

**From:** Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

**To:** Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 17 January 2019

**Subject:** KCC response to the Gatwick Airport draft Master Plan 2018

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Electoral Division:** All west Kent divisions

**Summary:**

This report outlines Kent County Council's (KCC) proposed response to Gatwick Airport's consultation on its draft Master Plan 2018, which closed on 10 January.

Gatwick's draft Master Plan proposes three scenarios to grow the airport between today, five years time and 2032. The first scenario is to continue to operate as a single runway operation and grow annual passengers from 45.7m (2017/18) to up to 61m (2032) using larger aircraft and improved technology, as well as growing demand outside of the current peak. The second scenario proposes to routinely utilise the emergency runway alongside the main runway, which would grow passenger numbers up to 70m by 2032. The third scenario continues to safeguard for an additional runway to the south. These scenarios are not mutually exclusive.

KCC's proposed response is in line with the Council's adopted *Policy on Gatwick Airport* (Cabinet, December 2014) and opposes expansion at the airport. It states that the routine use of the emergency runway is effectively the introduction of a second runway, and it expresses significant concerns over the noise impacts on west Kent. The response states that the benefits of growth should be shared with communities around the airport, who should see a reduction in noise and a night flight ban comparable with that at Heathrow.

An officer response has been made to Gatwick pending Cabinet Committee consideration and endorsement or recommendations to the Cabinet Member. An endorsed or amended response will be sent to Gatwick after Cabinet Committee.

**Recommendation:**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to discuss and comment on the proposed Kent County Council response to the consultation.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 At peak times, Gatwick Airport is the busiest single-runway airport in the world. It is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the world for the number of long haul destinations served, serves a total of 233 destinations (long and short haul), and in 2017/18 handled 45.7 million passengers. Gatwick's biggest airline is easyJet, accounting for 18.5m passengers in 2017/18. Low-cost carriers are the main operators at Gatwick, requiring multiple trips in a day and fast turnaround times. They are a key source of demand for flights during the night period (23:00 to 07:00). However, Gatwick also has an increasing number of full-service, charter and regional airlines.
- 1.2 Gatwick estimates that it contributes £5.3 billion to the UK economy, and supports over 85,000 jobs, including 24,000 employed directly on airport. Staff travel data shows that 5% these employees reside in Kent (approximately 1,160). Additionally, of all passengers terminating at Gatwick, 7.4% have their end destination in Kent. This is second only to passengers destined for Greater London.
- 1.3 In October 2017, the Government announced support for the Heathrow Northwest Runway (the third runway), which is now being progressed through the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). The *Airports National Policy Statement* (setting the planning requirements for the third runway) did not explicitly rule out expansion of Gatwick in the future but identified that Gatwick's scheme was not the best solution to restricted runway capacity in the south east. It should be noted, however, that the Heathrow scheme is not yet a certainty because of the substantial challenge posed by air quality requirements.
- 1.4 Subsequently, the *Aviation Strategy Call for Evidence* (2017) set out a proposed policy to make best use of existing airport infrastructure. Kent County Council (KCC) strongly opposed this policy being introduced but in June 2018 the Department for Transport (DfT) published *Beyond the horizon - The future of UK aviation – Making best use of existing runways*. This clearly states that Government is “*minded to be supportive of all airports who wish to make best use of their existing runways, including those in the South East, subject to environmental issues being addressed.*” Effectively, this actively encourages Gatwick to plan to utilise its emergency (also known as the standby or northern runway) runway for day-to-day use.
- 1.5 Increased noise is a consequence of expansion that will be most negatively experienced in west Kent. Gatwick saw a significant reduction in its noise footprint from the late 1980s to early 2000s as a result of the introduction of modern aircraft. Since then, the overall trend has been a general reduction in the noise contour areas. However, noise impacts specifically in west Kent have increased in this time due to changes to the management and routing of aircraft. In the 2018 summer period (25<sup>th</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> October), Gatwick saw an average of over 45 arrivals per night. If each of these disturbs sleep then the impact on individuals' health is clear.

