

4th June 2025

Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application by Gatwick Airport Limited (“the Applicant”) seeking Development Consent for the proposed Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project (“the DCO”)

Comment on Applicant’s Submission of Additional Information of 24 April 2025

National Express is the UK’s largest coach operator, running high frequency scheduled services linking hundreds of destinations across the country. We also deliver coach travel to major airports, including Gatwick, and are the official transport provider for Wembley Stadium. National Express is part of Mobico Group, a leading international shared mobility provider of bus, coach and rail services, employing 46,000 people in 12 countries across the UK, North America, continental Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

National Express welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Secretary of State’s request for comments on this important scheme. Gatwick’s Northern Runway Project shows the importance of transport connectivity in relation to economic growth and National Express strongly supports the proposed development.

National Express works collaboratively with London Gatwick to encourage use of sustainable modes and enable higher public transport mode shares for airport passengers and staff. This partnership approach to surface access has delivered significant improvements in recent years and we recognise our role in delivering sustainable transport services alongside London Gatwick and within the wider transport network. We consider the Secretary of State’s position that the airport should be held solely responsible for delivering sustainable transport mode shares, as a pre-requisite for being permitted to operate nationally-important infrastructure, to be disproportionate and unnecessary. Achieving sustainable transport mode shares relies on a wider network of service and infrastructure providers in addition to Government policy and is not fully in the airport’s control.

We believe the package of measures included in London Gatwick’s Surface Access Commitments (SAC) are comprehensive and provide a sound basis for managing and mitigating the impact of road traffic associated with growth and supporting sustainable travel. The inclusion of ringfenced funding for bus and coach is welcomed and National Express is engaging with London Gatwick in its efforts to achieve its ambitious but realistic mode share targets.

We recognise the significant funding commitment made by the airport and their desire to achieve “best in class” sustainable mode shares through investment and proactive monitoring. National Express supports this approach, in particular we endorse monitoring road traffic and transport mode shares for several years in advance of starting dual runway operations to enable London Gatwick to proactively shape its action plans. We note the Examining

Authority's report did not reflect London Gatwick's updated proposals on this issue at the end of Examination, which already address the concern raised in the Secretary of State's letter. We support London Gatwick's proposals for growth and we urge the Secretary of State to move to approve the Northern Runway Project.

National Express operates a network of coach services providing choice for passengers travelling to and from London Gatwick, in particular to provide a sustainable travel option for those without an attractive rail alternative. National Express endorses the considerable investment commitment made by Gatwick to enhancing regional bus and coach services to provide sustainable travel choices to a wider catchment area, and to increase mode share. We have recently supported this by enhancing our services from the South Coast adding additional frequency from Poole. We have also revived our 206 service offering introducing six journeys a day between Portsmouth and Gatwick, with some journeys reaching the airport in as little as 1 hour 35 minutes. The 206 will also serve Bournemouth and Southampton. In addition, we have increased the frequency of services from Birmingham to Gatwick to 12 a day arriving at the airport within 3 hours 25 minutes - shaving nearly 30 minutes off the current journey times from Birmingham. National Express is keen to offer its operational experience in partnership with London Gatwick to optimise solutions for regional coach services that deliver benefits for passengers and wider travel. National Express will continue to work in partnership with London Gatwick to deliver these aspirations.