

# GACC NEWSLETTER

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Dear Members

This newsletter comes at the start of what will be a decisive period for Gatwick airport, the communities around it and the environment that Gatwick and aviation more widely impact.

Traffic at Gatwick is slowly building up as travel restrictions are relaxed, although flight numbers are still less than 30% of the August 2019 numbers. We expect this trend to continue, subject to any changes in the restrictions. However, we don't currently know how long it will take for traffic to return to historic norms, if it ever does. Gatwick management estimate 4-5 years.

We expect Gatwick to launch the consultation on its proposals to expand by developing its existing standby runway in the next two months. Although the scale of expansion being proposed is less than would be the case with a full second runway, the threat is very real and very serious. We summarise Gatwick's proposals, their devastating impacts and the way we intend to campaign against them below.

## Proposed expansion at Gatwick

Gatwick plans to expand in two ways. First by operating more aircraft using its existing main runway. This accounts for about 60% of proposed growth. Secondly by redeveloping its emergency (or standby) runway so it can be used on a routine basis, accounting for the remaining 40%.

In September or October we expect the airport to launch a public consultation on the second of these proposals. There will then be a formal planning process, known as a Development Consent Order process, in 2022.

If permission was granted, Gatwick would be able to grow from 45m passengers and 280,000 flights in 2018, to 74m passengers and 390,000 flights over the next 15 years, nearly the size of Heathrow. The consequences for local communities, people under flight paths and the environment would be devastating: more noise, more road and rail congestion, more CO<sub>2</sub> and other emissions, worse air quality and properties under flight paths would be devalued.

GACC, working with other community and environmental groups and councils, has created the "Gatwick's Big Enough" campaign to oppose these plans. Our objective is simple: to prevent further growth at Gatwick. We plan to focus on five key issues: aircraft noise; the climate change consequences of expansion; the inability of local infrastructure to cope with additional passenger volumes; the air quality consequences of expansion and the fact that there is no need for expansion in market, planning or policy terms. We will also contest any economic and employment arguments Gatwick seeks to make, which in our experience are routinely exaggerated. We'll be in touch again when details of the consultation are available, but if we're to prevent Gatwick's unwanted and unnecessary expansion plans, we'll need your support.

At the same time, we are continuing to work to ensure that there is proper scrutiny of the airport's proposed main runway growth. Gatwick is exploiting a historical loophole in planning law to argue that there is no need for this growth to be reviewed or approved, in breach of government policy in our view. We continue to engage with Department for Transport officials and the Aviation Minister on this and were pleased that Kent MP, Tom Tugendhat, wrote to the Minister recently urging him to take steps to ensure this proposed growth is robustly scrutinised. Tom's letter is [here](#).

### **Night flights**

We are very disappointed that the government has decided to roll over current night flight and noise limits at Gatwick (and Heathrow and Stansted) for a further three years. The vast majority of responses to the consultation, including many from the Gatwick area, urged government to ban or reduce night flights, but community views have again been ignored. The government's decision document is available [here](#).

We are continuing to work with other campaign groups to put pressure on the government to ban or reduce night flights in due course, including by requiring it to do additional research on the health impacts these flights have.

Part 2 of the government's consultation on night flights - which focuses on longer term policies and arrangements - has been extended until 3 September. GACC has submitted a full response which is on our website [\[here\]](#) and we encourage members to respond if you haven't already done so. Please feel free to draw on our response, but it's always better to use your own words where possible. We've also prepared a two page summary response, which is [here](#), for those who would like to respond but are short of time. The consultation itself is [here](#).

### **Noise Management Board study on aircraft dispersal**

Gatwick's noise management board has recently signed off terms of reference for a study that will consider options for dispersing aircraft arriving at or leaving Gatwick and consider how they could be handled in order to spread the burden of noise fairly. This will feed into a public consultation on Gatwick flight paths, as part of the wider airspace modernisation programme, probably in 2022.

Any change in aircraft flight paths is controversial and different communities will have different views. However, we welcome the study as a first step in assessing the options for dispersal, the metrics to be used to measure community impacts and possible methodologies for evaluating the fairness of each option. We will report back on the study's progress in due course.

### **Airspace modernisation**

At the national level we are continuing to work with other community and environmental groups to try to ensure that the regulatory and policy foundations of the wider airspace modernisation programme are fit for purpose, engaging extensively with the Department for Transport and the CAA.

### **Aviation taxation**

Our response to the Treasury's recent consultation on Air Passenger Duty is available on GACC's website [here](#). We have since been working with other groups to urge the relevant Treasury minister to review the aviation industry's current exemption from VAT and Fuel Duty and not to proceed with the proposed reduction in domestic APD.

### **Joining GACC: please spread the word**

Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to join GACC and help protect the interests of communities around the airport and under flight paths. Information on how to join is on our website here: <http://www.gacc.org.uk/contact-us.php>.

### **GACC contact details**

Email: [info@gacc.org.uk](mailto:info@gacc.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.gacc.org.uk>

Twitter: @GCgatwick