

# Response to Gatwick Master Plan 2018 consultation.

Cllr Jonathan Essex, on behalf of Surrey Green Party. 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

## 1. Introduction

This response focuses on two aspects: climate impacts and the wider economic case (including climate, environmental and social impacts). On both accounts the Gatwick Draft Master Plan out for consultation is found wholly inadequate, and highly damaging.

## 2. Climate Change Limits not reflected in Master Plan

For climate change to be abated it is crucial that all UK airports, collectively, stay within the UK's carbon budget, and that this itself is sufficient to stop dangerous climate change. This response focuses on these two aspects in turn.

### 2.1 Misleading climate claims.

The master plan makes three misleading claims:

- Gatwick is wrong to claim that it is carbon neutral.
- The increase in carbon emissions due to extra flights at the airport are massively understated.
- Increased efficiency of operations will not offset the impact of runway expansion.

**Gatwick Airport is not carbon neutral.** The Draft Master plan kicks off by claiming Gatwick is already carbon neutral. This is utter nonsense – a bit like saying Wetherspoons is teetotal because the bar staff don't drink alcohol themselves whilst on duty. The airport makes great claims about the emissions within its direct responsibility but seems to forget it is an airport – and the whole consultation is about facilitating more flights to take off and land. The carbon emissions of not just the existing flights to and from Gatwick (of which 50% can be attributed to the airport as every Gatwick flight either starts or lands there), its direct emissions and the emissions caused by surface access for both passengers and freight are measured in million of tonnes. The claims made in the master plan for total carbon impact are therefore a massive understatement: completely wrong and hugely misleading. The report's claims on potential (but not guaranteed) efficiency improvements should be balanced by presentation of the total increased emissions associated with the additional flights that the plan seeks to enable. The total impact of these, not just the amount per passenger, should be measured and reduced. It is not acceptable for the Airport to exclude the emissions from aircraft and those associated with surface transport from what it is prepared to take responsibility for.

**Increased Carbon Emissions of Extra Flights Massively Understated.** Its consideration of scope 3 emissions should include planes not just taking off and landing but all the emissions of them flying (**not just when the planes are below 3000 feet**) – and the impact of land transport. The master plan claims that the carbon emissions of the emergency and second runway proposals increase carbon emissions by around 177,637 tonnes of carbon dioxide (23%) and 301,425 tonnes of carbon dioxide (39%) respectively. But the government's Airports Commission Final Report (Table 9.6, see below) independently calculated that the impact of the proposed expansion of Gatwick would be between

11.2 and 16.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. **This is 55 times as much as Gatwick's figure for a second runway.** So the master plan is scandalously misleading on the scale of the impact. This alone should render this consultation null and void.

**Table 9.6: Carbon assessment findings, change in MtCO<sub>2</sub>(e) over the appraisal period, carbon-traded (CT) and carbon-capped (CC), assessment of need<sup>73</sup>**

Area of Emissions	Gatwick Second Runway		Heathrow Extended Northern Runway		Heathrow Northwest Runway	
	CT	CC	CT	CC	CT	CC
Passenger surface access	11.5	6.6	7.1	4.9	8.4	5.7
Airport operations (energy and fuel use)	1.1	0.8	2.1	1.8	2.6	2.2
Construction of airport facilities and surface access infrastructure	3.9	3.9	10.1	10.1	11.3	11.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>19.2</b>
Air travel at the expanded airport (not included in monetised assessment)	110	68.9	260	210.4	309.9	236.7

Source: Jacobs

**More efficient operations plus extra runway does not equal carbon reductions.** Gatwick Airport's claim that it can expand its runway whilst reducing emissions does not hold up to scrutiny. There is a need to make operations more efficient. But increasing overall demand will increase flights, which will massively increase carbon emissions, as accepted by the government (even if not accepted by Gatwick Airport Ltd). For total impact to reduce, **more efficient operations must be combined with a cap on flights**, which is best achieved by stopping building more space for planes to take off and land.

## 2.2 Staying within the UK's current carbon budget.

The Gatwick master plan is flawed both in the short and long-term.

The Airports Commission Final Report was supported by a carbon analysis that showed that if the UK is to stay within its carbon budget for international aviation and shipping, **expansion at one airport (Heathrow has been chosen by the government) must be matched by reductions in flights and emissions at other airports.**

The last Gatwick master plan acknowledged that an extra runway, and increased flights, would increase the carbon emissions associated with international (and domestic) flights from Gatwick. This is still the case, both for use of the emergency runway as a second runway, and for construction of a new second runway. As expansion at Heathrow has been approved, emissions – and that means flights – from all other UK airports must reduce.

