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Rail links 'critical' for Gatwick Airport

Gatwick Airport needs better rail links if it is to compete with Heathrow, a new report says.

The report by Arup, the firm designing the HS2 terminal at Euston station, said rail links were "critical" in attracting new airlines.

Guy Stephenson from Gatwick Airport said rail links to the centre of London were faster and more convenient than from any other London airport.

But he admitted that passengers' impressions lagged behind Heathrow.

"The capabilities of the trains on the Gatwick Express rank below equivalents at Heathrow, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Stockholm airports," said Mr Stephenson, the airport's chief commercial officer.

Lost rail links

The Arup report said that if Gatwick Airport was to attract new airlines, it must also offer more direct rail routes.

"In recent years, Gatwick has lost direct rail links to Oxford, Birmingham, Manchester, Watford and Kent.