

I attended the ISH 6 on Climate Change in person in the morning and online in the afternoon.

As far as I could understand, Gatwick's representatives seemed to say that their proposals for 100,000 new flights per year would not materially affect the ability of the Government to meet their legally binding emission reduction targets, as they were following the Jet Zero strategy which was consistent with the Government's Net Zero policies.

On 3rd May the High Court ruled the Government's climate strategy unlawful for the second time in less than two years. Government will again have to rewrite it's plan laying out how Government policies would cut emissions, after the Court found that proposals for achieving Net Zero approved by the Secretary of State were too vague for the High Court to be satisfied that the statutory targets would be met.

"The government had previously been warned that the plan was not sufficient by its own climate watchdog.

When the new plan was published in March 2023 the UK Climate Change Committee (UKCCC) said it was even less confident that the government could achieve its climate goals than before it published the plan."

Government Defeated in High Court over climate plans, BBC News website, 3rd May 2024

Moreover, two reports published in the last few weeks have cast further doubt on the viability of relying on Sustainable Aviation Fuels to achieve projected cuts in emissions: Carbon Brief Analysis: Benefits of UK 'sustainable aviation fuel' will be wiped out by rising demand (15 May 2024) and the Institute for Policy Studies Greenwashing the Skies (May 2024). My case would be that, given this recent ruling and these reports, on top of doubts expressed previously, the Planning Inspectorate cannot reasonably be confident that the proposed expansion project at Gatwick would not materially affect the Government's legal obligations under the Climate Change Act 2008.