

GATCOM Member Questions - January 2024

Question 1 from Angie Hills – ABTA

Please can GAL clarify how the increase in charge for the forecourt/drop off zone, helps achieve the aim for 60% of journeys to and from the airport to be zero or ultra-low emissions by 2030. Do GAL financially contribute to the rail and bus providers and if so, could they provide further details of the investment provided and whether they are consulted on how the investment is used. Especially given for example there are no direct trains from Kent.

London Gatwick Response

Drop-off charges help contribute to targets for sustainable travel because they aim to disincentivise the least sustainable way of travelling to the airport and reduce the relative cost of alternative public transport options. Drop-off or 'kiss and fly' travel usually means 4 car journeys to and from the airport, two which are generally single occupancy, contributing to local road traffic congestion and emissions. Annual mode share data from Luton and Stansted Airports before the COVID-19 pandemic indicated that the introduction of drop-off charges contributed to mode shift away from Kiss and Fly towards more sustainable modes of transport.

London Gatwick's Sustainable Transport Fund (STF), which is formed from a combination of a levy on our passenger parking spaces, staff parking allocations, forecourt charging and red route enforcement, makes important contributions to public transport services which benefit airport staff, passengers and our local communities. We use a range of data inputs to collaboratively develop proposals for service enhancements with operators, including CAA passenger mode share data, the results of the airport-wide staff travel survey and passenger and staff feedback. In recent years, on rail the STF has contributed capital funding to the building of Platform 7 and the Gatwick Airport Station redevelopment, as well as the doubling in frequency of Great Western Railway's Gatwick to Reading service from December 2023. We also work closely with Metrobus to provide service enhancements on local bus routes to and from the airport, with approximately £600,000 budgeted for supporting Metrobus services in 2024 alone. This includes running services later into the evenings, 24-hour services and other changes to routes and timetables to encourage more people to travel to the airport by local buses. Gatwick also contributed to Metrobus' hydrogen buses and have pledged further support of £950,000 for further expansion of the hydrogen fleet, subject to the successful outcome of a West Sussex County Council funding bid to the Department for Transport.

The **Transport Forum Steering Group** meets quarterly. Member organisations include Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent County Councils, Crawley Borough Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, National Highways, Network Rail, Govia Thameslink Railway, Great Western Railway, National Express, Metrobus, Transport for London and PAG. The Transport Forum Steering Group are consulted regularly on proposed initiatives for the STF,

monitors spend and members are encouraged to bring forward their own suggestions and projects for funding.

Kent remains a key target area for public transport services to and from London Gatwick, however, there are significant challenges to enabling new bus, coach or rail services to the county. A previous coach service by National Express, part funded by Kent County Council and Gatwick Airport, was withdrawn after a few months due to very low passenger numbers and a service launched by megabus in 2023 was similarly challenged by low uptake.

We remain open to proposals from bus and coach operators for services to Kent and other underserved areas. However, any investment in services from the Sustainable Transport Fund must ensure value for money and demonstrate positive outcomes in terms of patronage, mode shift and the ability for services to operate with reducing levels of subsidy. Past experience has demonstrated that services to Kent face extremely high operational costs and challenges in achieving passenger numbers that mean we must carefully consider future proposals to ensure we support services that have the best possible chance of success and becoming sustainable with reducing or no subsidy. However, notwithstanding the challenges, the Northern Runway project has identified mitigation measures for Kent.

In terms of rail provision - Network Rail have recently concluded a study exploring the potential rail case for direct services between Tonbridge and Gatwick, to which we contributed data and insights. The study concluded that there may be a case to extend the existing Tonbridge to Redhill service to Gatwick, but that services beyond this to other locations in Kent would require significant investment in infrastructure and faces significant logistical and operational challenges. We will continue to work with Network Rail, GTR and the DfT to encourage operators to bring forward Tonbridge-Gatwick services at the earliest opportunity, but we recognise there are constraints and challenges for the rail industry to overcome to enable trains to operate.

Question 2 from Chris Larkman – Which?

Following the successful evacuation of all passengers and crew after the recent Japan Airlines crash, has Gatwick Airport and the airlines reviewed their emergency evacuation procedures?

London Gatwick Response

The self-evacuation of the aircraft occupants is primarily the responsibility of the airline and aircraft crew. Often this can be as a result of liaison with ground based Rescue & Fire-fighting Services (RFFS). However, for an incident such as the Japan aircraft accident, where no prior indication of a problem was in evidence, the evacuation will be initiated by the crew/persons onboard, and the responding RFFS crews will dynamically react accordingly to the incident evolving in front of them.

The saving of life is the primary objective of the RFFS, where passengers and / or crew are unable to self-evacuate, Fire service crews will aim to rapidly suppress and extinguish fires in order to facilitate a search of the aircraft.

London Gatwick Airports Rescue & Fire-fighting Service have reviewed the open source information in relation to the Japan Aircraft Accident. Our equipment, personnel and tactics/techniques are subject to continued regulatory oversight and auditing. An appropriate RFFS provision, along with a high level of inter-agency Interoperability and emergency planning, provides London Gatwick Airport with a confidence that we can appropriately respond to emergencies of a similar nature.