

# Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign

# GACC

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To all GACC members -27 May 2014

## New flight paths

Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) have launched a consultation on their plans to redraw many of the flight paths around Gatwick. The document is at [www.gatwickairport.com/gatwickairspaceconsultation](http://www.gatwickairport.com/gatwickairspaceconsultation)

These proposals could have a serious impact on many towns and villages around the airport, and we advise you to study them carefully. The new flight paths will potentially affect an area from Guildford to Tunbridge Wells and from Petworth to Sevenoaks.

GACC is extremely concerned about these proposals which could represent the biggest change in the noise impact of Gatwick for a generation. We will need to take time to study them in detail but our initial reaction is that -

1. Any change in flight paths causes great distress and anger because the previous peace is shattered, expectations of future peace are destroyed, houses are devalued and people are unable to move and feel imprisoned. People have paid extra for houses that are not on flight paths only to find that new flight paths are being created - without compensation.
2. One of the main motivations is GAL's desire to get more aircraft off the runway, and thus to make a larger profit.<sup>i</sup> There is no need for extra flights when Stansted is only half full.
3. The consultation covers too small an area because disturbance is experienced far beyond the noise contours, particularly in areas where background noise is low. It is a disgrace that no maps are given showing the full length of the new flight paths.<sup>ii</sup>
4. No details are given of the new point-merge system for arriving aircraft which will affect much of East and West Sussex, and part of Kent.

*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.*

5. A risk is that this consultation will set community against community. Anger should be directed at the airport, not at your neighbours.
6. The airspace is being redesigned in ignorance of what causes disturbance. The necessary research has not been done. For example, there is no evidence that concentration will cause less disturbance than dispersal. Ten flights an hour over one person may cause as much annoyance as one flight an hour over ten people.
7. The proposed new flight paths all relate to the existing runway. If ever a new Gatwick runway were to be built, all the flight paths will need to be revised, with new flight paths over areas at present peaceful. So why cause extra hassle now, when there is no urgent need for change?
8. The 60 page consultation document<sup>iii</sup> is written in technical language and is difficult for lay people to understand. GACC will be asking for a simpler version to be sent to all those under the new flight paths, and for public meetings to be held so that people can understand what is proposed.

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<sup>i</sup> GAL is a private company owned by overseas investors.

<sup>ii</sup> The reason is that this consultation is being conducted by Gatwick Airport Ltd which is responsible for flight paths below 4,000 feet. NATS (National Air Traffic Services) is responsible for flights above that height.

<sup>iii</sup> 120 pages including maps.

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