

Aviation Environment Federation (AEF) Webinar: Airport Expansion 5 March 2025

Report by Hilary Burn (for information and next PCAA meeting)

The online meeting was very well attended.

- Steve Clarke from BAAN also attended. He is now leading a campaign group titled, "No Airport Expansion". The link to the campaign is <https://www.noairportexpansion.org/> and will be added to the PCAA website.

The main purpose of the presentation was to show the Government position on expansion, its implications on the local and national level.

There was a lot of information from the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) on the seventh carbon budget.

The take away messages:

- the CCC had NOT moved away from the sixth carbon budget of no more airport expansion but had framed it in a different way.
- The budget suggests that emissions needs to fall in the period of 2025-2030 probably through demand. The citizen panels gave support for demand management. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is critical but has many limitations and that aviation needed to be taxed.

Key dates which will indicate the view of the Government:

- 1 April 2025 - Legal Challenge the JR hearing on the Jet Zero policy.
- 3 April 2025 - Luton decision
- May 2025 - The Government announces the next Carbon Delivery Plan which includes aviation. Note that the Government has had two previous plans which failed due to court rulings.
- 30 June 2025- Farnborough Airport decision on overturning conditions
- July 2025 - Heathrow has to confirm plans to the Government on its intention on how it intends to grow and submit application for third runway.
- Sept 2025 - Airport National Policy Statement (ANPS) Review.
- 27 Oct 2025 - Gatwick decision

To note that London City Airport is complaining of the restriction imposed by conditions on their expansion passed by the Government as it makes it very hard to expand. These conditions are related to noise.

In February 2025 the Chancellor Rachel Reeves invited Heathrow to bring forward expansion plans for consideration by the summer. The government will then review the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) to ensure that any scheme is delivered in line with legal, environmental and climate obligations.

Airport National Policy Framework (ANPF) Review

The AEF wrote to the DfT on the ANPF Review 18 months ago. The letter was sent through Leigh Day. Approximately, every three months the AEF receive a response from the DfT that answers will be given in due course.

The AEF have asked

- What format the review would take. (It could be procedural requiring a vote in Parliament or it may be just London airports excluding the regions).
- Will it include up to date advice from the CCC and a cumulative emissions update from the DfT on all airports which was last done in 2017?

If the Carbon Delivery Plan is challenged again it makes it exceedingly difficult for the Government to review the ANPF. (My view is that the Government may carry out a view that allows Heathrow to be accommodated).

Issues to emphasise in planning application

Issues to emphasise in planning application are as follows

- Noise
- Emissions from inward flights as departing flights are only considered under the Finch decision
- The New Economics Foundation (NEF) case made around economic issues and highlight the limitations and barriers to meeting the SAF mandate.