
Press release 18 May 2014

Public misled

GACC has now studied the new runway plans announced by Gatwick Airport Ltd on 13 May. Brendon Sewill, chairman of GACC said: 'They are horrendous - much larger in scale than in the recent consultation. The proposals will so infuriate local people that they will be determined to oppose the runway scheme at every stage. Any hopes that the airport may have had of building a new runway on time will have disappeared.'

The new plans are set out in a 3,200 page document that has been sent to the Airports Commission but which has not been published, denying residents a chance to examine the plans in detail. The plans were submitted even before the runway consultation was completed (closing date 16 May) thus treating over 6,000 residents with contempt (see below).

The Gatwick press summary shows that the new airport would be bigger than anything previously envisaged. The maximum number of passengers per year has gone up to 97 million compared to a maximum of 87 million in the consultation. That would make Gatwick much bigger than Heathrow today (72 million in 2013), and nearly three times as big as Gatwick today (35 million).

Pressure on road and rail

'The plans would mean nearly three times as many people travelling to or from the airport by car or train. It is nonsense for Gatwick to pretend that this could be dealt with by actions such as longer trains and improving J9 on the M23.'

The number of new jobs attributable to a new runway has jumped up to 122,000, far more than the figure of 17,500 previously forecast by the airport. It is stated that these new jobs would be spread across London and the South East but inevitably most would be concentrated around Gatwick - where there is comparatively low unemployment. According to Sewill: 'The result could only be large scale inwards migration, making the north-south divide worse. It would mean massive urbanisation and house building, and great pressure on hospitals and schools. Goodbye green fields.'

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.

Public treated with contempt

The new plans show utter disdain for the 6,000 people who have visited the runway exhibitions during the past month, and for the thousands more who have responded online. They were asked to give their view on which of three runway options was the best - or least bad. But in this latest document there is no mention of any alternative options - it is clear that Gatwick Airport Ltd have gone for the biggest.

Option 1, a close parallel runway, has gone in the bin. Option 2, with the runways used alternately to provide respite, has gone down the drain. Perhaps they are mentioned somewhere in the secret 3,200 page document, but they are not mentioned at all in the current publicity splurge.

When the consultation was launched on 4 April, GACC described it as 'Plush but phoney' - phoney because Gatwick's owners had already decided on their preferred option.

GACC has been proved 100% correct.



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