

Consultation on issues affecting passengers' access to UK airports: a review of surface access (CAP 1364)

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for providing Crawley Borough Council with the opportunity to respond to the above consultation.

The council takes a pro-active approach towards surface access issues in relation to Gatwick Airport. The recently renewed S106 Legal Agreement¹ between Gatwick Airport Ltd, West Sussex County Council and Crawley Borough Council ensures that as the airport grows measures are in place to minimise as far as possible its short and longer term environmental impacts. A structure of continuous communication and monitoring reflects the importance of maintaining and enhancing how the parties to the agreement share information and work together and with other stakeholders to bring benefits to the airport and the communities it serves.

The S106 Agreement contains a number of legal obligations on the airport owners to meet the overarching surface access objective:

To ensure that the Airport's passengers and employees have access to a range of travel options that meet their particular needs and so doing to:

- *Reduce the rate of growth of trips by private car and taxi to and from the airport by encouraging greater use of public transport;*
- *Ease congestion by better traffic management and implementing strategic road improvements; and*
- *Manage on-site traffic emissions.*

Obligations to achieve these objectives include targets to increase public transport modal share whilst providing a sufficient amount of parking for those who choose to arrive by car and a levy on the total supply of parking spaces on-airport which is then used to encourage greater public transport through, for example, new bus routes or train station improvements.

The council believe surface access should be considered as a whole, encompassing the need for sustainable transport by encouraging non-car modes of travel in order to improve the sustainability of airports reducing air pollution and traffic congestion. This is mentioned briefly in para 2.24 of the consultation document but we would further emphasise the benefits to be gained from having targets and measures in place to improve the sustainability of airports whilst still being able to serve the interests of consumers.

Paragraph 3.11 mentions that in some cases airport operators appear to be pro-active in influencing planning policy, which may have the ability to restrict entry in car-parking markets. Para 13 of the Exec Summary raises an issue of airport operators controlling a large proportion of the required surface access facilities.

Crawley Local Plan Policy GAT3 restricts provision of additional or replacement airport parking to within the airport boundary. Alongside this, the policy also requires proposals for long stay parking, (within the airport boundary) to be justified by a demonstrable need in the context of proposals for

¹ <http://www.gatwickairport.com/business-community/corporate-responsibility/sustainability-strategy/s106-action-plans/>

achieving a sustainable approach to surface transport access to the airport. These 'proposals' refer to the airport's Surface Access Strategy and Parking Strategy, a requirement of the S106 Agreement. The result of this policy is provision of parking spaces managed in the most sustainable way:

- Provision of long stay parking commensurate with achieving greater public transport use.
- A reduction in the number and length of car journeys which has a positive impact on air pollution and traffic congestion.

Crawley Local Plan Policy GAT3 does limit entry into the off-airport car-parking market but enables operators to be encouraged/required to improve the modal share of non-car modes of transport and directs new spaces to sustainable locations. There are already a number of well-established off-airport parking operators that currently provide between 35%-40%² of the total long stay parking for Gatwick at peak times. These serve an important part of long stay parking provision, helping meet demand from passengers, which could not be wholly provided on-airport. Future need for parking to support the growth of Gatwick to its maximum passenger throughput under its current one runway two terminal configuration can however be provided on-airport as the airport is already close to capacity.

Gatwick Ltd's Approved Operator Scheme is a good example of how the airport is working with off-airport operators to improve the overall long stay parking service providing information about tested companies which consumers should be able to trust. There have been significant problems over the years with disreputable companies offering meet and greet parking services. They operate from the airport forecourts to sites which do not have planning permission, often in the countryside, or on previously developed sites which do not meet the Parkmark Standards or Trading Standards regulations. The result is poor security, safety and customer service with cars not returned on time, damaged or with a significantly increased mileage.

Planning policy, the S106 Legal Agreement and airport initiatives such as the Approved Operator Scheme show that it is possible to improve both the sustainability of the airport and the consumer experience but this does require some degree of control over forecourt and car park access by the airport owner and also through the planning system, directing new provision to the most sustainable locations. In Gatwick's case, these are within the airport boundary.

Yours faithfully

Tom Nutt

² Gatwick Long Stay Parking Survey 2016 (available on request from the council)