

MRBD "Improving the trading and working environment of Manor Royal."

1. About this statement

This statement has been produced in response to the Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) consultation document "A second runway for Gatwick: Our April 2014 Options Consultation". It represents the current position of Manor Royal Business District (MRBD) Limited based on the proposed second runway options.

2. The statement

MRBD recognises the economic benefits of an expanded Gatwick Airport to the local and wider area. On this basis MRBD remains supportive of the Government's consideration of Gatwick Airport as a legitimate option for providing much needed additional runway capacity.

Given the national debate is about increasing capacity, Option 3 appears the logical choice of the three if a new runway is to be built at Gatwick. It is the option that delivers the greatest economic benefit and allows Gatwick to compete better. It would not be sensible to invest considerable sums in a compromised solution that would not meet the capacity needs and risk missing out on the maximum economic benefit in the longer term.

However, MRBD is not in a position to provide outright support for expansion until further information is provided on key issues concerning; replacing lost commercial space, assisting displaced businesses, housing provision, infrastructure improvements and the intention to involve local companies in any future development and operation of the airport.

As well as the associated social and environmental considerations, which go hand in hand with any major infrastructure project of this scale and importance, MRBD needs further clarity about what measures will be put in place to manage the impact of this development on the Business District. Estimates suggest that approximately 1,000,000 square feet of commercial floorspace on Manor Royal will be lost, which equates to about one-eighth (12.5%) of the total current floorspace offer.

In providing this response MRBD acknowledges that its view is just one of many. It also acknowledges that most local businesses and business organisations tend to support the expansion of Gatwick Airport. It is important that every effort is made to engage with the business community and that their views are properly represented and taken account of.

This position is consistent with MRBD's previous statement where these issues were originally highlighted and as yet have not been adequately addressed. MRBD encourages GAL, and other relevant parties, to read the previous statement (Issue date: 20th November 2013) in conjunction with this one.

MRBD looks forward to an on-going dialogue with GAL throughout this process and in helping GAL understand the views of local businesses, particularly those located on Manor Royal and directly affected by expansion.

3. Make a decision we can all rely on

Whilst not a particular focus for this consultation, it is critical that the Government of the day, with cross-party support, commit to making a decision about where the next runway should be built and make a commitment to building it that we can all – residents and businesses – rely upon.

A decision to not make a decision or to defer making a decision would be extremely unhelpful and damaging. It would also extend what has already been a long period of uncertainty. It is imperative a decision is made and that that decision - made on the basis of sound evidence - can be relied upon. That way all parties can plan ahead with a much higher degree of certainty.

4. Conclusion

MRBD remains supportive of proposals for an expanded Gatwick Airport to be considered in more detail and acknowledges the merits of a second runway. MRBD cannot, however, provide unreserved support for a second runway, in particular Option 3, until further work has been undertaken and answers provided to those questions set out in this response and its previous statement.

This statement has been issued by MRBD Limited, the Manor Royal BID company. May 2014.

For further information contact MRBD Limited via:

Steve Sawyer, Executive Director

07881 514 656

steve@manorroyal.org

or visit www.manorroyal.org where this statement will be published.

A. About Manor Royal Business District – the place

The Manor Royal Business District is a key economic hub within the South East region and provides the employment foundation for Crawley and the wider Gatwick Diamond area.

It lies to the north of the built-up area of Crawley, within 5 minutes by road from Gatwick Airport, the motorway network (M23) and Crawley town centre. It is well served by rail and is within easy reach of the cities of London to the north and Brighton and the coast to the south. Its strategically advantageous position and excellent transport connections have been factors in Manor Royal's growth.

It covers an area of 539 acres, or 310 football pitches, and provides approximately 8 million square feet of developed commercial floor space - almost 20% of all such space in the Gatwick Diamond. It is home to more than 500 businesses (about 17% of all businesses in Crawley are based at Manor Royal) providing jobs for 30,000 people - 18,000 of whom commute to the area from outside the town. By itself Manor Royal accounts for 40 per cent of Crawley's total employment and, according to the Ratings List, provides approximately 700 individual rateable business units.

As well as providing significant benefits in terms of commercial floorspace, jobs and business Manor Royal generates approximately £25m of rates per year, about one-quarter of all rates generated in Crawley and 10% of the total rates for the County.

As such the Manor Royal Business District is an important economic hub that should be valued, protected and enhanced so that it is well placed to continue to effectively compete and contribute to the economic success of the Gatwick Diamond into the future.

B. About Manor Royal Business District Limited (MRBD) – the company

In June 2013, following the successful outcome of the BID ballot in the preceding April, Manor Royal Business District (MRBD) Limited was formed. MRBD is a not for profit independent company limited by guarantee. It's Board and members are made up of, represent and work to promote the interests of Manor Royal based companies and staff.

MRBD is solely responsible for managing and delivering the Manor Royal BID (Business Improvement District) using contributions from Manor Royal companies to reinvest in the area and generate additional funds to deliver the vision and objectives set out in its Business Plan. The Manor Royal BID is the largest industrial BID in the UK.

MRBD's vision for Manor Royal is:

“For Manor Royal to be widely regarded as the place where the best companies and people chose to be for the strength of its business community and the quality of its trading environment.”

As well as using funds generated directly and indirectly by the BID, MRBD seeks to promote the interests of Manor Royal by working with strategic partners (private and public), representing the interests of Manor Royal businesses and influencing the activities of others, including contributing to the development of relevant policy and strategy.

MRBD maintains the firm belief that a strong and successful Manor Royal is key to the economic and social wellbeing of Crawley, West Sussex and the Gatwick Diamond.

On this basis MRBD is an advocate for the area and Manor Royal's legitimate representative voice advancing the interests of the Business District and working alongside its partners and supporters for mutual gain and the realisation of its vision.