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Up to £1 where sold

Gatwick Diamond authority denied

18 June 2025



Merging Reigate and Banstead Borough Council with its neighbour Crawley has been ruled out – in a decision that has left drivers behind the move “disappointed” with the Government. This week leaders from the 11 boroughs and districts, together with the county council, were told the Government planned to survey residents over merging into either two or three mega councils.

The council was told it would not be allowed to move forward with its preferred option because it had also backed the creation of three unitaries – and the rules stated councils could only support one idea, and they had to cover all of Surrey. The government also said the plan lacked enough detail on cost savings. They had wanted to form, at £13 billion plus, the largest economy in the sub-region, and to be conjoined by the world’s busiest single runway airport in Gatwick.

The news was relayed to the councils by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon. He said: “I understand this will be disappointing; however, this consultation process allows for consultees to comment on whether the Secretary of State should implement one or other of the two proposals received, including the proposal co-signed by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. If, in the future, there remains an interest in changing the boundary between Surrey and West Sussex, there are other mechanisms for doing so and this process does not prevent that. I also note your desire for the Gatwick Diamond economic area to be within the area of one Strategic Authority so as to best provide for economic growth. I want to make clear that the decision not to include your proposal in the consultation does not preempt devolution options for the wider area, including establishing or expanding a Strategic Authority that includes all councils making up the Gatwick Diamond.”

Leader of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, Councillor Richard Biggs said: “We are disappointed that the Government will not be including our joint proposal with Crawley within the consultation. I am pleased that we took the opportunity to highlight to Government the important contribution that our combined area makes to the national economy, as well as its economic growth potential. While we accept the Government’s decision, we will continue to advocate for joined up economic and infrastructure planning and investment across both authorities. In terms of local government reorganisation, we are now focused on trying to secure the best available model of local government in Surrey – which we continue to strongly believe is three unitary councils. A three unitary model in Surrey will achieve the best balance of delivering value for money for our residents whilst maintaining strong local connections and identities and delivering high-quality service.”

Chris Caulfield

Epsom and Ewell Times adds:

The **Gatwick Diamond** is a term used to describe a key economic area in the South East of England, centred around **Gatwick Airport**. It includes parts of **Surrey and West Sussex**, notably towns such as **Crawley, Reigate, Redhill, Horsham, and Haywards Heath**.

Key features of the Gatwick Diamond:

- **Economic significance**: It is one of the UK’s most dynamic business regions, home to over **45,000 businesses** and supporting around **500,000 jobs**.
- **Transport hub**: Gatwick Airport, one of the UK’s busiest international airports, makes the area a major transport and logistics hub.
- **Sectors**: It hosts a mix of industries, including **aviation, engineering, financial services, professional services, and advanced manufacturing**.
- **Strategic location**: Situated between **London and the South Coast**, with excellent rail, road, and air links.

Purpose of the name:

The term is used by **local authorities, business partnerships, and regional planners** to promote regional cooperation, attract investment, and plan infrastructure in a way that supports sustainable economic growth. The **Gatwick Diamond Initiative** is a public-private partnership that actively markets the region for inward investment.

So, when Reigate and Banstead refer to the **“Gatwick Diamond economic area”**, they are aligning with this identity and economic cluster, arguing that the area’s interests may be best served by a unified strategic authority.

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Additional reporting – Sam Jones.

Gatwick Airport (Credit Gatwick Airport)

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