

For Immediate Release

11th February 2025

Press Release: GACC CALLS FOR REJECTION OF GATWICK EXPANSION IN LIGHT OF MOUNTING EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Following a week of extreme weather news [see 1-4], Chairman of Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) is calling for a halt on all airport expansion plans at Gatwick, Luton and Heathrow Airports [see 5].

Peter Barclay, Chairman of GACC said, “The latest shocking realities of climate change highlight the urgent need for climate action. Expanding airports will result in an increase in emissions, worsening global heating even further.”

Peter Barclay continues, “The government must accept this new reality of climate change is happening now, and it is this, not economic growth, that must take priority when the government reassesses the case for airport expansion.” [see 6, Select Committee meeting 11th February 2025]

Vice Chairman of GACC, Jonathan Essex said: “The situation is urgent and the evidence is clear, we must listen to the Climate Change Committee and halt all airport expansion. There is no sound moral case or indeed need to expand Gatwick or any other airport in a climate crisis.” [see 7,8]

Jonathan Essex continues, “The government and aviation industry’s notion that we can just expand now and rely on so-called Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) later is a dangerous illusion which delays and frustrates the climate leadership needed now. Such biofuels still have climate impacts when emitted from planes and are more expensive. Delivery at scale would require vast habitat destruction or displace food growing and will not be realised any time soon. Suggesting we can fly now, delay climate action, destroy nature and make poverty worse is a dangerous illusion.”

Contacts:

GACC Press Officer - Trish Kiy: press@gacc.org.uk, 07734 406 678

GACC Chair - Peter Barclay: info@gacc.org.uk, 07720 397 354 / 01293 862 821

GACC Vice Chair - Jonathan Essex: greenjonathanessex@gmail.com, 07801 541 924

Ends

Supporting Notes and Evidence

This week it was announced that temperatures at the North Pole reached extremes, rising by more than 20 degrees Celsius above the average [1], which follows announcements that January 2025 was the warmest on record [2] with wild fires and extreme flooding made worse by climate change [3,4].

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/04/temperatures-at-north-pole-20c-above-average-and-beyond-ice-melting-point>:

[2] <https://www.copernicus.eu/en/media/image-day-gallery/january-2025-warmest-january-record-globally#:~:text=The%20Copernicus%20Climate%20Change%20Service,13.23%C2%B0C%2C%20...>

[3] <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-02-02/falls-of-1-metre-of-rain-in-parts-of-north/104887302>

[4] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0ewe4p9128o>

A government decision on Gatwick Expansion is currently due by 27 February 2025.

[5] <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/TR020005>

This government's Transport Select Committee examination of whether the planned airport expansion will drive economic growth [6] as decisions are expected soon on both Gatwick and Luton Airport expansion plans.

[6] <https://committees.parliament.uk/event/22748/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

The government has said that they expect airport expansion proposals to be “delivered in line with the UK's legal, climate and environmental obligations” [7], while there is no plausible way to mitigate the climate and environmental impacts of air travel and meet the UK's climate obligations.

[7] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/airport-capacity-and-expansion-a-government-update/government-update-on-airport-expansion>

Gatwick Airport estimate that the airport will generate 5.583 MtCO₂e in 2038 [8] from aviation alone (i.e. not including associated terminal and surface transport emissions). Gatwick Airport estimates for Gatwick Airport's emissions with the Proposed Development will contribute to about 3% of the sixth carbon budget from 2033-2037, increasing to 4.9% for the seventh carbon budget. The impact of the proposed continued expansion of Gatwick (i.e. alone other Airports) on CO₂ emissions and specifically on the seventh carbon budget is therefore significant.

[8] <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR020005/TR020005-000877-5.3%20ES%20Appendix%2016.9.4%20Assessment%20of%20Aviation%20Greenhouse%20Gas%20Emissions.pdf> , Table 5.3.1.