



EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Your Ref:

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When calling please ask for: Mrs J Holden

19th August 2024

Via email to: gatwickairport@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

TRO20005 - Gatwick Airport 2nd Runway

The bulk of this representation was made directly to Gatwick (Gatwick Future Plans) in November 2021. We note the situation has moved along and wish to make our updated representation to the planning inspector now that the plans are at the scrutinization for approval stage.

East Grinstead is situated some 12 kilometres (8 miles) to the East of Gatwick, meaning that residents are affected by departures and arrivals regardless as to the directional runway being used on the day, although significantly more when the east bound take off is used. Prior to the Pandemic during the summer months' atmospherics could result in many complaints as to airplane noise disturbing sleep and the general lifestyle of residents. The Proximity to the airport and the hours of flight (including the exceptions to the night time curfew) can cause significant distress for residents. As the airport slowly returns to a fuller post pandemic schedule, the disruption felt by residents will increase. The proposals for expansion at the airport, therefore, has significant concerns for the Town Council.

Increase Airport Capacity

Gatwick today can handle 55 scheduled aircraft movements per hour. It is noted that in peak summer months the operation currently has little or no spare capacity. It is further noted that the historic (1978) planning permission, placed a restriction on the airport so that the northern (emergency) runway could not be used concurrently with the main runway. This legal agreement expired in August 2019 but the planning condition would need to be removed by an application to the planning authority to allow this to then proceed.

Daily ATM's during the summer period are expected to increase from 851 to 915 by 2038 and then to 927 by 2047, this final change will increase the current 55 air movements per hour to around 59 per hour, effectively one per minute.

The Council has no objection to the growth of Gatwick per se, growth means more employment opportunities in lower and higher skilled occupations and this is good for the growing towns surrounding the airport. However, we remain aware that growth will result in more flights which in turn increase pollution in noise and air pollution

directly from the aircraft, the associated increased traffic journeys through the town to reach Gatwick from the South East. Growth without mitigation to support the local community infrastructure and wellbeing is not supported.

Project Proposals

Amongst the approach to defining the proposals Gatwick have listed

- Minimise and mitigate the environmental effects of the proposals, such as noise, air pollution, carbon and other impacts on the natural environment and seek opportunities to enhance these aspects where possible.

The Draft Energy Strategy includes

As part of the project, Gatwick will seek to minimise carbon emissions and promote sustainability including measures to increase sustainable travel to the airport for example by limiting car usage; improvements to on airfield operating procedures; setting an approach to use of sustainable construction materials and logistics and maximising the re-use of spoil; reducing aviation emissions and designing to appropriate energy efficiency standards.

These aspirations are supported, it is not clear that the proposals are designed to limit car use with the inclusion of more parking and the works on the A23. However we are very concerned as to the environmental impacts on our communities for car traffic accessing the airport which we feel will only increase.

Surface Access Proposals

The application refers to the high level of rail connectivity with 20 trains to and from central London in the morning peak hour (shared between London Bridge and Victoria) and a wide range of direct services to other destinations. It is worth commenting at this point that the connection via train to Gatwick from East Grinstead (12 km or 8m to the east) is 1 hour and 4 minutes, with a requirement to travel north to East Croydon and then South to East Grinstead. There are no direct bus services either between the two destinations and while East Grinstead is regularly used as a terminus and bus transfer to Gatwick during engineering works the trip can take in excess of ½ an hour as the roads are congested with Gatwick bound and other traffic. We would welcome dedicated bus lanes introduced on the A264 with Gatwick investment to make this journey easier when the airports own station is not in use, it will also be another public service option for passengers and staff reaching the airport from East Grinstead and the connecting villages.

There are off road pedestrian and cycle routes to Horley and Crawley, the report mentions national cycle route 21, this includes Horley and Gatwick and then goes on through Crawley Down to East Grinstead. We would require investment from Gatwick to make this route another sustainable route for employees if not passengers from the airport.

