

July 2021

*Last month Bristol Airport announced they were bringing forward their plans to be 'carbon neutral' by the end of the year and 'net zero' by 2030, but what does this actually mean? To find out I looked on Bristol Airport's website and found the report 'Becoming a net zero airport' which was released a couple of years ago. On review of the figures published on page 3 I saw that the carbon emissions are split into two categories, scope 1 and 2 which the airport says they control, and scope 3 which they say they only influence. By reducing the emissions in this first category it would seem the airport can viably call themselves 'carbon neutral'.*

*The catch however is colossal. By the airports' own figures, scope 1 and 2 only accounts for a tiny 0.7% of the total emissions, including only the airport building and on-site vehicles. This category does not account for the remaining 99% of emissions caused by the flights themselves and travel to and from the airport. At this stage, the claim of being 'carbon neutral' by the end of the year is looking fairly inconsequential.*

*So what of the significantly larger scope 3 area - on further review of the airport's report, it says it will reduce the emissions from it's flights mostly by carbon offsetting and from improving aviation technology. The offsetting will be done through CORSIA, an international agreement on aviation carbon offsetting. However according to a report drawn up for the 'German Environment Agency, CORSIA overstates the effect of 80% of it's offsetting projects and "In the absence of robust eligibility restrictions, CORSIA will not result in significant emissions reductions beyond those that would occur without the scheme." In regard to improving aviation technology, the 'Committee on Climate Change' "assumes that full electric planes will not be commercialized by 2050, and it does not have a role for hydrogen turbine or hydrogen fuel cell planes by 2050 either.". Therefore the industry will have to rely on new SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuels) which are currently in limited use and will likely only be able to reduce flight emissions by 50% by 2050. Therefore the airport is depending on strategies which are going make them fall far from 'net zero' by 2030.*

*I understand that these are wider problems than Bristol Airport can tackle alone so in this regard it makes sense why it claims it can only 'influence' reductions in this area. However we are here today to discuss the airport's appeal to allow them to expand their capacity by 20%. The airport's influence here is clear and it is not being used to reduce their emissions. Expansion would result in a 34% increase in flight emissions from 2019 levels, leaving their efforts to decarbonise their buildings and onsite vehicles to be frankly worthless. In fact the only way it will serve the airport is as a 'Greenwash' marketing ploy to make them appear green exactly when they are appealing for their emissions to significantly increase. North Somerset Council rejected the expansion plans last year partially on the basis of these increased emissions and it is for this reason that I believe this decision must stand.*

Kind regards,

Ollie Lax