

[REDACTED]

18.7.25

Dear [REDACTED]

Could you kindly contact Heidi Alexander – Transport Secretary as I would like to voice my concerns regards the Gatwick Airport Runway.

Many thanks From: Pat Cameron (Ms)

Dear Ms Alexander,

Gatwick Airport – New Runway

I would like to introduce myself. I work at Gatwick Airport for [REDACTED] who have the Special Assistance contract and my son works for DHL who have the Easyjet baggage handling contract. So everything that is mentioned below is what we see happening, hear stories from our colleagues and I observe and report a lot of times when things breakdown regularly in the North Terminal where I work.

I happen to come across an old article on ITV News dated 26th April 2025 and comments made by Chief Executive – [REDACTED] about how this new project represents £2.2 billion investment fully funded by the shareholders to make use of the Northern runway. All they see are £ signs how much they can make and not bothered about what the staff have to go through and the appalling working conditions. I seriously think you should make some time to take a tour around the Airport and not rely on what is put on paper before you make any decisions in October. You should make 2 visits one with Gatwick officials and I bet you only get taken to where they want you to go and the 2nd visit I am truly happy to show you around all the issues I have mentioned below or you can take my letter with you and ask them questions as you go round with the Gatwick Officials and see how they will justify having more passengers coming threw the Airport and should anything happen with such a large volume of people what is their emergency plan as currently a lot is happening in the Aviation sector. We complain but nothing seems to be done at the Gatwick meetings that our Employers attend.

As far as I am concerned this only benefits these shareholders at the end of the day and never think about the bigger picture and the impact it will have on the already cramped Airport that is run down, leaks all over the place which are a health and safety hazard to staff working there, the increase of emissions the Airside ground staff have to inhale as they are not even currently supplied with any masks to carry out work and can see during the hot spell from inside the Airport watching the ground how hot the tarmac is creating heat rising from it and can see the fumes from the planes as they pull up to the Gate areas. The staff are working with out-dated equipment that keeps breaking down and they have to physically push the luggage belt unit to the plane and having to request additional ground staff to help as the electric unit had broken down and all the other stair belt units were in use on other

flights since Easyjet dominates North Terminal with so many flights coming in and going out. By having this new Runway this will increase the already busy flight path and passengers have to wait already for their luggage to get delivered much longer. I once had to wait 1hr 30mins last week for passengers who had arrived from a TUI flight at 3.30am. More passengers coming and going in the sitting Area airside before they get their Gate Numbers come up and the International Arrival area is currently causing issues for Buggy drivers as they have to fight their way to get past so many passengers in such a small area. Vehicle congestion from M23 roundabout that leads into either South Terminal or North. I used to drive to work so I fully know what it is like when I used to get stuck to get into the staff car park in the South Terminal. Yes – it is great to hear just how many jobs this Runway will bring to the Airport. But they don't mention just how much staff come and go, how they are struggling to fill positions due to the staff leaving and Companies here have a high turnover of staff. They only tell you what they want you to hear to get them to win the Project and cover up all the current issues.

I wrote a very long letter listing all these issues to the Area Manager for Unite Union [REDACTED] since I am a member and told him I will be away from 25th July and back to work 5 Sept and I would like him to bring up all the points I have listed below at the Gatwick Staff Consultation regards the Runway.

I used to be a Buggy driver until May this year [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] getting worse as finding pushing people that are so heavy and not prepared to help themselves walk to the top where the buggy is waiting it has taken a toll on my [REDACTED] so from 5th September I will be assigned to working Days and no longer nights but just pushing the passengers threw security and collecting them from the drop off area and checking them in.

These are the list of Issues I emailed Unite Union Area Manager about the Infrastructure issues.

