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Subject: Gatwick Second Runway

Categories: Deadline

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Dear Sirs

This is a transcript of what I said when I spoke at the Open Floor Hearing on 2 May.

"Hi. My name is Adrian Lee and I live in Horsham. I am representing myself. I'm one of Sir Jeremy Quin's constituents and notwithstanding that, I am here very much in favour of an expanded Gatwick Airport.

I've spent over 30 years of my life in aviation; firstly in the military and since then in a range of civilian occupations. That has given me the perspective to see at first hand the immense economic benefits this industry can deliver not only for our region, but for UK PLC as a whole.

The expansion of Gatwick Airport will be a major economic catalyst. It promises to create thousands of jobs, stimulate local businesses, and attract greater international investment to our region.

An expanded Gatwick means not only more direct flights, but also enhanced global connectivity which will make the UK an even more attractive hub for international business and tourism.

Moreover, with this expansion comes the opportunity to further modernize our infrastructure. This isn't just about accommodating more passengers; it's about refining the way we travel. Updated facilities and increased flight options will improve the travel experience for passengers and provide economic benefits through more competitive airfares and services.

But the first and foremost benefit of Gatwick's expansion is the significant boost to our local and national economy.

The projected investment in our region is around £2.2b! Who else is planning to spend that much money in our local economy?

With the creation of thousands of jobs, will bring a surge in employment opportunities. These jobs will range from construction to high-tech positions, spanning various sectors and skill levels, and will ensure a broad-based benefit to our workforce.

Furthermore, an expanded Gatwick will enhance our global connectivity.

By increasing the number of destinations and flights, we open new doors for business and leisure travellers alike. This improved connectivity will attract more tourists, increasing spending in our local businesses, from hotels and restaurants to retail and services. The ripple effect of this spending will invigorate every corner of our economy.

In essence, expanding Gatwick Airport is about seizing a strategic opportunity to fuel our economic engine, to enhance our standing in the international community, and to offer unprecedented travel facilities to millions more passengers.

This project is a beacon of growth, opportunity, and prosperity and in my view it should be seized with both hands. The direct contribution to UK GDP from aviation is well over £5 billion. It is responsible for over 1.5 million jobs.

In 2022 alone, around 200 million passengers travelled internationally to or from the UK. By contrast, there were just 2 million passengers in 1950. That's a 200-fold increase in the last 75 years!

And it's forecast to be over 300 million and beyond by 2030.

Yet despite this incredible growth and the associated contributions to UK GDP, in all that time this country has built only one additional civilian runway - in Manchester in the year 2000. Nearly a quarter of a century ago!

What a damning statistic. Let's embrace this fantastic opportunity and just do it."

In addition, I would like to say that we simply need to get on with this. Those agitating against this much-needed expansion are doing so on the basis of some demonstrably ridiculous arguments.

Ramblers complaining that walking near the airport is spoilt by aircraft noise! I mean, seriously? They have the whole rest of Kent, Sussex and Surrey - go there!

People running minority protest groups who choose to live under the approach and departure path to Gatwick and then complain they hear aircraft noise! Again, live somewhere else.

It's time we stopped listening to the anti-everything brigade and actually got on and delivered big infrastructure projects in this country in timeframes that don't get measured in decades.

And on the subject of aircraft noise, let me just say this. I live in Horsham and aircraft regularly fly overhead. They are barely audible. I have more noise 'pollution' from teenagers on mopeds and idiots doing doughnuts in the Tesco car park at weekends.

Modern aircraft are getting quieter and quieter. From Stage 2 noise regulations, through Stage 3 (Chapter 3) and Stage 4 (Chapter 4) and now Stage 5 (Chapter 14), the noise footprint of modern aircraft has reduced significantly over the last 30 years and will continue to do so through the use of high bypass ratios and improved aerodynamics.

Noise is a spurious argument and should not be entertained for it is a diminishing issue.

As I said in my spoken contribution, we've only added one civilian runway in the country since the Second World War. That of itself should be an international embarrassment to us. Just get on and deliver this expansion and let us fulfil our economic potential to the max.

Best regards

Adrian M Lee
