

Buckland Parish Council Response to Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Consultation

Submitted via email to feedback@gatwickfutureplans.com

1st December 2021

Dear Sirs

Buckland Parish Council ("Council") strongly opposes the proposed expansion and growth at Gatwick being proposed by Gatwick Airport Limited ("GAL").

Council having reviewed the consultation documents has, as a parish council member of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign ("GACC"), drawn upon the GACC commissioned professional assessments, and concluded, from that shared analysis that the consultation:

- (i) gives a misleading impression of the need for the development, which on closer inspection contains contradictory statements and implied errors;
- (ii) relies on projected benefits and costs of the proposed development derived from economic analysis from which key factors have been omitted and that contains material errors;
- (iii) mischaracterises the noise impacts of the proposed development; and
- (iv) projects a vision that is not consistent with the Airports National Policy Statement.

In Council's view this GAL consultation is not fit for purpose; a view which appears to match that expressed in many responses to the consultation, including responses from several principal authorities. Accordingly, as Council does not believe the consultation meets the requirements of the Planning Act, Council asks that any application based on it be rejected on the grounds of inadequate consultation.

Council extends its full support to the fuller response submitted by the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign and has included below a summary of the issues it considers will be most likely to affect those living and working within the parish of Buckland:

Congestion on the local highways network

The section of A25 that connects Dorking and Reigate passes through the centre of Buckland and is routinely used by National Highways as a diversion route for the M25 whenever traffic using the J8/9 section needs to be diverted. The increased use of satellite navigation to avoid congestion on the motorway network invariably leads to traffic congestion on this section of the A25. Congestion in local town centres has already led drivers to seek alternative rural routes and, as a result, local roads between the M25 and Gatwick Airport are increasingly seen as preferred routes. This congestion undermines quality of life for Council's parishioners.

With the network bounded by the M25, M23/A23, A24 and Gatwick airport already overcrowded, and with the M25 often operating at capacity, Council is understandably concerned, given any extra traffic will result in unacceptable pressure on the local road network, by GAL's proposal to provide an additional 25,000 car parking spaces. Council is also concerned by the GAL proposal to significantly grow cargo throughput, a proposal which GAL itself acknowledges will significantly increase the number of cargo handler goods vehicles movements.

Safety on our local highways network

With severe congestion already apparent, before taking into account further airport expansion, any additional congestion will clearly increase the potential for accidents and GAL's reliance on the recently reconfigured M23 smart motorway as the main strategic route to the airport arguably adds to this augmented accident risk.

The GAL proposals do not seem to address the likely need to increase capacity within the local National Health Service; in our emergency hospital at Redhill and in local doctors' surgeries.

Climate Change

With National Policy targeting net zero by 2050, Council does not understand how GAL can claim their proposals will comply with Government policy. Council is aware the government's climate change advisers have made clear that there is no case for additional airport capacity in the UK and that any net expansion would have unacceptable climate change impacts. Despite this GAL has failed to put forward credible plans for mitigating the emissions that will be generated, initially by the proposed construction and, over time from the projected growth in activity.

With Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council both having declared climate emergencies, and with road traffic making up a considerable proportion of carbon emissions across Surrey any proposed growth in traffic movements driven by growth at Gatwick Airport will make progress towards reducing emissions more difficult and arguably make net zero unattainable.

Air Pollution

There has also been much discussion regarding air pollution which has been proved to cause considerable health problems and, despite numerous studies that has focused on areas close to Gatwick Airport, GAL has so far failed to address this problem or to observe World Health Organisation guidelines.

With the A25 passing through the centre of Buckland, Council is concerned that any GAL generated increase in traffic passing through the village could be expected to have an adverse impact on the health of people living and working in the parish.

Land Use

Expansion of the size envisaged by GAL will result in increased demand for housing and buildings to house activities needed to support the larger population. The demand for new dwellings already presents a considerable threat to Mole Valley and GAL proposals to generate even higher demand seems at odds with the UK Government's stated priority for levelling up which would appear to favour directing investment outside the south-east.

Noise

Aircraft noise in this area is already inconsistent with Government policy and GAL fails to address the need to deliver any meaningful improvement. Buckland residents, whilst not located directly under current Gatwick flightpaths, does suffer because of low-level overflying by aircraft departing Heathrow and is also overflown by light aircraft and helicopters routing north of Gatwick controlled airspace. As Council remains mindful a pending comprehensive review of south-east airspace could result in significant changes, Council is disappointed GAL is not committed to reducing aircraft noise, particularly given the high level of night flying at Gatwick airport, levels which contrast with other UK airports.

Council asks for due weight to be given to Council's stated objection and concerns.