

Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign

GACC

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Press release 30 September 2014

Flight paths postponed

Gatwick admits defeat on flight paths

Gatwick Airport has announced that it is postponing the planned introduction of new flight paths.

As a result of massive opposition, the introduction of a new departure flight path to the west, outlined in a recent consultation, has been postponed. This will set an important precedent for similar new flight paths proposed at Heathrow and at Birmingham.

A new procedure for arriving aircraft - the point-merge system - proposed by NATS (National Air Traffic Services) has also been postponed in the face of widespread concern expressed across East and West Sussex.

A new flight path recently introduced over Beare Green, Holmwood, Reigate and Redhill is currently under review by the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority).

However the other new concentrated departure tracks - which have resulted in a wave of agonised complaints up to 20 miles around the airport, and the formation of several new and vocal anti-noise groups - remain in position.

Brendon Sewill, chairman of the GACC Gatwick's Big Enough campaign, said 'This is a victory, but only a partial victory so far. It's not all routes, and it's only a postponement. We want to see all new routes cancelled.'

Sally Pavey, GACC committee member and leader of CAGNE which has campaigned - powerfully and now successfully - against the trial of a new flight path over Warnham and other villages, added: 'The fight must go on.'

It is thought that Gatwick Airport bosses may have ordered the postponement because they realised that the protests were undermining their case for a new runway. But GACC will continue the protests, pointing out that a new runway, with twice as many aircraft, would be far worse than the present situation.