

I wish to express in the strongest possible terms my opposition to a second runway at Gatwick Airport. The inevitable increase in carbon emissions resulting from such a development would be in direct opposition to the UK's legally binding net zero targets. A recommendation of the Climate Change Committee is that there should be no net airport expansion across the UK. It is inevitable that greenhouse gas emissions from flights departing from or arriving at Gatwick will rise as a result of increased aircraft movements and flights, as well as increased travel to the airport by road and more out-of-airport transport to support the operations. This is quite contrary to the need for decreased emissions in order to meet the UK's net zero ambitions. Off-setting schemes and/or the possible use of biomass-based fuels are not a solution as they would leave the same amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, at a time when levels need to be lower - not the same or higher.

Sussex residents are already feeling the effects of climate change on their lives. Temperatures approaching 40oC have arrived more than 20 years earlier than expected, and there has been increased flooding from more intense and frequent storms, as well as coastal erosion. Just in the last few weeks the weather has been unusually warm and unusually wet. 2023 was one of the warmest years on record with global average temperatures above the 1.5oC Paris Agreement target. The Northern Runway proposal does nothing to improve that situation, and in fact can only make it worse.

Not only would a second Gatwick runway run counter to climate change policies but it would have deleterious implications for local biodiversity. One example is the destruction of a woodland corridor along the A23, a consequence of which would be that bats could no longer follow this route, disconnecting their foraging and roosting habitats. No clear indication is given of the impacts of the biodiversity losses, or of the measures that will be taken to compensate for them. Replanting of trees would not replace the loss of mature woodland for many years.