

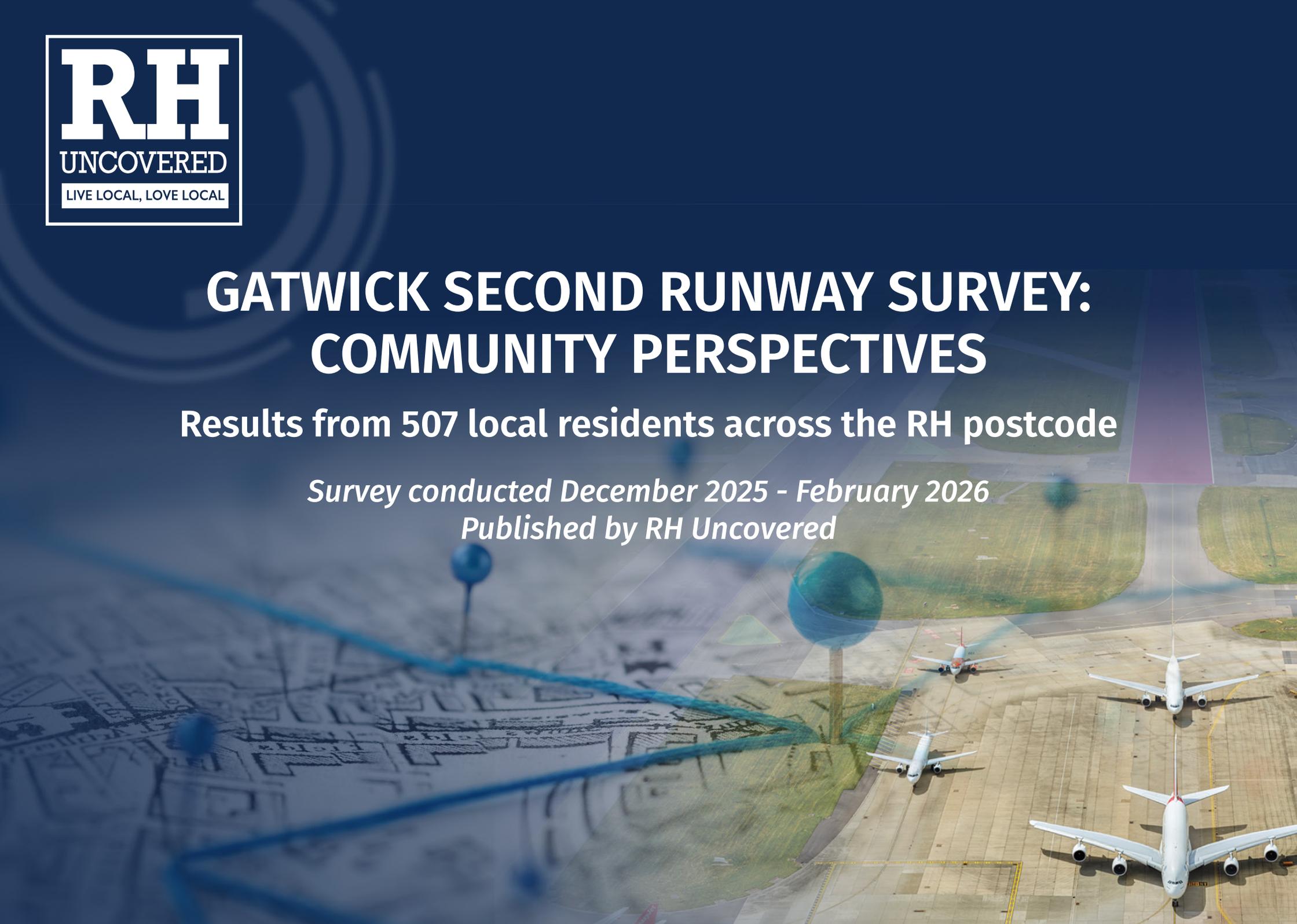


# GATWICK SECOND RUNWAY SURVEY: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Results from 507 local residents across the RH postcode

*Survey conducted December 2025 - February 2026*

*Published by RH Uncovered*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the winter of 2025-26, RH Uncovered asked local residents: how do you feel about Gatwick's second runway expansion?

More than 500 people across our seven distribution areas shared their views through a comprehensive survey covering overall sentiment, specific concerns, and potential impacts.

This report presents findings from 507 survey respondents across our seven distribution areas.

While this provides valuable insight into perspectives from those who chose to participate, it represents a snapshot of certain views rather than a comprehensive representation of all residents across the RH postcode area.



## Key findings at a glance

### Opinion is divided, but leans slightly positive

- 52% support the expansion (37% very positive, 15% somewhat positive)
- 38% oppose it (29% very negative, 9% somewhat negative)
- 10% remain neutral or are still forming an opinion

### Infrastructure is the widespread concern

- 72% believe local infrastructure cannot handle expansion without significant investment
- This concern appears across both supporters and opponents
- 54% say infrastructure is “already stretched”

### Environmental concerns feature prominently in priorities

- Noise pollution, air quality, and traffic are the top three concerns
- 56% are worried about increased aircraft noise
- Economic factors (jobs, growth, infrastructure) ranked close behind

### Jobs welcomed – with questions about practicalities

- 58% view 14,000 potential jobs positively
- 33% raised concerns about housing and infrastructure capacity

### Geographic patterns show variation

- Horley 54% oppose, Crawley 58% support - both closest to airport
- Haywards Heath (most in favour): 69% support
- Division exists across all areas

# METHODOLOGY

## Survey Design and Distribution

**Timeline:** The survey launched 18th December 2025 and ran through 8th February 2026

### Distribution channels:

- Print: Featured in RH Uncovered's January edition, distributed from 18th December 2025 to 154,000 homes across seven areas
- Digital: Published on rhuncovered.co.uk
- Social media: Shared via RH Uncovered's Facebook and Instagram channels and local community groups
- Email: Sent to RH Uncovered subscriber database

