

As someone who has worked in Gatwick for the past 20 years, I stand before you today to advocate for the second runway expansion at Gatwick Airport. Throughout my career, I have experienced the diverse sectors of this bustling hub, from retail to transportation, security, and now running my own guest house. With this comprehensive perspective, I firmly believe that the expansion of Gatwick's runway is not only crucial for the airport's growth but also for the livelihoods of the people and the communities it serves, particularly in the south east of England.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating, causing significant job losses and economic uncertainty. Gatwick Airport, being one of the largest employers in the region, has not been immune to this hardship. The expansion of the runway presents a unique opportunity to revitalize the local economy, creating a multitude of new jobs and fostering a renewed sense of hope and prosperity for the people in our community.

The construction of the second runway will not only create employment opportunities during the development phase but will also generate a vast number of jobs once operational. From engineers and construction workers to airline staff and hospitality personnel, the expansion will provide a wide range of employment options for individuals with diverse skill sets and backgrounds. This means that people who have been adversely affected by the pandemic will have a chance to rebuild their lives and secure a stable income to support themselves and their families.

Furthermore, the expansion of Gatwick Airport's runway will have a ripple effect on the surrounding areas. Local businesses, including my own guest house, have experienced a severe downturn due to the decline in tourism and travel. A thriving airport will attract more visitors, boosting the demand for accommodation, restaurants, and other services in the region. This, in turn, will create a positive domino effect, benefiting other sectors of the economy and revitalizing the local community.

Beyond economic considerations, Gatwick's expansion will also have broader social and environmental impacts. The growth of the airport will facilitate improved connectivity, allowing our community to connect to the world and fostering cultural exchange, business partnerships, and tourism.

In conclusion, the second runway expansion at Gatwick Airport is not just about bricks and concrete; it is about rebuilding lives, restoring economic stability, and fostering a thriving community. As someone who has witnessed the challenges faced by our region firsthand, I implore you to consider the long-term benefits that this expansion will bring to the people of Sussex, Surrey, Kent and London. Let us seize this opportunity to create a brighter future for our community and ensure that Gatwick remains at the forefront of aviation excellence.

Thank you.