

## **Gatwick Airport – Northern Runway Planning Hearing – Thursday 2 May 2024**

My name is Amanda Jones. I'm speaking today as an individual and local resident, but wish it to be noted I hold several roles in the economic and cultural sectors within the region:

- I am a Director of Coast to Capital and an Executive Board member of the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership
- I Chair Sussex Past - a charity responsible for the operation of nine heritage properties across Sussex
- I chair Good Space – a volunteering network of twelve arts, heritage and sports organisations working in partnership with the NHS to promote the benefits of volunteering to our mental health and wellbeing and
- I am an Associate Director of Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival - the largest multi-arts festival in England, also delivering the pan-Sussex music education hub.

I also sit on the Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership - recently awarded LVEP status by the UK government.

I fully support Gatwick Airport's northern runway plans.

Globally, it is well accepted that countries and destinations seeking to further develop their economies and create truly sustainable employment and quality of life for all residents - see tourism as a key source of inward, foreign investment.

A strong heritage and cultural offer plays a leading role in attracting that tourism – and a successful airport hub essential to enabling it.

Research evidence consistently proves that increased and improved air connectivity has a significant and positive impact on international tourism. It extends the length of stays of transit visitors into multi-day stopovers, and encourages visits to a region as a final destination in its own right.

Tourism is central to the South East's economy and as a result - central to our entire cultural eco-system.

At Brighton Dome & Festival we enable over 600,000 people annually to access music, theatre and dance; The Good Space network provides over 1,000 volunteering opportunities across Sussex for individuals wishing to look after their mental health & wellbeing; Create Music, now delivers music education lessons to over 10,000 school children every week.

We do ALL of this through a continual drive for significant self-generated income, a substantial proportion of which is generated directly from national and international tourism.

Tourism already contributes significantly to the UK economy at over £237 billion in GDP - providing over 3.7m jobs – and is projected to grow at 3% annually across the next 10 years – nearly twice the 1.7% projected growth rate of the overall economy.

There is a real opportunity for the South East's economy to grow as part of this - and a fully operational northern runway at London Gatwick central to achieving that - providing international visitors much greater access to the region and right at the heart of it.

In doing so, it will significantly increase meaningful, employment opportunities - well evidenced as a basic need to sustaining good mental health & wellbeing, and sustain and grow our amazing cultural and heritage sectors and the impact they deliver to all our lives.

I encourage you to recognise, this is not an economic versus social or moral argument. I urge you to support London Gatwick's northern runway plan and in so doing, support both the economic and social health & prosperity of the south-east region.

Thankyou.

ENDS