### Survey structure:

- 12 closed-ended questions covering demographics, sentiment, priorities, and specific concerns
- 1 open-ended question inviting detailed comments

### Response rate:

507 completed responses (498 with location data)

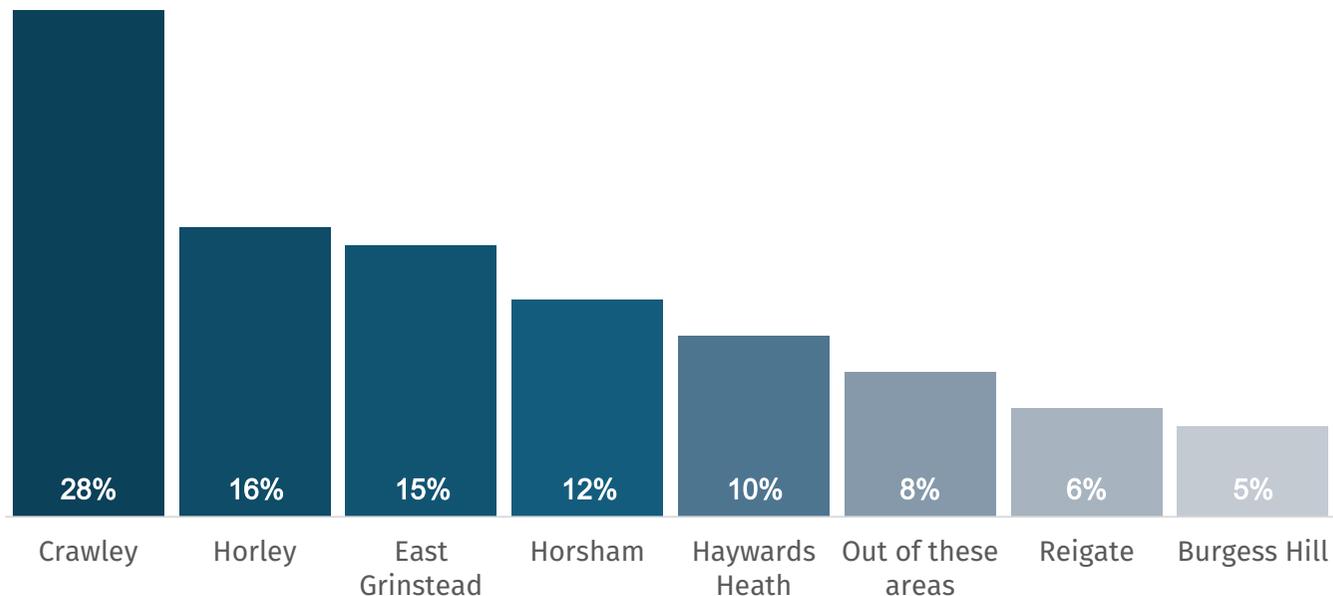
### Limitations

While overall sentiment was relatively balanced (52% support, 38% oppose), respondents who opposed the expansion tended to provide more detailed written comments explaining their specific concerns.

This provides a useful snapshot of certain views in the community but isn't a full representation of all residents across the area.

# WHO RESPONDED

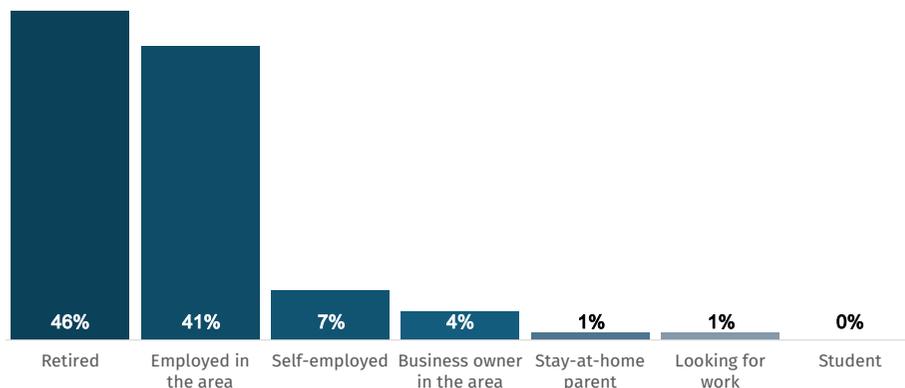
## Where respondents live



**Survey findings:** Responses came from all seven distribution areas. Nearly half (44%) came from Crawley and Horley – the areas closest to the airport and most directly affected by operations. The strong engagement from these areas means concerns raised about noise, traffic, and infrastructure are grounded in current lived experience near the airport.

## Employment profile

- Retired: 46%
- Employed in the area: 41%
- Self-employed: 7%
- Business owner in the area: 4%
- Stay-at-home parent: 1%
- Looking for work: 1%
- Student: 0%



**Survey findings:** Nearly half of respondents are retired (46%), while 41% are employed locally. This mix suggests both quality of life concerns (more important in retirement) and economic considerations (relevant to those working) are present in the community. When looking at employment status, retirees (230 respondents) were almost evenly split in their views - 47% supported and 43% opposed - closely mirroring the overall community division rather than showing a distinct generational pattern.

## Housing status

- Homeowners: 89%
- Renters: 9%
- Living with family: 2%

**Survey findings:** The overwhelming majority of respondents (89%) are homeowners with significant financial investment in the area. This context helps explain why concerns about property values, long-term area development, and quality of life feature prominently in responses – these residents have substantial stakes in how expansion affects their homes and neighbourhoods.

## Aviation connections

**Survey findings:** Most respondents (72%) have no direct financial connection to Gatwick or the aviation industry, yet 70% fly from the airport at least once per year. This context is important for understanding perspectives: people value Gatwick as customers for convenient travel, but don't depend on it for their livelihood. This could shape how they weigh personal travel convenience against quality of life impacts from expansion.



