

Crawley Local Plan 2024-2040 Examination Gatwick Airport Ltd’s Response to the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions – Hearing Session 2
15th December 2023

| Matter 5: Gatwick Airport | |
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| Inspectors’ Question | GAL Response |
| Issue 1: Whether the overall approach to Gatwick Airport is justified, effective and positively prepared. | |
| <p>5.11 Is the approach in Policy GAT3 to Gatwick Airport related parking soundly based (in large part as a continuation of 2015 Local Plan policy)?</p> | <p>GAL supports the approach of Policy GAT3 and its current proposed wording. Whilst it is very similar to the wording of the adopted 2015 plan, GAL considers the adopted policy to have been soundly based and of proven effectiveness.</p> <p>GAL notes that in finding the adopted policy GAT3 sound, the Local Plan Inspector recited the basis for Policy GAT3 <i>which ‘requires all new parking to be provided within the airport boundary, on the basis that this is the most sustainable location’</i> (paragraph 87 of the Inspector’s Report 2015 - document CBLP/03). In finding the Policy ‘sound’, he noted that, <i>‘in the absence of cogent evidence to the contrary, there is obvious logic to the argument that car parks close to the terminals will minimise the length of car journeys for most people, and that on-airport provision is a more sustainable option’</i> (paragraph 88 of the Inspector’s Report 2015 - document CBLP/03). In practice, the airport is directly accessible from the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and on-airport car movements are controlled and direct and avoid creating additional congestion in surrounding areas.</p> <p>GAL also supports the amended policy wording as it removes any ambiguity that both limbs of the policy need to be met.</p> <p>GAL believes that the provision of on-airport car parking is directly aligned with the objectives set out in the NPPF (paragraph 110 of NPPF, September 2023) for managing patterns of growth and transport so as to limit the need to travel, reduce congestion and emissions, avoid and mitigate adverse effects of</p> |

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| | <p>traffic, and to promote sustainable modes of transport. This is because:</p> <p>i) The airport is the most sustainable parking location to reduce lengths of journeys and the number of trips by those who drive. Off-airport car park operations invariably lead to additional trips and / or longer journeys than the equivalent on-airport operations, which are located close to the airport terminals and are well connected to the strategic road network.</p> <p>ii) Off-airport supply creates additional car journeys in areas surrounding the airport that are not as well served by the SRN. Off-airport operators have no obligation to reduce or manage private car trips, contrary to sustainable development objectives of promoting public transport and reducing reliance on private car journeys, which are key objectives of Gatwick's Surface Access Strategy and part of an on-airport parking strategy.</p> <p>iii) There is adequate current and planned capacity to meet future airport-related parking needs for a single runway operation, taking into account existing authorised off-airport car parking provision. This level of provision is consistent with GAL's Northern Runway Project future baseline (i.e. a single runway airport can grow without the need for additional parking outside of permitted development) as set out in the Northern Runway Project Environmental Statement at Chapter 4: Existing Site and Operation (paragraph 4.4.6).¹ We set out the relevant text below:</p> <p><i>“Future Baseline: Car Parking</i></p> <p><i>4.4.6 A number of new car parks are also planned for implementation in the absence of the Project. These include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South Terminal Hilton Hotel multi storey car park: 820 spaces. This project is being brought forward by the hotel operator. Outline Planning</i> |
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¹ Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project Environmental Statement (Chapter 4: Existing Site and Operation): <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR020005/TR020005-000822-5.1%20ES%20Chapter%204%20Existing%20Site%20and%20Operation.pdf>

