevelopment of the forecourt to the landside concourse and the departure lounge, while security, immigration and the baggage handling system are also subject to considerable investment to improve the efficiency of the airport and, in turn, the experience offered to passengers.

“We’ve focused on the passenger experience in two ways,” Melee said. “The first is processes: How do we handle check-in and the overall level of service to improve the passenger experience? By examining these processes the solution does not necessarily require investment in infrastructure and this is something that we’re working on with the airlines and the ground handlers.

“Then there are the projects that do require a capital investment. For example, the South Terminal security model is currently very confusing for passengers so we’re consolidating security into a single central area, which is both visible and intuitive. This project wasn’t even in the original programme, but we challenged ourselves to deliver efficiencies and improve the key pinch-point in the airport journey.”

The South Terminal baggage handling system and the Pier 1 refurbishment has also been redesigned to be undertaken as a collaboration project and, according to Melee, “we will deliver a better final product for as much as £50 million cheaper.”

Improved experience

Allied with the investment in North Terminal – which has already seen the redevelopment of the forecourt and interchange and also includes a £76 million extension and new 1,177-space Multi Storey Car Park 6 – along with the redevelopment of the airfield, Melee outlined that the passenger journey will be vastly improved.

He said: “The whole journey, from when you arrive at the airport to check-in, through to security and your experience in the departure lounge, will be significantly changed at every step along the way.

“For arrivals, when you go out to transportation, whether that’s public or private, the roadways and the wayfinding are being improved. From point-to-point, the whole journey will be dramatically improved.”

A revision of previous policies and procedures based on industry best practice has been key to shaping not just the projects themselves but also the manner in which they are delivered; something highlighted by the Design for Six Sigma approach that has been applied to every stage of each development project.

Safety is also of paramount importance throughout each of the construction projects. “We developed ‘Destination Zero’ which is a very detailed and wide-ranging safety programme aimed at not just changing the behaviour, but also the entire safety culture,” Melee said. “From day one we talked about safety as one of our core values and, more than one year on, that has not changed.”

Melee

“The whole journey, from when you arrive at the airport to check-in, through to security and your experience in the departure lounge, will be significantly changed at every step along the way.”
self-service, convenience and shorter lines at the airport.

ARINC is revolutionizing the way airports, airlines and travel operators move passengers and baggage to their destinations. We offer unparalleled expertise in shared systems and networking—integrating the entire airport enterprise for check-in and boarding, baggage handling, passenger self-service and more. ARINC’s dedication sets the standard for technologies that speed passenger flow, streamline operations, reduce costs and strengthen security.
Following the change of ownership, Gatwick Airport needed a fresh identity. Rather than simply replacing the signs, this has involved a complex and far-reaching project, as outlined by Jeremy Fletcher, Gatwick’s brand communications manager, and Samantha Holgate, head of airport communications. Ryan Ghee reports.

At the heart of Gatwick’s new identity is the slogan: ‘Your London Airport’, encapsulating the notion that the airport has been placed back in the hands of its customers.

“We wanted to distance ourselves from the old days of BAA ownership. We wanted Gatwick to stand on its own two feet and make sure that it is recognised in its own right,” Fletcher explained.

This slogan alone says a lot about the approach of the current owners. “Our new identity is about being more approachable and we want passengers to feel the improvements we’re making,” Holgate said. “What we’re aiming to be is more friendly, straightforward and open, and I think the new brand and approach to passenger communication will help to achieve this.”

Of course, creating a new image and establishing new ideologies is a process that takes some time. Following the acquisition, detailed passenger research was undertaken and an explicit effort was made to ensure that the business priorities reflect the needs and demands of the passengers.

Fletcher said: “The brand itself touches all elements of the business. Hugely important is the whole personal approach. It’s about our staff, our work ethic and wanting to make people smile while giving them a high-quality service.

“The identity really conveys what we’re about. It’s not just about what we perceive ourselves to be, but passengers’ perception and our reputation among airlines, partners, the local community and our peers.”

Building relationships

Gatwick’s new identity is very much centred on building a closer relationship with its passengers. In order to do this, social media, such as Twitter, has been embraced as a communication and customer service tool, while direct, personal responses to passenger queries are also promoted.

Throughout the terminal building, the new identity is clearly in evidence. As well as the introduction of new signage – which now consists of yellow text on a black background to improve visibility and wayfinding – the hoardings which are in place to separate passengers from the ongoing works are also being used as a “canvas” to communicate with passengers in a light-hearted and conversational style. Passengers with ‘smartphones’ can even view video footage of the ongoing projects via the ‘Stickybits’ application by simply using their mobile device to scan a barcode on the hoardings.

At the Econsultancy Innovation Awards 2010, Gatwick won the award for ‘Innovation in Online Customer Service’. The airport was also shortlisted in the ‘Best use of social media’ category at the CIPR Excellence Awards 2011.

This innovative approach also extends to the passenger-orientated events that were held throughout 2010, ranging from the Gatwick Runway Models competition to Gatwick Glow, which offered passengers free spray tans to prepare them for their summer holidays.

“It’s all about doing something different,” Fletcher explained. “You don’t normally go to an airport and expect this type of entertaining experience. A lot of the things we have done recently are outside the boundaries of what we used to do.

“Gatwick is becoming far more friendly and human in a way that the other larger airports aren’t. This makes a big difference in terms of people choosing to fly from Gatwick, work at Gatwick, or do their business at Gatwick. We want to grow and to do this we will continue to be flexible and willing to work with people in order to offer something different.”

In 2010, Gatwick Airport held various innovative passenger-orientated events to improve the passenger experience, including Gatwick Glow and Gatwick Runway Models.
Merson Sign Design offers wayfinding expertise

With Gatwick Airport coming under new ownership in 2010, the management was keen to give the airport its own style of wayfinding signage and branding to clearly differentiate it from BAA airports and their signature wayfinding.

Merson Sign Design was appointed by Gatwick Airport to research the current wayfinding delivery methods in airports worldwide. The process included working with Gatwick Communication and Design Teams to develop a number of potential ways forward. The output from this key stage, combined with Merson’s extensive knowledge of Gatwick Airport and its operations, was used to prepare a proposal for GAL (Gatwick Airport Limited) illustrating potential design directions for their new wayfinding signage.

A number of influences from Middle Eastern airport terminals were favoured, partly as a result of Merson’s extensive experience of signage masterplanning and wayfinding in this region.

Airport terminal sign design is a complex field requiring expertise in areas such as bomb blast measures, product durability, servicing requirements for high usage areas and integration requirements with FIDS (Flight Information Displays) and customer help points.

Merson has invaluable experience in these and all associated disciplines, gained in its delivery of London Heathrow’s Terminal 5 signage, comprising some 33,000 signs of all types.

The options that were subsequently assessed as the strongest candidates were then manufactured as prototype signs, which were installed in the airport terminals for live environment assessment.

GAL then undertook subjective research, primarily in the form of extensive passenger questionnaires, to gain vital feedback on the effectiveness of each proposed scheme. The prototype signs were installed at check-in - a landside location - and in one of the departure lounges - an airside location. These locations were selected as they provide feedback from passengers in very different parts of their airport wayfinding experience.

The signage design development continues to advance using the passenger feedback and Merson Sign Design will be working with GAL to successfully conclude the design process.

sign design & wayfinding for passenger terminal projects.

caption: concept | technical | wayfinding
Find out more at mersonsigndesign.com
Enhancing and expanding North Terminal

The redevelopment of Gatwick Airport’s North Terminal has two main objectives: to upgrade and modernise the existing facilities, and to expand the capacity by extending the southern and eastern ends of the terminal. Ryan Ghee discussed this project – and the redevelopment of the airfield – with Wayne Lonsdale, Gatwick’s programme development leader North Terminal and airfield.

Lonsdale’s role requires him to oversee the various complex processes involved in the regeneration of both the North Terminal and the airfield and ensure that each stage is completed both seamlessly and within budget.

As with the South Terminal, the forecourt and the interchange, which provide an all-important welcome to passengers arriving at the North Terminal, are key aspects of the plans. While the revitalisation and expansion of the forecourt has already been completed, a new interchange has also been constructed, providing a modern new entrance into the terminal and a new station for the inter-terminal shuttle.

“The old track transit system was taken out in September 2009 and the new one was in place and operational by 1 July 2010, a full 16 weeks ahead of our deadline,” Lonsdale said. This £47 million investment has resulted in the improved reliability and efficiency of transfers between the...
two terminals, while the utilisation of the latest technology also allows for improved safety and up-to-the-minute service information.

