

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 20 March 2025

Liberal Democrat Motion on Opposing Bristol Airport Expansion

To be proposed by Cllr David Harding

Council:

1. Reaffirms its opposition to the expansion of Bristol Airport as previously expressed in March 2019 as part of the Climate Emergency Declaration and again in July 2022.
2. Notes that communities in Bath and North East Somerset, local campaign organisations and communities in neighbouring authorities also oppose expansion of Bristol Airport.
3. Regrets that Bristol Airport controversially won permission to expand from 10 million to 12 million passengers a year in the face of overwhelming opposition expressed by local communities, organisations and elected politicians, and are now consulting on a further expansion to 15 million passengers a year, of which they estimate that 12 million will reach the airport by private transport, including up to 1000 increased night flights each year, and an extended runway to enable services by larger aircraft types.
4. Notes the government has expressed support for airport expansion (both the Chancellor and Prime Minister have expressed support for a third runway at Heathrow and the Transport Secretary has “set out a path” for the expansion of Gatwick airport) in conflict with the advice given to government by the Climate Change Committee, who have repeatedly cautioned against airport expansion without a framework in place to manage overall national capacity.

Council believes that:

5. Airport expansion is incompatible with the action being taken by West of England Councils to tackle the Climate Emergency, the UK Government’s legally binding climate targets, and advice from the Government’s own Climate Change Committee.
 6. The health and wellbeing of B&NES residents will be adversely affected, through increased air, noise and light pollution and through congestion, rogue parking and rat running through our rural villages and narrow country lanes.
 7. “Sustainable aviation” is a meaningless phrase, regularly used as greenwash by the airport and fossil fuel industries. Sustainable Aviation Fuel is an unproven technology with no clear feedstocks which would permit deployment at meaningful scale.
- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
 - *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

Council therefore:

8. Hereby determines to oppose expansion of Bristol Airport in its response as a statutory consultee to any forthcoming planning application.
9. Calls on all locally elected representatives and all candidates for the forthcoming West of England Combined Authority elections to oppose expansion of Bristol Airport.
10. Calls on the government to consider all airport expansion applications on a national basis and to make decisions in line with the advice from the Climate Change Committee, which has said there should be 'no net expansion of airports'; and taking into account the cumulative impact of CO2 emissions and their impact on the UK's legally binding journey to net zero.
11. Requests that the Leader write to the Secretary of State, the aviation minister, and local MPs to inform them of Council's position.

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