

BURSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman
Bob Locke

Clerk to the Council
Jeannie Ryan

October 2023

Dear Sir,

GATWICK AIRPORT NORTHERN RUNWAY DCO – 20042861

RELEVANT REPRESENTATION

Burstow Parish Council (BPC) has membership on the independent consultative body of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) and we welcome the opportunity to have registered as an interested party to make our representations on Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) proposals to bring the existing Northern Runway into routine use alongside the main runway. We are pleased to say that we were previously invited to state our views in a Scoping Opinion, sent to you on 28th September 2019. Any correspondence between then and the current date were probably only through GATCOM as we regularly have an input to the opinions expressed by them. Whilst we support the comments being expressed by the GATCOM secretariat, we feel that there are some areas where some emphasis is required by us.

Before referring to the possible individual impacts it needs to be understood what area is covered by the Parish Council.

1. Relevant to the east of the airport, the Parish starts from the edge of Copthorne village and, going due north, passes across Keepers Corner into Redehall Road and so to the centre of Smallfield. The current flightpath passes across the southern end of Redehall Road and above the listed Burstow Parish Church, less than 2 miles from touchdown.
2. However, with the Northern Runway in use on a regular basis, many more residents would be subjected to noise over a much larger area of Smallfield. This is an unsatisfactory situation as there are far less homes affected currently as none have been built under the flightpath since the airport became a commercial enterprise.
3. What is even worse is that more noise complaints are received by Gatwick Airport these days due to the number of movements even though aircraft are decidedly quieter. With the prediction by Gatwick Airport Limited, pre-pandemic that the number of ATMs would increase from 280,700 in 2017/18 to 300,000 in 2022/23, an increase of 6.9% was not very welcome for the residents close to the airport so there was some relief for the residents with the actual reduced numbers. It is to be hoped that the Department for Transport do not allow any increase in night movements when they recommend the new Night Regime in 2024 following the results of their consultations.
4. Because of the types of aircraft that use Gatwick, there are likely to be more of those that are suitable for a shorter runway so the difference of a maximum 53mppa for one runway versus 61mppa by using both is expected to exceed the difference of 8mppa on the northern runway. This figure will be much greater if the 2032 figure of 68-70mppa is achieved.
5. The residents of our Parish have been very consistent with their acceptance of the airport and its benefits and disbenefits even though they are affected by both arrivals and departures. It is unacceptable to put an extra burden on residents who moved into their current homes with the knowledge that there was only limited use of the northern runway, mainly for maintenance purposes on the main runway. Having more aircraft arriving and departing along a flightpath closer to the centre of the village is asking for complaints to commence from a new quarter, hence our request that a new bund should also be included in the north eastern part of the airport.. I am not sure that even mitigation would be acceptable with this scenario but, at least, this should be offered in some form.
6. Burstow Parish Council believes there is a need to consider the knock-on effects that using the Northern runway will bring with new housing. Even though the Tandridge Local Plan has not been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, more housing is still likely to be located in Smallfield and might conceivably be built under the flightpath of the northern runway.

7. It is understood that an airspace change process under CAP1616 will probably be unnecessary if the northern runway is brought into scheduled operation as Routes 3 and 4 will surely follow a similar SID to that of aircraft departures from the main runway soon after departure. However, if this is the case, more people than those living in the Parishes directly east and west of the short runway will be affected with the wraparound turns.
8. It is accepted that Gatwick Airport is economically very important to this area of the south east and long may it continue to serve business, jobs and customers alike but it would appear to us that the proposed increased use of the Northern runway is not a viable proposition for either Burstow Parish Council to the east or Charlwood Parish Council to the west.
9. Although not being considered in this environmental assessment, as the land to the south is being safeguarded for the possible full length second (southern) runway, it would seem more sensible to be pursuing this course of action, even though it was not recommended by either the Davies' Commission or the Government. It is apparent that another main runway will be required very soon, and before the new Heathrow third runway is completed, if the number of airline customers continues to rise.
10. Whilst the economic benefits of an expanding airport are understood, it cannot be taken in isolation. The general surface transport infrastructure gives cause for alarm as both the rail and road links are already over-crowded. The M23 Smart motorway was constructed for pre pandemic traffic but so much congestion already occurs so will be inadequate for the proposed expansion despite the protestations to the contrary that there will only be a 1% increase per year over the next 10 years.
11. Network Rail have tried to squeeze every drop of timetable utilization out of the main London-Brighton line that has included losing most of the dedicated 'premium' services of the Gatwick Express since extending many of the train services to Brighton. This service must be allowed to return to a dedicated service in any expansion.
12. Some joined-up thinking will be necessary with government departments in order to improve the surface access infrastructure mentioned above. Both the A22 and A23 roads need upgrading to dual carriageways in many places in order to help avoid the massively increased use of country lanes that is already being experienced.
13. In summary, Burstow Parish Council wishes to comment more fully on the two issues of noise and road infrastructure.

