

# NEWSLETTER

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Today's Newsletter deals exclusively with the threat of a second runway. I hope that those who are concerned about noise and pollution from the existing runway will recognise that our campaigning on those issues continues but that the threat of an extra runway with the noise and pollution it would bring justifies special attention.

A new Gatwick runway would be a great disaster for the towns, villages and countryside of Surrey, Sussex and west Kent. The plans published by Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) on 23 July show Gatwick expanding from 34 million passengers per year now to around 90 million.

More than doubling the present size of Gatwick would mean more than twice as many planes in the sky, and GAL admit that there would be new flight paths over areas at present peaceful.<sup>1</sup> It would mean more than twice as much airport-related traffic with queues at many road junctions. And more than twice as much climate change damage.

'More jobs' - that is the benefit that many people see in a new runway. GAL state that a new runway would create 19,000 new jobs. But that excludes the jobs in new firms attracted to the area by an airport larger than Heathrow, normally assumed to be a similar figure. The total of around 40,000 new jobs far exceeds the level of unemployment, and would mean massive inward migration, either from other parts of the UK or from other EU countries. There would be a need to build perhaps 30,000 extra houses, destroying swathes of countryside. There would be substantial pressure on local schools, hospitals and social services.

Even the businessmen in the 'Gatwick Diamond' who so enthusiastically support a new runway need to realise that a new runway would create severe labour shortages and upward pressure on pay, which could well put some of their firms out of business.

The national debate is between those who want a larger hub airport - an enlarged Heathrow or airport in the Thames estuary - and GAL who are trying to sell the concept of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted each with two runways, Gatwick being the first to get a new runway.

## Gatwick too small

The plans, however, confirm what has always been known - that there is not sufficient space at Gatwick for an efficient new runway.

GAL give three runway options - a well known ploy to divide the opposition. But it is clear that they virtually rule out a close parallel runway because 'the capacity benefit is relatively small'. And they rule out the option with a middle-width separation between the runways because there would be no room for a new terminal.

GAL's preferred option is the so-called wide-spaced runway - only a few hundred yards north of the residential area of Crawley. Yet previous studies have shown that this layout would still provide insufficient space for aircraft to congregate around a terminal or to manoeuvre between the runways.<sup>2</sup> Indeed it is stated that the runway separation might need to be increased beyond that shown on the plan - presumably involving demolition of part of Crawley.<sup>3</sup>

Amazingly little detail is given. No airport boundary is shown. No indication is provided of where a new terminal (which would need to be bigger than T5) would be located.

An ominous threat hangs over the town of Horley and the medieval village of Charlwood (with its grade 1 Norman church and 80 listed buildings) - a sentence saying that options for a runway to the north of the airport will be included in later consultations.<sup>4</sup>

It is stated that a new runway would cost £5 billion to £9 billion, presumably £9 billion for the wide-spaced option. That can be compared to the £1.5 billion which the present owners paid to buy the airport in 2009. So a substantial increase in airport charges would be inevitable. At a public evidence session of the Commission, GACC asked Carolyn McCall, CEO of easyJet, if she would accept an increase in landing fees at Gatwick to pay the cost of a new runway: she indicated that she would not. British Airways would also be reluctant to pay more.<sup>5</sup>

## More noise

A new wide-spaced runway would increase the number of people within the 57 leq contour (serious community annoyance) from 3,050 to 11,800. The number within the measurement of moderate annoyance as used by the EU, the 54 Lden contour, would be 42,800.<sup>6</sup>

The Airports Commission has published a discussion paper on aircraft noise.<sup>7</sup> Responses need to be in by 11 September. GACC will be responding in detail but we have sent in an initial comment - that the tables purporting to show that far fewer people are affected by noise at Gatwick or Stansted than at Heathrow are misleading. Aircraft noise is more annoying in rural areas because the background noise is lower, and because the expectation of quiet is higher. The International Standards Organisation suggests that a 10dB difference should be recognised between rural areas and urban residential areas.

## What happens next?

The following timetable has been set out by the Airports Commission:

*Autumn 2013.* The runway plans submitted by Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, the Mayor of London, Birmingham etc. will be studied by the Commission. This will largely consist of narrowing down the various options submitted.

*December 2013.* The Commission will assess whether there is any need for a new runway, and will publish a short-list of potential runway locations. Gatwick is bound to be on the short-list: to assume otherwise would be unrealistic.

*Jan - June 2014.* The Commission will work with each of the airport promoters to develop their plans into a draft proposal, including a draft impact assessment.

*Summer 2014.* Draft proposals and impact assessments for each potential site will be published for public and expert scrutiny.

*First quarter 2015.* Final proposals submitted to Airports Commission.

*May 2015.* General Election.

*Summer 2015.* Airports Commission publishes final report on where a new runway, or runways, should be.

*Autumn 2015.* New Government decides whether to proceed.

