

By email:

Our ref: Aviation/AWG/CAA
Your ref: CAP 1364

Mr P L Pinto
Civil Aviation Authority
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23 March 2016

Dear Mr Pinto

Consultation on issues affecting passengers' access to UK airports: A review of surface access at UK airports

The consultation has been drawn to our attention by GATCOM, the consultative committee for Gatwick Airport.

While we understand the focus of the review is around the competitive conditions of forecourt access and consumer information, the way forecourt access is controlled at Gatwick Airport has a wider impact on the local area. This is particularly so since a more restrictive regime was put in place some years ago, limiting drop off and pick up of passengers directly from the terminal forecourts. The restrictions on access have had a number of consequences which we would like to draw to your attention as part of the review.

As well as serving the airport, Gatwick railway station is used by non-airport travellers seeking to access the rail network. Restrictions on accessing the forecourts, which serve both the airport and station, limits non-airport travellers' access to the railway station. Gatwick Airport did respond to criticism of this arrangement by offering local residents a discounted parking scheme. While the response was initially welcomed, it has had only limited success. We believe the problem is that the discounted parking scheme really only caters for those commuters using the station on a very regular basis, and is not appropriate for most local travellers who use the station less frequently. It also makes picking up a rail passenger a longer, more arduous task than used to be the case before forecourt restrictions on direct pick up were introduced. We ask that the forecourt restrictions be reviewed again with the aim of enabling non-airport travellers to access Gatwick railway station more easily.

One unintended consequence of limiting access to the forecourts is that a variety of taxis, private hire cars and valet parking now wait off-airport, parked up in surrounding residential streets. Not only does this lead to greater congestion in those streets, but leads to the unsavoury behaviour shown in the attached photos sent to us by a local resident, whereby drivers dump bottles of urine and faeces while awaiting their fares. Since these businesses are

focused on serving airport passengers, we feel that the onus should be on Gatwick Airport to provide adequate facilities to mitigate this type of disgusting behaviour from continuing in the way it does at present.

One way of avoiding congestion on the airport forecourts would be to ensure a frequent and efficient bus service that could be used by staff and locally based passengers to access the airport. It remains disappointing that even nearby villages such as Charlwood, and local towns such as Dorking and Leatherhead, have no direct bus service to the airport. We ask that, as part of the review, further thought is given on how better public transport services could be integrated with the operation of the airport to improve accessibility and reduce demand on the forecourts.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Seed

Councillor Sarah Seed
Executive Member for Planning

Enc. Pictures taken on Povey Cross Road, Hookwood, 5 March 2016

