

By email:
RunwayConsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Our ref: Aviation/Heathrow R3

If telephoning please ask for: Guy Davies
01306 879281

Email: guy.davies@molevalley.gov.uk

28 March 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Draft Airports National Policy Statement

I represent Mole Valley District Council (MVDC), which lies some distance from Heathrow Airport but borders Gatwick Airport.

Question 2 on the consultation response form asks how best to address the issue of airport capacity in the south east, either through the expansion of Heathrow Airport (the Government's preferred option) or any other scheme including the expansion of Gatwick Airport.

As you know, this question was considered at length by the Airports Commission. After a careful review of the evidence, MVDC concluded that the environmental harm of expanding Gatwick Airport would far exceed its economic benefit and objected strongly to it as an option. We raised no objection to the expansion of Heathrow Airport recognising that it had a much stronger economic case and met national aviation needs better than expansion at Gatwick. The Council was unanimous in its view and we were pleased that the Airports Commission reached the same conclusion in their final report in July 2015.

In light of the issue being raised again in the draft Airports NPS, I would like to reiterate our concerns about a second runway at Gatwick Airport. The adverse impacts arising from a second runway would hit communities in Mole Valley particularly hard, with noise, road congestion, and housing pressure all significantly increased.

In terms of noise, the expansion of Gatwick Airport would be proportionately more disturbing than around Heathrow because of the relatively quiet rural nature of the surrounding area. Recent changes to airspace around Gatwick have highlighted how disturbing aircraft noise is to the local population. The addition of a second runway would magnify these concerns many fold.

Gatwick would be less resilient to interruptions in strategic surface access than Heathrow. There is only one motorway (M23) and one mainline railway (Brighton mainline) serving the airport. These services are already overcrowded during peak periods with high flows during other times. The lack of capacity leads to poor resilience, with even small interruptions in movement causing persistent backlogs. Experience has shown that when these services are halted, the local road network is incapable of handling the consequent disruption.

Pressure for additional housing would also be much harder to accommodate. It would require the large scale release of Green Belt land contrary to the Government's stated aim, and which would be bitterly opposed by local communities.

We are also concerned that the existing strategic infrastructure would be insufficient to handle the increased demand. In that we include not just surface access requirements for the airport, which is significant in itself, but also local infrastructure requirements such as highway improvements, new health, education and sporting facilities and flood resilience measures (which are a particular issue around Gatwick) that would be essential to support new housing and businesses in the surrounding area.

I would be grateful if you would bear these points in mind when considering the location of new runway capacity in the south east.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vivienne Michael". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Councillor Vivienne Michael
Leader of the Council