GATWICK EXPANSION

Gatwick's own figures prove it should not be allowed

Gatwick Airport's application to bring its standby runway into routine use should be denied because the airport's geographical location in England will cause huge congestion costs, to the detriment of the national economy. There is an alternative that will benefit the economy and Gatwick's owners.

Why will these be huge congestion costs?

According to the Department of Transport's Annual Road Traffic Estimates 202: pages 22 and 23: Gatwick Airport's catchment area **already has:**

1. The five local authorities with the highest level of traffic in the UK
2. Four of the five busiest stretches of motorway in the UK – all on the M25
3. The M23 to Gatwick is marked on the DfT's map (page 23) as one of the busiest stretches of road.
4. The M23 from the M25 to Gatwick has been widened to SMART motorway status (i.e. an extra carriageway added). This must have been done because Gatwick and National Highways expect extra traffic demands on the motorway network arising from Gatwick's growth.

SUMMARY:

TRAFFIC:

1. **Based upon figures taken from its own 2019 Master Plan, Gatwick's expansion will:**

- **create extra car journeys on the existing regional and national road network south of London as follows:**
    - **if average 4 people per vehicle: from 2.655m rising to 3.343m extra journeys per year**
    - **if average one person per vehicle: from 10.623m rising to 13.373m extra journeys per year**
    - **The average occupancy will be somewhere between these figures – see detail below – so the extra journeys will be greater than 2.655m.**
- **create extra heavy goods vehicle journeys over the road network as follows:**
    - **if all extra cargo tonnage carried by 44 tonne lorries: 5,068 extra journeys per year**
    - **if only 66% carried by such lorries (per Government statistics referenced below) and 33% by, say, 26 tonne vehicles, then 6,261 extra journeys per year.**
    - **It is likely that still smaller lorries may be used as well, further increasing the number of journeys per year.**
- **Assuming the lower figures, namely 2.655m car journeys and 5,068 lorries, this means at least 7,274 extra cars per day and about 14 lorries per day, total extra 7,288 vehicles per day**
    - **14 lorries per day doesn't sound much but:**
        - **to secure just 14 lorries of cargo per day, Gatwick creates 7,288 extra vehicles per day**
        - **to illustrate this in terms of congestion: parked nose to tail these extra 7,288 vehicles amount to an extra 18 miles of traffic queue per day (more than twice the distance from the M25 to Gatwick airport)**
    - **How real is the congestion issue across the road network?**
        - **The worst choke points on the M25 carry 100,000 vehicles per day each way between junction 13 and 14 (Heathrow) and 90,000 each**

way at Dartford. Adding an extra 7,288 vehicles per day to these totals seems insignificant, but you are adding them to already congested roads, not to empty ones.

- **7,288 is an extra 7.3 % of the junction 13/14 traffic and an extra 8% of the Dartford traffic. These percentages are higher at other M25 points**
- **Not all will go on the M25; some will go only on local roads**
- **The extra vehicle journeys – which are on the low side of estimates – (see detail below) have caused at least 10 local Councils to register formal complaints.**

CATCHMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

2. **At least 26.3% of Gatwick's claimed South East catchment population is on the opposite side of London and closer to other airports both geographically and by journey time**
3. **Much more than 26.3% of the London area population is closer to other airports than to Gatwick.**

CONCLUSION

Congestion is the enemy of Connectivity.
Why build a hub airport nearly the size of Heathrow's 2019 passenger numbers of 80.9m (https://www.heathrow.com/company/about-heathrow/facts-and-figures) in that part of England that is separated from the rest of the country by the great agglomeration of London, hemmed in by already congested roads and motorways and where at least 26% of its claimed south east catchment area and a greater % of its London catchment area are closer to other airports?

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ALTERNATIVE

The government is apparently committed to spending 32bn on infrastructure improvements mostly across 'Network North' covering a population totalling over 14m (East and West Midlands, and Northwest) with the second, third and fourth largest cities in the UK.

- **The North needs connectivity; the area south of London is already heavily congested.**
- **This public money could be leveraged to improve national connectivity if the Government arranged for the private owners of Gatwick to do a joint venture to create a hub airport in the North to align with the Network North programme.**

DETAIL:

In its Master Plan of 2019 (MP2019) (the latest that its Press Office could send me on October 20th 2023), Gatwick uses numerous statistics to justify its plans.

These figures do just the opposite: they prove the case for preventing Gatwick from expanding.

Road Traffic

1. Gatwick predicts that if the Inspector approves the plan, passenger numbers will increase from 45.7m per year in 2017/2018 to 68-70 million by 2032/3 and 75 million (73.9% growth on 45.7m) by the late 2030s. (MP2019, p.87 5.3.13)
2. Gatwick says that the planned road improvements to the North and South terminal roundabouts and the extra lane on the M23 Smart motorway between the airport and the M25 will increase the road network capacity by 30%, and is based upon the traffic modelling up to 2028. (MP20-19 4.4.17).
3. These figures "do not cater for the standby runway scenario", but will give capacity for 60m passengers per annum (mppa) which is simply the capacity of the existing runway excluding routine use of the standby one (MP2019 4.4.6. , 5.2.8 and 5.2.14)
4. Gatwick plans to increase rail mode usage to 45% from 39%. (MP2019 5.2.15)