1.6 The Gatwick Airport draft Master Plan sets out the airport's growth plans for the next 5 years, and then looks ahead to 2032, and presents three potential growth scenarios in the context of Government policy.

## **2. Summary of 'Gatwick Airport Draft Master Plan 2018'**

2.1 In 2017/18, Gatwick handled over 282,000 aircraft movements, 45.7m passengers, and 102,000 tonnes of cargo. The cargo tonnage represents a 24% increase on 2016/17 and is driven by increased long-haul services.

### **Master Plan for the next 5 years**

2.2 Gatwick's proposals for the next 5 years are to grow the airport in its existing configuration as a single-runway by:

- Greater use of the airport in the off-peak periods (outside of the summer, and potentially at night<sup>1</sup>);
- More intensive use of the runway in peak periods; and
- Shifting to larger aircraft with higher load factors.

This is the same methodology Gatwick has used to grow the airport to present levels of throughput. Anticipated growth under this scenario is an increase to 52.8 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2022/23 (an increase of 15% on 2017/18 passenger numbers). However, they expect to achieve this with only a 7% increase in number of aircraft movements due to higher load factors.

2.3 Gatwick believes that it can achieve this whilst fulfilling its *Decade of Change* sustainability strategy commitments, as well as delivering a smaller noise footprint than today. Surface access improvements during this timeframe are set out in its Surface Access Strategy, including the upgrade to the Gatwick Airport Station and targets to achieve a 48% public transport mode share by 2022.

### **Master Plan for 5 – 15 years**

#### **Scenario 1: Existing main runway**

2.4 This scenario is a continuation of the 5-year growth plan but looking ahead a further 10 years. Under this scenario, Gatwick could be handling 57 – 61mppa by 2032. As for the 5-year plan, this would be achieved by growth outside of the current peak times and further increases in the average aircraft size, with new technologies and minor infrastructure changes (for example, additional car parking). The draft Master Plan states that the noise footprint would continue to reduce owing to the introduction of modern quieter aircraft,

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<sup>1</sup> In the summer period (March to October) Gatwick fully utilises its movement quota allowance and so cannot grow by running more night flights.

although the maximum number of movements per hour could increase to 60 in 2032, compared with around 55 today.

### Scenario 2: Existing emergency runway

- 2.5 The emergency runway (Gatwick uses the terminology 'standby' throughout the draft Master Plan) is currently restricted to operation when the main runway is unavailable (for resurfacing or because of an incident) under a 1979 legal agreement with West Sussex County Council. This agreement expires in 2019 and so Gatwick is investigating how it can be used to enable growth, in line with the Government's policy on making best use of existing infrastructure.
- 2.6 The separation between runways is insufficient for completely independent operation and so the emergency runway would be used for departures only (with a limit on aircraft size). This would release capacity on the main runway for arrivals, and therefore add 10 to 15 additional hourly aircraft movements in the peak hours, increasing to about 70 per hour. Gatwick forecasts that this could lead to 68 to 70 mppa by 2032 (up to 390,000 air transport movements (ATMs)).
- 2.7 To deliver this would require some reconfiguration of the airport, such as moving taxiways and stands, as well as improvements to the junctions serving the North and South Terminals. The initial noise modelling shows that noise generated by this scheme would be broadly similar to today's noise levels.
- 2.8 Owing to the significant increase in capacity afforded by this scheme, planning permission would be sought through a Development Consent Order (DCO). Gatwick anticipates consulting on this scheme in 2019 and suggests that the emergency runway could be brought into use in the mid-2020s.
- 2.9 Under this scenario, Gatwick expects the number of people affected by day-time noise in 2032 to be comparable to that experienced today due to the introduction of quieter aircraft. However, the noise metric used averages out noise energy over a given time period and does not represent the impacts of the increased number of noise events. Gatwick expects a reduction in night-time noise (the least acceptable kind of aviation noise) because it does not forecast traffic growth in the night quota period<sup>2</sup>.

