

Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign **GACC**

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Runway down-played

GACC welcomes the low priority given to a new runway in the Gatwick master plan published last Thursday, 19 July.¹ We also welcome the assurance given by the Gatwick CEO, Stewart Wingate, that the report in The Times - that Gatwick was seeking a new runway to make it the same size as Heathrow - had misrepresented his views; and that '*Gatwick Airport is not actively pursuing, promoting or lobbying for a second runway*'.² But he should do more to allay the anxiety caused by runway speculation.

GIP, the major shareholder in Gatwick, wants to sell its shares in around 2018. Obviously the prospect of a new runway would improve the price. But there is no space for an efficient new runway (as the master plan admits),³ and it is doubtful if a new runway would prove profitable (look at Manchester's second runway – almost unused).

The master plan does have a short section describing how the airport might look in 2030 if a new runway were built but this section is unchanged since the draft published in October 2011. It merely reproduces the plan given in the (now discredited) 2003 Air Transport White Paper for a new runway to the south of the airport, very close to the edge of Crawley. 'If any new runway ever became a serious possibility,' said GACC chairman, Brendon Sewill, 'there would be massive opposition from across Surrey, Sussex and Kent.'

More noise – SHOCK

GACC's main criticism of the master plan is that it still tries to hide the impact on local residents of 80 more flights every day and larger aircraft. Hidden away on page 105 is a table that shows that the number of people within the 57 leq noise contour (the official measure of the onset of significant community annoyance) is due to

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double, from 2,450 at present to 4,952. The number of people within the wider 54 leq contour is due to increase by 50% to 12,363.⁴

The master plan tries to excuse this by saying that aircraft have got much quieter over the past twenty years – which is true. But it is still lamentable that the improvement in recent years is to be reversed. The master plan admits that the noise in 2021 will actually be worse than in 2004 or 2007.

GACC is also concerned about the forecast substantial increase in ground noise (engine testing, maintenance etc) which mainly affects Charlwood and Horley. When the draft plan was published last autumn we pressed for measures, such as earth bunds, noise walls or the relocation of buildings, to be shown in the final master plan: we are glad that the need for such measures is accepted but disappointed that no details are given.

Economic critique

GACC also believes that the economic statistics given in the master plan are rubbish. A separate note is attached showing why this is so.

¹ <http://www.gatwickairport.com/masterplan>

² Speaking to the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee, 19 July. The Times report was on 16 July.

³ Master plan paragraphs 10.3.5 and 10.3.6

⁴ Table 9.6. The severity of the noise increase is also shown by the fact that the number of people within the ear-shattering 69 leq contour is forecast to increase from nil at present to 31.

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