72% have no direct financial connection to Gatwick or the aviation industry



70% fly from the airport at least once per year

## Flight frequency breakdown:

- Multiple times a year: 42%
- Once a year: 30%
- Every few years: 14%
- Rarely/never: 14%

# OVERALL VIEWS

## Feelings toward expansion plans

- Very positive: 37%
- Somewhat positive: 15%
- Neutral: 6%
- Unsure: 4%
- Somewhat negative: 9%
- Very negative: 29%

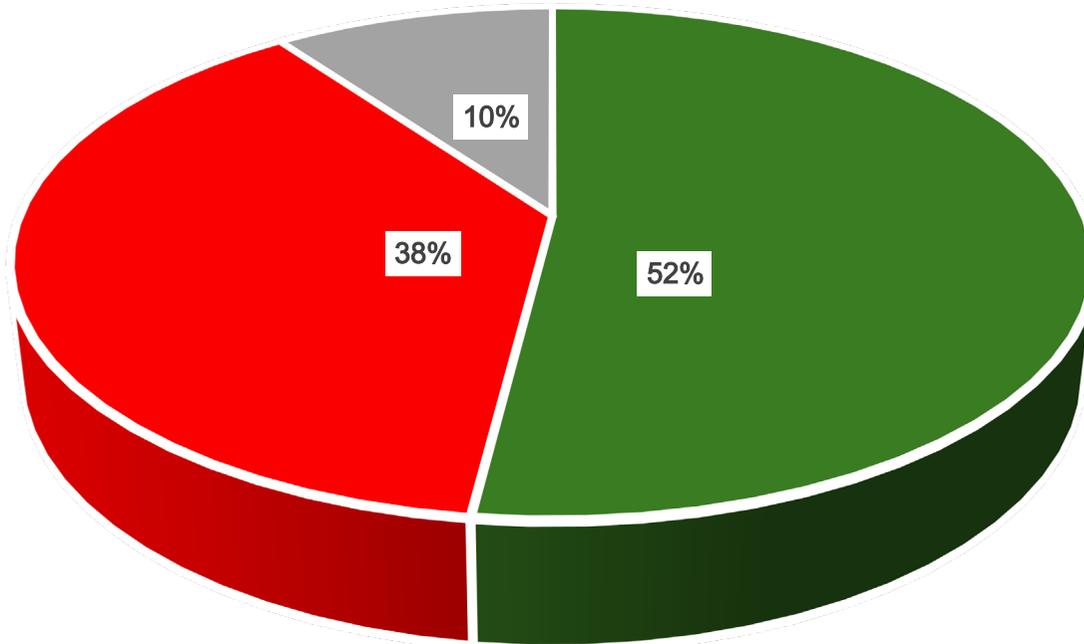
### Combined view:

- SUPPORT (Very + Somewhat Positive): 52%
- OPPOSE (Very + Somewhat Negative): 38%
- NEUTRAL/UNSURE: 10%

**Survey findings:** Just over half of respondents (52%) support the expansion, while 38% oppose it and 10% remain neutral or are forming an opinion.

The results suggest respondents are weighing competing factors. Those expressing strong support (37%) often cited economic opportunities, regional connectivity, and the inevitability of growth.

Those strongly opposed (29%) frequently raised concerns about environmental impacts, quality of life degradation, and infrastructure capacity. The 24% who fall somewhere in the middle - somewhat positive, neutral, unsure, or somewhat negative - suggest many residents see both benefits and drawbacks, making this a complex decision rather than a clear-cut issue.



• SUPPORT - 52%    • OPPOSE - 38%    • NEUTRAL/UNSURE - 10%

*“It’s the UK’s second largest airport. If we want to continue to grow as a nation, we must invest in our airports, which will help create jobs, boost the economy & the local economy.”*

*Modern planes are a lot quieter, more fuel efficient and there are ways we can further reduce pollution and noise. But this expansion/upgrade is a must.”*

**– Crawley resident**

*“Completely against expansion of Gatwick, due to insufficient housing, infrastructure, roads, schools & medical facilities.”*

**– East Grinstead resident**

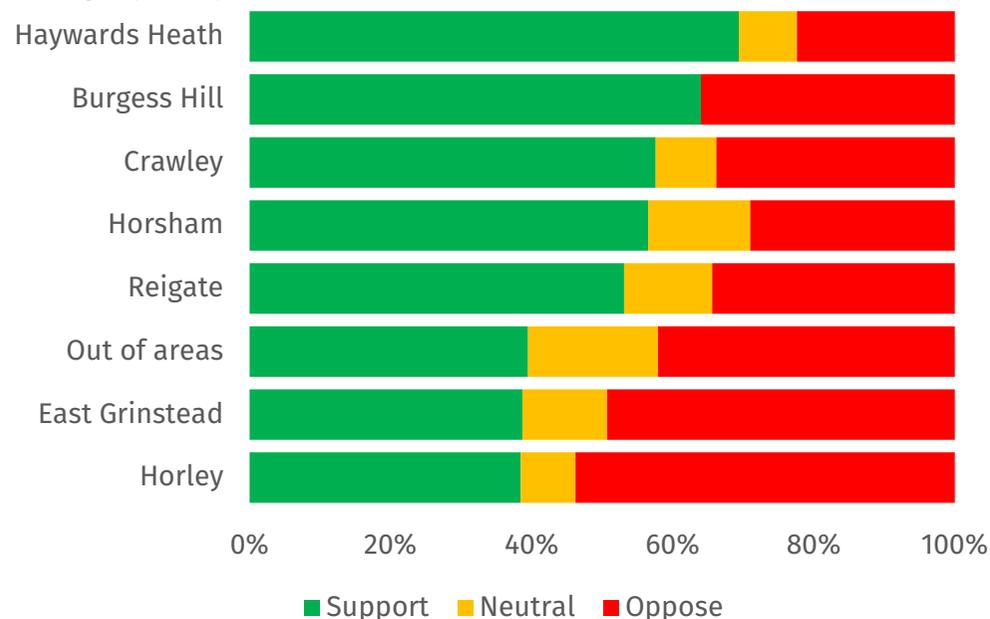
*“My main concern is pollution and aircraft noise. I am aware that I already live with it but I’m not sure I can cope with more. I am seriously considering moving.”*

**– Alison from Horley resident**

*“I think the expansion of Gatwick will be positive for Crawley and the surrounding area bringing employment and investment to the area. I am concerned about the noise pollution and the local infrastructure and how this will be affected and supported to manage the extra volume of housing, roads, traffic, daily living requirements such as utilities, shops, schools and healthcare.”*

**– Crawley resident**

## Geographic patterns



**Survey findings:** Opinion varies by area, though division exists everywhere. Horley shows majority opposition (54%) – the only area where more people oppose than support. This makes sense given Horley’s position directly under flight paths and closest to airport operations.