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| | <p><i>Permission was granted for the car park MSCP in 2018 (Crawley Borough Council reference CR/2018/0337/OUT) and permission was renewed in 2021 (CR/2020/0575/NCC). The hotel's planning agent has advised that works are expected to recommence in 2023 or 2024 with completion in 2024 or 2025.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Multi-storey car park 7 (North Terminal): 3,250 additional spaces. A GPDO consultation was submitted to Crawley Borough Council in October 2022 (CR/2022/0707/CON). Works have commenced and are expected to be complete in 2024.</i> • <i>Use of robotics technology within existing South Terminal long stay parking area to increase parking capacity: 2,500 additional spaces. A GPDO Consultation was submitted for a trial of Robotic Parking in 2019 (Crawley Borough Council reference CR/2018/0935/CON). The trial was delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic. It is proposed to extend robotic parking over a larger area of existing car park to provide the additional 2,500 spaces in three phases - 500 spaces in 2024 and 1000 spaces in each of 2025 and 2026. These further phases will also come forward as permitted development subject to GDPO consultations with Crawley Borough Council."</i> <p>iv) The control of parking supply is fundamental to delivering agreed mode share targets.</p> <p>GAL considers that there is sufficient car parking to meet current needs. On-airport Multi-Storey Car Park 7 is under construction to increase the amount of short- to medium-stay parking within a short walk to the terminal and there is no evidence of an existing shortfall in long stay parking, allowing for the flexibility that exists to switch between self-park and block-park provision in some cases. The proposed NRP project will provide sufficient parking to meet its needs.</p> <p>Whilst Policy GAT3 is considered to set out the most sustainable approach to car parking, there is a clear contradiction with the allocation of Gatwick Green which would remove land identified in the Gatwick Masterplan 2019 as required to support the southern runway proposal. If adopted as proposed, that</p> |
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| | <p>scheme would hinder GAL's ability to provide sufficient on-airport parking in a sustainable location with the shortest and most direct links to the terminals, and easily accessible from the SRN. The Gatwick Green scheme would compromise the sustainable delivery of the Southern Runway project, be inconsistent with GAL's approach to promoting modal share targets and encourage additional pressures for off-airport parking which would be inconsistent with the objectives of Policy GAT3.</p> |
| <p>5.12 Would Policy GAT3 provide an effective framework for managing car parking demand associated with the airport within the Borough, having regard to, amongst others, permitted development rights on airport "operational land", the latest Airport Surface Access Strategy and objectives for modal shift related to the Airport's operations?</p> | <p>GAT3 would remain an effective framework for managing car parking supply at the existing single runway two terminal Gatwick Airport.</p> <p>The policy defines the strategy for the provision of car parking regarding airport-related car parking needs. For the reasons set out in our response to MIQ 5.11, GAL believes the approach to controlling off-airport parking is sound. Allowing additional off-airport parking would undermine Gatwick's objectives for modal shift and make it more difficult to achieve targets for sustainable travel that are contained in the Airport Surface Access Strategy.</p> <p>Permitted development rights apply to airport "operational land" pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 8, Class F of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 ("GPDO") and are only available to GAL, as the airport operator, or its agent of development. These rights are not available to other persons or organisations and so cannot benefit third party operators, such as hotel operators or office users, situated on the airport. This policy provides the framework for the consideration of this type of proposal.</p> <p>Permitted development rights are also subject to prior consultation with the LPA (and EIA screening where applicable), who will use this policy to prepare a response to such consultation or screening request. GAL work proactively with CBC to try and ensure that its consultation responses do not contain an objection and so this policy still has relevance to permitted development projects.</p> <p>In addition, permitted development rights do not generally apply to development which, following EIA</p> |

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| | <p>screening, is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>There consequently remains a need for Policy GAT3 to set out the basis for the assessment of car parking proposals on the airport. GAL considers the policy to be sound. The management of on-airport parking associated with Policy GAT3 is consistent with the regular, annual monitoring undertaken in association with the airport's s106 obligation and its Airport Surface Access Strategy.</p> |
| <p>5.13 Does Policy GAT4 provide a justified and effective framework for non-airport related employment floorspace within the airport boundary?</p> | <p>Yes, it does provide a justified and effective framework.</p> <p>GAL has considered the land supply implications associated with identified growth at the airport and is aware of the employment land and floorspace requirements of the airport to meet its needs as it grows.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the existing total employment land as well as the total projected pipeline of employment land need. GAL has considered CBC's assessment of their own economic growth potential and whether CBC has a current and forecast surplus or shortfall in space. GAL has assessed the total quantum of future airport-related floorspace need and is satisfied it can meet the operational needs of the airport as it grows within the airport boundary as shown with Plan 4 of the Gatwick Airport 2019 Masterplan (EGSM/GA/06).</p> <p>However, GAL continues to be concerned that the proposed Airport Boundary as shown in the Policy Map (CBLP/M/01) is based on Crawley's own interpretation of what the boundary should be for policy purposes, rather than showing the actual boundary as defined on Plan 21 in the Gatwick Airport Masterplan 2019. This is problematic because those businesses included in the 'policy boundary' may be subject to unnecessary restrictions when there is no functional relationship between their business and the airport and GAL does not recognise the area as GAL controlled land in the airport boundary. We reiterate the points made during the November 2023 hearing sessions that it can cause</p> |