### Scenario 3: Safeguarded land for additional runway to the south

- 2.10 This scenario proposes that, despite the *Airports National Policy Statement* to progress the Heathrow Northwest Runway, an additional runway at Gatwick is

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<sup>2</sup> This period (23:30 – 06:00) is regulated by the DfT, who set limits on the number of aircraft movements and the amount of noise that can be produced. During the summer period (March to October), Gatwick is permitted to have 11,200 ATMs and currently fully utilises this quota. However, the winter night quota (3,250 ATMs) has significant spare capacity and so there is potential for growth there

in the national interest. Therefore, Gatwick proposes that the land to the south - as set out in its Second Runway proposals made to the Airports Commission - continues to be safeguarded (i.e. a slightly different footprint to that safeguarded in the Crawley Borough Council Local Plan today). The rationale is that the DfT forecasts show that UK airport capacity constraints will become apparent by 2030 even with the Heathrow third runway.

2.11 The draft Master Plan states that an additional runway could be delivered within 10 years of commencing the planning process and expand the airport's capacity to 95 mppa. Being a much larger scheme, it would require significant changes to the airport configuration as well as to the road network. The proposals put to the Airports Commission included mitigation and compensation measures because Gatwick's environmental impacts would be much greater. Further, the draft Master Plan does not preclude the continued use of the emergency runway if a new runway was built, effectively making Gatwick a three-runway airport.

2.12 The draft Master Plan is **not** proposing to develop additional runway proposals on the safeguarded land but instead seeks to continue to protect the land that would be needed from future development that could inhibit future expansion plans.

### Consultation process

2.13 The consultation ran from 18 October 2018 to 10 January 2019. All consultation documents are available on the Gatwick website<sup>3</sup>. KCC agreed with the Airport that an officer response was submitted by the deadline and following Cabinet Committee that response will either be endorsed or amended. The proposed (officer) response is Appendix A to this report and summarised in Section 3 below.

## **3. Summary of KCC's proposed response to the consultation** *(full response to the consultation questions is provided in Appendix A)*

### 5- year growth plan and Scenario 1: Existing main runway

3.1 The proposed response states that growth at all costs cannot be supported and emphasises the emerging evidence demonstrating the health impacts of noise. It states that Gatwick must work with the Noise Management Board and others to make meaningful improvements to benefit those living around the airport both today and during the draft Master Plan period.

### Scenario 2: Existing emergency runway

3.2 KCC's response is in accordance with the Council's *Policy on Gatwick Airport* adopted by Cabinet in December 2014. The response considers scenario 2 to be equivalent to a full second runway scheme and fully opposes it.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gatwickairport.com/business-community/growing-gatwick/long-term-plans/>

- 3.3 The response reiterates KCC's objections to the introduction of the Government policy to make best use of existing runways, particularly noting that no amount of mitigation or compensation can counteract the inability of residents to sleep, the negative impacts on their health and educational attainment, or restrictions on the peaceful enjoyment of their homes and gardens. Given the Heathrow Northwest Runway scheme and the recent planning consent for an additional 9m passengers at Stansted bringing substantial extra capacity to the London Airports system, the response asks whether further capacity at Gatwick is necessary.
- 3.4 A worsening of noise impacts in west Kent is the primary concern with scenario 2. The draft Master Plan forecasts that noise levels in 2032 will be similar to today. However, this is based on the fleet of aircraft using the airport being replaced with improved, quieter models. It omits consideration of the number of noise events that residents will experience, which will undoubtedly increase as the proposals will enable increased aircraft movements. Whilst night-time noise is unlikely to increase as dramatically as the day-time (owing to DfT restrictions), the proposals fundamentally fail to share the benefits of growth with the communities around the airport. The proposed response emphasises that any planning application must seek the views of affected communities on noise management, and measures including a reduction in or ban on night flights would be one way to share the benefits of any expansion, if permission for the scheme was granted.
- 3.5 Furthermore, the proposed response highlights concerns with the surface access to the airport, which will suffer from the additional passenger demand without substantial improvement. Under this scenario, cargo tonnage is forecast to treble, and this will place further demand on the road network from lorries and delivery vehicles.
- 3.6 Finally, the scenarios have been assessed in isolation but they are not exclusive choices. If scenarios 1 and 2 are enacted together then the negative impacts would be dramatically worse compared to the assessment presented in the draft Master Plan.

