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Climate Rules Out Runway

The need to take climate change seriously rules out any new runway - at Heathrow or at Gatwick. That is the conclusion of a new research study published by GACC today. Written by Cait Hewitt, Deputy Director of the Aviation Environment Federation, it shows that the agreement in Paris last December by all the nations of the world to put tougher limits on climate change, must mean cancelling plans for a new runway.

‘If we are to prevent great disasters in future,’ said Cait, ‘we have got to slow down the growth in air travel. Big tax increases would be political dynamite, and the alternative of an effective world-wide emissions trading scheme looks impossible to achieve. In an old phrase it’s just pie in the sky.’

The research study shows how every other industry in the UK is - by law- due to cut their CO₂ emissions by 85% on average, but that aviation is permitted to increase their pollution in the sky by 120%.¹ If a new runway is built it would be even higher.

GACC chairman, Brendon Sewill, commented: ‘In 2010 new runways at Heathrow or Gatwick were ruled out by the Government on the grounds of climate change, but more recently this crucial issue has been ignored in all the debate about runways. It is time for the Government to stand up to the lobbying by the aviation industry, and tell them that there will be no new runway.’

Author Cait added: ‘If we go ahead with building a new runway we will be storing up serious trouble for future generations.’

The research study is attached. It is number 4 in the new series being published by GACC. Previous studies have been on Ambient Noise, Paying for a New Gatwick Runway, and Gatwick and Tax. They are available on www.gacc.org.uk/research-studies

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¹ By 2050 compared to 1990