railfuture

Campaigning for better services
over a bigger rail network

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Dear Gatwick Airport Ltd,

Gatwick Northern Runway Project – Summer 2022 consultation

Railfuture is Britain's leading and longest-established national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in development and transport planning.

We have been pleased to have the opportunity to offer two previous consultation responses, on 10 January 2019 and 1 December 2021*. We have a particular interest in surface access issues.

What are your views on our car parking proposals, including for additional on-airport spaces to assist with reducing existing off-airport unauthorised spaces?

Within the context of an approach to surface access which would seek to maximise modal shift away from the use of private cars (no matter their means of propulsion or control) by airport users and workers alike, we broadly welcome the revised approach to car parking. We should therefore very much prefer that you should <u>not</u> continue to include within your parking proposals for the Project the identified 3,300 spaces that may be needed to replace off-airport unauthorised spaces and which are included in the revised parking proposals.

What are your views on our Project updates? (Please specify the topics to which your comments refer: Airport Surface Access Strategy and Rail Strategy.)

We note that the consultation's sub-title is "making best use of Gatwick." One particular viewpoint, recognising that this is outside your control and only amenable to your influence, is around the notion of 'making best use of Gatwick Express.' We appreciate the focus on rail services and infrastructure, and suggest that there is another factor which contributes to mode choice and efficient use of whatever services and infrastructure are available, and that is the price mechanism – rail fares. We consider that it has long-since ceased to be tenable for a premium fare to be charged for a decidedly non-premium product, distorting the travel market in the process. However well-used the Gatwick Express may and will be, it is under-used in comparison with the other branded rail services to and from London. We therefore advocate the alignment of Gatwick Express with Southern fares, as the services offered are in totality distinguished by little more than the livery of the rolling stock, in order to maximise efficient use of overall passenger capacity on the route between London and Gatwick.

**www.railfuture.org.uk   www.railfuturescotland.org.uk   www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk**

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We recognise the current state of flux before your own Airport Surface Access Strategy and government's plans for Great British Railways are finalised, and having registered our viewpoints look forward to continued stakeholder engagement around their application in future proposals.

In the meantime we shall be supporting the proposals from Transport for the South East in their draft Strategic Investment Plan for the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme and other rail enhancements of benefit to the airport's users and workers, while challenging them to be more ambitious with their proposed rail interventions in the quadrant north-east of Gatwick particularly to improve orbital connectivity and with an especial focus on the Medway Towns / Maidstone conurbation.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS
Railfuture
Vice-Chair London & South East regional branch
Director for Infrastructure & Networks, national Board

* 10 January 2019: https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display1968
* 1 December 2021: https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display2873