

Contact: Mr M. Robinson
Direct Line: (01293) 438951

Our Ref: CR/2023/0582/CON
Email: development.control@crawley.gov.uk
Date: 4 December 2023

Mid Sussex District Council
c/o Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS
FAO Hamish Evans

Dear Sir

PROPOSAL: CONSULTATION FROM MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR RETENTION FOR USE OF SITE AS LONG STAY AIRPORT CAR PARKING (SUI GENERIS). (DM/23/2493)
LOCATION: UNIT 3A, ACACIA GROVE, COPTHORNE ROAD, COPTHORNE

I write with reference to your consultation notification dated 29th September 2023 in relation to the above application. Crawley Borough Council comment as follows:

The Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030, Policy GAT3 – Gatwick Airport Related Parking states that:

“The provision of additional or replacement airport parking will only be permitted within the airport boundary. All new proposals must be justified by a demonstrable need in the context of proposals for achieving a sustainable approach to surface transport access to the airport.”

The reasoned justification for this policy identifies that countryside or employment sites which are vacant are not usually in the most sustainable locations, may not be appropriate for parking and would lead to the loss of sites for employment or other uses. It goes on to emphasise that *“sites within the airport boundary provide the most sustainable locations for additional long stay parking which needs to be provided as passenger throughput grows whilst still supporting the public transport target. Sites within the airport boundary are close to the terminals and help to reduce the number and length of trips. The Airport operator is responsible for meeting the modal split target for passengers and the level of provision of car-parking spaces makes an important contribution to meeting this target. It is therefore important that the provision of car parking spaces is appropriately managed in the most sustainable way.”*

The relevant emerging local plan policy within the Submission Crawley Borough Local Plan 2024 – 2040 May 2023, (which is currently subject to examination in public), is Policy GAT3: Gatwick Airport Related Parking. This states that: *The provision of additional or replacement airport-related parking will only be permitted where: i) it is located within the airport boundary; and ii) it is justified by a demonstrable need in the context of proposals for achieving a sustainable approach to surface transport access to the airport.*

The supporting text para 10.26 includes the following specific commentary that would be directly applicable to the airport car-parking at the location proposed by this application. *“However, there are also a number of operators which offer car parking services to airport passengers which use sites that*

do not have planning permission for airport related car parking. This includes off-airport sites, without the appropriate planning permission, typically located in the countryside or previously developed land which has been used for employment or other purposes. Such off-airport sites are not in the most sustainable locations, may not be appropriate for parking and may lead to the loss of the countryside or employment sites."

The proposal would result in the retention of an off airport car-park outside of the airport boundary in a un-sustainable location that would not support the Airport operator's requirements in terms of managing the modal split target for passengers. It is therefore considered that this site has not been justified by a demonstrable need as the Gatwick Airport Car Parking survey consistently identifies that there is spare parking capacity available within existing on-airport and at authorised off airport car-parks in more sustainable locations than that proposed. Furthermore, the Gatwick Airport Parking Strategy and Masterplan (July 2019) demonstrate that there is sufficient land within the airport to meet the need for any additional parking provision which, balanced with the airport's sustainable mode share obligations, might be necessary as the airport expands to 45mppa and subsequently to 53mppa by 2023, and 61mppa by 2032 (based on a single runway operation).

The proposal is not therefore considered to be in a sustainable location as it is off airport and it would therefore be harmful to the delivery of sustainable surface transport access to Gatwick Airport which would be contrary to policy GAT3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and policy GAT3 of the Submission Crawley Borough Local Plan 2024 – 2040. On the basis that the development is in clear conflict with both the current and emerging relevant Crawley Local Plan airport car-parking policies Crawley Borough Council **OBJECT** to this proposal.

If you have any queries please call Marc Robinson on (01293) 438951.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clem Smith', with a stylized 'S' and 'M'.

Clem Smith
Head of Economy and Planning Services