

# Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign

# GACC

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Press release

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## Gatwick included in short-list

This is no surprise. For the past year GACC has assumed that Gatwick would be included in the short-list of potential sites for a new runway. Now we know that only the so-called 'wide-spaced' runway option will be examined - the one that would cause most environmental damage.

Brendon Sewill, chairman of GACC, said: 'Now the battle is for real. The battle lines are drawn. Now the spotlight is on Gatwick the next step will be to examine the runway plans in detail, and it will be found that Gatwick is an unsuitable site. It is too small, it can never be a four-runway hub, and the 'constellation' concept (London with three airports each with two runways) is coming unstuck. Research shows that no other city in the world has two competing hubs.'<sup>1</sup>

GACC agrees with Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, RSPB, WWF and other national environmental organisations that any new runway cannot be reconciled with the UK's obligations under the Climate Change Act.'<sup>2</sup>

We are delighted that our friends at Stansted have had the threat to their homes and environment lifted. Over the past 10 years they have fought a good fight and won a worthy victory. Now we at Gatwick must do the same. We have done it before in 1970, 1993, and 2003 and we will do it again.

Georgia Wrighton, Director of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (Sussex) said: 'A second runway at Gatwick, together with sprawling development and urbanisation anticipated on a massive scale, would concrete over cherished open countryside. A heady cocktail of increased flights, HGVs and cars would erode the tranquillity of rural communities, and the health and quality of life of people living under its shadow. The national obsession with expansion will land a disaster on the countryside whilst making runaway climate change unstoppable. Instead of airport expansion we need genuine support for and promotion of alternatives.'

*GACC is the main environmental body concerned with Gatwick. Founded in 1968, we have as members nearly 100 Borough, District and Parish Councils and environmental groups covering about a twenty miles radius from the airport. Our committee, elected annually, represents all areas. Because we rely on rational argument and put forward constructive solutions we have had strong support in Parliament and at every level of government.*

Andy Smith, Director of CPRE Surrey: 'Surrey is already struggling to cope with being squeezed between Heathrow and Gatwick airports, with serious environmental impacts in terms of noise and air pollution, both from flights and from road traffic. These problems would become significantly worse with a new runway at either Heathrow or Gatwick, which would undoubtedly make the quality of life worse for communities across Surrey, and would lead to new pressures on the beleaguered Green Belt.'

Sewill added: 'A new runway used to full capacity would cause substantial environmental damage to all the towns and villages for many miles around Gatwick.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the usual issues of noise, pollution and climate change, one of the emerging concerns is that making Gatwick larger than Heathrow would lead to the urbanisation of much of Surrey and Sussex. Doubling the number of airport jobs plus an influx of new firms (as envisaged by the Gatwick Diamond business association) would mean that a large number of workers would be attracted into the area from the rest of the UK or from the EU, with a need for extra housing equivalent to a new town the size of Crawley.<sup>4</sup> The resulting pressure on schools, hospitals, roads and railways, and on the countryside is beginning to worry many councils. Once people recognise that the threat is real, and that a new runway is not just a strip of concrete, there will be tidal wave of opposition.

The Airports Commission will now require all the short-listed airports to produce an environmental impact assessment. GACC will be watching like a hawk to ensure that Gatwick does not try to use its expensive PR consultants to gloss over the impact.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of Global Hub Airports. JLS Consulting October 2013.

<sup>2</sup> <https://mediacentre.heathrowairport.com/imagelibrary/downloadmedia.ashx?MediaDetailsID=1879&SizeId=-1>

<sup>3</sup> Aviation Environment Federation. <http://www.aef.org.uk/?p=1651>

<sup>4</sup> [www.gacc.org.uk/the-runway-issue](http://www.gacc.org.uk/the-runway-issue)

<sup>5</sup> According to research commissioned by West Sussex County Council and the Gatwick Diamond business association. [Implications of changes to airport capacity - slides 2013](#) (page 17)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.prweek.com/article/1169601/gatwick-brings-fishburn-hedges-lca-support-second-runway-bid#disqus\\_thread#disqus\\_thread](http://www.prweek.com/article/1169601/gatwick-brings-fishburn-hedges-lca-support-second-runway-bid#disqus_thread#disqus_thread)

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