### Scenario 3: Safeguarded land for an additional runway to the south

- 3.7 The proposed response reiterates KCC's strong opposition to any additional runways at Gatwick. It suggests that Gatwick needs to seek clarification on safeguarding from Government given the national significance of any such expansion plans.
- 3.8 Given that this proposal is to safeguard land, rather than progress an additional runway scheme, there is no consultation question on noise and surface access impacts.

## Economic benefits

- 3.9 The proposed response makes it clear that Kent does not receive the economic benefits of Gatwick as strongly as those Local Authorities in the *Gatwick Diamond* area or within the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership area. The proposed response encourages Gatwick to work with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and Locate in Kent to ensure that Kent's proximity to the airport benefits the local economy.

## Noise

- 3.10 KCC's proposed response states that Gatwick is not effectively sharing the benefits of growth with the communities negatively impacted by aviation noise, and that the noise benefits forecast over the draft Master Plan period are as a result of technological improvements to aircraft design. This requires only a passive role from the Airport. Conversely, the response implores Gatwick to actively explore opportunities presented by growth (at Gatwick and the other London airports) to reduce noise, especially during the night. Gatwick must formulate these plans with the Noise Management Board.
- 3.11 The proposed response recognises that Gatwick wishes to be "*best in class*" in its approach to noise management, and that the current scheme for insulation costs go beyond minimum requirements. However, new World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines states that health impacts from aviation noise are observable at a lower level than previously thought, and therefore KCC's response makes it clear that Gatwick needs to step-up its approach to mitigation accordingly.

## Surface Access Strategy

- 3.12 The proposed response expresses concern about Gatwick's reliance on the M23 and the Brighton Main Line as the main access routes for passengers and staff, and the inherent lack of resilience this causes. Recent capacity enhancements on these routes are designed to support background growth, and for Gatwick to absorb that capacity through its own growth will present problems, such as reduced journey time reliability. The Airport is currently reliant on a single railway route with no viable proposals for any improved rail connectivity.
- 3.13 Targets for increased mode share by sustainable transport are welcomed. The proposed response asks Gatwick to support the reinstatement of the rail service to Tonbridge via Redhill and Edenbridge, with a possible link to the existing service between Gatwick and Reading. This would help widen the economic benefits of the airport to Kent.

## **4. Conclusions**

- 4.1 Gatwick Airport has consulted on its draft Master Plan, looking at growth over the next 5 years with the existing single-runway configuration, and beyond

that by proposing the routine use of the emergency runway alongside the main runway and continuing to safeguard the land for an additional runway.

4.2 KCC's officer response has been produced in line with the Council's adopted *Policy on Gatwick Airport* (Cabinet, December 2014) and opposes the use of the emergency runway. This is effectively a second runway and, although not fully independent from the main runway, will dramatically increase Gatwick's capacity. This will lead to unacceptable noise impacts on west Kent regardless of forecast technological improvements leading to aircraft that are quieter. Gatwick suggests that it will consult on the use of the emergency runway in 2019, commencing the Development Consent Order (DCO) process to seek planning consent.

4.3 The consultation closed on 10 January 2019 but Gatwick has agreed to accept either an endorsed response or amended response following the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.

## **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 N/A.

## **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 N/A.

## **7. Equalities Implications**

7.1 N/A.

## **8. Other Corporate Implications**

8.1 N/A

## **9. Governance**

9.1 N/A.

## **10. Recommendation:**

10.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to discuss and comment on the proposed Kent County Council response to the consultation.

## **11. Background Documents**

*Appendix A: Proposed Response by Kent County Council to the Gatwick Airport Consultation on the draft Master Plan 2018.*

*Gatwick Airport draft Master Plan 2018*

<https://www.gatwickairport.com/globalassets/business--community/growing-gatwick/gatwick-draft-master-plan-final.pdf>

*Kent County Council Policy on Gatwick Airport*

Kent County Council Policy on Gatwick Airport (December 2014)

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s49886/Item%209%20-%20Policy%20on%20Gatwick%20Airport.pdf>

## 12. Contact details

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