

A runway success... or

The cases for and against a second runway at Gatwick are made in the week

The long awaited decision on the future of airports at Gatwick and Heathrow is expected to be made by the Government this month.

Airport expansion has proved a difficult topic for successive governments, and the issue was given to the independent Dav-

ies Commission by former Prime Minister David Cameron.

While it recommended a third runway be built at

Heathrow last July, the Tory Government stalled on accepting the commission's findings and an announcement setting out which

airport will be allowed to expand has been delayed several times in the past year.

But now Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said

a decision would be taken 'shortly', with a second runway at Gatwick, a third runway at Heathrow, or an extension to one of its exist-

'Major economic benefits for minimal impacts'

By Charles Kirwan-Taylor, director of corporate affairs and sustainability at Gatwick

Gatwick is fortunate to enjoy excellent local support for our expansion plans.

At the heart of these plans is the need to balance the significant economic benefits expansion would deliver, while limiting the environmental impacts.

The need for a new runway has never been greater. Gatwick is already the world's busiest single-runway airport, flying to more destinations than any other UK airport.

Gatwick connects local businesses in the South to important business destinations around the world, helping to generate tens of thousands of local jobs while playing an important role in the economic success of the region.

But without a new runway, the London airport system will be full by 2025 and the UK risks losing out to our competitors who are forging ahead with new links to existing and emerging markets around the world, which is more important than ever in this

post-Brexit environment.

With land already safeguarded for expansion, a second runway at Gatwick can be delivered faster, is 100% privately funded and with approved road and rail improvements, Gatwick will be road and rail ready for a new runway by 2020, boosting local transport links for local commuters.

Due to Gatwick's cheaper landing fees and lower construction costs, Gatwick expansion will ensure passenger charges remain low while increasing competition across the sector.

Unlike Heathrow, we recognise that our community will have concerns about a new runway.

That is why

Gatwick has made cast iron guarantees to local people and the Prime Minister that we will do everything we can to minimise the environmental impacts of expansion.

To achieve this, we have committed to a range of guarantees on air quality, noise and compensation.

Air quality is one of the most important issues in this debate and a critical public health issue. Gatwick has never breached legal air quality limits and can guarantee that with a second runway we will remain well within these important legal limits.

On noise, we will limit the noise contour area most impacted by aircraft noise (57dB(A) Leq) to 70sqkm, an area with a current population of 15,000 people. This is less than 5% of the hundreds of thousands of newly affected people Heathrow would impact.

For those most impacted

by noise, Gatwick's industry leading compensation scheme will pay £1,000 per annum towards those people's council tax.

These Guarantees are in addition to the pledges Gatwick has already made to ensure

the benefits of expansion are spread across our local community, which is why we have committed to:

- A £46.5m fund to help local authorities deliver essential community infrastructure

- A £3.75m fund to help create 2,500 new apprenticeships for local people

- Further noise insulation measures

- A £10m local highway development fund in place to meet any additional works

- For the small number of homes that would need to be compulsorily purchased a £131m Property Support Bond will offer homeowners

25% above market value, significantly above statutory requirements

- A £14m Home Owners Support Scheme to buy any homes that would be subject to

high levels of aircraft noise - above a set noise level - under the new plans.

While we await a Government decision on expansion Gatwick is continuing to do everything we can to limit noise and lessen our environmental impact. Gatwick is already on track to become the UK's most sustainable airport and we intend to remain so with a second runway.

With the ongoing support of local people we can make this runway happen so that the South and Britain can finally benefit.

Charles Kirwan-Taylor