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| | confusion for successive Council officers and the determining authority for TCPA and GPDO applications who do not have an appreciation for where and why the boundary diverges. |
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| Matter 9: Environment and Green Infrastructure | |
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| Inspectors' Question | GAL Response |
| Issue 1: Whether the approach to Environmental Protection is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. | |
| 9.2 Is the policy justified in restricting development sensitive to aviation transport noise to the 60dB contour (57db at night)? What has informed the change in thresholds since the 2015 Plan and does Topic Paper 7 provide a cogent explanation? | It is important to GAL that the council adopts strong land use planning policies so that housing is not built in areas with high levels of noise from aircraft using the airport that would adversely affect residents' health and wellbeing. In our Regulation 19 submission GAL broadly supported Policy EP4: Development and Noise, but also pointed out that we consider 63dB Leq should be taken as the Significant Adverse Effect Level and this should be reflected in Table 1 of the Noise Annex instead of Leq 60dB (see paragraph 58 of GAL's Regulation 19 submission dated 20 June 2023). |
| 9.3 Would the policy potentially inhibit otherwise sustainable locations for residential development in the Borough? | As noted above, GAL consider that 63dB Leq should be taken as the Significant Adverse Effect Level and this should be reflected in Table 1 of the Noise Annex instead of Leq 60dB. GAL does not consider that Policy EP4 inhibits otherwise sustainable locations for residential development when having regard to the location of the safeguarded land. |
| 9.4 Have alternative thresholds for aviation transport sources been tested including: (i) the scope for allowing development within a specified higher dB range subject to demonstrating effective mitigation that would reduce noise levels to acceptable readings in habitable areas; and (ii) not having a dB threshold in Policy and so assessing each proposal on its own merits subject to the acoustic evidence and mitigation provided? | In our Regulation 19 submission we noted our support for the clarification made in Topic Paper 7, paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 that, with regards to acceptable levels of noise when planning for new housing, this is a very different situation to considering the noise levels when planning airport expansion. Both situations should comply with the Noise Policy Statement for England, as interpreted to those different situations. When considering applications to build new housing within the Borough the council should comply with the three aims of this policy quoted in italics as follows. |

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| | <p>1. <i>Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life – by avoiding new housing where necessary.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life – minimizing adverse effects by choosing sites where external noise levels are not likely to give rise to adverse effects in preference to housing in areas where adverse impacts are likely, and only where this is not possible, mitigating adverse effects through planning conditions that ensure Good Acoustic Design.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life. Providing new housing in areas where adverse effects are not likely.</i></p> <p>The mitigation through acoustic screening usually available for ground levels noise sources, such as road traffic, is not usually available for aircraft noise when it comes from above, both for external and internal areas. We therefore feel it is important to have a level of aircraft noise above which new housing is not built.</p> <p>GAL would not advocate ‘not having a dB threshold in Policy’ (e.g. no noise thresholds) and leaving the assessment of noise effects to applicants. This could lead to inconsistencies in decision making, speculative development in unsuitable areas and in the worst cases new residential development being consented that could give rise to long term health effects as a result of noise.</p> |
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| Matter 10: Transport and Infrastructure | |
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| Inspectors' Question | GAL Response |
| Issue 1: Whether the approach to transport infrastructure to support the plan's proposals is soundly based. | |
| 10.3 Does the fact the Crawley Transport Modelling Study is to 2035, whereas the plan period is 2040, indicate a level of uncertainty about impacts on transport infrastructure in the latter part of the plan period? Does the additional sensitivity testing to 2040 demonstrate that highway impacts attributable to the plan's policies and proposals have been appropriately considered over the totality of the plan period and a robust baseline (worst case scenario) established from which to develop mitigation approaches? | We reiterate our concerns made in Annex 3 of our Regulation 19 response (29 June 2021) "Review of Gatwick Green Transport Modelling" (resubmitted in response to MIQs1 at REP-056-001E) over the lack of clarity in how growth has been modelled and the assumptions made around journeys to and from Gatwick Airport. Also, the extent to which adequate modelling has been undertaken to take account of the full potential trip generation associated with plan policies and proposals including the Gatwick Green development. |
| 10.4 In terms of mitigating impacts attributable to the Crawley Borough Local Plan's policies and proposals, are these identified and would they largely be implemented through developer funding? | There is a lack of evidence that the full extent of the Crawley Western Link Road, notably the eastern end of the link, has enough cost certainty and benefits to attract developer funding given the outcomes of the corridor study undertaken by SYSTRA on behalf of Crawley Borough Council (Examination Library reference ES/ST/02a). GAL also consider it to be inappropriate for the interim approach to be adopted when there is no certainty of funding and the delivery of the route (and any subsequent realignment due to its conflict with the Gatwick Masterplan within the safeguarded area) is dependent upon developer contributions. |
| Issue 2: Whether the plan's approach to the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Transport Link at Policy ST4 is sound? | |
| 10.8 Is the principle of an area of search justified? Is it necessary for plan soundness, having regard to the evidence base (documents at ES/ST/02 – the various SYSTRA reports), that a narrower area of search or preferred option for the route alignment is identified? | There is justification for the principle of an area of search but the parameters by which it is defined are not sound in that they allow for routes that could encroach on the Gatwick Airport safeguarded area for the southern runway and therefore conflict with other plan policies, in particular the scale of development envisaged in Policy GAT2. The area of search should be narrower, allowing only for routes that avoid the safeguarded area. These options were part of the work prepared by SYSTRA on behalf of Crawley Borough Council and are shown |

