

Thank you, panel, for granting me the chance to speak today. My name is Brett North, and I am the Chief Executive of the Gatwick Diamond Initiative, a business-led partnership that collaborates with businesses, business groups, and local, regional and national governments to sustain the future of the Gatwick Diamond economy.

The Northern Runway project is an important catalyst to drive new era of prosperity for our communities. It will bring opportunities promoting employment, prosperity and career opportunities for at least a generation to come.

GDI is here NOT just to advocate for the proposed Gatwick Airport northern runway but to make a case for the transformative power of this strategic investment in our region. This project heralds a gateway to securing prosperity for future economic resilience and sustainability in the face of contemporary and future challenges.

The Northern Runway project of Gatwick Airport is projected to create an additional 14,000 jobs across the regional economy, 3,000 directly at the airport, but many more in the surrounding Diamond region. We are a region that has pockets of deprivation and unemployment and where, even in the more affluent areas, we see high streets and other traditional employment struggling.

Beyond this lies a £2.2 billion short-term boost to the local economy, delivering careers and training as the regional business community scrutinises Gatwick's continued initiatives to enhance local participation in its supply chain.

This project and its associated £1 billion uplift in the economy is currently almost alone in region as a future strategic approach to sustaining business activity in this region, the Northern Runway project is a catalyst to inspire further investment and alleviate these pressing issues.

This investment isn't just about numbers; it's about opportunities for growth and development within our community.

Our region is stressed to pivot further towards a more global trade outlook as reflected by UK government strategy. We are challenged to face that local business challenges are driven by global shifts and many of these markets are only accessible via air.

We need to see further Collaboration and Global Connectivity. The business community has worked with the airport to establish new routes in the Persian Gulf, and low-cost routes to North America are offering businesses cost-effective access and reciprocal tourism and investment opportunities.

In conclusion, the responsible expansion of Gatwick Airport is more than just the physical structure of this project; it is a potential catalyst for regional transformation. It promises to enhance our economic resilience and international connectivity and safeguard an economic future through strategic investment and the undoubted innovation historically the Gatwick Diamond has seen. Across the

Gatwick Diamond, businesses are looking at how they can transform to meet the challenges they face; we need to balance how we can shape this opportunity into a thriving, resilient future for the Gatwick Diamond region and beyond. I Thank you for granting me an audience.