

Gatwick Draft Master Plan Consultation

Questions:

QUESTION 1

Given the above, to what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose the principle of growing Gatwick by making best use of existing runways in line with Government policy? Before answering, you will find it useful to read Chapters 4 and 5 in the full version of the draft masterplan.

The reference to ‘making best use of existing runways’ refers to Gatwick’s current proposal in the draft Master Plan for routine use of the emergency runway.

With one exception, we have concluded that insufficient information has been made currently available in the Draft Master Plan or at the exhibitions for Plane Justice to reach any firm conclusions on this question at present.

A number of crucial issues bearing on this matter have been left hanging, in particular:-

- a) It is still not at all clear to us what the potential increase in aircraft traffic would be, as figures ranging between 10% and 30% have been quoted. Gatwick’s response to date to the question “*what is the maximum percentage increase possible?*” has been that further evaluation work needs to be done¹.
- b) Leading on from (a), no clear explanation has been given of the factors that limit the potential increase in aircraft traffic to very substantially less than 100% (as would be the case with a full-blown second runway).

Our understanding is that the main factor which limits the increase is the proximity of the emergency runway to the main runway; But there is need for some evidence of *what technical factors bring this about*, and also what contribution may also be made to limiting the increase by the current (shorter) length of the emergency runway.

- c) Would any of the departure or arrival routes suffer or benefit disproportionately as a result of routine use of the emergency runway? (i.e would any such route experience a significantly greater or lesser percentage increase in flights compared to other routes?). Gatwick’s response to date to this question has been that further evaluation work needs to be done.
- d) As we understand it the draft Master Plan makes an *assumption* there will be no traffic growth in the night quota period, nor changes in the quota limits. This of course is not the same thing as a commitment. What is Gatwick’s position on night flights if its emergency runway plans were ever to see the light of day?
- e) As to surface transport, there is no sense of an applied strategy to reduce the reliance of the airport on country roads and lanes around Gatwick as feeder routes into the airport, nor is it clear to us at least whether any envisaged improvements are an attempt to contain the increase in passenger numbers the Plan envisages, or to make inroads into the existing level of reliance on these rural roads.

There are references e.g. to Gatwick’s transport partners’ plans for public transport links and adding lane capacity to the M23, but on the other hand the Plan makes provision for nearly

¹ We have assumed that the maximum percentage increase for normal aircraft operations would exclude some potential additional capacity held back for resilience and emergency purposes. GAL should also make clear what capacity has been withheld for these purposes.

10,000 new car parking spaces at the airport and e.g. says “*the growth in road traffic will place additional pressure on the capacity of South Terminal entry roundabout*”.

- f) The one exception we referenced earlier is that, notwithstanding government approval for expansion at Heathrow, Gatwick appear *not* to have put forward this emergency runway proposal as an alternative to a new full-blown runway to the south of the existing airport. Gatwick have proposed in this draft of their Master Plan that land for such a new runway should still continue to be safeguarded. We would anticipate that maintenance of such a stance by Gatwick is likely to prove incendiary with local communities.²

Our strongest advice to Gatwick would be to refrain from taking forward further work involving any change in use of the emergency runway, unless and until further evaluation and modelling work has been undertaken and put out to consultation, and which should address as a minimum the questions and issues referenced in (a) to (f) above.

Questions 2 to 11: Please refer to Question 1 above.

² A brief note about Gatwick’s YouGov poll before Christmas: Having studied the YouGov poll PDF document linked to Gatwick’s press release, we noted that no information was given as to the geographical distribution of the respondents to the poll, beyond they were located in Surrey, Sussex and Kent with a percentage split between the three counties in the case of some poll questions. In the interests of transparency, and so the findings of this poll could be placed in some context meaningful to residents affected by Gatwick airport operations and flight paths, we invited Gatwick to publish a list of the Outward part of the Postcodes where the 3,000 respondents were living, together with the number of respondents within each such Outward Code. It would also be helpful to see some notes from YouGov as to how the respondents were recruited, and whether specifically for this survey.