

I am a proud Bristol resident. I moved to the city recently from London, having left the capital with the desire to live in a smaller-equally vibrant city- closer to the great outdoors, with the promise of a greener, more environmentally friendly ecosystem to call my home. Because of this, I was incredibly saddened to hear of the plans to expand Bristol airport by 50%. This desire to increase the flight traffic through Bristol airways contradicts everything that I have come to love about Bristol, everything that my neighbours stand for, which worryingly threatens our very way of life.

This is a huge blow not only to the local ecosystem, reduction in green spaces and increased noise pollution, but to the increase expected in chemical pollutants forecasted to leak into our atmosphere. If the Bristol airport expansion were to go ahead, we should expect pollutants such as Nitrogen Oxides being released at a greater level, bringing with it the very real threat of increased gases released into our atmosphere, speeding up the effects of the climate change crises and the destruction of our ozone layer. This will be a direct result from the increase in flights leaving and entering Bristol air space by nearly 24,000 per year if plans are accepted. What this really means is a risk to life, reduced life expectancy and in some cases death. In fact, in 2013 a young girl of just 9 years of age died in Lewisham, London. The coroner found that air pollution 'made a material contribution' to her death. Knowing what we know about the risks and real life examples of the effects air pollution and poor air quality in cities has on those living in the area, why is the idea of the airport expansion in Bristol allowed to continue to happen?

It is widely documented that aviation services produce various hazardous particulate matter (PM), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and various hazardous air pollutants (HAPS) along with increase carbon monoxide (Popescu et al., 2011; Woody et al., 2011). Airport expansion increases the impact of these chemicals, releasing tons more hazardous particulars into the atmosphere, causing increased public health impacts (Woody et al., 2011). As a Bristol resident, I believe that by accepting the expansion we are taking a step backwards in our mission to become a greener city and therefore more conscious, caring society. What precedent are we setting our children if we choose capital over health, wealth over the environment?

I stand with my neighbours and ask for those in power to abort the plans for expansion, take heed of the warning signs that threaten our health and wellbeing, minimising green spaces when we need them the most and learn from our past mistakes to make a brighter future for all