Lonsdale continued: “We demolished all of the old North Terminal station and we’ve constructed a new interchange which satisfies all of the new safety and security regulations. No vehicles are permitted within 25 metres of the terminal building, so we have created new forecourt facilities as well.

One of the key issues that has also been addressed is the cross-flow passengers, a particular issue in North Terminal previously.

“From the interchange, passengers will go up the two moving walkways and when they meet people coming off the shuttle or from the lifts they will all be travelling in the same direction into departures,” Lonsdale explained.

“Arrivals will be on the ground floor and there will be a direct route into the car park. This means that departing and arriving passengers will never cross and it also makes the wayfinding process more intuitive.”

Increased capacity

In order to increase the capacity of the North Terminal from 16 million to 20 million passengers annually, the eastern end of the terminal is being extended to provide both additional check-in and baggage reclaim capacity.

A total of 27 new check-in desks will be added along with four new reclaim belts, three for international arrivals – with one safeguarded for future A380 operations – and one domestic belt. The north-east corner of the terminal will also be extended to allow for the expansion of the plant rooms.

“The North Terminal baggage system will also be upgraded at a cost of £32 million,” Lonsdale said. “We will replace the whole system in the main baggage hall and we will go from six sorters to two sorters and this will make the system a lot more reliable and efficient and it will create more flexibility. Early bag store facilities will also allow us to take the bags from the passengers as soon as they arrive at the airport. This will make a massive difference to customer service.”

Airfield regeneration

Lonsdale’s responsibilities stretch far beyond the North Terminal building and he outlined the significance of major investment in the airfield. Six multi-aircraft ramp system (MARS) stands have already been delivered, four of which can cater for Boeing 747 size aircraft, with two capable of handling the new Airbus A380 aircraft. The latter is especially significant as this allows the airport to deal with diverted aircraft of this size and is a stepping stone for full operations, for which planning permission was granted in October 2010.

Refurbishment of the taxiways is also well underway. The ‘Juliet Kink’ – a long-standing kink on one of the main arteries of the airport’s taxiway system – has been realigned and reconstructed using efficiency savings from the North West Zone project, while work on Taxiway Lima was completed by Easter 2011. The team is also currently specifying the requirements for the renovation of taxiways Papa and November.

A resurfacing of the runway is also planned for 2012 and due to the single-runway nature of the airport this is a project that requires the most intricate of planning processes. “This is going to be very challenging,” Lonsdale explained. “The runway will close late-evening and must be handed back to airfield operations in time for the first flight arrivals at approximately 5am. Anything we have touched must be back in place and fully operational by this deadline – so there’s a lot of pressure.

“We’re the busiest single-runway civil airport in the world and we have a peak of 53 ATMs (air traffic movements) per hour. We have to make sure that we don’t affect this operation at all.”

Alongside the resurfacing of the runway, the airfield ground lighting will also be completely upgraded and while a strict plan of action is being developed, a contingency plan is being integrated to ensure that all eventualities are accounted for and any impact on airport operations is minimal.

Lonsdale explained: “Our main aim is to improve the passenger experience, so we will do everything in our power to make sure that there are no negative knock-on effects during the delivery of the projects.”
AirRadio’s communications solutions

Round handling, passenger handling, security and swift aircraft turnaround are all vital aspects of the operation of any airport. While each of these may appear to be rather separate components of the airport mechanism, the effective operation of all of them is intrinsically linked to the efficiency of the communication between airport staff in their respective areas.

AirRadio supplies communications solutions covering all operational disciplines; supported by scheduled preventative maintenance in line with agreed customer service levels from our base at Gatwick.

Our trunk network platform allows one-to-one, group and broadcast radio calls so users can share operational messages across all areas of the airport and across different user groups – such as check-in, catering, fuelling or security.

The network can also carry data allowing customers to deploy task allocation applications to specify the use of resources – both human and physical – in real-time. The resulting data can then provide management information for use in enhancing operational performance, especially the aircraft turnaround process. AirRadio’s ground to air service (otherwise known as Co VHF) provides communications between the operations office on the ground and the flight crew, enabling them to maximise the utilisation of their resources and eliminate unproductive time. Examples include: advising of last minute events such as gate changes or requests for passenger wheelchairs, or advance warning of situations such as engineering issues.

Recently, AirRadio has become involved in supporting the development of an affordable airport Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) solution that will enable accurate monitoring and tracking of Target Off-Block Time (TOBT), the key focus of the EUROCONTROL Single European Skies Initiative (SESAR). The use of existing AirRadio communications equipment as part of the CDM solution optimises the number of devices in operation, minimising the requirement for user training, maintenance and support during the life of CDM.

Is communications core to your business?

Whilst you think about that, consider if it would be best placed in reliable trusted hands …

AirRadio with:

• a broad portfolio of mission critical mobile communications
• a secure private network with capacity for growth, business continuity & contingency plans
• the ability to undertake collaborative decision making with airport partners

Could be your answer

With over 30 years experience providing communications solutions for the aviation industry, our portfolio of communications services, radio, cellular and mobile data applications, deliver an integrated communications solution to meet your needs and exceed your customers’ expectations.

Together, we’ll help your business take off.
Airfield excellence

Gatwick could see its throughput grow from the 31 million passengers handled in 2010 to around 40 million by the end of the current decade with a two-terminal, one-runway operation. It is, therefore, applying new ways of thinking to drive airfield efficiency and maximise capacity, as David Wilson, head of airside operations, Gatwick Airport, explained.

Gatwick is the busiest single runway airport in the world, the second busiest airport in the UK and the eighth busiest in Europe. It is also the largest point-to-point airport in the world, and with no foreseeable plans to pursue a second runway, optimising the mix of traffic and use of the runway is expected to facilitate the growth to over 40 million passengers per year.

A significant project aimed at optimising that runway performance is currently being undertaken by the air traffic management performance team, who are working with Gatwick and GIP Six Sigma specialists, airfield operations staff and NATS to assess separation and sequencing of arriving aircraft and taxi time and runway holding of departing aircraft.

An enabler for optimising sequence and separation, both on the ground and in the air, is Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM). Gatwick is one of 33 airports in Europe currently implementing A-CDM and the airport is at release three of the five-phase release of the project. Wilson explained that it will enable real-time decision making, meaning the airport, airline and handling agent community will all benefit. Indeed, reduced taxi times and runway holding times will provide a benefit in terms of lower fuel usage and fewer emissions.

“A-CDM does not directly add capacity, but it can generate more capacity as a by-product of more efficient operations,” said Wilson. “We’re committed to developing capacity at Gatwick in an environmentally responsible way. A-CDM will allow us to improve our aircraft stand allocation processes, traffic flows, taxi times and reduce congestion. Gatwick is already the world’s busiest single runway civil aerodrome, and this will lead to more

Wilson
“Following the first period of snow in late-November 2010, we made an immediate decision to invest more than £8 million to double the size of Gatwick’s snow fleet from 47 to 95 vehicles, which will put our snow clearing capability on a par with that of a similar sized Scandinavian airport.”
efficient operations, lower emissions and lower costs for our airlines. Passengers will benefit from improved on-time performance and more accurate information on flight information screens because the software allows flights to be tracked along the entire journey, rather than just on approach or departure.”

Gatwick is building flexibility into its approach to airfield operations and developments, engaging with all airfield users and NATS. In the summer 2011 season, Gatwick will handle 53 movements per hour during peak periods on its mixed mode runway and is looking to identify opportunities to create additional slots without compromising safety. It is, for example, monitoring runway occupancy times and seeking to maximise this.

While A-CDM is a tool to help achieve these goals, process improvement and regular review of day-to-day operations take place to address and capture short-term gains. Wilson also identified the need for a cultural and behavioural shift. “A huge amount of time is spent liaising with other stakeholders at the airport. I chair the ATM Performance Steering Group, working with the airlines, NATS and ground handlers. We make sure there are positive and robust relationships and we work together to maximise our airfield operations,” he said.

Gatwick selected NATS Services to provide an A-CDM web-based portal, which collates all aircraft information onto one screen or handheld device, including their current position, and accurate forecasts of arrival and departure times. A-CDM will also enable a more coordinated response in the event of operational disruption.

Runway rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of Gatwick’s main runway will be a 12-18 month project, taking place from spring 2012 and with an investment of £43 million. Rehabilitation of the standby runway has already been completed, in case there are any delays when work is undertaken on the main runway. Rehabilitation of the main runway will take place through the night, with 100mm taken off the surface and replaced. “We will also replace all aeronautical ground lighting, cables, power supplies and approach lighting – it will be virtually a brand new runway,” said Wilson. “The contractors will have to be off the runway by the time of the first flight, which is usually at 05:30. We are also using the opportunity to see what is required for A380 operations – and looking at our runway lead-ons and lead-offs to be Code F compliant. Gatwick is currently a diversionary status A380 airport, but we are investing in infrastructure to accommodate the A380 for the future.”

