

Gatwick Master Plan

On Thursday, I attended the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) meeting where Gatwick confirmed their intention to push forward with the Master Plan originally announced in October 2018. Gatwick confirmed that the feedback from the public consultation had given strong support to the airport's expansion with 67% of respondents supporting the airport maximising its use of existing capacity by:

1. Using new technology to build capacity and resilience on the main runway;
2. Bringing the existing standby runway into routine use alongside the main runway by the mid-2020s;
3. Recommending that planning policy continues to safeguard land for an additional runway.

Gatwick clearly feel that this feedback fully endorses their Master Plan and confirmed they have initiated the formal planning application process with the Government's Planning Inspectorate to expand its use of the standby runway. Although this will be a protracted process, which will take a number of years and will involve further and more detailed analysis of Gatwick's plans together with further public consultation, the outcome for communities, should Gatwick be successful, will be truly devastating with an estimated increase in flight traffic of approaching 40%. Such growth must not be allowed. Not only would it mean much more noise, particularly for communities to the west of the airport, but would also result in more carbon emissions, faster climate change, more adverse health impacts and even greater congestion around the airport. Gatwick's plans fly (excuse the pun) in the face of the UK's climate change commitments and the climate emergency Parliament has recently declared. In short, our physical and mental well-being are at risk and must not be sacrificed in order to deliver even greater financial returns for Gatwick's corporate shareholders.

With the resources at their disposal, Gatwick's plans are extremely professional, so it will take all our efforts to have any chance of thwarting the airport's opportunistic expansion plans. As a first step, Community Noise Groups have already engaged with local MP's who have clearly articulated their concerns and objections in the attached letter to Chris Grayling together with a separate press release which was released yesterday.

As the situation with the NMB becomes clearer and our thoughts on how best to tackle Gatwick's Master Plan mature, I will keep you updated, but in the meantime, I would very much welcome any thoughts/strategies you may have, particularly in relation to the Master Plan.

Atholl Forbes
Chair - PAGNE