GACC has already submitted a number of hard-hitting responses to Discussion Documents published by the Commission.<sup>8</sup> We had a meeting with the Chairman, Sir Howard Davies, on 24 June, and will continue to engage vigorously with the Commission, both on our own and in conjunction with national environmental organisations.

## **Blight**

One of the consequences of this protracted process is that large areas of South East England will be blighted. At Gatwick we reckon the blight may extend 10 or 20 miles east and west of the airport, and is likely to affect around 18,000 houses (the number within the 54 Lden contour). People will have difficulty selling their houses, and those who need to move either to a new job or for retirement will suffer anxiety and financial loss.

GACC has suggested to Gatwick Airport that they should extend the blight relief scheme introduced by BAA in 2005 to a far wider area (it only covered about 280 houses). But our plea fell on deaf ears.

## **No need for any new runway !**

This heading may come as a surprise to many people who have been conditioned by years of aviation industry propaganda, and by countless newspaper articles. But Stansted is less than half full. The number of flights from the London airports was exactly the same in 2012 as in 2002 but the number of passengers has gone up 20%. That is because the number of passengers per plane has been steadily increasing, a trend which is not fully reflected in the forecasts.

The average number of passengers per plane at Heathrow and Gatwick is at present around 145. But modern aircraft can hold 220, or 300 or 400 (let alone the Airbus380 which can hold 500-800). If, over the next fifteen years, the average number of passengers per flight goes up to 185, that would be equivalent to a new runway.

There were proposals for a new runway at Gatwick in 1970, in 1993 and in 2003 but each time when it came to the crunch it was found that it was not needed. GACC has asked the Airports Commission to publish a 'No New Runway' option alongside their short-list of new sites.

## **County Council Shenanigans**

West Sussex County Council passed a motion on 19 July supporting a new Gatwick runway. We are appalled that this motion was put down at only two days notice with a spurious excuse of urgency, was discussed before Gatwick had announced their plans, that there was no proper assessment by council officers of the impact of a new runway, and no public consultation. The reason given was that the Council wished to be in a better position to negotiate with GAL. But lying on your back wagging your tail is not a strong negotiating posture.

Surrey County Council held a similar debate on 16 July but their motion only opposed the closure of Heathrow (ie opposing plans for a new airport in the Thames estuary) while being somewhat ambiguous about new runways at either Heathrow or Gatwick.

Crawley Borough Council is to have a debate on 26 September on its attitude to a new runway.

The West Sussex County Council and Crawley Borough Council commissioned a survey of residents. It was quoted as showing support for a runway but actually showed that:

- Under half of residents agree that there is a need for more runway capacity in the SE.
- Under half of residents support the building of a second runway at Gatwick.
- A majority of residents did not agree that an increase in noise would be acceptable.
- Only 20% of businesses replied that air travel is important to their organisation overall.

The survey had some serious omissions: no question relating to climate change, no question about local pollution, and no question asking about possible traffic congestion.<sup>9</sup>

## Scare stories

Gatwick Airport has employed a high-powered London PR agency to influence local opinion. One of their tactics is to spread the scare story that the Gatwick area will go downhill if a new runway were built elsewhere. That is rubbish. A new runway at Heathrow would cost £14-18 billion - resulting in much higher landing fees which would discourage airlines moving there from Gatwick.

We believe that without a new runway, Gatwick will remain as at present - a successful and prosperous one runway, two terminal airport.

## What is to be done?

Everyone who is opposed to a new runway will be wondering what they can do to make their views known, or to help GACC.

There is no indication that the Airports Commission will be influenced by letters from the public. This is obviously going to be a long drawn-out campaign with a need to influence MPs around the time of the next election in 2015.

There are four ways you can help GACC -

- ♥ by encouraging friends, relatives and others to join GACC;
- ♥ by joining a small fund-raising group;
- ♥ by writing to the press, or letting us know that you are willing to be interviewed on TV;
- ♥ by letting us know if you have any special skills to contribute.

Parish, District and Borough councils may wish to hold debates on the runway issue, and GACC will be pleased to provide a speaker.

## Seminar and GACC AGM

GACC, jointly with CPRE Surrey and CPRE Sussex, is organising an important seminar on 25 October. Speakers will include Cabinet member Francis Maude. An invitation is attached.

The seminar will be in the morning, and the GACC Annual Meeting will be held in the afternoon. Nominations for our committee should be submitted a week in advance.

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<sup>1</sup> Submission to Airports Commission 6.15. See flight path maps [www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news](http://www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news)

<sup>2</sup> Admitted in Gatwick Master Plan July 2012. Paragraph 10.3.6

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 3.16.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraphs 2.53 – 2.54

<sup>5</sup> Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee. 23 July 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 6.12, and 6.14. Tables 7 and 8.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/airports-commission>

<sup>8</sup> See [www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news](http://www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news)

<sup>9</sup> See [www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news](http://www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news)