This master plan is therefore completely out of kilter with the UK's carbon budget as it stands. For the UK aviation sector to make one-by-one proposals to *expand*, whilst the UK government-appointed Airports Commission said that the opposite was required, is not just unacceptable but outrageous. There is no space for Gatwick Airport expansion of any kind within the current UK carbon budget.

## 2.3 The need to further constrain UK carbon emissions.

The way in which it is argued that overall emissions can go down while Heathrow is expanded is through future improvements in aeroplane fuel efficiency. So aviation emissions are predicted to go up *even further* in the short to medium term before coming down again at some point in the future. This is flawed on a number of accounts:

- Firstly, as stated above without national constraint on demand for flights through pricing (if the natural constraint of restricting runway numbers is not used) there is no way in which the promise of reduced flights elsewhere across the UK while Heathrow expands will happen. It is a promise in word only.
- Secondly, the current plan to increase emissions now and reduce them later means that *overall* emissions are greater, and the carbon budget is being exceeded. This increases the risk of runaway climate change.
- Thirdly, the current carbon budget is not strong enough, as it is linked to restricting carbon emissions globally to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, not 1.5°C, though the world's leading climate scientists have recently reported that even at 1.5°C post-industrial warming, climate change will be unacceptable for global humanity. This is set out in the IPCC's special report on 1.5°C climate change published in October 2018. This sets out a strong case that to limit climate change to that which avoids long-term tragedy, the UK needs a stronger carbon budget. This would require not just the planned expansion at Heathrow to be avoided, but **any** expansion of any runway capacity in the UK, and a plan to decarbonise the aviation sector completely by 2030, alongside the rest of the UK economy.

The environmental campaign group Plan B is currently contesting the legality of an additional runway at Heathrow on the grounds that it is incompatible with the UK's long-term climate targets.

Currently carbon emissions globally are still rising, and fast. This is consistent with the construction of more and more transport infrastructure that allows people and freight to travel further and faster. Aviation and shipping, as well as land-based transport, are expanding fast. We cannot continue to expand global transport whilst reducing global emissions.

Planning permission for use of the emergency runway was granted solely on the basis that under no circumstances could it be used in conjunction with the main runway – which goes against the projection of up to 80,000 extra flights a year from the emergency runway alone.

### 3. Economic Impacts

The Gatwick Airport Draft Master Plan appears focused on maximising value for the airport's owners and their shareholders. However, to be responsible, business must restrict its income-generating activities to those which are also beneficial to wider society. This requires that the financial benefits to the business itself must not be at the expense of wider society. Their operations must be within climate limits, and improve the quality of the environment, the sustainability of how resources are used, and the way economic benefits are shared. The case for expansion of Gatwick fails on all of these counts.

#### 3.1 Local Impacts

Local groups CAGNE, GACC and GON have written cogently about the impacts that Gatwick Airport expansion would have on local residents – particularly in terms of noise pollution, air quality,

congestion of surface access, increased demand for land for homes, and the additional burden placed on local councils to meet these needs. That master plan does not address these, in particular:

- noise – as with carbon emissions, there should be a plan for noise impacts from the airport to go down, not get worse.
- who pays for the new infrastructure, including both rail and road capacity, which any expansion would require?

### **3.2 Wider environmental impacts**

Expanding Gatwick Airport would make the focus of economic development in the UK more polarised. Rather than expanding the economy where it is already the strongest, the UK needs to better balance economic development across the UK. This will mean creating jobs where there is long-term (often intergenerational) unemployment and community decline, and large amounts of urban dereliction and empty buildings. It will not mean expanding London and building on the countryside around London to provide more infrastructure such as aviation, surface access infrastructure, business locations (including offices, retail and industrial estates – such as the proposed ‘Gatwick Airport City’), and more homes on the Green Belt. This is not a sustainable plan for the immediate area around Gatwick Airport, or for the South East of England, or for that matter a sustainable economy for the UK as a whole.

As set out above, expanding Gatwick Airport is likely to mean the UK moves even further away from accepting and acting on its climate responsibilities. And it is not likely that this can be simply ‘offset’ by greater reductions elsewhere in the economy. To get to zero carbon, all parts of the economy need to take part.

## **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, Surrey Green Party is not in any way of supportive of expansion of Gatwick Airport – and is astounded at the audacity of Gatwick’s dangerous and damaging proposals. This master plan would benefit GAL’s owners and investors while harming local residents and future generations.

Gatwick Airport’s vision is aligned to aggressive trade aspirations that will tend to offshore the UK’s emissions – meeting our emission targets by increasing the global nature of the economy and obtaining more and more of our resources and goods from overseas. This model of expanding global transport will further lock-in the kind of economic structures and behaviours that are keeping the world on the path to runaway climate change. We need to make different economic choices, to create a different type of economy fit for the future. That means expanding the parts of the economy that will lead us to zero carbon, not the most polluting sectors, which include aviation.