

Gatwick Northern Runway Project, DCO Examination Procedure

Post Hearing Submission by the Surrey Climate Commission, following the Open Floor Hearing on Wednesday 28 February 2024

The Surrey Climate Commission opposes this DCO application.

The Surrey Climate Commission is a partnership which brings together civic groups, the public sector, academic institutions and businesses from across Surrey, to work collaboratively to reach a carbon neutral future as soon as possible. The Commission's members comprise over 100 community groups across Surrey. We are part of a network of Climate Commissions across the country. The views presented at the DCO hearings are those of the Climate Commission, and do not necessarily represent the views of all partner groups and organisations.

Across the South East there are many businesses, public sector organisations, and community groups and thousands of individuals giving vast amounts of time and effort to live more sustainably and reduce our impact on our planet. Many of them volunteer their time and effort for free. Yet the results of all their efforts will be overwhelmed by the environmental impact of this project.

We are all aware that environmental limits are being exceeded, with accelerating increases in global temperatures and a breakdown of our climate and ecosystems. We know this is because too much carbon dioxide and other pollutants are being released into our atmosphere. We know that the use of fossil fuels is the prime contributor. It's not only the world's scientists that agree on that, but governments across the globe.

This project to expand Gatwick, to increase the number of flights, the operations needed to keep the airport running, and cars accessing the airport, will significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions. This will have a negative impact on the ability of the UK government to deliver its Net Zero strategy, stay within its legally binding carbon budget and meet its international climate commitments.

The government's own advisers on emissions targets are clear on airport expansion. The UK Climate Change Committee recommended "no net expansion of UK airports to ensure aviation can achieve the required pathway for UK aviation emissions."¹ It further noted that "no airport expansions should proceed until a UK-wide capacity management framework is in place to annually assess and, if required, control sector CO₂ emissions and non-CO₂ effects."² Why is that advice being ignored?

We note and support points raised by the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign on several aspects of this project, including:

¹ Climate Change Committee (2020) *Sixth Carbon Budget Advice*.

² Climate Change Committee (2023) *Progress in Reducing Emissions: 2023 Report to Parliament*

- The need for expansion.
- The economic assessment and the impact on jobs.
- Climate change.
- The impact of noise and night flights.
- The impact on water, flooding, ecology and air quality.
- The impacts of construction.

At this Open Hearing the Climate Commission raises particular concerns regarding the surface access proposals. The impact of the additional surface transport journeys is significant, and should be assessed against national transport targets and policies, and host local authority transport plans and climate strategies.

In Surrey about 45% of greenhouse gas emissions are from surface transport, and about two-thirds due to car use. Gatwick's **mode share targets**³ fail to prevent a **growth in car use**⁴ for surface access. If the project were to proceed then we would seek the adoption of higher targets for public transport and active travel. We would also like more clarity on the parking strategy and how increased off-airport parking will be prevented, and would like to see more detail on the active travel proposals. We support the points on active travel in the representations by Mole Valley Cycle Forum and Charlwood Parish Council.

Modelling of the increased traffic volumes show **increases in local journey times**,⁵ which will impose inconvenience and disruption to people in the local area.

In contrast to its planned investment in road infrastructure, Gatwick is proposing only **limited or non-specific investment in sustainable transport**⁶. Our view is that the surface transport investment priorities should place a greater focus on sustainable transport.

The project will increase **demand pressure on London-Brighton mainline**⁷ trains beyond planned additional capacity. Improvements to accommodate rail demand growth are planned by the rail industry to 2029, but not beyond. No increased rail capacity is planned or funded by Gatwick. Modelling for this project shows increases in the numbers of people standing on London-Brighton mainline trains. Gatwick's reports wave this aside as insignificant. We would ask each extra passenger forced to stand on these trains whether they think it's insignificant.

³ Gatwick DCO document APP-090 Surface Access Commitments, paragraph 4.2.1.

⁴ Gatwick DCO document APP-258 Transport Assessment Report, Tables 8.6.4 & 8.6.8.

⁵ Gatwick DCO document APP-258 Transport Assessment Report, sections 12.5 & 13.5.

⁶ Gatwick DCO document APP-090 Surface Access Commitments, section 5.2.

⁷ Gatwick DCO document APP-258 Transport Assessment Report, section 9.8