

Written Summary of Oral Submission by Mole Valley district Council

Open Floor Hearing 1 (28 February 2024)

1. Mole Valley District Council is a host authority to the DCO process. The administrative border runs along the northern and north western edge of the Airport and application site.
2. The Council will be utilising the issue specific sessions to present its case. The Open Floor Hearing is being utilised to summarise the Council's general position on the DCO at this time.
3. Throughout the NRP process, Mole Valley District Council has been constantly engaged in the pre and post application opportunities where they have arisen. However, as set out in both its individual [AoC-013] and joint [AoC-020] Adequacy of Consultation Statements, these opportunities have resulted in little change or response to the concerns the Council has raised.
4. While it is accepted that the Examining Authority has found the legislative requirements for pre-application consultation have been met (S.42, S.47 and S.48), the legislation is technical and to comply with the requirements says nothing about the efficacy of consultation and whether it has been meaningful and successful. The Council do not believe the Applicant's efforts achieved this and the process and quality of the scheme has been impacted as a result.
5. The Council does not feel that the Applicant has approached consultation in a way which recognises the concerns and uncertainty a project of this scale has caused within the community and the steps taken merely to meet the basic requirements and not to gain and action valid feedback.
6. In terms of the proposals the Council's main concerns can be summarised as:
 - Insufficient economic and need case for the expansion;
 - Insufficient consideration of noise impacts, management or mitigation;
 - Insufficient consideration of air quality impacts, management or mitigation; and an over-reliance on the benefits of untested future technology;
 - Insufficient consideration and provision of additional public transport or initiatives that will encourage and secure modal shift, including bus and rail;
 - Concerns over the cumulative impacts of wider airspace change;
 - Concerns regarding the tranquillity assessments for landscape including the Surrey Hills National Landscape which is currently undergoing a boundary review and if the Secretary of State agrees, will be notably expanded; and
 - Concerns regarding the quality and deliverability of the Economic Skills and Business Strategy.
7. It is argued by the Applicant through its Planning Statement [APP-245] that there will be a national and local economic benefits to the airport expansion and these assertions are being questioned by the Council and others through this examination.
8. It is considered that the need and economic case for the scheme has been overstated and it is therefore logical to assume that so must be the benefits. Unless justified, the scheme

cannot be considered to comply with Section 104(7) of the Planning Act 2008, in demonstrating that the benefits of the scheme will outweigh the adverse impacts.

9. Like many other authority areas, Mole Valley is just one local authority where communities and the environment will be impacted by a multitude of adverse impacts. Through this examination the panel will receive information on how the assessment of and mitigation for areas of concerns will result in detrimental outcomes for Mole Valley communities, their health, wellbeing and quality of life, if the scheme is consented in its current form.
10. Simply put, it is the Council position that the proposals before the examination, as presented are not good enough and the efforts of the scheme represent a 'bare minimum' approach to the provision of nationally significant infrastructure. It is very much hoped that through this examination the Applicant will be held more keenly to the high standards that should be expected of scheme of such a significant scale, of which it has consistently fallen short.
11. The Council welcomes the opportunity of the hearing sessions to raise our concerns on the proposals and supports the involvement of Mole Valley parishes, the community and residents who have registered as interested parties to ensure they have their say in this process.
12. If this application is to be viewed in any other way other than negatively, this application must be justified and the negative impacts mitigated. If this cannot be achieved then the Application should not be supported and Gatwick should remain a single runway, two terminal operation.
13. End.