The airport has already invested £40 million in six new widebody stands, two of which are A380-compliant, while further significant investment is taking place in the rehabilitation of taxiways, and reconfiguration of stands at North Terminal. The pier strategy is also being reviewed, with Pier 2 undergoing reconfiguration. As part of this strategy, there will be a larger volume of stands for Code C aircraft.

“Since we have also invested £1.8 million in fire appliances, with three new Rosenbauer Panthers on order. We will take delivery of another 53 movements per hour during peak periods on its mixed mode runway and is looking to identify opportunities to create additional slots without compromising safety. It is, for example, monitoring runway occupancy times and seeking to maximise this.

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Runway rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of Gatwick’s main runway will be a 12-18 month project, taking place from spring 2012, and with an investment of £43 million. Rehabilitation of the standby runway has already been completed, in case there are any delays when work is undertaken on the main runway. Rehabilitation of the main runway will take place through the night, with 100mm taken off the surface and replaced. “We will also replace all aeronautical ground lighting, cables, power supplies and approach lighting – it will be virtually a brand new runway,” said Wilson. “The contractors will have to be off the runway by the time of the first flight, which is usually at 05:30. We are also using the opportunity to see what is required for A380 operations – and looking at our runway lead-ons and lead-offs to be Code F compliant. Gatwick is currently a diversionary status A380 airport, but we are investing in infrastructure to accommodate the A380 for the future.”

The airport has already invested £40 million in six new widebody stands, two of which are A380-compliant, while further significant investment is taking place in the rehabilitation of taxiways, and reconfiguration of stands at North Terminal. The pier strategy is also being reviewed, with Pier 2 undergoing reconfiguration. As part of this strategy, there will be a larger volume of stands for Code C aircraft.

“We have also invested £1.8 million in fire appliances, with three new Rosenbauer Panthers on order. We will take delivery of another 53 movements per hour during peak periods on its mixed mode runway and is looking to identify opportunities to create additional slots without compromising safety. It is, for example, monitoring runway occupancy times and seeking more consistency.

While A-CDM is a tool to help achieve these goals, process improvement and regular review of day-to-day operations take place to address and capture short-term gains. Wilson also identified the need for a cultural and behavioural shift. “A huge amount of time is spent liaising with other stakeholders at the airport. I chair the ATM Performance Steering Group, working with the airlines, NATS and ground handlers. We make sure there are positive and robust relationships and we work together to optimise our airfield operations,” he said.

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Eagle provides winter service

Eagle Airfield Equipment Ltd is very proud to have been a working partner of Gatwick Airport Ltd since its conception and breakaway from BAA. During last year’s snow of February, Eagle Airfield had talks that followed visits by Gatwick to Scandinavia to see the operations and products used. So, when the call came with the December snow for extra sweepers, the company was only too willing to do whatever was required and so found six very good second-hand machines in Europe and within a week, with Gatwick’s help, had them delivered to the airport for immediate use with little extra training as they were the same as their present fleet. Following this there became a requirement for a new fleet to meet the future operations at the airport and Eagle Airfield is pleased to be supplying some of this new fleet as follows:

- 9 – R/S 400 Sweepers c/w trucks & EP 9 Ploughs;
- 8 – EP 6 Ploughs to be fitted on existing Unimog units;
- 2 – Oshkosh Blowers; these will all come from Overaasen.

Eagle Airfield is also supplying 20 Holms 3.5 metre front mounted sweepers for John Deere tractors. Eagle will also supply 9 of its own Ramphog ploughs for use around the terminals. Eagle is also proud to say that the fleet, both old and new, will use SIB cassette brushes in both poly and steel. To this end, Eagle wishes to continue this relationship for many years to come.
Achieving operational efficiency

Minimising the impact of the ongoing construction works and ensuring that the terminal facilities are fit for everyday operational use is a fundamental part of the ongoing developments across Gatwick Airport. Ryan Ghee spoke to Marcus Stanton, the airport’s head of terminals.

Working with airline customers and passenger advisory groups is important to Gatwick’s dedication to providing the best possible passenger experience, especially during the capital investment programme.

“Our primary job in a lot of passenger areas is almost to be invisible so that the passenger can carry on their journey without hindrance and without the stress. Our aim is to treat the passenger as a guest,” Stanton said.

The airport has developed a set of passenger commitments, while in-house, daily meetings between senior members of staff have been introduced to ensure the optimisation of operational efficiency.

Stanton said: “I’m closer to the airlines and the management teams than I have ever been in terms of our business-to-business relationship. We’re now in a position where we’re talking to each other, rather than at each other.

“In the daily ops meetings we have about 20 senior managers in the room and these last about 15 minutes. They tend to be data-driven, and they can either be positive or focused on poor performance, identifying areas that need to be improved. Previously, we might have had these once a month, but now they’re every day and what we focus on is the here and now. We now have a new operating rhythm and have removed a lot of the bureaucracy that previously existed.”

Putting the passenger first

The development of the relationship between airport and airlines is already having a direct benefit for the passenger. For instance, Gatwick is the first airport in the UK to publish the airlines’ arrivals baggage delivery performance, with monthly league tables displayed in the baggage reclaim hall in both terminals and online.

“The airlines might have felt slightly uncomfortable about us displaying this information, but it’s something that we’re not shying away from because we are putting the passenger first,” Stanton explained. “This is already driving a different behaviour. Feedback from the airlines is driving a better performance from the handling agents and this is having a positive impact on the passengers.”

The introduction of self-service suites is another area highlighted by Stanton as driving efficiency in the terminals. The self-service testing lab that has been implemented in South Terminal for passengers flying with Norwegian has significantly reduced check-in times, with the bag-drop process reduced to less than 20 seconds.

“We’re extending self-service to Delta in the North Terminal and we’re also working with easyJet and BA, then moving on to Thomson,” Stanton said.

Elsewhere, the PRM (Passengers with Reduced Mobility) manager has been transferred to an in-house role following a review of each stage of the passenger journey, around £2 million has been spent on wayfinding and dynamic media.

Stanton added: “All of these are very important steps to improve the efficiency here at Gatwick. We’re aiming to offer a great service to every single passenger and then, once we’ve achieved that, we’ll develop a passenger experience that we can really be proud of.”
Increasing check-in capacity without increasing terminal area

Paul Bellamy, Director, Ashcote Consulting Limited

The scene at check-in in many airport terminals is similar during peak periods: congested with queuing passengers. Despite the widespread use of online check-in that should speed the process up, those passengers with bags are still destined to queue ahead of a hosted bag drop. Even when these are fully staffed the main reason for queues is that transaction times are still high at around two thirds that of conventional check-in.

This is because the same security questions, bag tag printing and time consuming human interaction exists as before. Matching staffing levels to demand at these bag drops is notoriously difficult without adding significant operational cost and this too tends to exacerbate queuing.

Reducing queues and speeding up the baggage acceptance process is important and is more than simply a customer satisfaction issue: it enables a terminal to increase in capacity without adding costly space.

Removing the host and automating the bag drop will take out some of the time but can potentially add back more through complex processing and baggage checks prior to acceptance. The key elements of any automated self bag drop solution will include:

- Passenger identification, allowance and security checks;
- Bag tag printing and fixing;
- Dimension and weight checks;
- Readability / bag identification checks - most important to ensure the bag is identifiable in the downstream baggage systems.

These sub-processes can be conducted in a one-step or two-step process. A one-step solution has a combined kiosk, bag tag printing and bag drop unit, whereas a two-step separates the time consuming passenger acceptance, bag tag printing and labelling processes from the pure bag acceptance elements. The first step processes occur at a kiosk, whilst bag acceptance is conducted at a dedicated bag drop unit.

One-step bag drop has many advantages, but is costly and will do little in improving transaction times, queuing and therefore departure concourse capacity. A two-step process allows the potential capacity of a given baggage input system to be maximised by reducing the bag drop portion to a minimum. The passenger and tag processes are confined to kiosks that are relatively cheap compared to the equipment and complexity of a bag drop unit. Kiosks can be placed in any part of the flow routes to the terminal such as car parks, walkways, concourse, etc and not be limited to the physical, technological and cost limitations that bag drop units are.

Recent experience with Qantas’ new bag drops in Australia have seen average transaction times at the automated self bag drop reduce to one third of conventional check-in times. This has not only eliminated the queues, but also enabled a significant increase in terminal capacity without increasing the area of the departures concourse.

