

GATCOM November 2025

AGENDA ITEM 11 – MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS

Questions in italics and GAL responses in standard text.

Question 1 from Dominic Rothwell (Unite the Union – South East)

Gatwick Airport’s partnership with Uber, an operator licensed by Transport for London rather than Crawley Borough Council, gives a commercial advantage to out-of-area drivers, while locally licensed drivers, who are subject to stricter checks and limited operating boundaries, are left at a disadvantage. These are local workers who have served the airport for decades. What assessment has Gatwick Airport made regarding the impact this partnership will have on local employment and the sustainability of the Crawley-licensed taxi and private hire trade?

- For the benefit of the Committee, to give this matter some context, GAL have been engaging with Unite on this matter for some time and have previously provided full responses on all of the matters raised.
- Also, Crawley Borough Council has conducted a full investigation of the matter and in its report to the Crawley Borough Council Licencing Committee on 18 March 2025, concluded, in paragraph 5.2 of the report: *"However, despite its presence at the airport, Uber is not operating in contravention of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976. Therefore the Council does not uphold the complaint of Unite."*

GAL response: As at other UK airports, all lawfully operated taxis, including local firms, independent drivers, ride-hailing services and national companies, can drop off and pick up passengers from London Gatwick in our public car parks and forecourts, subject to paying the associated charges. This offers passengers choice of operator and service. Gatwick welcomes competition in all areas of activity at the airport to help support the best outcome for the passenger.

Gatwick’s official taxi partner, Airport Cars, holds the airport taxi concession, with prominent positions at the terminal doors. Uber was successful in winning a competitive tender for an advertising package at the airport. This opportunity was made available to a range of different businesses across several sectors, including Airport Cars.

Furthermore, this commercial arrangement is enabling "out-of-area" working that local authorities cannot regulate. This conflicts with the principles of accountability and safeguarding highlighted in the Casey Report. What steps is Gatwick Airport taking to ensure that its commercial relationships reinforce, rather than undermine, local regulation, protect local jobs, and uphold the integrity of the airport’s reputation as a responsible employer in the community?

GAL response: Currently taxi licensing is a matter for the local authorities, in Gatwick’s case, Crawley Borough Council. Any changes to legislation are a matter for Government; the Casey Report specifically called for any loopholes in licensing regulation to be closed by the Department for Transport. We do not believe that the commercial relationship with Uber has any impact on local regulation, and we are proud of our reputation as a responsible employer.

We take our role in the local economy and community very seriously. Our Decade of Change Sustainability Strategy to 2030 includes key performance indicators relating to employing

local people and we report on our spend with local businesses annually. In 2024 nearly 58% of our employees were from the RH postcode area and £121m of our spend was with local and regional suppliers.

Our strategy also includes investing resources in programme and partnerships to support the local and regional economy and community. For example, we are already over halfway towards our goal of 1 million student encounters by 2030, through our education programme. We are also actively involved in outreach with groups supporting people who may experience barriers to work, to ensure that the airport campus is a diverse and inclusive workplace for all.

In the longer term, our Employment Skills and Business Strategy (ESBS), which is secured through the Northern Runway s106 legal agreement with local authorities demonstrates how we will continue to deliver the benefits of airport growth, supported by a £20m ESBS fund. All of this work is supported by the strong partnerships we have built with local stakeholders over many years, as part of our goal to be a partner and advocate for the local and regional economy.

As a responsible neighbour, we maintain a private hire vehicle waiting area on site to reduce the impact of taxis and private hire vehicles waiting in local residential roads. We have worked closely with local authorities, residents' groups and others to develop this facility to minimise nuisance parking, noise, litter and other antisocial behaviours. Feedback since the introduction of the area has been positive and Gatwick continues to work with partners to minimise the impact on communities.

Question 2 from Cllr Malcolm Fillmore (Rusper Parish Council)

On 22 October, a standard form letter was sent under the signature of Jonathan Deegan, Planning & EIA Lead to an unknown number of residents of Rusper (and Charlwood) and possibly others warning them of Gatwick's Compulsory Acquisition powers. It listed four sites but only by their Land Registry number. There was no proper map attached which would show where these sites were. It was also unclear whether these sites were the totality of the sites required by Gatwick.

The letter and attachments themselves were drafted in a highly legalistic manner and referred to documents which were not readily accessible. This letter has caused those residents in receipt of it considerable concerns and anxiety, not least because of the virtual impossibility in understanding whether or not it actually impacted them.

We, at Rusper Parish Council are concerned that no attempt was made by Gatwick to contact us to discuss the letter before it was sent so that we could be informed and advise our residents.

GAL response: We replied to your emails dated 28 October and 29 October, to confirm relevant letters were sent out as required by s134 of the Planning Act. This is a statutory requirement, and GAL must provide the information in a prescribed form.

Due to the legal requirement of the letters, we were unable to contact anyone prior, or have any explanation sent out with the letters. This included parish councils.

Can we have a clear statement as to exactly what properties are being required under potential compulsory purchase powers together with the publication of a clear map plus confirmation that no other sites will be required under the Northern Runway project?

GAL Response: GAL confirms that there are no residential properties that are required to be purchased for the NRP Project. Indeed, the second paragraph of our letter sent to non-acquisition interests clearly states that '**Although your land is not required for the construction of the Project and thus is not subject to the compulsory acquisition powers granted in the Order, you are in possession of a land interest or right that may be affected by the changes proposed in the Project**'. Far from being frightening, we believed that reading this would give people reassurance that their home was not at risk of being acquired.

Can we also know how many such letters were sent to residents since we are getting numerous anxious residents contacting us?

GAL Response: Relevant letters were sent to individuals as listed in the Book of Reference. This was a document submitted with the DCO and updated during the course of the examination. We estimate out of the 4,500 letters sent out approximately 250-300 of these contained the word Rusper, so have estimated around 250 – 300 addresses in Rusper.

Will Gatwick send out further letters of clarification – in plain English – to all those sent the letter of 22 October?

GAL Response: No, we will not be sending out any further letters of clarification as we have provided the relevant information as required by law. However, we have updated our website with some Q+A's with some answers to the questions most often asked.

Anyone who has contacted the GAL team (from the details on the letter) have been contacted or will be contacted directly in order to discuss their particular circumstances. We had 137 enquires since the letter was sent all have been contacted.