1. Internal Airport Surrounding Issues:

- **Leaks** through out the Airport when it rains. All you see are wet signs, buckets, soak mats etc. Surely they should be looking at maintaining the existing issues first and sorting out teething problems before this expansion. The Jettys are a disgrace water running down them whether it be North or South Terminal. Signs warning people of leaks all over the place when it rains. It is a Health and Safety risk to us the Agent having to push these heavy passengers up wet Jettys. If an Agent slips (Which has happened few times before as I know of 2 incidences and 1 the Agent is still fighting the case) pushing a passenger up or down the Jetty you are talking about the wheelchair and suitcase crashing the Agent and the passenger getting hurt.
- **All Arrival Gates in the corridors:** Gatwick needs to provide at least 2 x seats outside each Gate area as during busy periods when no Buggy drivers are available as still on other jobs they send a pusher to clear the Plane but there are no seats to off load the passenger to wait at the top of the Arrival Gate for

them to sit on. This then causes a delay for the Outbound flight then the Company gets fined. Surely by having more Seats available in the Arrival corridor at each Gate it makes more sense for Wilson James to send a pusher to off-load the passengers and get them sitting on the benches until someone picks them up and the outbound plane does not get delayed. This is so important as even passengers complain that they should be providing more sitting areas to wait for Passenger Electric Buggies.

- **Electric Wheelchairs:** The Agents need at least 2 electric wheelchairs at the Arrival gates that only staff will have access to so they are permanently left inside the Departure Gate area and not taken out by passengers. Agents are struggling as people are grossly overweight and the North Terminal all it has is ramps at each gate and some Gate areas carpeted which makes it twice as hard to push and very long corridors with ramps before getting to the top to the Buggy. It is causing a detrimental effect on Agents bodies: knees, necks, wrists, ankle and back issues. They should have like a card reader so when staff tap on it the wheelchair comes on or some other idea so Passengers cannot use them.
- **Carrys:** Why is it that Aviation is the only Organisation that is using pro move slings to carry people from their seats onto an aisle chair and then into the wheelchair. Other Industries eg: hospitals, adult and social care use hoists to do all the heavy lifting. Wilson James needs to have a really good look at this as Ambi-lifts should all have a hoist and they should be dealing with Carrys and dropping them off at the coaching gates. It is wrong that 2 people should manually lift a person that is over 20 stone plus who is sitting near the window and having to lift over the arms of the plane seats onto an aisle chair. Look at how much damage it is doing to the Agent back and other body areas. Why does the Airport not specify on their website and all Airlines that if a passenger is a Carry they are to bring their own sling. I have worked in the Care industry and everyone that needed hoisting had their own sling that gets checked and they measure up so they are using the correct size. That way Wilson James does not need to provide any slings only as an emergency if they forgot it.
- There is only 1 or 2 slings in the whole of each Terminal that is used on the passengers. There was an incident where a Carry was done and the passengers trousers was wet with urine. For a start Agents not provided with disposable gloves by the company in such a case, then this sling is used on this passenger they put it away and used on another – very unhygienic indeed. How often do the slings get washed, wheelchairs and buggies cleaned and serviced?
- **Long Gate Areas and All Domestic Gates:** Gates like 102, 46,47,48,49 and all the Domestic Gates these passengers should all be sent to Coaching gates. The reason why is a buggy driver has 5 passengers to push such a distant and also when they have their electric wheel chairs or EMA's on board there are no lifts at each of the Gate areas in Pier 4 like they are in Pier 5 to put them into the lift for the TCO and the Agent to help them to bring them to the plane door. The lift is miles away in Domestic and Pier 4 and when you have heavy large EMAs due to the fact the passenger is grossly overweight this is a

struggle for TCOs to push them to the plane door – some have injured their back pushing the passengers electric scooters. This as a healthy issue and should not be allowed to happen to any Staff who is doing a job especially in this day and age with carrying and pushing such heavy items as all this should be done by equipment that is invested by the Airport or Company that has the contract.

- **Misuse of Special Assistance:** The Government should start introducing Health cards linked to their doctors records and when booking for SA put their health card number to make a booking if they require SA then the genuine passengers will have the help that is required or even start charging £5.00 to £10.00 to use Special Assistance and put the money towards purchasing well needed equipment for the service to make it easier for the Agents eg electric wheelchairs, buggies, hoists, aisle chairs (just a thought).

