

# GATWICK OBVIOUSLY NOT

## Response to Gatwick Airport's "Master Plan Consultation"

**QUESTION 1:** *To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose the principle of growing Gatwick by making best use of the existing runways in line with Government policy?*

Strongly oppose.

**QUESTION 2:** *Please explain why you hold this view.*

The growth proposals in the master plan would further enrich the airport's shareholders whilst inflicting more flights, more noise, more emissions and more public transport congestion and over-crowding on local people and those under flight paths.

Any growth at Gatwick should be matched by a directly proportionate reduction in noise, emissions and other local impacts. Gatwick's draft master plan contains no new proposals for reducing these impacts on local people or on communities under flight paths. In our view, therefore, Gatwick's proposals are not consistent with the basic principles of fairness and balance that underpin government policy or with the specific policy requirement that environmental issues and mitigations should be taken into account in airport growth proposals.

The nature and scale of required reductions in noise, emissions and other local impacts should be agreed in parallel with any formal growth proposals and growth should be conditional on achieving those reductions. In each case the metrics to be used should be agreed with local community representatives and their achievement should be measured and certified independently. Required noise reductions should take account of the fact that the airport's noise footprint has increased in four of the past five years, in contravention of government policy. Required emissions reductions should address the fact that the government already expects aviation's greenhouse gas emissions to increase from 7% of total UK emissions now to 25% by 2050. Expansion at Gatwick and elsewhere will make the position worse but the draft master plan contains no credible plans to address this situation.

The question, and the context in which it is asked, are designed to be misleading. It is intended to give the impression that growth at Gatwick on the basis proposed in the master plan would in fact be consistent with government policy. For the reasons set out above we do not believe that is the case. This cynical approach to consultation is inappropriate and inconsistent with good practice. It suggests that Gatwick's master plan consultation is designed to be a PR exercise rather than a serious attempt to gather and assess local views.

**QUESTION 3:** *Given the draft master plan looks out beyond 2030, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that land that has been safeguarded since 2006 should continue to be safeguarded for the future construction of an additional main runway?*

Strongly disagree

**QUESTION 4:** *Please explain why you hold this view*

We strongly oppose the use of this land for an additional runway. Following the government's decision to support a third runway at Heathrow there are many reasons why no further runways should be constructed in the UK and specifically why Gatwick would not be an appropriate location for an additional runway. Given Government policy does not currently support an additional runway at Gatwick, currently safeguarded land should be made available for other more economically and environmentally advantageous purposes.

Continued safeguarding of the land to build an additional main runway leaves a threat of future expansion hanging over the heads of local residents and blights a large area. It also precludes consideration of how that land could be best used for the benefit of local people.

**QUESTION 5:** *What more, if anything, do you believe should be done to maximise the employment and economic benefits resulting from Gatwick's continued growth?*

The local area does not need yet further Gatwick expansion in order to thrive. Even more dependence on the airport reduces resilience in the event of an economic downturn. There is a range of other sectors that could generate similar economic benefits to the regional economy. Local Government, working with local communities, must be more imaginative in the creation of a more diverse economy that supports the Government's Clean Growth Strategy. This includes considering how safeguarded land could be better utilised to meet the needs of local communities.

**QUESTION 6:** *What more, if anything, do you think should be done to minimise the noise impacts of Gatwick's continued growth?*

Any further growth of Gatwick must be conditional on directly proportionate reductions in noise, measured on a basis to be agreed with local community representatives. A regulatory regime should be established to ensure this principle is adhered to at all times and that any "excess" growth is promptly reversed until proportionate noise reductions are agreed. Measures of noise impact must take full account of the frequency of aircraft noise as well as average noise levels.

The measures to be taken to achieve proportionate noise reductions should be for Gatwick airport to propose in consultation with local community representatives. They must include: an ongoing commitment to dispersal of arriving and departing aircraft on a fair and equitable basis to be agreed with local community representatives and accelerated fleet replacement.

**QUESTION 7:** *What more, if anything, do you think should be done to minimise the other environmental impacts of Gatwick's continued growth?*

Any further growth of Gatwick should only be conditional on drastic measures to reduce the environmental damage that its activities cause. We believe these should include:

1. An audited and enforceable plan to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions from flights to and from Gatwick
2. Reductions in the number of ATMs, possibly through the use of larger aircraft
3. Reductions in the carbon emissions, noise and pollution impacts of surface access arrangements to the airport
4. Implementation of a permanent environmental and health impact awareness campaign for all passengers flying to and from Gatwick

**QUESTION 8:** *Do you believe our approach to community engagement, as described in the draft master plan, should be improved, and if so, how?*

Gatwick's approach to community engagement is based on two principles:

1. first that the airport's commercial interests should always take precedence over the interests of local communities whom its activities impact
2. and secondly that engagement is a substitute for meaningful action.

The airport's approach to engagement should instead focus on enforceable, directly proportionate noise and other impact reductions as pre-conditions of any growth. It should also agree to full compensation for all people whom its activities adversely impact, including for diminution in value of properties.

**QUESTION 9:** *If you make use of Gatwick, what areas of the passenger experience would you like to see improved?*

No comment.

**QUESTION 10:** *Are there any aspects of our Surface Access Strategy that you believe should be improved and, if so, what are they?*

Gatwick's surface access is wholly incompatible with expansion of the airport. The airport is the wrong side of London and is handicapped by an overburdened rail connection north/south and a totally inadequate rail connection east/west. It is only accessible by one motorway that reaches neither the Capital nor the coast. As a result the airport's operations already cause severe road and rail congestion and overcrowding for local people. Any further growth of the airport should be conditional on (a) reductions in the number of people accessing the airport by road and (b) reductions in public transport congestion. The airport should fund all improvements required to meet these conditions.

**QUESTION 11:** *Do you have any other comments to make about the Gatwick Airport draft master plan?*

Gatwick's draft master plan is a manifesto for corporate greed, environmental irresponsibility and local destruction.

The master plan makes no attempt to balance the interests of the airport with those of local communities impacted by its operations. The growth proposals in the master plan would further enrich the airport's shareholders whilst inflicting more flights, more noise,

more emissions and more public transport congestion and over-crowding on local people and those under flight paths.

We reject the one-sided, industry-takes-all, approach set out in the master plan. We propose instead that the airport and local councils and community groups should agree arrangements under which growth is permitted only where it is matched by directly proportionate reductions in noise and other environmental impacts and where full compensation is paid to any person who suffers additional noise as a result of any permitted growth.