In the future, when queuing on the departures concourse becomes a thing of the past, the whole balance of the terminal spaces will change. The concourse will no longer have to be sized to accommodate long passenger dwell times as it becomes almost a transient space. Removing the traditional check-in bottleneck will make security search the new restriction on passenger flow towards the gate and this must be sized accordingly. Ultimately, far more space will be required in the departure lounge to cater for the increased dwell times here. Dramatic reductions in the check-in concourse will likely be the source of such space.

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Under new ownership, Gatwick’s IT focus is on simplification. The most immediate challenge has been separating Gatwick’s systems from those of the previous owner. Once that process is complete, the airport will have half the number of systems that it had previously, as Stuart Birrell, chief information officer, Gatwick Airport, explained.

**Simplifying IT**

When Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) acquired Gatwick, it inherited a staggering 140 IT legacy systems still operated and managed by BAA. The new owners are implementing a smarter IT approach designed to help drive efficient operation and better service and this will see the inherited IT systems halved through a combination of system retirement because the business does not need them or being replaced by an integrated SAP system. The new systems will be rolled-out in phases, with completion by summer 2012.

“Under BAA, all management and decision-making was done at Heathrow, and all systems were designed to run a 7-airport operation. Now that Gatwick is operating independently we don’t need that complexity,” explained Birrell. “At the technology level we will simplify and rationalise. We can use some of the newer technologies to cut costs and simplify. It has been a huge challenge separating the systems, costing tens of millions – the scale and complexity is huge.”

The final changeover will take place on 1 June 2011, while, significantly, Birrell received the keys to the Data Centre and the codes for the network on 1 February.

Gatwick awarded multi-million pound IT contracts to three core service suppliers, Logica, Xchanging and Computacenter, enabling it to take full control of its IT systems and support critical airport improvements. It enables Gatwick to operate as a fully standalone airport and means it can operate an IT system that best meets the needs of its business. Leading edge technology and systems will bring best practice in global airport operations to Gatwick.

Norwegian’s successful self-service trial in the South Terminal highlights the significant changes taking place in terms of the passenger journey and check-in experience at Gatwick. 85% of the airline’s passengers have been using the self-service kiosks, while 50% of passengers also use self bag tagging.
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Enhancing the passenger experience

An innovative element of the current developments at Gatwick is the ‘Stickybits’ initiative. It is the first airport in the world to use the giant mobile barcodes to help communicate the £1 billion investment programme to passengers. Most of the infrastructure work is taking place out of sight, behind hoardings, but passengers can download a free ‘Stickybits’ mobile application and go on a coded ‘Gatwick Discovery Tour’, enjoying an audiovisual peek behind the scenes at how the airport is changing. “It can influence the enjoyment and experience of passengers,” commented Birrell. “We have also gone ‘live’ with a new booking system for parking – we bought the system as a service from APCOA. The role of IT is changing – it is about making a more robust solution, integrating with web services and e-commerce.”

New, innovative technologies are being installed in the central security search area. Gatwick is looking at technologies such as automated gates and advanced CCTV. There will also be dynamic messaging to passengers – regarding queues, for example. “Central search is very much about productivity in terms of passenger flow and experience – making the passenger experience much more positive,” said Birrell. As part of this initiative to enhance the passenger experience, the Norwegian check-in area has been enhanced with images of Norway, while there are similarly images of Dubai at the Emirates check-in area. Additionally, both Emirates and Delta have large video walls in the North Terminal. “Passengers are increasingly tech-savvy – it is important to provide them with access to technology,” explained Birrell.

Norwegian’s successful self-service trial in the South Terminal highlights the significant changes taking place in terms of the passenger journey and check-in experience at Gatwick. 85% of the airline’s passengers have been using the self-service kiosks, while 50% of passengers also use self bag tagging. According to Birrell, self-tagging will become ubiquitous, particularly among regular travellers and business travellers, who very quickly take to such new technologies.

As a standalone business, Gatwick is rolling out leading edge technology and systems to enhance the passenger experience and optimise passenger flow, which will make it a showcase airport.
Innovative IT infrastructure

Michael Ede, IT Service Director

We have ambitious plans for IT at Gatwick. Although it’s often ‘hidden’, IT has a big role to play in improving the passenger experience and our business efficiency at the airport. But many of the improvements we’re planning wouldn’t have been possible on the disparate, legacy networks that we inherited. So, working with our network managed service partner, Xchanging, one initiative is to create a common infrastructure for the airport which will give us greater visibility and control over IT. This will be a wired and wireless infrastructure that is secure, reliable, flexible and fast to meet the needs of the latest airport applications.

As well as enabling greater flexibility and new services, this new common infrastructure will improve the carbon efficiency of IT. The use of modern equipment, which is more power-efficient, and new design principles that enable us to rationalise the amount of ‘kit’ we need, will reduce our power, space and cooling requirements for IT. This will have a particularly marked effect when we come to redesign our data centre next year.

Embracing innovation

Xchanging’s role is not just to provide the day-to-day running of the network; they are also helping us to deliver innovative services by advising us and generating ideas within their area of expertise.

Together, we’re looking at how we can set up check-in desks like ‘hot desks’ that can be dynamically provisioned so airlines are not tied to a fixed range of desks. When the check-in clerk logs into their computer, the network will detect who they are and which airline they work for so that the correct systems load and appropriate passenger signage is displayed on the overhead screens.

Deploying a secure wireless network across the airport is another improvement that will enable greater flexibility for airlines and retailers. For example, it will reduce the need for IT equipment on piers, which frees up space, reduces power and makes it simpler for airlines to switch between gates. Wireless could also improve the efficiency of retail space utilisation because retailers would not have to re-wire and reinstall IT equipment if they wish to move from one unit to another.

Once the wireless network is in place, we are also thinking about how we can use it with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tagging, for example on the passenger’s boarding card, to enable retailers and airlines to ‘spotlight’ individuals and provide relevant targeted information and promotional offers.

These are just a few examples of the way that IT is contributing to our goal of making Gatwick London’s airport of choice. We have aggressive targets to meet, but with enthusiastic partners on board, whose ambition matches our own, we’re up for the challenge.

Ede

“Together, we’re looking at how we can set up check-in desks like ‘hot desks’ that can be dynamically provisioned so airlines are not tied to a fixed range of desks.”
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The redevelopment of the South Terminal – which originally opened in 1958 – entails a multitude of separate projects. Almost every aspect of the terminal will be renovated and while the capacity will remain unchanged, the aesthetic appeal and the overall passenger experience will be significantly enhanced.

Providing the gateway to Gatwick, the South Terminal forecourt is being revitalised in a £30 million project which will provide a new entrance to the terminal and improved access routes.

James explained: “The forecourt is really important because almost every passenger departing from South Terminal has to pass through it, it’s an old infrastructure and in its current state it’s very confusing.

“’To solve this we’re creating a single new entrance so passengers will intuitively know where they’re going and it will be an entrance Gatwick can be proud of.”

More than half a century after opening, Gatwick Airport’s South Terminal is currently the subject of hundreds of millions of pounds of investment as it is shaped into a modern, state-of-the-art facility. Ryan Ghee spoke to Stephen James, South Terminal programme development leader, Gatwick Airport.
The intuitive wayfinding will lead passengers from the drop-off points and car parks to express elevators, which will then deliver them effortlessly towards the terminal concourse.

“One of the key things we have done is de-clutter the concourse area and this project was long overdue because some of the original concourse is more than 50 years old,” James said. “We’ve moved the ticket desks that confronted passengers on arrival and we’ve removed the advertising from the entrance area so as not to confuse the passenger. It’s about getting passengers from their starting point to where they want to be as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

Along with the improved lighting, which will create a more appealing environment, new lighter coloured tiles on the floor of the terminal will deliver a brighter, more modern terminal.

**Centralised security**

Almost immediately after assuming operational control of the airport in late-2009, the new management team identified the South Terminal security process as being in need of a comprehensive revamp. In its current guise, there are three separate security areas over two floors, but this will be transformed into a single, centralised security zone in time for the 2011 summer season.

James said: “We’re already meeting our objectives in terms of the time it takes for people to go through security, but there’s still an element of confusion at the moment and we’ll remove that. We’re creating a single, large security area and the space is going to be quite flexible. It won’t just be squashed into a corner and I’m confident that it will be the best airport security area in the world.”

Included in the 19 lanes which will make up the near-6,000sqm security area will be two fast-track lanes and two special assistance lanes for families and passengers with reduced mobility.