Crawley, despite also being very close to the airport, shows 58% support. This may reflect the town’s economic relationship with Gatwick – many residents recognise the airport as central to local employment and business activity. Haywards Heath, further from direct impacts, shows strongest support at 69%.

The pattern that emerges: proximity to the airport doesn’t simply equal opposition.

Economic relationship to Gatwick, current flight path exposure, and distance from operations all appear to influence views. Even in Horley (highest opposition), 38% still support expansion. Even in Haywards Heath (highest support), 22% oppose. No town is uniformly for or against.

*“Fabulous opportunity to modernise and develop this area. We need better roads, much better rail and infill of housing and businesses. This could really drag East Surrey into the 21st century and connect us to the capital properly.” – Reigate resident*

*“The local community in Horley needs investment in infrastructure - roads and transport links, and public services - schools and doctors surgeries which are already very stretched.” – Horley resident*

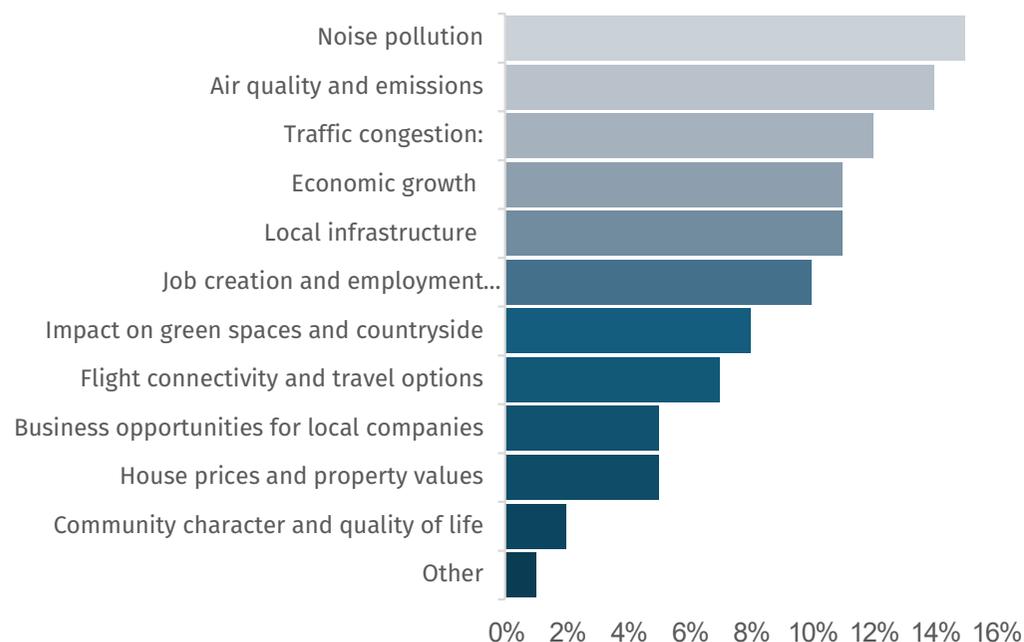
## What matters most regarding the expansion

**Survey findings:** Environmental concerns (noise, air quality, traffic) feature most prominently, accounting for the top three priorities. Together, these represent 41% of all top-three selections. However, economic factors (infrastructure, economic growth, jobs) ranked close behind at 32% combined.

This distribution helps explain the divided sentiment in Q4. Respondents aren’t ignoring one side or the other – they’re genuinely weighing competing priorities. Some prioritise environmental protection and quality of life. Others emphasise economic opportunity and regional development. Many acknowledge both sets of concerns but reach different conclusions about which matters more or how the trade-offs should be managed.

*“as a mother, grandmother and great grandmother I have always worried about the air pollution that affects our young people in particular. Just look at the huge amount of children with respiratory conditions such as asthma in areas surrounding Gatwick. I only have to look at the oily deposits on my garden pond and the disgusting smell of aviation fuel to be reminded of the dangers of living so close to the airport.” – Crawley resident*

*“The country is dying, compared to other European countries. We desperately need major projects of this nature to make us fit for the future.” – Haywards Heath resident*



# SPECIFIC CONCERNS

## Concerns about noise

- Very concerned: 36%
- Somewhat concerned: 20%
- Not very concerned: 24%
- Not at all concerned: 18%
- Doesn't apply to me: 2%

### Combined view:

- Concerned (Very + Somewhat): 56%
- Not concerned (Not very + Not at all): 42%

**Survey findings:** Just over half (56%) expressed concern about noise from increased flights, while a substantial minority (42%) are not particularly concerned.

Responses show variation in how residents experience airport noise – some find current noise levels already disruptive, while others have adapted to living near an airport or don't find it significantly bothersome.

