

# Principles for Surface Access at Gatwick

UPDATED IN LIGHT OF CONSULTATION

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## Introduction

Surface transport is of key importance to the success of Gatwick in its ambition to compete and grow and become London's airport of choice. In support of this ambition we have been undertaking an exercise to review how we set charges for accessing our forecourt.

In February 2013 Gatwick consulted on its approach to setting bus and coach Charges. In August 2013, GAL wrote to operators informing them that, given the wide range of views expressed, it would undertake a more detailed review of costs and charges for bus and coach services.

In January 2016 the Civil Aviation Authority issued a consultation on surface access at UK airports<sup>1</sup>. As part of this review they requested that airports develop and publish a set of good practice principles for surface access. In light of this Gatwick has used the comments received to our 2013 consultation to develop a set of draft principles. We consulted on these principles in May/June 2016.

The principles outlined in this document will be used in future revisions of charges, which will be consulted upon.

## Importance of surface access at Gatwick

Gatwick airport's ambition is to 'compete and grow and become London's airport of choice'. In order to achieve this we have a set of strategic priorities by which we run the business (figure below). These priorities cascade through to everything we do and this includes surface access.

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<sup>1</sup> See CAP1364, available on [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)

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Surface access to and from the airport is the heartbeat of our airport – we need it to operate efficiently and effectively to achieve our ambition to grow and become London's airport of choice. It is also fundamental to attracting, new airlines and is one of the three most important factors affecting an airline's choice of airport, as well as to our passengers.

To help us deliver our ambition, we have developed three passenger commitments:

- We'll treat you as our guest
- We hate queues
- We love to be on time.

Our aim is that surface transport at the airport, and to and from the airport, will deliver the outcomes to achieve our passenger commitments and our overall ambition. However, delivering this ambition requires engagement with a large number of partners.

Gatwick Airport's surface Access strategy for 2012 – 30 sets out the following vision for surface access at Gatwick:

- To be the best connected and accessible UK airport, delivering integrated surface transport
- Contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the local community and of the UK economy
- Lead the way for best practice in Surface Access Strategies, with innovation at its core.

The remainder of this document sets out a draft set of principles derived from this vision upon which we propose forecourt access at Gatwick airport should be based going forward.

## Forecourt access at Gatwick

Gatwick Airport Limited (“GAL”) provides access to the airport to a wide range of vehicles including private vehicles, taxis, scheduled buses and coaches, and car park and hotel courtesy buses.

We recognise that our surface access facilities are used by a range of different operators, including ourselves. It is therefore important that the charges to third parties using our facilities are based on transparent, fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory principles.

Gatwick Airport plays an important role in the local, regional and national economy and therefore our approach and policies associated with surface access cannot exist in isolation. Our overall approach to surface access is set out in our surface access strategy, which was last updated in 2012<sup>2</sup>. This provides an overview of the facilities available, as well the types of users.

### Previous consultation

The current approach to setting charges has developed over many years and resulted in a number of different tariffs for different types of user. We have previously instigated an initial consultation on changes to the structure of the charges to provide a simpler more consistent structure which is fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory.

GAL considers that charges for Forecourt Access Services should be based on the costs of providing them. GAL has therefore undertaken a detailed review of the costs incurred in providing Forecourt Access Services to bus and coach operators, which it has used as the basis for setting charges.

In February 2013 GAL consulted on its approach to setting bus and coach charges and received a wide range of comments including:

- Request to keep current structure
- Suggestion that charges should vary according to vehicle size
- Requests for reductions for larger buses
- Requests for reductions for smaller & more frequent buses
- Requests for charging to be based on passengers carried
- Requests for discounts for bulk carrying of passengers
- Requests to support and encourage the growth and development of new services

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gatwickairport.com/business-community/corporate-responsibility/sustainability-strategy/surface-access/>

- Suggestion that charges to be based on cost recovery plus reasonable return.
- Requests for no more than inflationary increases
- Requests for protection of cost increases on smaller businesses
- Requests to charge taxis for picking up on GAL's forecourts
- Requests to charge based on proximity to terminal

In August 2013, GAL wrote to operators informing them that, given the wide range of views expressed, it would undertake a more detailed review of costs and charges for bus and coach services. That review was later delayed and postponed to take account of the recommendations of the CAA's study.

#### Proposed principles for consultation

In setting prices, GAL is proposing the following:

- Subject to the management of wider issues such as congestion. GAL will seek to recover the full costs of these facilities from users except to the extent that there are either broader objectives and/or phasing in provisions in which case, some costs will be met by GAL. Should the forecourt facilities become significantly congested, then we may consider pricing as a tool to ensure a good passenger experience.
- GAL's own use of Forecourt Access Services will be priced on the same basis as other similar users.
- Prices for bus and coach operators will be mainly based on sizes with different prices for different vehicle sizes where appropriate. We may also adopt additional schemes to encourage the use of greener vehicles in line with our decade of change undertakings.
- One of the major drivers of the cost of accessing the forecourt is the coach park. Use of this facility, particularly by charter coaches, is necessary to manage congestion on the forecourt itself. We propose the costs of the coach park should continue to be allocated based on use of the Coach Park. This will mean that, as the principal users, Chartered coaches and express coaches will be responsible for the majority of the costs of the coach park.
- Gatwick plays an important part in the local economy. To support local hotel and guest house owners, prices for courtesy buses operated by local hotels and guest houses and hotel hopper services ("Hotel Courtesy Buses") may be set at lower levels.
- To support local transport facilities, GAL will not charge operators of local buses ("Local Scheduled Buses") that use Forecourt Access Services;
- Gatwick, in cooperation with West Sussex Country Council, ParkMark and Trading Standards operates an Approved Operator Scheme for meet and greet operators. The scheme helps ensure that passengers receive an acceptable level of professionalism and

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service by, for example, requiring suppliers to demonstrate that their facilities meet planning and security requirements. We provide information as to which operators participate in the Approved Operator Scheme on our website.

- Pick up: For security reasons and to manage congestion, pick up by cars, taxis and minicabs is not allowed in the drop off area on the forecourt and parties are directed to the short term car parks. We will, however, continue to operate a free alternative to this in the Long Term Car parks.
- Drop off: Drop off is currently free in the forecourts. If this should change in the future then we will arrange for a free alternative to be available in a similar way as for pick up.
- We will provide unbiased onward travel information to passengers through our website and onward travel kiosks.
- Gatwick will consult with users ahead of making changes to the level or structure of charges. Such consultation will be undertaken from time to time as appropriate. Such consultation will contain sufficient content to help inform users of how charges are derived, the basis for their calculation and the costs to which they relate.
- Gatwick may choose to make our products available on so called aggregator websites. If we choose to do so any arrangement will comply with normal competition law.
- The development of facilities outside the airport perimeter is for the local planning authority to consider. Gatwick participates transparently in the local planning policy through the local plan and surface access strategy.

We seek further comments from stakeholders on these principles. Following the receipt of further comments we will evaluate our current charging structure against these principles and if necessary propose changes. This could for example include an assessment of the cost base (to align with the principle of charging ourselves for our own use). We would propose that any material changes identified would be phased to limit the potential impact on the community.