The weight of emphasis placed on the passenger experience is highlighted by the fact that the redevelopment of the security area has taken place at the short-term expense of the terminal’s retail offering and in 2010 alone, Gatwick sacrificed £5 million worth of commercial revenue to allow for the security improvements.

Immediately after passing through security, passengers will be able to enjoy the refurbished departure lounge which was enhanced with “very little disruption” and has “resulted in a significant increase in space”.

**Baggage factory**

In keeping with the overall aim to optimise the speed and efficiency at which passengers and their baggage will be processed through the terminal, a brand new baggage hall will be introduced to serve the South Terminal.

The first phase of the baggage handling system upgrade will see the replacement of the existing baggage screening process, allowing a passenger’s bag to be checked in at any one of the nine check-in zones and sent to any area of the baggage handling system; something that has previously been very restricted.

Phase two will entail the introduction of the brand new baggage hall, which will include early bag stores. This will allow passengers to check their bags in a number of hours ahead of their departure time and the bags will then be held in an automatic storage area until the handling agent requires them to be released into the system, thus increasing the efficiency of the entire baggage handling process.

A new pier 1 will also be constructed alongside the new baggage facility in a project which will make savings in terms of both efficiency and expenditure. “Pier 1 will be wrapped around the baggage factory,” James explained. “By combining these projects we’ve created space and we’ve managed to reduce 24 phases to, essentially, just two. This also means that we’re not trying to upgrade an existing, operational baggage system and this is a great solution from an airline and airport perspective. It will also result in a saving of around £50 million.”

Alongside this, Pier 2 is also being refurbished and this will result in four new aircraft stands. James said: “This is a very complex project because it requires us to move and create new airfield ground lighting, stand lines, fueling systems, and new blocks of lifts and escalators. We’re also brightening up the gate rooms and making it a more efficient process for the passenger as well.”

For arriving passengers, the immigration hall is also being upgraded and, with the second phase currently underway, this will be complete by summer 2011, when passengers will be able to utilise e-gates at the airport for the first time.

**New airport**

Passengers travelling to and from the airport by rail will also benefit from the £53 million upgrade to Gatwick Airport railway station, which is being jointly funded by Network Rail and Gatwick.

“We’re working very closely with Network Rail on this and it’s a very significant project in terms of providing a better experience for passengers as well as everyday users of the railway station,” James said. “While it’s Network Rail’s project, we will work closely together to create something that really feels like a part of Gatwick in terms of its identity. It will also secure the future of the Gatwick Express.”

While the investment in the South Terminal will see the overall project delivered on a phased basis, once complete, James explained that passengers “will feel like they’re in a new airport”. He added: “The South Terminal experience has been based around an aged infrastructure and this investment will not only improve the look, but will transform the service we provide to passengers.”
Slicker security

Following Global Infrastructure Partners’ (GIP) acquisition of Gatwick Airport, all security aspects, including IT systems have been separated from BAA. The airport has established a new structure for security with new leadership and significant investment will see the security areas in both North and South Terminals substantially upgraded. Geoff Williams, a former Deputy Chief of Police and now head of security at Gatwick, outlined the new strategy and his mission to radically improve customer service to Ross Falconer.

There are three main strands to the new Gatwick security strategy which in turn support the broader strategy for the airport – namely competing to grow and deliver the best passenger experience. First and foremost is a “steely determination” to keep people safe. “Our staff are well trained and work to very high standards and safety is our primary function,” commented Williams.

The second strand is to cut queues; Gatwick has focused hard on this and – under new ownership – over 95% of the time, people now pass through security at Gatwick in under 5 minutes, with an average queue time of just 1 minute, 47 seconds in 2010. The third focus is on delivering excellent customer service. “It’s vitally important we improve the service passengers experience in security,” stressed Williams. “Passengers may enjoy a variety of things at the airport, for example the shops, restaurants or parking. Security, however, is the one thing we all experience and we are determined to make that experience as swift and hassle free as possible, while ensuring we always maintain high standards of security.”

Part of Gatwick’s improvement strategy for security involves differentiating the security it provides – tailored more to meet the needs of individual passengers. As an example, it is the first UK airport to introduce assistance lanes for passengers with reduced mobility and those travelling with children. This means Gatwick can now provide focused care and attention for people using the assistance lanes and this, explained Williams, has the double benefit of improving the passenger experience and reducing queues in the main security lanes. He said: “We are absolutely determined to provide a better service for all passengers. Security should be no different from any other service when it comes to providing good customer care and we are aiming for excellence.”

In support of the approach, all security staff are also receiving customer service training leading to a recognised City and Guilds qualification. The drive to improve service has already had a dramatic effect with complaints down over 50% since last year, while compliments have trebled, and the many letters of thanks received from passengers and airlines is evidence of this success.

As part of its focus on improving customer service, Gatwick’s security team has introduced a ‘mystery shopper’ initiative, which involves travellers providing anonymous feedback about their experience of the security process. 80% of this feedback, so far, has been positive, with some “golden nuggets” of information giving insight into the passenger experience, according to Williams, who is keen to point out he also receives regular helpful feedback from passenger advisory groups and airline representatives.

Major refurbishment

A £45 million investment in the South Terminal will, significantly, see security located in a single area on the ‘Village’ level. It is currently split between three different locations on two floors. Moving to a larger, single location will provide a slicker, more straightforward experience for passengers by summer 2011.
two floors. Moving to a larger, single location will provide a slicker, more straightforward experience for passengers by summer 2011. There will be 19 security lanes, with the flexibility to increase that in the future if required. New technology and, with the help of lean 6 sigma experts, standardised processes will be implemented and the layout designed to enable efficient operation. “We are installing state-of-the-art equipment with some new innovations such as biometric screening designed to enhance security and speed up the journey time. We are also implementing the learning from extensive pilots and trials involving passengers and security staff and formalising the Assistance Lanes and Fast Track for premium passengers to use,” said Williams.

The main 15 lanes will be ready by summer 2011 and the two Fast Track and two assistance lanes in September 2011. Meanwhile, a £5 million investment is being made in the North Terminal’s security area to create more capacity in line with the airport’s growth projections and the new owners have already made investments in improving other aspects of security such as the perimeter areas.

“We are investing in improving security right across the airport and we work closely with other agencies such as the police,” explained Williams. “Essential elements to our approach to security are keeping people safe and cutting queues. Importantly, I firmly believe the service provided to passengers needs to radically improve. Passengers want to feel that the security process is undertaken for their benefit. The aim is to ensure security is not something that is ‘done to’ passengers, it must be provided ‘for the passenger and on their behalf’. Feedback from passengers and airlines on the new approach has been very positive. Importantly, our passengers are noticing the difference.”

Gatwick is working hard under the new ownership to provide the best possible service and to be creative in its customer service. “Security is here to keep people safe and must always be carried out politely and helpfully. We test our security processes every day. Airport security is part of modern life, an essential part of the passenger journey, and we have a steely determination to make the security process safe and hassle-free,” concluded Williams.

Following the South Terminal investment, there will be 19 security lanes, with the flexibility to increase that in the future if required. New technology and, with the help of lean 6 sigma experts, standardised processes will be implemented and the layout designed to enable efficient operation.
ward-winning or not, it’s always gratifying when clients have faith in your products and service to invite you into a world class project, which will deliver international ‘firsts’.

That’s how Human Recognition Systems (HRS) felt when they became involved in Gatwick Airport’s ambitions to create a “slicker, more straightforward experience for our passengers” with their £45m refurbishment of the South Terminal.

“HRS has a track record in providing cutting edge technologies in UK-regulated airports and the aviation industry,” said Perry Hailey, Head of Technology at Gatwick Airport.

“Wanting a partner who would listen to our needs, help us achieve our service delivery agreements and provide the expected return on investment prompted us to approach HRS.”

Transport Business Unit Manager at HRS, Jim Slevin said: “We are thrilled that two of our highly researched biometric solutions will be first introduced to the UK at Gatwick.”

MFlow Journey measures and manages the efficient flow of passengers throughout airports. It helps operational teams to make informed decisions to optimise staffing levels, reduce passenger queue times (enhancing passenger experience), increase dwell time in retail areas and provide regulatory and service level reporting.

MFlow Track (CUL) has also been carefully tailored to fulfil Gatwick’s commitment to ensure airport security and to heighten passengers’ travel experience. It’s another unprecedented success for HRS and for the UK aviation sector as Gatwick is the first airport to install this innovative solution for this application.

Produced in conjunction with their partner, AOptix Technologies Inc., the HRS product MFlow Track (CUL) helps to ensure the secure and easy flow of passengers in areas used by both international and domestic travellers. Gatwick will deploy this product for the Common User Lounge (CUL) where both types of passengers converge.

