

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Gatwick Airport](#)  
**Subject:** Second Runway at Gatwick Airport Planning Application.  
**Date:** 12 October 2023 12:10:12

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Dear Inspector,

I wish to raise the following concerns about the proposed second runway at Gatwick airport. There are a number of issues that do not make sense in the proposal and require far greater explanation and detail from the company. Currently I feel the proposal is unsound and flawed so has to be rejected.

I believe the estimates of flight growth produced by the company are highly optimistic and are more an aspiration than a realistic forecast. They are assuming COVID never happened and air transport will not only return to pre-COVID levels but continue to increase at the same rate as the pre-COVID levels, both of these assumptions are grossly optimistic and based on evidence to date unrealistic. It is well known that video meetings have in many cases taken the place of what were face to face meetings resulting in a significant drop in business travel. Video meetings and working from home have become more common and acceptable as it offers considerable savings in travel cost and save time spent on travelling. One only has to look at hotel bookings to see the marked reduction in business travel and airlines are also saying business travel has not returned to pre-COVID levels nor do they expect it ever will. I strongly suspect much of the air traffic analysis done by Gatwick was done prior to COVID but they have not updated this to take into account the short and long-term impact COVID is having on airlines and the travel industry in general.

Following COVID many of the long-haul routes and operators no longer use Gatwick and their activities have been consolidated at Heathrow, this reflects the drop in demand. There does not appear to be any significant return to Gatwick of these airlines and routes and without supporting statements from the airlines the air traffic growth figure has to be treated as a wish, it is also something totally outside of the control of the airport company. While Gatwick is saying they hope airlines will return without evidence from the airlines to support the claims of the airport company I fail to see how they can be treated as anything other than speculation. While the business case for a development might not be considered as a direct material consideration from a planning point of view given the nature of the application there must be an evidence-based growth figure that has been peer reviewed by an independent body and accepted before it can be treated as valid. I feel Gatwick Airport will be increasingly dominated by short haul scheduled flights operated by the lower cost airlines and holiday air traffic. However, it does appear some airlines are cutting back the routes they fly and the frequency of flights due to demand reductions.

Of greater concern is how, if they are realistic, the increased number of passengers will get to and from the airport. It is a fact that the train lines out of London through East Croydon are already at capacity. Longer trains with extended platforms have already been

introduced in an attempt to overcome these passenger capacity issue but there is a clear limit on what this can achieve. Having a new station at the airport with increased passenger capacity cannot solve the problem if there are not the trains available to use the station. Given the large increase in on-site parking being proposed by Gatwick demonstrates that the airport knows and accepts that rail travel is not the solution and many many passengers will still drive to the airport. No business would fund the construction carparks that are not needed. Added to this the local area is already plagued with the setting up of other parking sites that offer a lower cost option compared to parking at the airport. Many of these do not have planning permission and the local councils are faced with the cost of planning enforcement and local residents the inconvenience of these parking sites. It is known that some of these off-site parking organisations leave vehicles on residential roads in the area.

The airport has failed to accept that already the M25 and M23 are at peak times of the day working above capacity. If you use these roads during these periods traffic is crawling along in a stop start fashion. It also only takes minor incident on these roads to bring the traffic to a standstill at which point drivers divert to the other local roads many of which are country lanes totally unsuitable for high levels of traffic. As a local resident I do not need to be told there is an issue on the M25 or M23 I can tell by the increase traffic levels down the narrow country lanes. I do not believe Gatwick have addressed the road traffic issue realistically and have assumed the M23/M25 have the capacity and only the enter and exit routes from the airport will need improving.

While the airport can insist the transportation of the heavy materials they will be needed must only use the main roads it would be impractical for the airport to impose and control what routes the many construction workers needed on the site will use to travel to work. Given that many of these workers will need tools and equipment they will need to bring their vehicles on the construction site and there is no the option of an off-site compound/parking for workers vehicles with bus service to the construction site. As the workers will not wish to risk getting stuck on the M25/M23 they will choose you use the lanes and minor roads in the areas to travel to and from the site.

There is also the uncertainty of the routes aircraft will use as these are still under consideration and until these are known it is very difficult/impossible for local residents to understand the full implications of increased noise and pollution on them. The aircraft routes need to be known and before comments can be made and until the flight routes are known any consultation cannot be fair and balanced.

In summary I do not think the air traffic growth forecast is realistic and I do not think the airport has worked out a valid ground transport strategy that would cope with the large increase in passenger numbers. Due to these key factors the application should be refused. I am making these comments as a local resident but I am also a Tandridge District councillor and some or all of these comments might be part of the formal response from Tandridge District Council.

Councillor Mick Gillman

Member for Burstow Horne and Outwood ward Tandridge District Council