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| | <p>in Examination Library reference: ES/ST/02j. At the present time, however, the proposed search corridor as shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map is not sound or justified.</p> <p>Notwithstanding these comments, GAL would query the future mechanism for bringing forward the full extent of a new transport link in the area of search as it is not clear how the need for this infrastructure would be triggered.</p> |
| <p>10.9 Is the area of search justified having regard to Gatwick Airport's masterplan, land ownerships, environmental designations and features and residential amenity? Is the interim approach to the eastern end of the route a pragmatic solution that would enable a future potential southern runway or an ineffective, costly and unjustified complexity that would present a significant level of risk to delivering a western link?</p> | <p>GAL maintains its objection to any suggestion that any part of the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Transport Link would be developed within the safeguarding area. The Crawley Western Link Study 2022 identified options which avoid encroachment into the safeguarded area. GAL has objected to the methodology for the sifting of options, the criteria used and the assessment itself (Examination Library reference ES/ST/02i) In particular, GAL noted, and objected to, an apparent underlying assumption that the safeguarding can be given less weight or ignored.</p> |
| <p>10.10 Would a route within the area of search be deliverable in principle and would Policy ST4 be effective in securing its delivery?</p> | <p>GAL does not consider that a route for the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Transport Link of which any part fell within the Gatwick Airport safeguarded area would be deliverable. The Crawley Western Link Study 2022 identified options which avoid such encroachment, and these should be used in preference.</p> <p>Notwithstanding GAL's objection to the location of the area of search, we would also query whether Policy ST4 is an effective mechanism to identify when the need for the transport route is triggered, support its design development and implementation. In the absence of these triggers, GAL queries the effectiveness of the policy.</p> |
| <p>10.11 Does the proposed route safeguarding provide an effective approach that strikes an appropriate balance between not precluding strategic options 'At Crawley' coming forward whilst at the same time providing sufficient certainty as to what could occur within this part of the Borough?</p> | <p>Policy ST4 does not 'safeguard a route' but simply identifies an 'area of search' for the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Transport Link. The policy makes no reference to safeguarding. Please refer to GAL's response to item 10.8 on the soundness of the proposed area of search.</p> |

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| <p>10.12 Would it be necessary for soundness to extend the area of search for the link further east to Gatwick Road?</p> | <p>Extending the area of search for the link further east to Gatwick Road would be likely to exacerbate any encroachment on the land safeguarded for a southern runway and is not necessary for soundness.</p> |
| <p>10.13 Is the wording of Policy ST4 sufficiently robust to ensure any route and its design takes account of environmental assets including, but not limited to, ancient trees/woodland not yet identified in any recognised inventory and proximate protected sites such as Local Green Space, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves?</p> | <p>Please see GAL's response to item 10.8. The area of search for the multi-modal link west of Crawley is unsound due to its inclusion of land within the safeguarded area. As route options are feasible that avoid encroachment on safeguarded land this should be a requirement of the area of search and Policy ST4.</p> |
| <p>10.14 Is it necessary for soundness for Policy ST4 to require a multi-modal link west of Crawley to have regard to land safeguarded at Gatwick Airport at part a of the policy?</p> | <p>GAL maintains its objection to the proposed area of search. Notwithstanding these comments, GAL consider that Policy ST4 should recognise it as a constraint in the borough, as it has for other social and environmental factors. The omission of safeguarded land in Policy ST4 demonstrates the inconsistencies that exist across this Local Plan and why it is unsound in its current form.</p> |