

Aviation and environment news

This is a new service from AEF providing a regular update on some of the news stories relevant to aviation and the environment.

You can download a PDF copy [here](#).

UK Airports and expansion

London City Airport

HACAN East published a [report](#) challenging claims by London City Airport that the new generation of aircraft, the centrepiece of its expansion proposals currently out for consultation, will be quieter for communities.

The airport is seeking permission to: increase passenger numbers from 6.5 million to 9 million a year; drop the ban on flights on Saturday afternoon and evening; and operate more flights during the first hour of operation after 6.30am and in late evening.

The report, which took measurements in South East London, found there was a 1.1 average decibel difference between new generation and old generation planes. This marginal difference would not be noticeable to the human ear.

According to [the Standard](#) over 1000 people responded to [City Airport's consultation](#) on operating more weekend and early morning flights, which closed this month.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, [slammed the expansion plans](#) on environmental grounds. The Mayor has the power to refuse referred applications of strategic importance. London Assembly Member Zack Polanski also published [his response](#).

So what happens next? City Airport will assess the responses before making them public later this year. If it puts in a formal application to Newham Council, the Planning Authority, Newham will hold a public consultation before its Planning Committee takes a decision.

Manston

An application was submitted at the end of last month by Jenny Dawes for permission for Judicial Review of the retaken decision to grant a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the re-opening of the former Manston Airport as an air freight hub. You can support the crowdfunder [here](#).

Luton

Also this month, the [hearing](#) into Luton Airport's application to expand began. The Secretary for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities called it in after Luton Council, the airport owner, had

approved it subject to conditions. Our Policy Director Cait appeared as an expert witness on climate change on behalf of local campaign group LADACAN.

Doncaster Sheffield

Doncaster Sheffield Airport is [set to close](#) close despite a financial lifeline offer.

<https://twitter.com/crisortunity/status/1574450113262542849>

You can read more about UK airport expansion plans on our [airports tracker webpage](#).

International news:

As we published, the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) had just concluded its Assembly where it passed a resolution to set an aspirational long-term climate goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. ICASA, the NGO coalition that AEF is a lead member of, [said](#) that the agreement for a 2050 net-zero emissions goal for international aviation provides new hope that the aviation industry will align itself with the Paris Agreement, but that "the hard work starts now." Wider commentary [by green campaigners](#) highlighted that the agreement was 'not legally binding'.

Reports:

ICAO

Several reports were released in the run up to [ICAO Assembly](#).

A [paper in Nature](#) laid out some of the weaknesses of the approach taken historically, arguing that: "the aviation industry's response to the climate challenge is a triumph of industrial interests over reality". The authors believe that "radical redesign" of the industry will be needed if it's to meet its own decarbonisation goals. This includes further research into the negative impact of contrails and greater investment in more disruptive tech such as electric and hydrogen aircraft. They also point out that it's not a coincidence that the solutions being pushed so far at ICAO, including carbon offsets and cleaner fuels, are the "least disruptive" to the industry.

Two reports have considered the compatibility of aviation emission reduction pathways with the Paris Agreement. [Analysis from Climate Action Tracker](#) followed work published earlier in the year by the [International Council for Clean Transportation](#) (ICCT).

Environmental group Transport and Environment also [released analysis](#) that claimed that ICAO's Carbon Offsetting And Reduction Scheme (CORSA) was 'greenwash'. It argues the case for expanding the EU ETS to include international flights.

Other recent reports

The UK's Airspace Change Organisation Group (ACOG) published their environmental strategy that “will help facilitate the adoption of greener practices within airspace change proposals over the next few years”.

ICCT meanwhile released a paper arguing “the case that progressive taxation, namely a [global] frequent flying levy (FFL), can generate revenues for decarbonization while ensuring equitable distribution of the cost burden.”

<https://twitter.com/rutherdan/status/1575146809630007298>

<https://twitter.com/StayGroundedNet/status/1575135991706312706>

And finally, the House of Commons Library released a [briefing](#) answering FAQ's about aviation policy.

Political updates:

The new Prime Minister Liz Truss got off to a rocky start with environmentalists as she and the outgoing prime minister [took separate private jets](#) to Balmoral. It was also revealed [how the new PM has voted on aviation issues](#), consistently voting in favour of increasing Air Passenger Duty, but not voting on many other issues.

Liz Truss also [suggested that the Planning Inspectorate's powers may be curbed](#). “It is too easy for local councils to be overruled by the Planning Inspectorate, and that is certainly an issue that I expect my secretary of state for housing to look at.” While the comments related mainly to housing developments, [the New Civil Engineer spoke to AEF](#) about why blocked airport expansions keep being overturned.

In the Department for Transport, Anne Marie Trevalyan quickly became the new Secretary of State, replacing Grant Shapps, and [Baroness Charlotte Vere of Norbiton replaced Robert Courts](#) as Aviation Minister, returning to the role that she held between 2019 and 2020.

Conservative party donations

The Conservative Party was donated £651k by the aviation industry between April and June this year, revealed [analysis of official records by DeSmog](#). The story was also run in [The Times](#).

In their report, AEF's Cait Hewitt, said “At a time when the aviation sector is looking for government approval of airport expansion, and finance for alternative fuels, these ‘donations’ can't help looking like sweeteners. It would be good if aviation businesses started putting their profits into decarbonisation rather than giving handouts to political parties.”

Labour Conference

Campaigners and media also took aim at the Labour Party Conference, with [Novara Media claiming](#) it would be rife with corporate greenwashing. Commenting on Heathrow's provision of an MP lounge, AEF Director Tim Johnson said “it affords [Heathrow] unlimited access to MPs

and other party members behind closed doors for the duration of the conference. Where's the transparency?"

[DeSmog](#) also provided criticism and quoted Tim Johnson saying: "This ability to influence the discussion, and deny any alternative point of view, is completely inappropriate".

Legal:

Following publication of the Government's Jet Zero plan, Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport (GALBA) are [taking the Government to court](#) on the grounds that it is unlawful. You can support their judicial review [here](#).

https://twitter.com/LeighDay_Law/status/1574739522826522625

Friends of the Earth also has a [petition](#) asking the UK Government to commit to no new airport expansion, and scrap plans for a third runway at Heathrow airport.

Other aviation news

Activist groups across Europe took part in a week of action against aviation advertising, replacing over 500 advertising sites with satirical artwork. As reported in [The Guardian](#).

<https://twitter.com/badvertising11/status/1572856021349179393>

And in an escalation of the story on 'Ghost Flights', [The Guardian](#) also exposed new data that revealed 5,000 empty flights in the UK since 2019. "Publication of this data is a step in the right direction, but we need more transparency to understand why these inefficient, polluting practices continue, and to hold the main airline culprits to account," said AEF Director Tim Johnson. "Given the climate emergency, the revelation that so many near empty planes have been burning fossil fuels and adding to the CO2 building up in the atmosphere is pretty shocking."