5. **Gatwick's current rail mode usage is 39% - leaving 61% of 45.7m passenger journeys (27.877m) to be made by road.**
6. **If Gatwick increases its rail mode to 45% and has routine use of the standby runway, then 55% of 70m rising to 55% of 75m road passenger journeys will be needed. This is 38.5m rising to 41.25m, resulting in a range of an extra 2.655m to up to an extra 13.373m vehicle journeys per year from 2032/3 and late 2030s – depending on vehicle occupancy.**
3. **2.655m probably much too low, even if many coaches and people carriers are used, because it does not allow for the journeys of taxis or friends/relatives delivering and collecting passengers. For every such delivery and collection, 4 journeys rather than 2 would be needed.**
4. **The actual number of journeys is also affected by the number and turnover of on-airport (not off-airport) car-parking spaces**
5. **Even so, Gatwick's local and M23 road improvements cater only for 60mppa. What other works will be needed?**

Air Cargo Traffic

5. Air cargo is planned to increase from 102,000 to 220,000 tonnes per year (MP2019 5.2.7)
6. This figure is increased to 305,000 tonnes per year (Gatwick's "long term plan" economic growth section https://www.gatwickairport.com/company/masterplan.html - 'benefits of the northern runway plan')
7. **Assuming this increase is carried 100% by 44 tonne lorries, (the maximum weight permitted in the UK), then at least an extra 5,068 lorry journeys will be needed per year.**
8. **According to the government's domestic road freight statistics UK 2020, 66% of freight was carried by large articulated lorries – not all of them 44 tonners. Even if this 66% consists entirely of 44 tonne vehicles, then allowing for the 33% of journeys by smaller lorries, the actual number of lorry journeys will be hundreds possibly thousands more than 5,068.**
9. **How will those extra lorries be accommodated by the M25 and local roads?**
10. **Congestion costs of the Air Cargo:**
    1. **Extra 2.655m cars and 5,068 lorries (lowest estimates)**
    2. **= extra 7,274 cars and 14 lorries per day = extra 7,288 vehicles per day**
    3. **Each car 4m long (about a Renault Clio) and lorry 12m long (max permitted length of 44 tonner) = 18.2 miles nose-to-tail length queue – about twice from M25 to Gatwick airport.**
    4. **To generate just 14 lorries of cargo per day, Gatwick has to create 7,288 extra vehicle journeys per day.**
    5. **How expensive is that to the nation?**

Rail Traffic

7. Gatwick says that 19.4m passenger journeys were made from the station in 2016/2017, making it the busiest station in the South East outside London. (MP2019 4.4.22) Working on daylight hours only (i.e. 12 hours per day) this is an average of 4,429 passengers per hour per year.
8. This capacity will be increased to "nearly 30,000 passengers per hour overall" (MP2019 4.4.21). Even on a 12 hour per day assumption (i.e. omitting night journeys) this implies capacity for 131.4m journeys per year – namely more than twice the 67m population of the UK in 2023.
9. **How credible is this? How many passengers will actually use the rail network?**

Congestion

9. How real is the wider congestion argument?
10. **Per www.m25traffic.co.uk, the congestion around Heathrow (junctions 13-14) arises because of the airport generated traffic: commuters and passengers.**
11. **The road carries 200,000 vehicles per day, average each way 100,000**

12. **The Dartford Crossing carries 180,000 vehicles on its busiest days (Highways England), this is average 90,000 each way.**
13. **Adding the lowest estimate of 7,288 vehicles (see above) to these routes seems comparatively insignificant, but you are adding those vehicles to an already congested road, not to an empty one. At the worst, the addition could be 7.2% of the total around Heathrow or 8% of the total at Dartford per day.**
15. **Of course some of the road traffic from Gatwick will not go on to the motorways, nor will it all go via Dartford nor all via Heathrow. It may not go on the motorways at all, in which case it will increase the traffic on the smaller roads, so the overall effect of congestion will be shifted around, rather than reduced, with corresponding impact at those junctions where the extra traffic lands – the old issue of 'traffic dumping'.**
16. **At least 10 local councils have raised complaints about the planned expansion causing greater congestion.**

The wider geographical context

9. The Government has stated (DfT UK Aviation Forecast 2017) that there is a need for more airport capacity in the South East of England.
10. The Airports Commission concluded that this should be at Heathrow because that airport is the better geographical hub than the other options, including Gatwick.
11. With its rail links through London to stations out to Cambridge, Peterborough, Milton Keynes and Bedford and planned to Oxford, Gatwick is seeking to redefine its geographical location.
12. **But out of the total population of 9.139m (2021/2022) in the formal "South East" region, 2.411m (26.3%) live north of London (Bucks, Oxon, Berks) and are closer to Heathrow, Birmingham, Luton and Stansted airports than to Gatwick both geographically and by journey time.**
13. **A still larger percentage of the 9.3m population of London (2020 figures) is closer to Heathrow, Stansted, Luton, and London City than to Gatwick, especially with the opening of the Elisabeth Line.**

Private and Public funding

19. **The government should not allow Gatwick to expand just because Gatwick can do so with private money:**
20. **First, as Gatwick says in its Master Plan, government and state authorities are already spending on the local infrastructure, which covers capacity only up to 2028/2029, i.e. excluding the expansion arising from the use of the standby runway, so even now it's not all private money, and what more public money will be needed beyond 2028/2029?**
21. **Secondly, the huge growth in Gatwick will create congestion costs across the wider economy which other businesses and the Government will have to pick up in due course either by way of lower economic growth or extra infrastructure costs.**
22. **So an apparent 'saving' in public funds now is not really a saving at all, it will instead create future obligations to mitigate the externalities which Gatwick will have loaded on to the rest of the nation.**