Why do passengers seem to feel that we are responsible for all the amount of luggage they bring threw when they book assistance. Surely if you can't carry that luggage why pack so much of it in the first place. They should have someone with them to assist with it if they can't manage their cases. We are not a porter service and should not be carrying heavy pieces of luggage off the belt and loading into the Buggy or pushing threw in the Airport wheelchair. I will give you an example when I was a buggy driver early this year on the Emirates flight a Female passenger booked SA who had a 6 yr old and 4yr old and 8 pieces of baggage plus 3 hand luggage. I am telling you now there is no way in hell I carried and loaded that for her – not with my condition. I gave her a trolley to push and left the kids with seatbelts at the back so she could see them and put some cases in the middle seat and told her to follow me. The only reason she booked assistance was because of the amount of baggage and kids not because anyone of them had a form of disability. Why does Gatwick not mention under the Assistance part of the website say we are only responsible for the individual and not their baggage. Gatwick should start up the Porter service again if they looking for money all the time than passengers abusing the service. We even have passengers book assistance as they had cosmetic surgery done in Turkey surely that is not a disability but something that was self-inflicted on themselves.

- **SA Passenger Booking:** Why is it a whole family of 6 seem to think they all entitled to be kept together and put on a buggy when it is only their Grand parents that need the assistance. This happens so often the Concierge staff get shouted and threatened when the rest of the family are told to meet them at the gate or can walk alongside the buggy as they have other disabled passengers to take.
- Why are there no rules in place on the website stating clearly what is allowed and not allowed. If a member needs assistance then 1 of the family members is allowed to travel with them but to make sure they too are booked for SA as then if anything should happen to them they know exactly what meds and how to deal with them should they have seizures etc.
- Whilst at it that applies to anyone that has dementia should not be travelling by themselves. This happens a lot of times. Families put their parents who

have dementia on a flight and book assistance. They then wonder off in IDL or get aggressive and we supposed to be dealing with all this crap. We are not a nursing home and we do not have someone in IDL to sit and supervisor people no more. Wilson James have done away with having a Hoist who used to make sure everyone was directed to the right place and assist the buggy drivers on large flights to load them into the correct buggy etc.

- **Third Party Harrassment from Passengers:** Why is it that Staff have to put up with all the verbal abuse, threats from SA passengers. Whoever is the Ops Manager on the day he should be available to deal with such things and the passengers should be banned from travelling at Gatwick Airport. People get punched, spat on, cursed (saying comments like I hope you die), sworn at. Surely if they genuinely required the service this should not be happening. All I mentioned above has happened to various people I have spoken to that work at the Airport.

North Terminal Lift near Immigration: Why also do they have a Passenger lift/buggy and Goods all have to share this lift so when you have a Domestic arrival flight you are waiting ages as they are using the lift for Goods delivery. If the Buggy driver needs to use it on the other side which is International and needs to get to IDL to pick up Passengers he too is waiting Ages for it. Where is the sense in this.

Issues Around Airport: They need to sort out their E-gates, travelators, Lifts always breaking down that I constantly report. The lifts are out dated. I got stuck in the Arrivals lift a couple of months ago with a buggy driver and 2 passengers in Pier 6 as I was helping him off-load from Gate 102 one of the difficult Gates. Very soon they will not be able to get parts for the lifts.

Toilets eg: Pier 4 need upgrading and some of the toilets smell awful inside.

Corridor : Need to widen the Arrival route that comes from Pier 4 and 6 leading into Immigration in a narrow corridor where the passengers and buggys fighting to get past one another. Buggy drivers waiting ages trying to get passed to get to a job.

International Arrivals Need someone there to keep the passengers moving as they just stand there and buggys drivers trying to get out as area very Congested.

E-Gates: They have less Border Force staff and relying too much on the e-gates which half of them are always down and not working. If they get the new Runway they will need more E-gates which they do not have any space in Border Control area so how are they going to get round it. You cannot rely too much on technology as it is great when it works but as soon as they systems are hacked into and computers stop working what is Plan B when you cut back on so many Border Force staff to rely on the e-gates.

I am sure there is other things many other staff are happy to add but this is all I have observed working at the Airport.

To conclude, the way I see things if Gatwick are trying so hard to get this Runway approved they have a very long way to go as they need to sort out some of these teething problems to allow the place to run more smoothly. You will be having what an extra 100k people throw the Airport and having all the issues.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my letter and concerns with this Runway.

Many thanks

Pat Cameron (Ms)