



**City Hall Greens**



Stewart Wingate  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Gatwick Airport

**Zack Polanski AM**  
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Sent via email to:  
[feedback@gatwickfutureplans.com](mailto:feedback@gatwickfutureplans.com)

25 July 2022

Dear Stewart,

**Northern Runway Highway Improvement Changes and Project Update – consultation response** <https://www.gatwickairport.com/business-community/future-plans/northern-runway/>

I am writing in my capacity as a London Assembly Member.

I absolutely reject Gatwick's proposals to bring the existing Northern Runway into regular use alongside its Main Runway, and the updated road improvement designs and updates on car parks, hotels, offices, the airfield, water management, carbon and noise.

In the UK, aviation is already responsible for around ten per cent of total carbon dioxide emissions, compared with two per cent globally, while the number of people who fly in any given year is also much higher, at around 50%.<sup>1</sup> Thus, there can be no justification for increasing the supply of flights at a time when the impacts of planetary overheating are entirely evident all around us. In fact, it is time to stop any airport expansion. The earth is not safe with even the levels of flights we saw before the pandemic, let alone an increase.

In May 2022, Possible published their report Missed Targets: A brief history of aviation climate targets.<sup>2</sup> This shows that the Government's plan to cut emissions from flights is not working. Airlines are out of control; they fail to meet even basic climate targets and are marking their own homework.

The Committee on Climate Change Sixth Carbon Budget 2021 progress report to Parliament stated that "some moderation of demand growth is likely to be required to meet the legislated emissions targets, as pre-pandemic trends in demand growth exceed what we expect can be accommodated in a Net Zero world".<sup>3</sup>

This call for moderation in demand growth reiterates the Mayor of London's London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway. To achieve Net Zero by 2030 requires: "Aviation growth beyond 2030 limited to 85% of 2018 levels by 2050".<sup>4</sup> This was further backed up by the Mayor in the answer to my written question, where he said: *"I fail to see how any airport expansion can be justified, being incompatible with achieving the UK's net zero target"*.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the proposals to bring the existing Northern Runway into regular use alongside its Main Runway will lead to more traffic congestion and air pollution in south London, Kent and Sussex, as well as around Gatwick itself. Local and strategic roads will not be able to cope with the additional demands arising from increased passenger and freight traffic.

These proposals also seriously undermine the Mayor's efforts to tackle air pollution. If implemented, Londoners will have to wait a lot longer to be able to breathe air that is safe and within legal limits. The proposals are incompatible with the High Court judgement requiring the Government to reduce people's exposure to illegal levels of pollution in the shortest time possible.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, there is entirely no justification for expanding capacity at Gatwick Airport. We should be doing the opposite and trying to limit people's ability to fly more than absolutely necessary.

Yours sincerely,



**Zack Polanski**  
**Green Party Member of the London Assembly**

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<sup>1</sup> Aviation Environment Federation, accessed 7 July 2022, <https://www.aef.org.uk/what-we-do/climate/>

<sup>2</sup> Missed Targets: A brief history of aviation climate targets, Possible, May 2022, accessed 7 July 2022, <https://www.wearepossible.org/latest-news/for-20-years-the-aviation-has-missed-all-but-one-of-their-sustainability-targets>

<sup>3</sup> Sixth Carbon Budget: CCC lauds historic milestone on path to Net Zero UK, accessed 7 July 2022, <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2021/04/20/sixth-carbon-budget-ccc-lauds-historic-milestone-on-path-to-net-zero-uk/>

<sup>4</sup> London Net Zero 2030: An Updated Pathway, January 2022, accessed 7 July 2022, <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/climate-change/zero-carbon-london/pathways-net-zero-carbon-2030>

<sup>5</sup> Answer for Gatwick airport expansion (1) March 2022, <https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2022/0525>

<sup>6</sup> ClientEarth v Secretary of State for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2 November 2016, accessed 19 July 2022, <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/clientearth-v-ssenviron-food-rural-affairs-judgment-021116.pdf>