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29 November 2021

Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Consultation - written response

Dear Gatwick Future Plans Team,

Thank you for providing the opportunity for Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to share our views on the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project proposals. We are grateful to you for having presented to our Board on 14 October.

Coast to Capital is a business-led collaboration between private, public and education sectors across a diverse area which includes East Surrey, Greater Brighton, and West Sussex. We aim to support the recovery of our regional economy through business engagement, skills initiatives, and by working with partners to bring forward transformational projects for the region, whilst continuing to monitor our historic investments.

As such, our response is broadly focused on the economic, social, and environmental opportunities the proposals could bring to the region, rather than answering some of the specific and more detailed questions in the consultation questionnaire. It should be noted that a number of partner organisations represented on our Board, such as the local authorities, will be making their own responses to the consultation.

Context

We published our [Build Back Stronger, Smarter and Greener](#) investment strategy in 2020, to promote recovery and sustainable growth for the region, in response to underlying structural economic issues and the immediate shocks presented by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Historically, productivity per head has grown at a slower rate than both the south east and national averages, with our LEP area ranked 28th out of 38 LEPs in 2019. Estimates suggest our regional economic output could have declined by up to 12% in 2020, compared to a 9.9% contraction in the UK.

The pandemic has starkly illustrated that the regional economy is largely reliant on Gatwick Airport, with the towns surrounding the airport being particularly impacted by the downturn in aviation travel. Nearly 100,000 jobs in the towns around the airport had been furloughed by June 2020 – reflecting dependency on jobs in the aviation industry and other sectors related to Gatwick. Impacts were particularly acute in Crawley where take up of all forms of income related support, since the start of the pandemic, has been higher than in the other local authorities around the airport. In recent years Crawley had the highest productivity per head in the Coast to Capital area, but during the pandemic over half of its jobs were in either vulnerable or very vulnerable sectors, making it the most economically exposed place in Coast to Capital.

Northern Runway Project

From a regional economic perspective, Coast to Capital recognises that the creation of an estimated 18,400 additional jobs by 2038 and £1.5bn GVA generated from the project would be beneficial to the economy. While we have not examined the proposals in detail, a large-scale, private sector investment on the scale of this project is an enormous economic catalyst and a sign of confidence in the region, particularly at a time where the aviation sector, and its supply chains, has been impacted so severely by the pandemic. Expectations are that it will take in the region of 4 years for aviation to return to pre-pandemic levels. It is also particularly relevant in the context of ‘Levelling Up’, where major public infrastructure investment by Government is expected to be targeted to the north of the country for the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding, given the scale of the project, we would urge Gatwick to ensure that it has fully considered and mitigated for the associated wider impacts on regional infrastructure – including issues such as transport, skills, jobs, housing and the natural environment. Decarbonisation of our transport network, including air transport, is central to the future success of the area and its contribution toward national ‘net-zero’ targets. We would be pleased to see Gatwick introduce more collaborative approaches like the recent announcement of the first flights using Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) at the airport.

There are also widespread concerns that infrastructure within the region is already constrained, particularly the road and rail network but also housing, a situation that will worsen without sufficient corresponding investment. There is also strong evidence that earnings and aspirations are lower in communities in close proximity

to and serving the airport and its supply chains, compared to those of commuters in high paid industries within the area.

We recognise that Gatwick have produced various initial reports on the impacts from the proposals, including an Outline Employment, Skills and Business Strategy, Preliminary Environmental Information Reports (PEIR) and Consultation Overview Document, and have committed to developing more detailed plans as the project develops. Therefore, if the Northern Runway proposals are successful, we urge Gatwick to actively work with local stakeholders to build on the existing reports and develop clear and detailed plans on how it will maximise the wider economic, social and environmental benefits after the runway is operational, committing to delivering specific projects with local partners and businesses.

As such, our Board would like to put forward or emphasise the following measures by Gatwick as the proposals develop:

- Support and help fund the production of a co-ordinated sub-regional policy framework for wider infrastructure around the airport, the need for which has been identified in our regional economic strategy, specifically Build Back Stronger, Smarter and Greener.
- Commit to working with Government, Network Rail, Transport for the South East and other transport bodies to ensure there is sufficient net-zero, public transport routes to the airport, that will meet increased capacity from the operation of the Northern Runway.
- Lead work with local stakeholders to develop and deliver decarbonisation plans to meet net zero and Jet Zero targets, as part of its Second Decade of Change and future decades.
- Work with partners to define a clear regional identity and discussions around developing an inward investment service to establish the area as an international 'trade hub'.
- Work with business representative organisations, including the LEP, to enable, grow and support local supply chains to deliver construction of and support future operations associated with the Northern Runway proposals.
- Maximise opportunities for local businesses to engage with Gatwick's procurement process ensuring the process benefits the wider economy around the airport.
- Directly commit to developing projects to grow productivity and innovation in the local economy and supply chains, specifically the Crawley Innovation Centre given its intended aims to pioneer and bring to market clean energy technologies and transportation.
- Partner with local businesses on research and development projects such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs).
- Establish a real Living Wage initiative at Gatwick Airport and encourage other businesses associated with the airport to adopt the initiative to help raise wage levels for residents living near the airport.

- Actively support the proposed Institute of Technology (IoT), contributing to curriculum development, strategic governance and professional development of the teaching staff.
- Engage with further and higher education partners to link local skills provision with employment at the airport, particularly engineering degree apprenticeships.
- Continue working with local skills providers to increase Gatwick's apprenticeship offering and expand work experience and T Level placement opportunities.
- Provide match funding for one or more Enterprise Coordinators for the Coast to Capital Careers Hub to facilitate targeted skills interventions in the area.

Regional economic success depends on the sustainable and integrated development of Gatwick Airport. The reach and importance of the airport gives our area a unique set of opportunities and strengths on which to build our future economy. It is essential for our competitiveness and will allow us to attract businesses from London and internationally to contribute to Global Britain ambitions.

Coast to Capital LEP is supportive of the proposals, as we have been of sustainable growth of the airport in previous consultations, given the potential benefits to the wider economy. We would encourage Gatwick to consider the full range of views expressed in how it takes the proposals forward and to promote appropriate economic, social and environmental mitigations of future activity in and around the airport, brought about by the proposals.

We look forward to further developments on the Northern Runway consultation as they come forward.

For and on behalf of Coast to Capital Ltd.

Julie Kapsalis



Anthony Middleton



Chair

Coast to Capital

Acting Chief Executive

Coast to Capital