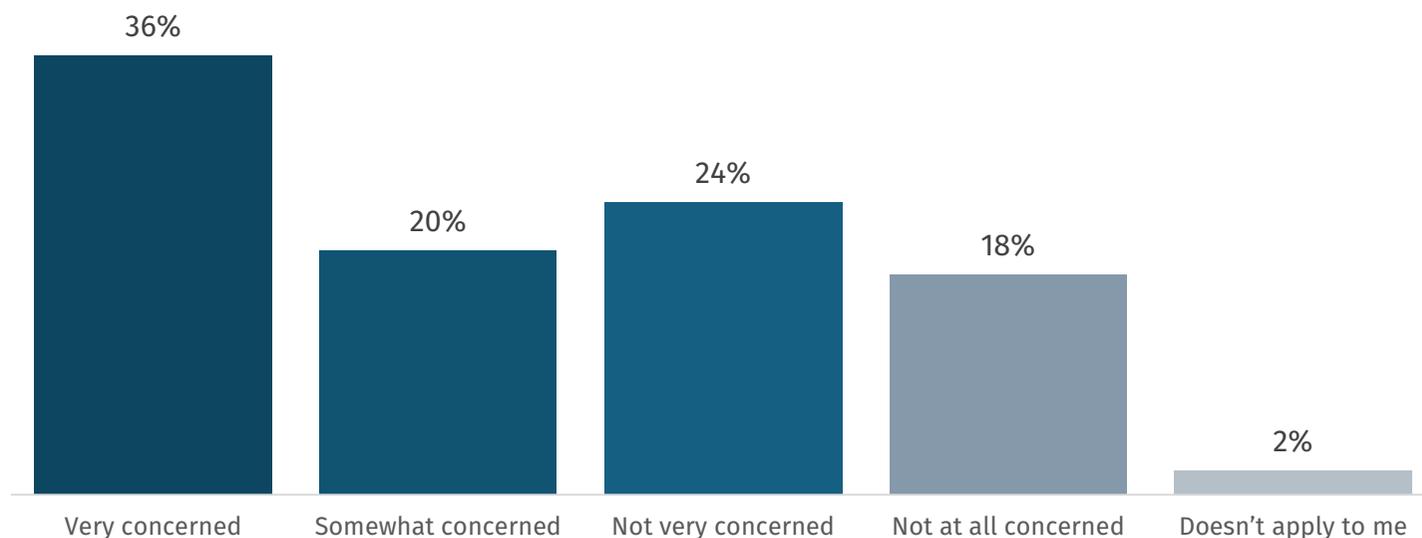
Those expressing concern often described specific daily impacts: being unable to open windows, needing noise-cancelling headphones indoors, sleep disruption, or difficulty enjoying outdoor spaces.

Those less concerned sometimes noted they've lived with airport operations for decades, accept it as part of the area's character, or prioritise economic benefits over noise considerations.

*"I already live under the flight path, depending which direction the flights take off the noise is unbearable. I cannot afford triple glazing and had to buy noise cancelling headphones to wear inside my home and sitting outside. I am now saving up to move away due to the noise issue."*  
– East Grinstead resident

*"It will probably mean actually less noise where I live in Tilgate, as another runway means there would probably be fewer go arounds in the busy summer months which are currently caused by runway congestion (go arounds go directly over my house, although as an aviation enthusiast I quite enjoy seeing the planes up close!)"* – Crawley resident

*"Reigate has increased noise levels which in the summer impacts quality of sleep as flights start as early as 0445. This will get considerably worse and impact quality of life in the area. Plus an adverse effect on wildlife on various levels. Also local pollution will increase."* – Reigate resident



## How people feel about the potential for 14,000 new jobs

- Very positive – great opportunity: 46%
- Somewhat positive: 12%
- Concerned about where people will live/ infrastructure: 33%
- Neutral: 7%
- Doesn't impact me: 2%

### Combined view:

- Positive: 58%
- Concerned about infrastructure/housing: 33%

**Survey findings:** A majority (58%) view the potential job creation positively, seeing employment opportunities as beneficial for families, young people starting careers, and the regional economy.

However, about a third (33%) immediately raised practical concerns about where workers moving to the area would live and whether infrastructure could support growth.

This pattern suggests many respondents see both benefits and concerns. While many positions would likely go to people already living in the area, it's unrealistic that all 14,000 would be filled locally given current employment levels. Respondents noted concerns about where relocating workers would find affordable housing in an area where housing is already expensive and scarce, as well as whether even positions filled by existing residents would create additional pressure on roads, trains, and services already described as stretched.

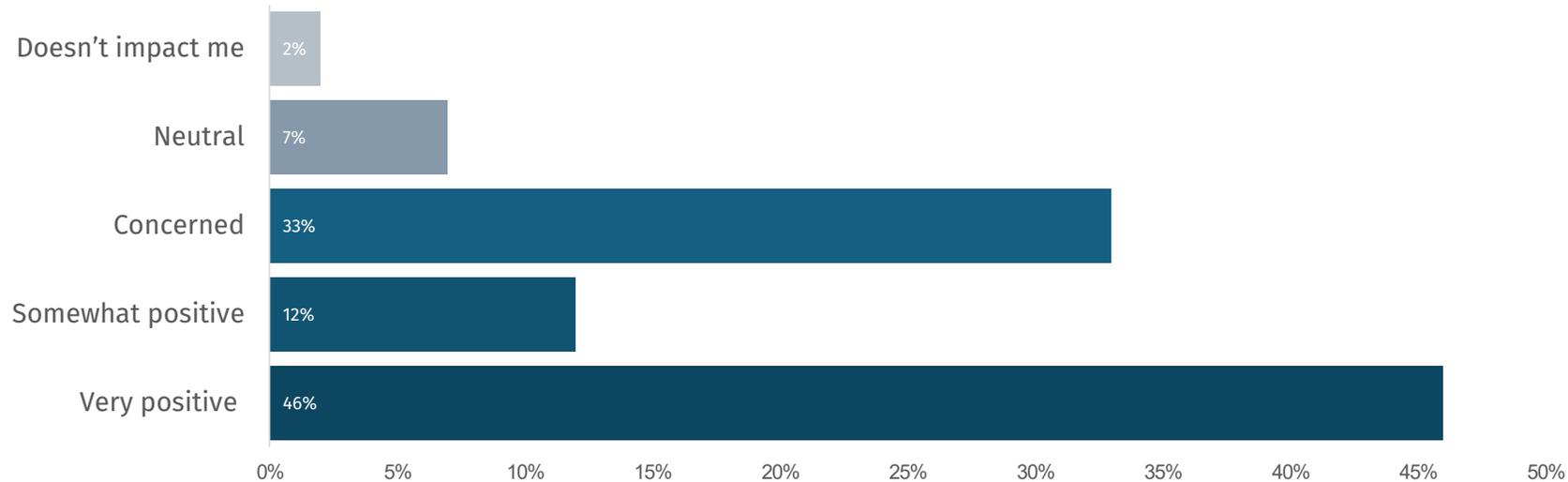
Some respondents who work or have worked at Gatwick offered perspective on job quality, noting that airport positions don't pay as well as they once did and often involve shift work that impacts family life. Others questioned whether 14,000 new positions would genuinely be filled, noting the airport already struggles to recruit for current vacancies.

