

**PRESS RELEASE: GACC puts Government on notice over dangerous and irresponsible decision.**

The Secretary of State for Transport has today made a decision stating that she is “minded to grant consent” for the development of Gatwick Airport based on an amended plan.

Further consultation is now expected with a final decision earmarked for October 2025.

Peter Barclay, Chair of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) says:

“Today GACC are putting the Government on notice that should they go ahead with what seems to be their revised plan we will legally challenge what is still a dangerous and irresponsible decision. We are calling out the Government’s failure to recognise Gatwick’s false economic claims and its plans to fly in the face of climate breakdown. Equally concerning is the government’s failure to listen to the evidence of the significant negative impact on local communities in terms of noise, air pollution, overloading of infrastructure and a general worsening of people’s lives.

Peter Barclay continues:

“GACC are appalled that the Government appears to have fallen for Gatwick’s and the aviation industry’s glossy brochure and not taken on board the significant and dramatic impacts this decision will have on local, national and worldwide communities. This decision is economically illiterate and appears to downgrade climate change as an issue of concern to the Government. This flawed approach will only come back to bite the Government that has made it with fearful results.

Jonathan Essex, Vice Chair adds:

“There is no need for this or any other airport expansion in the UK. That climate change has been downgraded to just another issue to consider after the Government has indicated its desire to proceed is completely unacceptable. Yesterday, the Climate Change Committee stated that no additional airport capacity is needed until at least 2035 and then only if Sustainable Aviation Fuels become viable. (2,3) Since the Gatwick consultation finished, we have passed 1.5C global warming for the past year, and last week the Channel Tunnel announced plans to expand connectivity to Europe. It is time for the government to back trains not planes, and instigate the repeated calls of their independent Climate Change Committee to introduce a plan to manage down demand for flying instead.” (4,5)

Hannah Lawrence, Campaigner at Stay Grounded, said:

“Encouraging Gatwick’s expansion in the middle of a climate crisis is irresponsible. Allowing such a polluting industry to expand in the name of supposed ‘economic growth’ would actually create further inequality, suffering and a lack of prosperity in years to come. All while those who have never set foot on a plane suffer the worst consequences.

Hannah Lawrence continues:

“There is no such thing as green flying which is why we need an immediate end to airport expansion and an urgent reduction in the number of flights that take off each day. The government’s final decision on this expansion must recognise this and reject the proposal.”

GACC has launched a fundraising campaign to support legal challenges.

<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/gacc/>

All enquiries to:

GACC Press Officer, Trish Kiy - 07734 406 678 - [press@gacc.org.uk](mailto:press@gacc.org.uk)  
GACC Chair, Peter Barclay - 07729 397 354 - [info@gacc.org.uk](mailto:info@gacc.org.uk)  
GACC Vice Chair, Jonathan Essex - 07801 541 924 - [greenjonathanessex@gmail.com](mailto:greenjonathanessex@gmail.com)

Peaceful Demonstration outside at: Riverside Garden Park, Horley at 5.15pm on Wednesday 26th November 2024. Photos available on request.

**ENDS**

**Notes.**

**Reference 1. The Government's Aviation Strategy: Making Best Use of Existing Runways** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-strategy-making-best-use-of-existing-runways>) encourages aviation to develop within its facilities within the airport boundary. However, we have never accepted Gatwick Airport Ltd's argument that this should include creation of a new operational runway at the airport. Gatwick Airport only has one existing operational runway and we believe that the policy relates to this existing runway alone.

**Reference 2. The Secretary of State's Minded to Approve Letter amounts to a downgrading of climate change concerns with them being considered later.** See quotes from SoS Letter (<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR020005/TR020005-003951-Gatwick%20Airport%20Northern%20Runway%20Project%20-%20Minded%20to%20Letter.pdf>) below:

Paragraph 17, pg. 6

"The Secretary of State will set out her full consideration of the remaining matters in her final decision. This will include Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change, Socioeconomics, Landscape and Townscape, Historic Environment, Ecology, Health and Wellbeing, Land Use and Recreation, Other Matters (including consideration of alternatives, Geology and Ground Conditions, Major Accidents and Disasters, Resource and Waste Management, and Cumulative Effects), Design, the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Compulsory Acquisition."

Paragraph 31, p. 9

"The Government's response to the Climate Change Committee (2024 Progress Report states with regards to airport expansion "the Government recognises a role for airport expansion where it provides economic growth and is compatible with our legally binding net zero target and strict environmental standards."

**Reference 3. UK Seventh Carbon Budget Report** (Climate Change Committee February 26<sup>th</sup> 2025, <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-seventh-carbon-budget/#publication-downloads>, pp. 225-226)

"Net Zero-aligned aviation demand (54% emissions reduction in 2040). Aviation demand can only grow if technology roll-out progresses and begins to abate and offset aviation emissions, with demand management playing an important role in reducing emissions in the 2020s and 2030s while availability of SAF and engineered removals is limited. [...] Compared to 2025 levels, aviation passenger demand increases by 2% by 2035 (to 319 million passengers), 10% by 2040 (to 345 million passenger), and 28% by 2050 (to 402 million passengers)."

**Reference 4. Climate change has now passed 1.5C and was 1.75C above pre-industrial levels in January 2025.** See for example <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd7575x8yq5o> and

<https://climate.copernicus.eu/copernicus-january-2025-was-warmest-record-globally-despite-emerging-la-nina>.

**Reference 5. The Advice of the Government's Climate Change Committee**

(<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2024-report-to-parliament/>)

The CCC's 2024 Progress Report states:

“Stop airport expansion without a UK-wide capacity management framework. No airport expansions should proceed until a UK-wide capacity management framework is in place to annually assess and, if required, control the sector's GHG emissions and non-CO2 effects. A framework should be developed by DfT in cooperation with the Welsh Government, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive. After a framework is developed, there should be no net airport expansion unless the carbon intensity of aviation is outperforming the Government's emissions reduction pathway and can accommodate the additional demand.” (p.96)