

3 June 2025

OBJECTION TO THE EXPANSION OF GATWICK AIRPORT

I strongly object to the expansion of Gatwick Airport for the following reasons:

1. Gatwick Airport does not currently run two runways. Its assertion that it can bring the emergency runway into operation with limited disruption is misleading. The emergency runway cannot be operated as is and would require a new runway to be built along with various infrastructure to comply with safety regulations.
2. Impact upon the environment – Air pollution. Impact upon the carbon footprint has been underestimated by Gatwick Airport in its consultation, ignoring the new Environment Act that includes air quality as a major consideration. It has been estimated that a second runway would add over 1 million tonnes of extra carbon per year. Air pollution has been identified as one of the leading causes of declining tree health. When particles settle on leaves, they block stomata that trees use for gas exchange, disrupting photosynthesis. The majority of trees in Surrey are deciduous and during the times of year when they have no leaves they are also unable to mitigate any of the pollutants caused by Gatwick Airport. When pollution damages trees this also damages the ecosystems and biodiversity through loss of habitat and disrupted food chains for wildlife. Trees also play a vital role in moderating climate change. This has not been taken into consideration. Paragraph 186(c) of the NPPF sets out that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
3. Impact upon the environment – waste water. London Gatwick currently discharges its wastewater to two separate Thames Water facilities; Horley Sewage Treatment Works (STW) and Crawley STW. There have been repeated instances of the Horley STW spilling onto public footpaths, leading to their closure on the grounds of danger to public health. The inadequate capacity of the existing STWs have not been addressed. The regulator has been highly critical of Thames Water's handling of wastewater, and has uncovered failings which "amounted to a significant breach of the company's legal obligations" and caused unacceptable environmental impact. In addition, this morning it was announced that Thames Water had a debt pile of £18Bn and had lost its major backer thus increasing the likelihood of nationalisation and the taxpayer being saddled with yet another large debt and responsibility for the wastewater treatment works. According to Thames Water's response dated 19 December 2024, a satisfactory solution to wastewater management has not been developed nor agreed. Gatwick expansion should not go ahead in the absence of a satisfactory, and fully funded, wastewater management solution; to do so, would be completely irrational.
4. Whilst my property is not "under the flight path", the noise, at times is significant and I have written to Gatwick on a number of occasions about this, including through my local MP when Gatwick appeared to be ignoring the judicial review finding about the use of P-RNAV. The impact on mine, and the surrounding properties, has not been taken into consideration by Gatwick Airport. My property is approximately 0.8 nautical miles south of the NPR, so, should not be seriously impacted by departing aircraft flying on a distributed route. However, that is not always the case. According to Gatwick Airport, when the airfield is operating in a westerly direction, aircraft disturbances from departing aircraft will be increased. Aircraft can also be "vectored" off route by ATCs for a variety of reasons.

Whatever the reasons given, the noise can become constant – and this is before any increase in size of the airport. This impact has not been considered by Gatwick Airport and does not appear to be covered by their “Noise Envelope”. Furthermore, there appears to be no restriction on night flights.

5. The road infrastructure does not support the expansion of Gatwick Airport. The M25 often has lorries driving to the port and any incident, no matter how minor, often cause major tailbacks and issues on minor roads. The same is true of the M23 where any incident, because these two motorways are often congested, will cause gridlock. That is the state of these two main motorways leading to Gatwick without any airport expansion. This was certainly the case when I used to commute to Tidworth 2018-2022.
6. The rail network does not lend itself to people travelling to the airport by train. During 2015-2018 I used the rail network to commute to London. There was often standing room only and certainly not enough space for people’s luggage. Much of the train stock does not even have sufficient room on the overhead luggage racks for a cabin bag. The rail network is on the main commute to London and, so busy at times that there is often insufficient room available to board the train. For anyone not on the Brighton to London line, any train journey to the airport will invariably require a journey into London first, difficult enough for adults, a nightmare for parents with children.
7. Gatwick workers are disgruntled with their terms and conditions and have taken industrial action at key holiday times such as school half term. It is not recognised as the best employer and, as such will continue to struggle to fill jobs, even more so with two runways. It is located in an area where unemployment is below the average for the UK and where there is competition from other large employers.
8. Health services are such that they cannot support any further influx of people (assuming Gatwick could even attract the additional workers required). It is no longer possible to phone the local doctor’s surgery and obtain a doctor’s appointment.
9. The South of England is already served by a number of airports, would it not make more sense to align airport expansion strategy with the levelling up agenda to provide employment opportunities and growth where most required?
10. The economic benefit has not held up under scrutiny. According to the New Economics Foundation Gatwick Airport DCO: Deadline 10 written by Dr Alex Chapman and published August 2024 instead of a positive net present value (NPV) the expansion would lead to a significant negative cost benefit of -£4.5Bn to society.

In essence:

- Gatwick has not undertaken sufficient due diligence in its identification and assessment of the full impact of operating two runways;
- the surrounding infrastructure does not support its successful operation following expansion;
- the impact upon the environment has not been fully accounted for and is unacceptably high;
- the current demise of Thames Water seriously undermines its ability to put in place an effective treatment of wastewater solution;

- ignoring its legal obligations will automatically expose the Gatwick expansion to Judicial Review should the application be approved;
- Gatwick is in the wrong location to best serve the levelling up agenda; the south already has a number of airports serving its travel requirements;
- There is a significant negative cost benefit to society of £4.5Bn to society.

Thank you for considering my objection to the expansion of Gatwick Airport.

Yours faithfully

Lynne Ormond