*"The increase in jobs will need increased infrastructure e.g. accommodation for the workers and their families which in turn will need more GP's, dentists, school places etc and my concern, where will it all go? The job vacancies will not be filled entirely by local people so will need workers to come into the area to fill them."* – Haywards Heath resident

*"I would expect many of the new positions would be at the lower end of the pay scale, not sure how that will be beneficial for any of the local areas where housing is already far too expensive, along with high rental prices."* – Crawley resident

*"Job creation is a red herring, airport struggling to fill current jobs due to high levels of local employment opportunities."* – Reigate resident

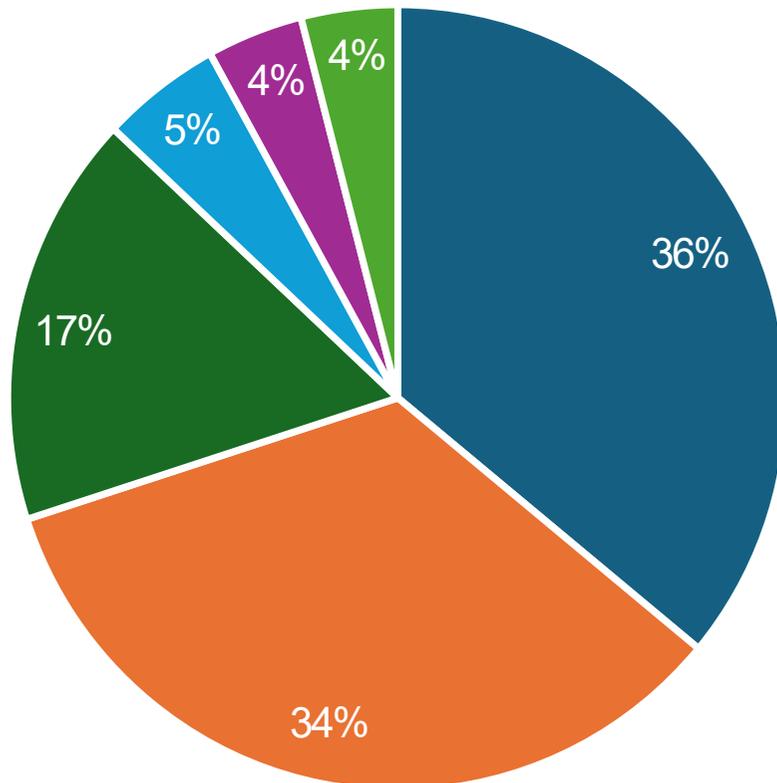
*"This is great for future college leavers. Jobs in aviation engineering and avionics. It will also do good for local shops and newsagents as people pop in on their way to and from work."* – Horley resident



## Concerns around impact on house prices

- Not concerned either way: 36%
- Expecting values will rise long-term: 34%
- Concerned values will drop during construction: 17%
- Already planning to move because of the expansion: 5%
- Hoping values will drop so I/others can afford to buy: 4%
- Other: 4%

**Survey findings:** Views on property impacts are mixed. The largest group (36%) isn't worried either way, while about a third expect values to rise. However, 17% are concerned about value drops, and 5% (approximately 25 people) are already planning to move because of the expansion.



*"We are now facing a forecasted 7.5% drop in property values, potentially stripping £25,000 from local homeowners while trapping us in a construction site for years. The noise impact will be unbearable; routine use of the standby runway removes vital respite for neighbourhoods like Ifield and Pound Hill." – Crawley resident*

*"I have a relative who lives very close to the existing runway - some days the noise is extremely loud inside and outside the house - I imagine this is going to increase with an extra runway, and possibly devalue her home." – Horsham resident*

*"Very concerned about how it will affect our house's value due to noise and pollution" - Crawley resident*

*"House prices will only rise and become even more unaffordable for the young with increased noise levels." - Haywards Heath resident*

*"It will bring so much employment to the area, which in the long term will make house prices rise." - Horsham resident*

