

Statement of Support for Gatwick Airport's plans to increase capacity.

Louise Punter, Chief Executive of the Surrey Chambers of Commerce

I am submitting this Statement of Support as I was unable to attend the Open Floor Hearing on 2nd May 2024.

Surrey Chambers of Commerce

Surrey Chambers of Commerce is the largest Business Representative organisation in Surrey representing 5000 businesspeople and over 1000 organisations. In addition, we work with 200 International Trade companies delivering essential services helping them to get their goods delivered overseas. We are also the Employer Representative Body leading on the Surrey and North Hampshire Local Skills Improvement Plan. This has included engagement with an additional 1000 businesses, getting to understand their skills challenges and gaps. We have a team of 11 proactive people, all of whom are picking up business intel on a daily basis. In addition, we have a strong Board, made up of Surrey businesses as well as a Council of 24 businesses representing the breadth of the local economy. The businesses we represent range from new startup businesses to the major airports in our area as well as everything in between. They come from every sector and type of business.

Benefits of having Gatwick adjacent to Surrey

- Many larger businesses cite the proximity to the 2 major airports (Heathrow and Gatwick) as a real reason to be located in Surrey, contributing to UK plc as their alternatives could be in mainland Europe.
- Following the restrictions that were placed on businesses over the Covid years it is really important for businesses to get back out building relationships with overseas customers. The proactive development of new routes from Gatwick is really contributing to this activity, which in turn supports the economy. To put the brakes on this growth of capacity would impinge on growing markets and more money coming into the UK.
- Gatwick is a supportive partner in the business eco-system and champions business activity and raising skills and aspirations in young people.

Consulting with Gatwick on the Plans

Gatwick are visible in the business community and regularly seek input on all their activities, including capacity growth, potential routes, skills building and environmental issues. The Chamber has been included in many stakeholder events and specific consultations, allowing the voice of the local business community to be heard.

Many of the new routes have been based on data from export activity across the region, demonstrating that they act on feedback from partners.

Advantages that use of the Northern Runway bring

More of the same benefits above but in addition it will create a local supply chain offering opportunities to local businesses in the construction phase.

They will be able to keep introducing new routes with a higher capacity to fill, bringing more business into the area.

With further partnership working more tourism can be encouraged as well as the Inward Investment. Gatwick's approach to partnering is very open and inclusive so allowing them to grow allows the area to grow economically.