

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

2 November 2021

Public Questions and Answers Sheet

Question from Ann Stewart (read by Democratic Services):

The Tyndall Centre is a world renowned organisation of British Universities where climate scientists of relevant disciplines work with policy makers. One of their resources is a database of the carbon budgets of UK cities. Their conclusions for Chichester are that to stay within the 1.5°C of the Paris climate agreement Chichester has a “ *maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 4.7 million tonnes (MtCO₂) for the period of 2020 to 2100.*”

<https://carbonbudget.manchester.ac.uk/reports/E07000225/>

If we continue to emit carbon dioxide at the 2017 rate, we will have used up our entire budget for the century by 2027/2028.

This council report states that by 2023 the additional flights proposed at Gatwick will result in an additional 1.51 million tonnes of CO₂. This is over a quarter of our carbon budget for this century. Will the council take this into consideration when discussing this report.

Answer from Cllr Taylor:

In 2019 the requirement for the UK to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (with all emissions by that date needing to be balanced by greenhouse gas removals) became law. In April 2021, the Government announced it would accept the advice of its expert climate advisory body, the CCC, that the sixth carbon budget (covering years 2033-37) should deliver a 78% reduction in emissions below 1990 levels and, for the first time, should include international aviation and shipping emissions. In July 21, the Government published a draft plan to put aviation on a pathway to net zero by 2050 in its consultation document Jet zero: Our strategy for net zero aviation. Whilst the proposals do not explicitly express support for airport expansion, they focus on technology measures to achieve emissions reductions.

The decisions around regional airport expansion is a central government issue due to the legally binding climate targets. In addition major infrastructure projects such as Gatwick or Heathrow expansion will go through public consultation and/or public inquiry as part of the nationally prescribed development consent order process.

Currently, there is no UK-wide policy for reducing aviation emissions overall, although ministers are due to announce a strategy for cutting transport emissions. The levers for disincentivising air travel lie with central government. This is illustrated by the latest Budget. The Chancellor said that most emissions come from international rather than domestic aviation, so the Government was introducing a new band of Air Passenger Duty covering flights of over 5,500 miles so that those who fly furthest will pay the most. However, flights between airports in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be subject to a new lower rate of Air Passenger Duty from 2023.

I can confirm that the Council will take carbon reduction targets into account in considering its response to this consultation and would add that CDC is playing a role through its on-going behaviour change campaign which encourages the use of personal carbon calculators so that people can better understand their carbon footprints and identify areas for change such as flying less.

As a point of detail, the Council's report does not mention the date 2023. Paragraph 3.9 refers to 2032 which is the date taken from the Environmental Impact Assessment prepared on behalf of the airport operator.

Question from Sally Pavey, Chair of CAGNE:

A second runway flies in the face of the climate emergency we are all facing. Aviation has no alternative currently to being able to fly lots of people thousands of miles without using fossil fuel – commercial green fuels and technology are years away. Even Crawley Borough Council is no longer focusing on Gatwick for jobs but greener more sustainable industries.

How can this council justify this draft response in favour a new runway at Gatwick Airport, but then Chichester is not local to the airport as such no workers (if any jobs are created as Gatwick will take 6-7 years to recover and automation remove many jobs) should be coming from your area; your area may or may not see the vast increases of noisy aircraft overhead (285-326,000 a year); a second runway alone will add more than 1 million tonnes of extra carbon every year plus greenhouse gases and particles; and how can this draft response talk about Gatwick paying for affordable housing when there is no land to build on as Gatwick safeguard land for a 3rd runway and a 3 bedroom house costs far more than most workers can afford?

How can this council support the building of a new runway when I quote – '*as a council we are committed to working with you to tackle climate change. The opportunity to avoid dangerous levels of global warming is closing and action is required swiftly at all levels from the international to the individual. In making its declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019, the council announced its commitment to taking urgent action and asking others - residents, businesses, partner organisations, and the Government*'?

Answer from Cllr Taylor:

The Council is not supporting the building of a new runway. The proposals are for the utilisation of the existing standby runway to be used by smaller aircraft.

The proposals are for the building of new associated airport infrastructure to the existing terminal buildings which will result in improvements to the road infrastructure around the airport, together with new hotels.

The council supports the economic role that the airport plays within the wider region and the positive contribution it makes to Chichester District. The new physical infrastructure according to the documentation provided by Gatwick is proposed to reach net zero emissions by 2040.

The council has drawn attention in its response that the consultation documents do not set out the full picture regarding carbon emissions, which is in the airport's Environmental Impact Assessment – that the proposals will when everything is taken into account result in an increase in carbon emissions as a result of the extra aircraft flights which use carbon fuel, until such a time as they can be fuelled by a renewable resource.

Question from George Hibberd:

I have a very important question to pose to the council for their meeting on Tuesday 2nd November regarding the plans to expand Gatwick's Northern Runway.

“Sir David King, the UK’s former Chief Science Advisor, has said that we have just 5 to regenerate planet Earth and what we do in the following 3-4 years will determine the future of humanity.

As a pilot who works with easyJet and is a member of the British Airline Pilots Association Environmental Study Group, I am acutely aware of my industry’s massively damaging impact on our life support systems, but also our lack of action and greenwashing campaigns to not only continue flying, but to expand our pollutive industry.

The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change, the International Energy Agency and the government’s own Climate Change Committee have said that we MUST take action to immediately reduce demand and therefore emissions in aviation to avert the worst effects of the climate crisis.

People in the global south are already dying. The natural world is seeing the sixth mass extinction of species. When battery and hydrogen aircraft are decades away, when Sustainable Aviation Fuels are not actually sustainable and won’t be price-competitive also for decades, when biofuels are going to cause yet more deforestation and carbon offsets are proven to be almost totally ineffective, what right does Gatwick have to lie to the public about its eco-credentials and expand an already pollutive industry plunging my future and many others’ presents into chaos?”

Answer from Cllr Taylor:

The council has drawn attention in its response that the consultation documents do not set out the full picture regarding carbon emissions, which is in the airport’s Environmental Impact Assessment – that the proposals will when everything is taken into account result in an increase in carbon emissions as a result of the extra aircraft flights which use carbon fuel, until such a time as they can be fuelled by a renewable resource.

In its draft answer to consultation question Q12, the council has stated:

The situation described in question 12 does not provide the whole picture. It refers only to construction and the operation of buildings, which represents only a tiny fraction of the true greenhouse gas emissions.

The increase in carbon as a result of the additional flights is equivalent to twice Chichester District’s whole emissions. It is possible to argue, as the Environmental Impact Assessment report does, that such an increase does not compromise the UK target, but only because it is less than 1% of UK total emissions. It is however, still a huge increase.

Carbon-offsetting is not a preferred strategy, and should only be a small part of the plan once all other options have been exhausted. The preferred strategy would be improvements in technology for the aircraft, and maximising public transport journeys to and from the airport via non-carbon modes of transport. Water-efficiency and reduction of waste are other areas that need to be considered. There is little mention of creation of on-site renewable energy sources to supply the new buildings at the airport and there does appear to be land available within the airports ownership to explore this, for example ground source heat pumps and water source heat pumps.