

Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign **GACC**

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Press release

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New Gatwick owner rules out second runway

GACC welcomes the statement by Sir David Rowlands, Chairman of the Board of Gatwick Airport Ltd, that a second runway will not be considered any time in the foreseeable future.

Speaking on 28 January, he said: "The simple fact is that we at Gatwick have not a shred of interest in a second runway. It's not government policy and it's not in our policy. Even if the Government started to look more favourably at the prospect, we would have to think very hard about spending £100 to £200 million on a planning application with an uncertain decision. We would have to look even more carefully at the economic value of a multi-billion pound project - would there be a commercial return?"¹

Brendon Sewill, chairman of GACC, says: "This firm statement will kill off some silly speculation, and will remove a lot of uncertainty and anxiety."

Sir David, who was previously Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport, knows that it is not Government policy to build a new runway at Gatwick, and that a new runway has also been ruled out by the Tories and the Lib Dems. His remarks indicate that, during the process of bidding for Gatwick, the new owners, Global Infrastructure Partners, made a careful analysis of what a second runway would cost and its potential returns. He must also know that any planning application for a new runway - which would double the size of the airport, double the number of aircraft, and double the noise and pollution - would meet huge local and national opposition.

"GACC thanks all those who over the years have supported our campaigns against a new runway," said Sewill. "The united stand by local people, by the local MPs and by all the local councils across Surrey, Sussex and Kent has helped to produce this result."

Nevertheless GACC will remain on guard. The Government and BAA have previously ruled out new runways at Stansted and at Heathrow, only to announce them a few years later. We will stand ready, if need be, to launch a massive campaign to defeat any new runway plan, as we have defeated such plans in the past.

GACC looks forward to working constructively with the new Gatwick owners to reduce the noise, pollution and CO2 emissions caused by the airport. As Sir David admitted: "Airports do not always make good neighbours, we intend to improve on that. ... We want to build a better airport, we want to be a good neighbour and build a good relationship with the local community we know we cannot grow at the expense of the community."

GACC Vice Chairman Peter Barclay commented: “I was particularly glad to hear Sir David say that: “We will operate on an open book. I don't see why stakeholders can't see what Gatwick is saying to DfT [and other government departments].”

“The first step,” Peter Barclay added, “will be for the airport to publish the revised draft noise action plan, at present under discussion with the Department for Transport. We need to see whether the many constructive proposals which GACC put forward have been included.”²

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¹ Meeting of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM). The quotations are based on notes taken by a number of people at the meeting.

² See www.gacc.org.uk A summary was given in the GACC newsletter October 2009