The application refers to the analysis of the Preliminary Transport Assessment Report and PIER, which indicates that the construction and operation of the project is not expected to have significant effects beyond the immediate highway network. This has been limited to the M23 spur link and the M23 itself. However traffic travelling to Gatwick from the East does not necessarily travel up to the M25 and down the M23, much of it travels on the A27 / A272 and the very convenient A264 with direct Kent and East Sussex links via East Grinstead. Again when the rail replacement is needed it is the A264 that bears the brunt of the Gatwick traffic as the

East Grinstead Station is the terminus. Upgrades to the A264 between East Grinstead and Gatwick will significantly help the communities who suffer from rat runs as the main roads are heavily congested with much Gatwick Bound traffic. We do not believe that the proposals go far enough to alleviate the congestion on the approaching roads such as the A264. The A264 meets the A22 in East Grinstead, this is already a “problem” area that is being looked at by West Sussex and Surrey Council to alleviate the impact of housing development. Increased traffic accessing Gatwick also needs to be input in to this work, Gatwick should be part of the solution recognising that any road upgrades will simply be attractive for the Gatwick bound traffic, thus creating greater congestion and countering any improvements that have been delivered through investment by the County Councils.

New Car Parking

As referenced above we note the Car Parking proposals. This provides a lot of capacity for new car journeys. Whilst the sustainable transport options are noted, these proposals make it clear that Gatwick see Car travel to the Airport increasing not decreasing (although the % may change), increased journeys mean increased cars on the approaching roads and again gives further argument for investment greater than simply the spur roads to the airport. The applications supporting documents show that the Airport believe that the Car Journeys will continue to be important and measures to reduce congestion will be necessary. The three mitigation points here do not go far enough and need to include the wider feeder roads such as the A264. While the aspiration as to zero emission vehicles is welcomed, unless Gatwick are intending to build links from the wider community via electronic or green transport this is not achievable where the car for public transport will remain significant. We would welcome a park and ride site between Gatwick and East Grinstead, with a green sustainable option to reduce the traffic on the A264.

Construction Traffic Access

The proposed routes give no details beyond M23. We would want a condition that the A22 / A264 is not a route for access to construction vehicles. Existing congestion has many HGV construction vehicles already passing through East Grinstead, contributing to congestion and air pollution levels.

Future Gatwick Growth

The project will deliver additional capacity in 2029, including long and short haul demand. With daily ATM's forecast to increase from 851 to 927 by 2047. This is a 7% increase and will increase the runway frequency from the current 55 per hour. This is a significant increase, we understand that Gatwick is the world's busiest single runway airport. We have concerns as to the air quality and the noise that increased movement will make to those living in the Gatwick proximity as the planes ascend and descend from the runways. We understand that increased investment in aircraft has made them quieter and that Gatwick has reduced in aircraft noise over the decades. However the increased volumes make the almost continuous noise a matter for concerns as to the mental health and sleep patterns of our residents.

We welcome the forecast of increased employment for Gatwick due to the expansion. 18,400 new jobs is a significant contribution. We also note that at least 50% of the new roles will be high or semi-skilled. It is requested that the jobs be advertised initially locally with the intention that the employed are able to access the airport via sustainable approaches and are not simply commuting in to the Gatwick Diamond for employment. It is also noted that the net increase in the jobs against pre Covid levels by 2038 is 8,000 due to the significant redundancies following the pandemic.

Environmental Costs

We have made comments in the above test as to concerns to environmental impact, it is noted that the Airport acknowledges that the project will have environmental costs. The present monetised value of the costs are £10.7m with the significant impact being the contribution to green-house gasses. However this is to be balanced with the net social benefits of the monetised amount of £10.5-£22bn. It is noted that the project is estimated to value £0.9bn -£3.5bn, however that the airport believe that the impacts on aviation markets and the wider economy will bring significant benefits on a national level, being materially larger than the negative impacts as set out in the report. It is noted that the project will have a net social overall benefit.

It is understood that Gatwick will continue to monitor and amend the mitigation to environmental effects with the aim of reducing or preventing significant adverse effects arising where practicable.

In Summary the East Grinstead Town Council understands the case and rationale that has been put forward for the need for growth.

The Town Council believes that the surface access plans for upgrade need to be wider than the proposals to take in to account the Westerly bound traffic approaching the airport, specifically upgrades to the A264, sustainable transport and potential for park and ride to the East of the airport.

The Town Council welcomes the aspiration for the airport of the future, but remains mindful of environmental and health effects of the airport on the surrounding communities. Investment in to the local traffic systems other than the immediate surround of the airport must be delivered should this development receive approval. Further research, mitigation and prevention of disruption to communities through noise from arriving and departing aircraft is essential. The accomplishments to date are recognised but more is still to be done, to offset Gatwick expansion.

The Council is pleased to have been able to submit to this consultation and trusts that the above comments are helpful

Yours sincerely

Julie Holden
Town Clerk
East Grinstead Town Council