“We firmly believe that staff and passengers alike need to be able to use the devices easily,” added Jim Slevin.

“So during extensive trials, we worked closely with Gatwick’s operators and staff to integrate their thoughts and needs into the product.”

MFlow Journey and MFlow Track (CUL) will be integrated into Gatwick’s operation for summer, 2011.

For more information about Human Recognition Systems, please visit: www.hrsltd.com
Throughout every stage of the redevelopment of Gatwick Airport, environmental sustainability has been high on the agenda. Doug Waters, Gatwick’s best practice manager, outlined the airport’s green credentials to Ryan Ghee.

material strategy also outlines the materials that Gatwick expects its construction suppliers to use. For example, any timber used must come from a sustainable source, while the amount of cement content used has also been significantly reduced.

Optimal efficiency
Recycling and re-using materials is a vital factor in each of the ongoing construction projects. In 2010 the target was to recycle or re-use 85% of waste and this was surpassed with a figure in excess of 90% over the course of the year. Importantly, this also includes excavation and demolition waste and in the North West Zone project – which entailed the creation of six new aircraft stands – more than 98% of materials were re-used.

In the terminal buildings themselves, a number of changes have also been implemented to improve the environmental performance of each of the facilities. For example, energy efficient LED lighting has been installed and a number of the heating and ventilation systems have also been replaced with newer, greener models.

However, it is the future plans that really highlight Gatwick’s long-term environmental dedication. “We’re looking to set up our own energy centres to generate our own electricity, heat and so on, and we’ll be able to manage these ourselves,” Waters said.

While Gatwick is the largest UK airport to have achieved both the Carbon Trust Standard and ISO14001 accreditation, Waters is adamant that there is no risk of complacency. “This has forced us to measure our carbon footprint properly,” he said. “Just because we have got these accreditations doesn’t mean that’s it. We have to make sure that we continually satisfy the standards and continue to improve.

“We’ve now got the opportunity to look at Gatwick as an individual airport in its own right and this is why we’ve been able to develop our sustainability plan up to 2020. For example, we’re targeting a 50% carbon reduction by 2020 (against a 1990 baseline) and we’re able to set these kind of ambitious targets because they’re being driven right from the top.”
Gatwick’s ‘Decade of Change’

Gatwick Airport has established a 10-point sustainability plan, highlighting 10 areas of focus to be addressed over 10 years. The Decade of Change framework describes how the airport aims to deliver sustainable growth through responsible environmental management coupled with strong economic and community programmes, as Tom Denton, head of sustainability, explained.

By 2020 we will

1. Demonstrate we are a trusted and valued neighbour.
2. Fulfil our role as an economic driver of local, regional and national significance.
3. Increase sustainable access options for our passengers and staff.
4. Reduce our carbon emissions by 50% (scope 1 & 2 emissions against 1990 baseline).
5. Improve air quality impacts.
6. Reduce impact of operational noise.
7. Generate no waste to landfill.
8. 20% reduction in energy (against 1990 baseline) and water consumption (against 2010 baseline).
9. Improve the quality of water leaving the airport.
10. Have an award winning biodiversity approach.

In 2010, Gatwick secured the Carbon Trust Standard for its approach to carbon management, as well as ISO14001 certification – it is the largest UK airport to achieve both accreditations. It has also been accredited at the ‘Reduction’ level of ACI EUROPE’s Airport Carbon Accreditation initiative. The airport is committed to sustainable growth through responsible environmental management coupled with strong economic and community programmes.

“Environmental targets are important to the local community but we also recognise the global perspective of climate change. We are committed to reducing our carbon emissions and improving air quality for the benefit of our passengers, staff and the local community.”

Tom Denton, head of sustainability, Gatwick Airport Limited.
change. In identifying the 10 points in our plan, we believe it is important that they are supported by clear targets and commitments. The ‘Decade of Change’ is underpinned by an environment strategy that sets out our approach to managing the airport’s environmental priorities: carbon, air quality, noise, waste, energy, water and biodiversity,” said Denton. “The environment strategy is also supported by targets for public transport, so that we can provide a better range of services for our passengers and employees."

Sustainability plan

Gatwick believes that success will be achieved by working collaboratively with airlines, business partners, employees and stakeholders. Locally, the airport engages and consults with local government and the community, for example through GATCOM – the airport’s consultative committee. The airport is also working closely with other stakeholders, such as the airlines, handling agents and business partners on-airport to ensure this vision is shared and supported.

It has recently set up a new airline sustainability group to identify joint working opportunities to deliver on-airport environmental improvements and targets.

The £1 billion Capital Investment Programme provides Gatwick with a huge opportunity from an environmental point of view. Environmental targets are established at the very outset of developments. “We really are securing wins by working with our construction partners,” explained Denton. “The North West Zone, to create six new stands for wide-bodied aircraft, is a great example where the airport and the contractor worked with the local community – brought local residents on-site to show them how the project minimised dust and how 98% of construction waste was recycled – it is a great example of where we are working together.”

The overriding goal of the airport’s sustainability plan is to reduce carbon emissions by 50% (against a 1990 baseline). Having achieved the Carbon Trust Standard for its approach to carbon management, Gatwick has plans in place to further reduce its carbon emissions year-on-year. The airport has established implementation plans for each of the business units so that it can develop trackable carbon budgets. The 10-year sustainability plan will see Gatwick reduce its energy consumption in several ways, including generating power via renewable sources, introducing a new carbon management zone for vehicles and installing an electric car recharging network for passengers and staff to use.

Gatwick is also empowering employees to change the way they work. “When our CEO, Stewart Wingate, launched our environment strategy last summer, he asked for airport volunteers and received a great response,” said Denton. “We have around 20 people, representing different airport departments, thinking about how their teams operate in terms of the environment and how to achieve efficiencies. We are also going to roll out accredited ‘green’ training. This strategy has been recently shortlisted by the CBI as a finalist for its People Awards – Green Strategy.”

Environmental best practice

Gatwick is committed to encouraging 40% of passengers to travel to and from the airport by public transport; the airport is currently achieving 38%. The airport believes that improved rail access will be a big driver to achieve this target. Recently the airport has agreed to contribute around £8 million to Network Rail’s £53 million project to enhance the rail station at Gatwick which will provide a new platform 7, improved track and signalling and enhancements to the station concourse. “We have set ourselves challenging public transport targets, such as 90% of passengers travelling to central London by public transport – a figure that currently stands at around 77%,” said Denton.

There are plans for the forecourt to reduce ‘Kiss ‘n’ Fly’ in order to encourage travellers to use public transport or park on-airport – this would effectively mean two journeys to the airport instead of four. The installation of charging points for electric vehicles will also encourage ‘green’ vehicle parking. A number of electric vehicles are already used airlside and, over time, Gatwick will look to replace its vehicle fleet with greener vehicles and incentivise other on-airport vehicle fleets.

Key concerns for the local community are air quality and operational noise, and Gatwick’s ‘Decade for Change’ addresses both. It is working proactively with the airlines and other stakeholders to reduce air quality and noise impacts using new technology, processes and systems. The airport’s reputation for best practice in terms of noise management will be enhanced with publication by the DfT of Gatwick’s European Noise Directive (END) noise action plan. The new owners are enthusiastic in their efforts to operate a sustainable airport. Publishing the ‘Decade of Change’ is a real kickstart for this, with positive feedback already received both internally and externally. Gatwick’s plans demonstrate a clear commitment to sustainable growth.
Under the new ownership, Gatwick has been proactively working alongside its airline partners to improve the passenger experience. Angus McIntyre, airline business development manager, Gatwick Airport, described the strategy to Ross Falconer.

**Proactive partnership approach**

Gatwick is focusing strongly on the passenger experience, and the relationship with its airlines is central to this – the mantra appears to be that “if the passengers are happy, the airlines will be happy”. McIntyre has been with the airport for three years and describes this new focus as “like a breath of fresh air”. “We were good before, but we’re a lot better now. All of the airlines have voiced their pleasure at the way we have improved security, for example. It’s a partnership approach – we are working with the airlines,” he said.

Indeed, the most visible improvements made under the new ownership are arguably to the security experience, as well as the check-in experience. Significant investments are being made in both the North and South terminals to redevelop the security areas. The target is to complete these projects within 18 months and Gatwick is delivering on that. Among the latest check-in innovations is the self-service trial held in partnership with Norwegian in the South Terminal. “We appreciate that airlines have individual requirements and we are responding to their needs,” commented McIntyre.