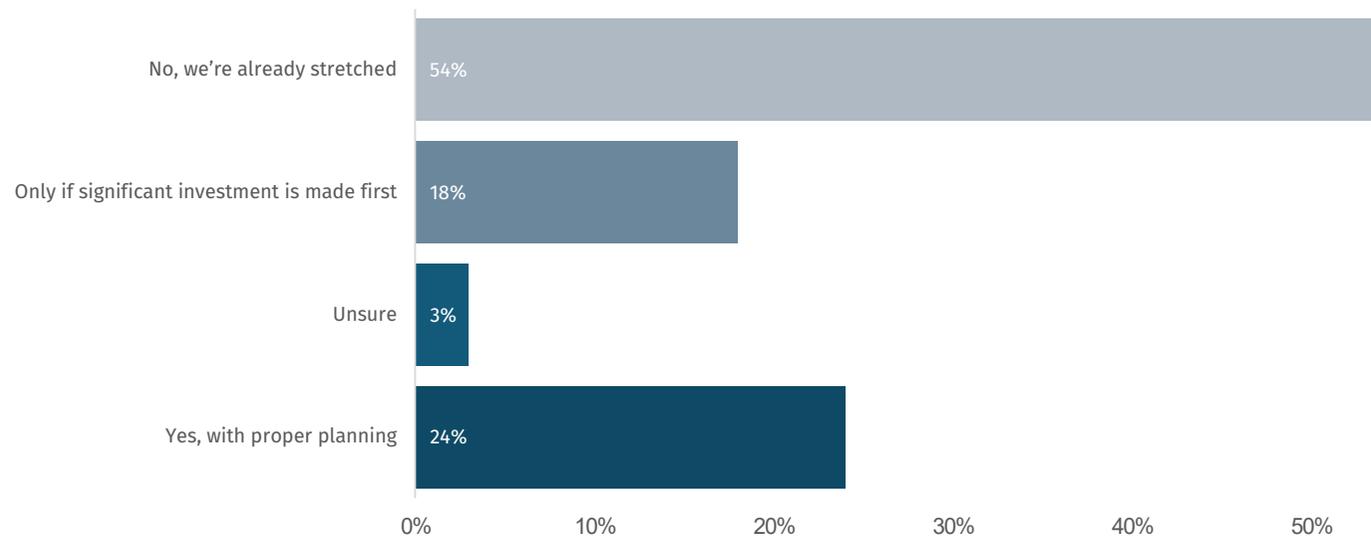
*"Concerned over more people in the area where services and drs, dentists, schools are already stretched. Roads are also too busy so will become worse. Very worried it will have a detrimental effect on house prices." - Horsham resident*

## Views on whether local infrastructure (roads, schools, healthcare) can handle growth

- No, we're already stretched: 54%
- Only if significant investment is made first: 18%
- Yes, with proper planning: 24%
- Unsure: 3%

### Combined view:

- NOT READY without major investment: 72%
- Confident with proper planning: 24%



**Survey findings:** Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) believe local infrastructure cannot handle expansion without significant investment. This is the finding that cuts across the support/oppose divide – even people enthusiastic about economic opportunities worry whether roads, healthcare, schools, and public transport can cope with growth.

The 54% who say infrastructure is “already stretched” are describing current experience: GP appointments hard to secure, roads in poor repair and prone to congestion, trains overcrowded at peak times, East Surrey Hospital working near capacity. The additional 18% who say expansion could work “only if significant investment is made first” aren’t opposed to growth in principle – they’re asking for concrete commitments before expansion proceeds.

Several respondents referenced their experiences with past housing developments that came with infrastructure promises they feel weren’t fully met. This history shapes current scepticism about assurances.

*“We were told infrastructure would be in place for new housing estates but reality is totally different.”*

– Crawley resident

*“Area already totally overpopulated... causing issues with traffic congestion, not enough GP appointments, A&E overstretched, schools and all facilities overstretched.”*

– Reigate resident

*“The opinions and concerns of all stakeholders, whether in favour of expansion or not, need to be considered and evaluated. There is no doubt this is an opportunity for growth in the local area and beyond but it has to be managed sensitively and with substantial investment for the local community infrastructure alongside that of Gatwick itself.”* – Horsham resident

*“Something has to be done about the railway. When I lived in Croydon I used train to come to work and the service was not good enough for what is almost a 24hr airport. A single cancelled train overnight could mean a 2hr wait for the next one. There is no reasonable bus alternative heading towards London from Gatwick.”* – Horley resident

*“Only thing I have slight worry and a problem on is the local infrastructure like East Surrey Hospital which is the emergency hospital that passengers would get sent to if anything was to happen at Gatwick, the hospital is on its knees already so I don’t think it would be able to cope if anything would happen now let alone the influx of passengers after the 2nd runway is in operation.”*

– Charlie from Reigate

*“My concerns are mainly regarding infrastructure. Roads are currently at or near capacity, schools, surgeries, dentists are all at capacity and the current sewerage and potable water systems are all in urgent need of upgrading. Where and how will these necessary improvements be provided and where most importantly will the money for all this come from.”* – Wayne from Horley

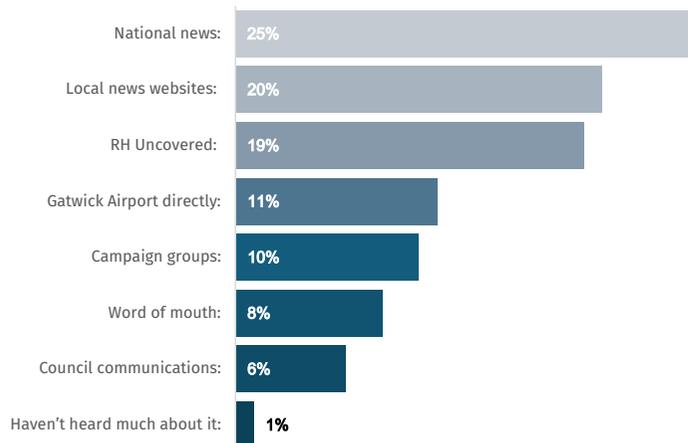
# INFORMATION SOURCES

## Where people heard about expansion plans:

- National news: 25%
- Local news websites: 20%
- RH Uncovered: 19%
- Gatwick Airport directly: 11%
- Campaign groups: 10%
- Word of mouth: 8%
- Council communications: 6%
- Haven't heard much about it: 1%

**Survey findings:** Respondents learned about the expansion through various channels, with national news (25%) and local news websites (20%) being most common. Nearly one in five (19%) heard about it through RH Uncovered, demonstrating the magazine's reach as a local information source.

The variety of sources suggests information about the expansion has reached residents through multiple channels rather than being confined to specialist or campaign group communications.



# ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

In the open-ended question, respondents shared additional thoughts beyond the specific survey questions. Several themes emerged:

**Public transport and connectivity:** Multiple respondents raised concerns about train reliability and capacity, noting that Gatwick's assumption of increased public transport usage may be unrealistic given current service levels. Some offered constructive suggestions including more frequent bus routes for shift workers and improved connections from surrounding towns.

