

Aviation and environment news - February 2023

Here's our third update on relevant aviation and environment news stories.

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

UK Airports and expansion

Manston

In January, the Court [refused](#) an application for a judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision to grant a Development Consent Order (DCO) to reopen Manston airport as a freight hub.

Manston campaigners have lodged an application for renewal of the claim for permission to apply for judicial review. They are crowdfunding [here](#).

Bristol

The High Court [ruled](#) that the expansion of Bristol airport will be allowed to go ahead, from 10 to 12 million passengers a year.

Bristol Airport Action Network (BAAN) had challenged the Planning Inspectorate's decision to allow the expansion. The judge recognised the impact on climate change but ruled that a local planning decision cannot overturn national government policy. The reasons behind the decision are set out by the [New Civil Engineer](#).

Demonstrations in Bristol followed the decision, and BAAN plan to appeal the decision through the Court of Appeal, having reached their funding target.

<https://twitter.com/baancc/status/1622204555151769600>

<https://twitter.com/baancc/status/1623024008219267091>

Read more about UK airport expansion plans past and present, [here](#).

International news:

In Brussels, the city council adopted a motion calling for a ban on night flights over the city from 10 pm to 7 am, except in emergencies. [The motion](#) also asked the Belgian Government to set an annual limit on movements at Brussels International Airport.

The EU has drafted [plans](#) to require companies to back up green claims about their products with evidence, in a bid to fight greenwashing. You can find out more about [greenwashing in the aviation industry](#) and [how to tackle it](#) in our articles published at the end of last year.

The International Council on Clean Transportation has published a [paper](#) on the net zero goal agreed at ICAO last October, arguing that it represents "a shift away from previous ICAO climate governance," favouring action to reduce CO2 from planes and fuels directly, rather than through offsets.

Reports:

At the end of 2022, the Campaign for Better Transport became the latest organisation to target private jet use, [calling for a new Air Passenger Duty](#) rate of £780 to fund better and cleaner public transport. You can find out more about Air Passenger Duty in [AEF's breakdown](#).

Green Alliance also published a [paper on reforming transport taxes](#), calling attention to the continued absence of tax on aviation fuel and VAT on flight tickets. The report notes that aviation tax is one way to help manage demand while there is significant uncertainty about the UK's ability to reach net-zero aviation emissions by 2050.

A new [academic paper](#) highlighted the need for the industry to completely reassess its relationship with profitability and to consider a new business model to stay within 1.5 degrees of global warming. If aviation's "current business model – volume growth with very small profit margins – is continued, it is likely that aviation's contribution to climate change will grow, due to constraints in biofuel production, cost, and an increase in non-CO2 warming".

[The Verge](#) reported on another recent academic paper, a [study in Nature](#) that showed how climate pollution from aircraft could triple by 2050, requiring \$1 trillion to offset. They note that the global airline industry only netted \$24.6 billion in profits in 2019 and that there is no quick techno-fix, suggesting an important role for demand management.

The research shows that limiting demand to 1% growth each year instead of the 4% projected by the industry would make a significant difference.

https://twitter.com/The_AEF/status/1618250637640347648

Consultations

The CAA has called for evidence on what environmental information should be provided to people when they are looking for and booking flights. You can respond [here](#) (closes 7th April 2023).

The CAA is also consulting on revisions to its Airspace Change Process Guidance (CAP1616). The consultation, which can be viewed [here](#), closes 5th March 2023.

And the Department for Transport has launched a [consultation](#) on achieving zero emission airports by 2040 (closes 2nd May 2023)

AEF also responded to the Department for Transport's call for evidence as part of its review of the CAA's "effectiveness and efficiency". You can read our full response [here](#).

https://twitter.com/The_AEF/status/1618982159016132612

Political updates:

[The Guardian](#) reported extensively on the impact of private jet use after Rishi Sunak was [criticised](#) for making three private jet trips in ten days.

In his [review of net zero](#), Chris Skidmore noted that the UK Government is not on track to deliver its commitments, with aviation one of the sectors at particular risk of not meeting targets. Although it does not mention cutting demand for flights or include many suggestions for decarbonising aviation, it does recommend that the low-carbon fuels strategy should set a SAF mandate to apply from 2025. There is also a suggestion that the Government should create a "carbon calculator" so people can inform themselves about the climate impact of lifestyle choices.

https://twitter.com/Josh_Gabbatiss/status/1614949503874007040

[Announcing](#) over £110 million for electric and hydrogen flights (which could reduce aviation emissions by around 4% by 2050 according to the Jet Zero Strategy), Ministers continue to publicly proclaim that we're close to 'guilt-free flights'.

Alex Chapman, a Senior Researcher at the New Economics Foundation had a look at the past claims from the Government that 'guilt-free flying' is on the horizon.

<https://twitter.com/chappersmk/status/1622927691174248455>

In January, MSPs [debated](#) the future of the Caledonian sleeper service, connecting London to Scotland, with Green MSP Mark Russell arguing that a nationalised sleeper service should be at the heart of the Government's vision for aviation to reduce air miles.

Wera Hobhouse, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson for transport [called for a debate](#) on how "expanding airports such as Bristol accords with the UK's net zero targets" The question was dismissed as having been dealt with at a local level, although this seems at odds with recent planning decisions that argue that carbon emissions are dealt with at a national level!