NOISE OVER MORE RESIDENTS WITHIN THE PARISH

As mentioned in the Introduction, relevant to the east of the airport, the Parish starts from the edge of Cophorne village and, going due north, passes across Keepers Corner into Redehall Road and so to the centre of Smallfield. The current flightpath passes across the southern end of Redehall Road and above the listed Burstow Parish Church, less than 2 miles from touchdown.

However, with the Northern Runway in use on a regular basis, many more residents will be subject to noise over a much larger area of Smallfield. Apart from other similar issues raised earlier, the north western part of the village is subjected to much departure noise with westerly departures as they are affected across relatively flat land from Gatwick so are particularly disturbed when the departure programme begins in earnest from 06.00hrs. As the northern runway will be closer and with the increased number of flights, these residents will be even more affected than at present. It is for this reason that we believe that Gatwick Airport should also commit to a bund at the north eastern end of the airport to alleviate these noise effects.

What is even worse is that more noise complaints are received by Gatwick Airport these days due to the number of movements even though aircraft are decidedly quieter. The airport's prediction was that the number of ATMs would increase from 280,700 in 2017/18 to 300,000 in 2022/23, an increase of 6.9%. However, the pandemic affected most of the predictions but the 2023 uptake was greater than expected, probably in the upper 80 percentile of the 2019 figure. If predictions get back on track, it will not be very welcome for the residents close to the airport when they anticipate reaching 375,000 to 390,000 ATMs by 2032/33 with 68 to 70 mppa. This would be an enormous increase of passengers from this year. It is to be hoped that the Department for Transport do not allow any increase in night movements following the Night Flight Consultation process with a new regime ready to roll in 2024/5

The residents of our Parish have been very consistent with their acceptance of the airport and its benefits and disbenefits even though they are affected by both arrivals and departures. To put an extra burden on more residents who did move into their current homes with knowledge of where the aircraft were likely to continue flying is asking for complaints to commence from a new quarter. We are not sure that even

mitigation would be acceptable with this scenario but, at least, this should be offered in some form due to the loss in value of properties.

RAIL AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

We feel that the rail and road infrastructure is inadequate south of the M25 and some joined up thinking is required by all government departments, both nationally and locally.

1. Whilst Gatwick Airport provides huge economic benefits to the region there is a lack of infrastructure investment to support it. There is one main railway line between London and Brighton that runs via the airport and must be the busiest line in the country with London bound commuters as well as the airport passengers and staff. Gatwick have been working hard to meet their environmental objectives of achieving a high rate of public transport usage so the airport plays an important role in this. We were delighted that a badly needed huge £150m investment in the airport station and its construction is nearing completion and should be more of a welcome to foreign visitors seeing the United Kingdom for the first time. Of this investment, GAL provided £40million. However, the incentive of using the dedicated Gatwick Express service has been removed for much of the 24-hour period since many of the trains now travel between London and Brighton and deny airport passengers the comfort they deserve when paying premium fares.

With all the housing construction taking place all around and nearby the airport, even more passengers will want to use the overcrowded trains apart from all the extra airline passengers. The regulatory Body should be considering how to increase the number of lines through an alternative route for flexibility purposes as well as catering for the extra passengers.

2. The road infrastructure needs a radical overhaul as it is not fit for purpose for this area. Little or no infrastructure investment is being provided by central government in probably the most economically productive area of the UK. Great play was made of the M23 motorway being upgraded to a SMART motorway but that was long overdue for pre-pandemic requirements, let alone with another 20 million passengers passing through the airport in the next decade together with residents in all the new homes being constructed.

Burstow Parish Council are supportive of the GATCOM statement regarding the A22, A24 and A264 roads and their inadequacy but already we are also very concerned with the increasing number of vehicles passing through the village along B and C or even unclassified roads – and that includes large lorries trying to avoid hold-ups on other A roads. This is very dangerous in a very rural area and many drivers going to/from the airport could be unused to the type of traffic using these roads and lanes. Apart from the M23 there are only two north to south A-class roads (A22 and A23) neither of which is substantial and both are heavily utilised, so traffic understandably looks for alternative routes. These A roads need to be upgraded to dual carriageways and certainly, the A22 from junction 6 of the M25 would be feeding into the A264 as an alternative A route to reach the airport if there are problems on the M25 and/or M23. Furthermore, as traffic travelling on the M25 from the east are often prevented from leaving at junction 7 the road network as described above has every likelihood of being heavily utilised and the road construction is not adequate for an enormous amount of traffic along these lanes, apart from the danger. The A25 from junction 6 might also be used as a diversion but it will still be the lanes converging on Smallfield that will be expected to take the extra burden.

Hence the call for some joined-up thinking about road improvements which cannot be left to either Gatwick Airport or Surrey County Council to provide the financial resources.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Jones
Burstow Parish Council
(GATCOM & NATMAG Representative)

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National Infrastructure Planning

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