



London Gatwick Airport reports the busiest six months in the airport's history, with 22.5m passengers - a rise of +8.0% or 1.7m passengers.

The airport company said that turnover rose by 8.6% to £391.6m (\$612.8m) as EBITDA increased by 12.7% to £221.6m (\$346.8m) yielding a profit before tax of £122.4m (\$191.5m). 'Major improvements' to both the North and South Terminal departure lounges and retail facilities are also reported to have contributed to a 4.5% increase in income per passenger to £3.71 (\$5.80).

Airport management said: "The period included one day of 906 air traffic movements in August - a world record for a single-runway airport achieved by increased operational efficiency. Gatwick's growth is a combination of more planes, bigger planes and fuller planes - load factors have increased to 86.1%."

The airport also reported growth across a broad range of travel markets with long-haul traffic, European business routes and emerging markets all combining to produce a record-breaking year to date - helped by increased frequencies on European routes and new destinations. Gatwick says this shows that Europe is likely to continue as the most dominant market for London airports.

Important key areas of long-haul growth include the Middle East with increased capacity on existing routes, such as Dubai and new services to Israel. The airport says that new and existing routes to emerging markets have also fed into overall long-haul growth, those serving Vietnam, Turkey, Russia and Indonesia.



\$1.5BN INVESTMENT CONTINUES

The airport also points to 'lighter regulation endorsed by the CAA' under Gatwick's 'Commitments and Contracts' framework. This has apparently allowed Gatwick to enter into commercial bilateral agreements with all of its major airlines.

The airport's £1bn (\$1.5bn) investment programme is also continuing with £90.5m (\$141.6m) invested over the last six months. As mentioned, the airport says that major improvements to both the North and South Terminal departure lounges and retail facilities have contributed to a 4.5% increase in income per passenger to £3.71 (\$5.80).

London Gatwick CEO Stewart Wingate said: "There is huge momentum behind the airport, both in passenger growth and the increasing recognition that Gatwick is the most credible, deliverable choice for the UK's next runway.

"But time is not on our side. Gatwick's success and continued rate of growth means we are now unable to meet demand across much of the year and are just a few years away from hitting full capacity, ahead of earlier forecasts.

"The capacity crunch facing Gatwick underlines the urgent need for a new runway. This time next year we will know which airport is chosen for expansion. Gatwick offers the compelling, credible option of a new runway that can actually be built, compared to an undeliverable Heathrow scheme and the threat of another report on airport expansion simply sitting on the shelf."

TOP IMAGE: Gatwick Airports retail spend has increased.