**Airline marketing**

Gatwick has become more intelligent in its marketing under new ownership and is increasingly making use of online media. “We’re working much more with the carriers. It is a fresh approach – we are looking at what methods the airlines have and what media channels they use,” explained McIntyre. He added that targeted e-marketing campaigns in collaboration with the airlines generate a higher click rate and are borne out of a more targeted approach.

There is also a focus on marketing at the destination end of the route; when British Airways launched Cancun services in November 2010, Gatwick worked closely with ASUR – the airport operator – on promoting the route. In looking to increase awareness of new routes, there is an effort to promote Gatwick to other airport authorities, tourist authorities and ministers.

The new, more proactive partnership approach with the airlines is a strategy

McIntyre

“I can’t speak highly enough of Gatwick. We are working with airlines to bring them in and make new services a success. It is a different approach to before, as it didn’t matter if a service went to Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted, it was still within the group. Our team is dedicated to best practice and making Gatwick the airport of choice for passengers.”
that is clearly working; airberlin, for example, switched two of its business routes from Stansted, launching new services from Gatwick to Nuremberg and Hannover in February 2011. It is the first step in a long-term relationship with the airline and strengthens Gatwick’s position when competing for business traffic in the London, German and wider European markets. The airberlin services are expected to generate 365,000 passengers per year.

“We have a diverse range of airlines and are moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach. We will pick up on airlines’ specific requirements, and while we don’t want terminals full of infrastructure specific to one airline, we will give airlines what they want, but in a commercially viable way. For example, the Virgin Business Lounge is very much Virgin branded, but is effectively a shell and can be reused,” said McIntyre.

**Route development**

Gatwick is working with its incumbent airlines to fill gaps in their schedules. 80% of the airport’s traffic is generated by around a dozen airlines. “If we can increase these existing carriers’ traffic, that is the easiest way to grow. We have a route development strategy whereby we have divided the world into 13 segments and can determine where we have good penetration,” said McIntyre.

North America is, of course, strategically important and Gatwick is working to increase coverage following the loss of traffic to Heathrow post-Open Skies in 2008. “We don’t need the same volume as Heathrow, but we do need the coverage,” explained McIntyre. “With BA, for example, we will look at what fleet they have available and gaps in their schedule. One of our messages to airlines is that there is a finite amount of time until we’re full. It creates a sense of urgency for the airlines – they have got to start thinking about new routes now, particularly as the lead time on a new route is around six to nine months.”

New long haul services are a specific target and Gatwick is intent on securing the correct type of traffic – services that will be operated long-term rather than for just one season – a strategy designed to give both the airport owners and the City confidence in the business. “It is dependent on slots and aircraft being available. The 787 represents a huge opportunity for us because of route economics. Thomson, at Gatwick, is the launch carrier in Europe for the 787 and BA, Virgin and a number of charter carriers have them on order and a key priority is getting them into Gatwick. The 787 makes routes to the Far East and North America commercially viable for point-to-point airports such as Gatwick,” said McIntyre.

“I can’t speak highly enough of Gatwick. We are working with airlines to bring them in and make new services a success. It is a different approach to before, as it didn’t matter if a service went to Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted, it was still within the group. Our team is dedicated to best practice and making every experience for the passenger better,” he concluded.
New routes point to dynamic growth in 2011

By Andreas Akerman, assistant editor, anna.aero

Gatwick Airport transported 31.3 million passengers in 2010, making it the ninth busiest airport in Europe. The largest share of these passengers, an entire 35%, is transported by easyJet. Gatwick is now by far the pan-European low-cost carrier’s largest base, offering more than twice as many seats as its second-largest base Milan Malpensa.

This shows how quickly the composition of Gatwick’s market has changed. For years, British Airways was the dominant carrier, but it was easyJet’s acquisition of BA’s Gatwick-based franchise carrier GB Airways in 2008 that made the low-cost carrier overtake the legacy carrier. In 2010, BA’s passenger numbers at Gatwick were a mere 41% of those transported by easyJet, or a 14% share of the airport as a whole. By contrast, BA’s share of Gatwick’s capacity was as dominant as 60% in 2000, before the low-cost revolution.

In 2010, European scheduled services stood for over half of all passengers at the airport. Long-haul traffic followed, contributing with 21% of airport passengers. Almost a third of these passengers come from the transatlantic market. European charter traffic followed with over 15%, while the domestic market contributed with 11% of passengers.
Once upon a time, an ex-easyJet network planner who was teaching at Cranfield University’s Department of Air Transport decided to take all his great wealth of route planning skills and create a huge source of intelligence for all the world to share online. Airline Network News and Analysis (anna.aero) was born and has been published every week since July 2007.
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Ken O’Toole
Director of New Route Development, Ryanair

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easyJet growth continues

In spite of its fast growth at Gatwick, easyJet does not show any sign of slowing down the expansion of its main base. The airline has already launched or announced seven routes for 2011, ranging from a domestic service to Aberdeen to the airline’s first route to Jordan – three weekly flights to the country capital Amman.

BA is also expanding at Gatwick this year, moving both Malaga and Mauritius services over from London Heathrow. The airline is also adding new flights to Marrakech and extending its service to Antigua to continue to San Juan.

UK leisure airlines Thomsonfly, Monarch and Thomas Cook Airlines in 2010 transported a combined 21% share of Gatwick’s passengers. Virgin Atlantic, which operates its leisure-focused routes to the Caribbean, Orlando and Las Vegas out of its Gatwick base, contributed with an additional 5%.

Norwegian overtakes Virgin Atlantic

This year, the foreign carrier Norwegian will overtake Virgin Atlantic at Gatwick, even though Gatwick is the latter airline’s second base. Although Norwegian’s fleet of 737s offers substantially fewer seats than all-long haul carrier Virgin Atlantic’s Gatwick fleet of 747s, the Nordic low-cost carrier will serve Gatwick from nine airports with 85 flights a week once it launches services from its new Helsinki base in May. This is the result of the airline’s rapid expansion, contributing to Norway and Sweden being among Gatwick’s fastest-growing country markets last year, and Gatwick has now become the largest non-base airport in Norwegian’s network.

Norwegian, which gradually moved its London operations from Stansted to Gatwick between 2007 and 2010, is not the only airline to make the move. In February this year, airberlin moved two of its London routes – from Hannover and Nuremberg – to Gatwick. Notably, the airline set to join the oneworld alliance will now gain connectivity with future alliance partner British Airways at its Gatwick base. Also the German market was one of Gatwick’s fastest-growing in 2010, generating more than 50% more passengers than in 2009.

Emirates’ busy Dubai route growing

Another new entrant to Gatwick is Aerosvit, the largest carrier in the Ukraine, which launched a daily Kiev route in March. Even last year, when the route was operated by a single carrier – Ukraine International, passenger growth of 49% was recorded.

A notable departure from Gatwick will be Qatar Airways, which in June shifts capacity to Manchester. Meanwhile, fellow Gulf carrier Emirates is thriving, having increased passenger numbers by more than 10% between Gatwick and Dubai in 2010. The Dubai route was Gatwick’s sixth busiest last year. Along with Orlando, the third-busiest route at the airport, Dubai was the only long haul destination to make the top 12. The next intercontinental route, to Bridgetown in Barbados, only makes 17th place.
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Competition key to Gatwick’s growth

Gatwick’s ambition is to compete to grow and become London’s airport of choice. As the Civil Aviation Authority’s (CAA) review into the competitive position of a standalone Gatwick Airport continues, Ryan Ghee spoke to Kyran Hanks, the airport’s strategy and regulation director.

Has regulation worked?

Hanks outlined his view that airport regulation in its current guise quite simply “hasn’t worked”. Each regulatory review consumes vast amounts of management time from airlines and airports. The nature of the process sets airports against their airlines. Passengers have no voice in the process. The airports spend significant time satisfying the regulator rather than focusing all their time on what passengers want. “The result has been – until relatively recently – low prices meaning that there has been no competition, there has been no new capacity, and the service quality up until recently has been generally low,” he said.

Gatwick’s current regulation is based on the previous BAA ownership, when the airport authority then had a 92% share of the London market and therefore, clearly had market power in the south east. “The big issue now is the change in ownership and whether this has introduced a dynamic competitiveness,” Hanks said. And this is what the CAA will spend most of 2011 looking at.

Is Gatwick competing?

The CAA will be seeking to establish whether Gatwick is competing now, and whether it might be expected to compete in the future. The ongoing review will explore a variety of factors, but the ultimate goal is to establish whether or not Gatwick has ‘market power’. If it is decided that it does, the CAA will recommend how the airport should be regulated. If not, the airport will have to be deregulated.

