



SURREY & WEST SUSSEX REGION

While we are well aware that FSB is putting in a national submission to the Davies Commission we have agreement from National Policy that we can make our own submission as the decision about a second runway at Gatwick will have a great impact on the economic wellbeing of the members and other small businesses in our region.

Our Regional membership is approximately 9,100, with an average of 5 employees, and extends from Worthing and Chichester on the coast to Croydon in the north.

General

We believe that there is a need for an additional runway in the South East and in the long term probably one both at Heathrow and at Gatwick. However we strongly believe that a second runway at Gatwick should be the first priority.

We are going to focus on the economic and related issues after making a few general comments.

- We feel there is more benefit nationally by having two major International airports (as with New York) rather than a single hub. This offers more choice to passengers and airlines and avoids the disadvantages of a single hub, through increasing competition leading to cheaper fares and increased connectivity.
- The environmental impact is far greater at Heathrow than Gatwick.
- The Gatwick scheme is deliverable within the timeframe and requires little direct public money

The presence of Gatwick Airport has led to major economic development in the area, the focus of which is the Gatwick Diamond which extends from South of Croydon to just north of Brighton along the A23 corridor. This business led initiative, now part of the Coast to Capital LEP, was established in recognition that in Gatwick Airport the area had a major asset which was essential the economic wellbeing of the area and would attract Inward investment, not only in aviation businesses.

Economic issues and impact on small businesses:

We feel that this aspect has not been sufficiently addressed in the consultation.

Small businesses , whether or not in the Gatwick Airport supply chain, have benefitted from the growth in the local economy due to the airport and inward investment. Those of our members who have been in business for some years are well aware of the negative impact of a downturn in the Airport. There is real concern that failure to have a second runway at Gatwick will reduce inward investment both from other areas of UK and from overseas, and also lead to a drift of major companies away from the area towards Heathrow.

Not only will this adversely affect small businesses dependent on the medium and large companies for business but also the many small businesses who work for the employees of those larger companies. The growth area for Gatwick is in routes to the Asia and areas with a faster growing economy. These are very areas small and medium sized businesses are being encouraged by UKTI to look to for growth.

The decision about the second runway will directly impact on the general economy of the area and also on employment levels.

Surface Access

The improvements to the M23 and junction with the M25 are long overdue and will bring general benefit to the area.

Again the rail improvements to the Brighton Mainline are welcome. We would want recognition that the Gatwick Express should not be used at peak times as part of the Brighton commuter service. A Gatwick Express service with premium fares should not be standing room only from Gatwick to Victoria.

There are some timetabling issues to be resolved but it is hoped that the planned rail improvements will enable these to be addressed.

There is little mention of improved east –west connectivity.

Employment and skills

We are working with Gatwick Diamond Initiative and the wider Coast to Capital LEP to raise awareness of the changing needs with regard to skills. This will be increasingly important if, as we hope, Gatwick Airport gains a second runway and the economy continues to grow. One of the issues we currently face is that we lose many of our graduates to other parts of the UK where there are a larger variety of career opportunities. This is being addressed through the inward investment activities carried out by GDI and the economic development teams at the local councils. It will also be helped by the recently announced decision by the University of Brighton to establish a Campus in Horsham when Novartis closes.

We are also working with both County Councils and the Colleges to increase the take up of Apprenticeships at all levels by small Businesses.

Summary

A thriving business economy is essential if the area is to maintain an effective mix of employment opportunities and businesses , including retail, otherwise there is a risk of the area having just a commuter and retirement focus. We believe that a second runway at Gatwick is essential to a thriving economy in this key area of the South East which will also bring national benefits.

Regional Committee
Surrey & West Sussex FSB

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]