

I'm a former partner in one of the biggest firms of accountants in the city; I spent over 20 years assessing business plans. I'm not an expert in the business of the airport, but I'm aware that there are qualified experts who cannot make sense of the Gatwick economics in the DCA application. I know that in future hearings, their evidence will be shared with you. I understand the expansion will have a significant economic impact, however this is entirely reliant on aircraft for which Gatwick take no responsibility for in their calculations for negative impact, on surface transport, emissions, etc. I urge the panel to have detailed regard to what precisely is the real upside given the downsides on which you've heard so far and will come to hear a lot of over the next few weeks and months. Business plans are nearly always drafted for the benefit of the business, with positive upsides and underestimates of the true costs of the negatives. The biggest questions are then, "so what are the risk factors and how exactly are these mitigated". If the answer is an unknown based on flimsy reasoning, this should present a huge red flag to the likely outcome.

I'm also the vice-chair of the LEP; although I submitting this on in my individual capacity, in that role I hear from lots of businesses who have scarcity of employees. Gatwick has been a reducing contributor to that over time, as they publicise their improvements in productivity. The incremental jobs claimed by their submissions does not give sufficient detail to show how economies of scale and further digitisation of the airport operation impact on current staff numbers and therefore reduce overall estimated gains in jobs. I hear from our neighbours of the succesful applications for Southampton Bristol and Heathrow airports, as well as those for Manston and Luton. I have not seen any evidence in Gatwick's submission that none of the assumed increase in passenger numbers are not already catered for in other airports calculations: after all, there was no need identified for both Heathrow and Gatwick to have increased capacity only a few years ago... using the same data I believe Gatwick are relying on now for their estimates. The public is told repeatedly Gatwick will be a net contributor to the local economy, however you're hearing they aren't meeting any costs of the damage it's going to cause, that's for councils and the public to suck up. The sustainable fuels and other alternatives for noise reduction and emissions have been talked about for many years; there's no evidence that will be fully in place for 2050.... Even if you believe the expansion will be needed, the negative impacts which Gatwick say will be mitigated fully, should be dealt with fully before the new runway should be allowed to operate. The economic benefit for shareholders of Gatwick airport should not be provided at the expense of those living near the airport.