“It sounds quite simple, but this is a very complicated process,” Hanks explained. “For instance, the CAA will look at our prices, both historically and in the future, look at our present and future capacity, look at whether airlines and airports are switching in or out of Gatwick, and whether other airports can be used as a substitute for Gatwick by its passengers. For instance, hypothetically speaking, if we were to put our prices up, would passengers and airlines have alternatives? If not, they would be ‘trapped’ and that would mean we have market power.”

As part of the review, the CAA will also explore the performance of Gatwick since leaving the BAA group and becoming a standalone airport in December 2009. Hanks said: “Gatwick dealt with the snow better than Heathrow in late November and early December, so this will be something that they’ll take into account. They’ll also look at the fact that airberlin and
Norwegian have recently transferred routes from Stansted to Gatwick and long haul routes starting up and moving from Heathrow.

Although much of the focus is centred on competition in the south east of the UK, this can be extended to the competition that Gatwick faces from other European airports. “An example of this is the fact that Ryanair and easyJet can base their aircraft elsewhere while still serving Gatwick, so our charges need to be competitive,” Hanks said. “The regulators need to encourage competition between airports by allowing them to offer different services, different pricing, different contracts, and better transparency of performance.”

Finally, Hanks notes that recent improvements have nothing to do with regulation. “The service improvement that we have seen at Gatwick recently has been about the new management team coming in and making changes, and that’s competition working. It hasn’t been down to regulation. Separate ownership and competition is the best way forward. We are looking forward to Stansted being in separate ownership.”

Possible regulatory changes

In order to make any future regulation more effective, Hanks also detailed the need for the promotion of contracts between airports and airlines to ensure that relationships can be built for the long term, for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. “It’s about promoting shared responsibility, continued commitments, and long-term relationships,” he explained.

Gatwick’s recently published Passenger Commitments state: ‘We’ll treat you as our guest’, ‘We hate queues’, and ‘We love to be on time’; the very approach that the airport would like to see promoted through any future regulatory changes.

Concluding, Hanks said: “Competition is always better than regulation in delivering what our airlines and passengers want.”
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Gatwick displays commercial commitment

As Gatwick continues to build and deliver on its commercial strategy, working with its customer airlines and business partners is vital to ensuring that the development of services and facilities is of benefit to all parties involved. Ryan Ghee spoke to Robin Longden, interim chief commercial officer, and Emma Rees, head of real estate, Gatwick Airport.

Developing a forward-thinking commercial strategy for the long-term future of Gatwick is a task that requires great consideration of the needs and demands of its airline partners and passengers.

"Each airline has its own agenda so almost everything requires a balancing act," Longden explained. "It's not just about Gatwick, but also the airlines which are looking at their commercial and passenger agendas, so the airport always has that as an issue to deal with."

Such is the complex nature of an airport environment, these individual agendas can inevitably cause a conflict of interest, but in keeping with the desire to deliver a world-class passenger experience, Gatwick is taking a proactive approach to ensure that it continues to "push ahead of the curve".

Longden said: "The airport has been under-invested in the past so we’re trying to move quickly to catch-up and at some point you have to forecast demand rather than simply answer it. That's why it's important to have more dialogue to explain where we're going and, importantly, why, and airlines can see that we’re doing the things that make sense.

"For instance, A380 infrastructure is currently being developed and even though it may be a couple of years before A380s are a common sight at Gatwick, we have to balance the agendas of cost and efficiency for the airlines versus investing in infrastructure development."

Route expansion
Developing the airport’s route network – which already spans more than 200 destinations across 90 countries – is also high on the agenda for Longden and his team. Incentive schemes and differential pricing are two examples of the innovative approach that the airport is taking as a particular focus is placed on expanding the long-haul offering.

"LCCs (low-cost carriers) are pushing the boundaries of what's deemed to be short-haul and because of this, developing the long-haul network becomes more important," Longden said. "Outbound routes are a key issue and we aim to develop these routes in a way that's compatible with the needs of the south east. "More people from the south east region travel through Gatwick than any other London airport and there's quite a spectrum of people who are passing through in terms of needs, requirements and destinations they would like to see served."

He continued: "We are competing to grow as an airport, and that means understanding how airlines want to grow and encouraging new routes from long haul locations. The 2012 London Olympics also provides a great opportunity to get people flying into Gatwick because the infrastructure and level of service we have in place will be just as good, if not better than, anywhere else in the UK."

Real estate
Investing in the airport's property portfolio is also a vital aspect of the commercial drive. Highlighting this, just 10 months after the change of
ownership, Gatwick signed a contract enabling Shiva Hotels Limited to operate a brand new ‘Hampton by Hilton’ hotel alongside the North Terminal.

Planning consent for the three-star hotel was submitted in December and construction work is due to start in April, ahead of the completion of the 192-bedroom facility just 12 months later.

Rees, who is directly responsible for overseeing the ever-expanding property portfolio, added: “We’ve had to explore ways of growing our property portfolio in a market that’s not booming and we have to deliver a value for money proposition.

“With our property portfolio we have to keep moving and growing. We really have to keep it vibrant and the Hampton Hotel provides a great example of that. For our customers it will provide a better product and for us it will reduce our voids.”

While outlining that a number of opportunities are being explored alongside business partners, Rees also explained that future real estate developments will be largely “demand led”. This, along with the utilisation and, where necessary, conversion of existing space will ensure that the need for a new facility exists before further significant investment is made.

As Gatwick continues to invest in its commercial strategy through the development of its route network, infrastructure and property portfolio, there is a palpable confidence in what the future holds for the airport.

“Our overall aim is to deliver an improved passenger experience and just over a year in, we’re walking the walk and the majority of the airlines can see that we’re moving in the right direction,” Longden said.

“The relationship will inevitably take a long time to form, but we’re showing our commitment and there’s a strong emphasis on making sure that we don’t change things that will be seen to undermine the fundamentals of an airport’s existence. We’re trying to implement a culture of being both reactive and progressive, but at the same time we appreciate that it’s not something that can happen overnight.”

Longden

“LCCs are pushing the boundaries of what’s deemed to be short-haul and because of this, developing the long-haul network becomes more important.”
While investment in infrastructure is vital to the future vision for Gatwick Airport, investing in human resources has also been recognised as equally important to the delivery of success. Tina Oakley, Gatwick’s HR (human resources) director, and Louise Ash, head of training, learning and development, spoke to Ryan Ghee.

**People Power**

According to both Oakley and Ash, Gatwick is very much a “people business” and with this in mind, the airport is taking every step possible to ensure that everyone involved in the day-to-day operation of the airport feels both enthusiastic about their role and valued by their employer.

“What has become clear is that the people working here at Gatwick have a huge amount of passion in wanting the airport to be successful,” Ash explained. “They have got a lot of experience and they want to be able to show that they can make a difference.”

Keen to make the most of this passion, Gatwick Airport provides various opportunities for members of staff to convey their views on how the airport is run and how it can be further improved. The greatest such example is the ‘Big Conversation’.

“During the Big Conversation we have sat down with Gatwick employees to gauge their views because we want to listen to our people and understand how they see the airport,” Oakley said. “We’ve done this both in small groups and through one-to-one interviews and it gives our people an opportunity to tell us what’s on their mind.”

**Seeing results**

Delivering an enhanced passenger experience is key to the reasoning behind the ongoing investment and steps are being taken to ensure that every member of staff – particularly those on the frontline – is fully equipped to make a telling contribution.

“No part of the passenger experience can be delivered unless you’ve got the right people doing the right things,” Oakley said. Working alongside Tourism South East, Gatwick Airport is offering employees the opportunity to achieve a City & Guilds qualification through its customer service programme.

Ash said: “We wanted to change the way our people feel about our passengers and to be able to recognise the different types of passengers and their different needs. We’ll have 1,600 members of staff doing this in total and it’s clear that it makes them feel very valued as well.”

While the fresh approach to human resources and customer service is “about developing what we want Gatwick Airport to be in the future”, the change in leadership style is already starting to bear fruit and in the first 12 months under new ownership, customer service-related compliments increased by 100% and complaints were down by 15%

“We’re still at the beginning but we’re already seeing the results,” Oakley said. “We’re trying to be less formal and more approachable in our service style and we want that to be reflected in how we manage our people. It’s a really exciting time and it’s an opportunity for Gatwick, but it’s also challenging and we can’t just talk about the changes; the proof is in the doing.”

As part of the Big Conversation, Gatwick Airport has actively gauged the views of its employees to search for ways to further improve the high level of customer service.
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