

Submission ID: 25939

CPRE Sussex requests an Issue Specific Hearing on Climate Change, please see reasons in attached letter.



The countryside charity
Sussex

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Application by Gatwick Airport Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project

Interested Party Reference number: 20044812 – Request for an Additional Specific Issue Hearing on Climate Change

We note that a principal issue to be considered by the ExA is climate change. We agree this is an important issue and were surprised no Issue Specific Hearing on this was included in the Timetable. For the reasons we set out in our initial submission when registering as an Interested Party and for others we would bring forward at a Hearing, we feel this is such a central issue that a Specific Issue Hearing on Climate Change is warranted.

We set out below some reasons as to why we feel a Hearing is needed. These are not an attempt to argue the merits of the case for or against development.

The landscape, environment and natural resources of Sussex are already being affected by climate change and this adversely impacts the wellbeing of the people of Sussex and its economy. These impacts include ones that are environmental (e.g. more rapid coastal erosion), societal (e.g. overheating of properties, drought and water shortages) and economic (e.g. damage and disruption from extreme weather such as floods, heatwaves and storm damage). There is also a risk of new disease outbreaks from changes to biodiversity.

If the DCO were granted the emissions from the construction and operational phases of the expansion of Gatwick would make this situation worse and, importantly, would jeopardise the successful delivery of current national policies on net zero. Further, it would make it more difficult to achieve the negative emissions needed to meet the full ambition of the Paris Agreement on climate change. COP28 recognised the need to end the use of fossil fuels and granting the DCO would run counter to that because the technologies needed in the aviation sector to do that do not exist at the scales needed to make the development sustainable and will not exist at those scales for the foreseeable future. The Climate Change Committee has made the challenges facing the aviation sector clear in its Sixth Carbon Budget. We are not saying that infant technologies have not been mooted or even trialled – simply that the scalability is unknown and maybe unachievable in a timely fashion. Topics such as this are so central that a Hearing is needed.

A Specific Issue Hearing would help examine matters related to future emissions from aircraft using an expanded Gatwick and allow the ExA to listen to arguments on all sides about impacts.

We believe it is probably in the interest of the applicant to have such a session as well as in the interests of those objecting. Some of the destinations that are likely to be flown to from Gatwick may well be too hot and so drought and fire stricken that they might no longer be desirable destinations if emissions of greenhouse gases do not fall quickly enough.

To promote, enhance and protect a thriving countryside for everyone's benefit

An Issue Specific Hearing on climate change may also be of value to the ExA as climate change will be relevant to many of the environment-related matters under consideration – including water, biodiversity, heritage and landscape – and it may be more difficult to decide on the sustainability of the proposal without the issue being specifically addressed.

Supporting documentation includes:

COP28: Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. Fifth session United Arab Emirates, 30 November to 12 December 2023 Agenda item 4. First global stocktake – Section II A amongst others refers to fossil fuels trajectories. The advanced copy of the document can be found here:

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17_adv.pdf

See also the news release “COP28 Agreement Signals “Beginning of the End” of the Fossil Fuel Era”

<https://unfccc.int/news/cop28-agreement-signals-beginning-of-the-end-of-the-fossil-fuel-era>

Climate Change Committee (2020): Sixth Carbon Budget – Aviation, can be accessed here: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Sector-summary-Aviation.pdf>

HM Govt (2022): Climate Change Risk Assessment – 45pp available here: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/61e54d8f8fa8f505985ef3c7/climate-change-risk-assessment-2022.pdf>

Climate Change Committee (2021): Independent Assessment of Climate Change Risk – range of documents accessible here, <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/>

We hope the ExA will feel able to grant this request.

Yours faithfully,

Prof Dan Osborn,

Chair, CPRE Sussex.