*"I've read increased public transport will be provided, but as usual even if you double the frequency of trains to London, people avoid the Gatwick Express as it's more expensive, so people use the already stretched public trains to Gatwick. If you can make the Gatwick Express more frequent and significantly cheaper, it will serve its purpose well."*  
– Reigate resident

*"The trains in and out of Gatwick Airport are a joke and not fit for purpose. Southern Rail is a shambles and an embarrassment for tourists who have recently arrived into the country and are faced with trains that cannot accommodate passengers with luggage and often have minimal carriage numbers."* – Horsham resident

**Climate and environmental concerns:** Several respondents noted what they perceived as contradictions between government messaging on individual carbon reduction and approval of aviation expansion. Some parents specifically mentioned concerns about children's respiratory health in areas near the airport.

*"Government have decided that from 2030 if I buy a new car it will have to be electric. But they have approved expansion which will potentially see a sharp increase in pollution raining down from the skies. Why is this acceptable and yet pollution from petrol cars is deemed unacceptable."*  
– Michael from East Grinstead

*"I'm concerned about the number of planes in terms of air quality and noise as we live under flight paths. I'm also concerned that the expansion goes against the UK GHG emission reduction targets and diminishes our standing as a climate leader. Until aviation can be made much less damaging we should not be expanding our capacity for flights."* – Haywards Heath resident

**Parking and local disruption:** Some respondents mentioned current issues with holiday makers parking in residential streets for weeks, taxi drivers causing disturbances, and concerns these problems would worsen with expansion. The increased drop-off fee at the airport was cited by several as pushing more traffic onto residential roads.

*"Holiday makers parking in residential roads is already totally out of hand, any expansion will only make it worse. Residents are already unable to park outside their own house and sometimes not even in their road."*  
– Horley resident

*"The fact that they have increased the drop off fees, has really taken all goodwill away from the project for local residents."* – Horley resident

**Different perspectives on development:** Some respondents expressed frustration with what they see as resistance to inevitable progress, while others questioned whether expansion is necessary or appropriate for this location.

*"The airport was here long before the houses! We need to expand, Crawley has become a ghost town since Covid. Things need to improve. We need more jobs and Gatwick is a perfect airport to expand."* – Crawley resident

*"London and the South East NEEDS airport expansion, to increase connectivity. Gatwick is as suitable as any other option. What those who live locally to Gatwick need is better public transport connectivity to Gatwick."*  
– East Grinstead resident

*"Absolutely opposed. The impact on nature, wildlife and green spaces - already under immense pressure to survive - is going to be catastrophic."* – Heather from Burgess Hill

**Green space and biodiversity:** One perspective worth noting challenged common assumptions about the expansion's environmental impact:

*"I think it's important that people understand the expansion has been thoughtfully planned to remain within Gatwick's existing footprint, no green spaces will be built upon and in fact, many of the green spaces around the campus will benefit from even more focus and investment in protecting biodiversity than the significant support that's already in place."* – Haywards Heath resident

# LEGAL CHALLENGE CONTEXT

Since this survey launched in December 2025, a High Court challenge to the runway approval has been heard.

Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions (CAGNE) and the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign challenged Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander's decision to approve the expansion plans in September 2025. The Department for Transport and Gatwick Airport Limited opposed the challenge.

The challenge questioned whether climate impact assessments were properly conducted. The four-day hearing took place in January 2026, with a decision expected in late February 2026. At the time this report was published, the outcome remained unknown.

# CLOSING NOTE

This survey represents 507 voices from across our seven distribution areas. While not a statistically representative sample, it provides valuable insight into the perspectives of engaged local residents.

What's clear from the responses: this isn't a simple story of universal support or opposition. Respondents expressed competing priorities, practical questions about infrastructure capacity, and different views about what the region needs.

Thank you to the residents who took time to share their perspectives.

## For more information:

- Original article (January 2026): [rhuncovered.co.uk/gatwick-second-runway](https://rhuncovered.co.uk/gatwick-second-runway)
- Follow-up article with findings (February 2026): [rhuncovered.co.uk/gatwick-survey-results](https://rhuncovered.co.uk/gatwick-survey-results)
- Published: February 2026
- RH Uncovered

# APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Section 1: About You

- Q1: Which area do you live in?
- Q2: What is your housing situation?
- Q3: Which of the following applies to you?

## Section 2: Overall Sentiment

- Q4: Overall, how do you feel about Gatwick's second runway expansion?

## Section 3: Priority Concerns

- Q5: Which THREE of the following matter most to you regarding the expansion?

## Section 4: Specific Impact Areas

- Q6: How concerned are you about noise from increased flights?
- Q7: How do you feel about the potential for 14,000 new jobs?
- Q8: Regarding house prices in your area, are you:
- Q9: Do you feel local infrastructure (roads, schools, healthcare) can handle the growth?

## Section 5: Personal Connection

- Q10: Does your household have any direct connection to aviation/Gatwick?
- Q11: How often do you fly from Gatwick?

## Section 6: Information & Engagement

- Q12: Where have you heard about the expansion?

## Section 7: Open Response

- Q13: Is there anything else you'd like to share about how the expansion will affect you or what support the community needs?

## END OF REPORT

# ABOUT RH UNCOVERED

RH Uncovered has been connecting communities and local businesses across Surrey and Sussex since 2006. Our free monthly magazine is distributed to more than 154,000 homes across eight areas - Crawley, East Grinstead, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, Horsham, Reigate, Horley, and the surrounding villages - and we're proud to be a trusted local voice that reflects the people who live and work here.

Our editorial content covers everything from local news and events to food and drink, homes and gardens, arts and culture, and community stories. Alongside the magazine, we offer businesses a range of marketing solutions including advertising, leaflet distribution, and multi-channel campaigns.

The Gatwick survey is a great example of what we do: listening to local communities and giving residents a platform to share what matters to them. We'll continue to follow this story as it develops.

## Get in touch:

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