

Aviation Background Paper

Note: This is the background paper linked to our aviation policy proposals drafted by the aviation subsection of the Transport Policy Working Group of the Green Party of England and Wales. This is **not** current Green Party policy. This must **not** be shared publicly.

Background

Great Britain is regarded as a global leader in aviation, and the industry supports hundreds of thousands of direct jobs across the country. Aviation connects people, cultures and economies across the world and has transformed what it means to travel.

At the same time, in the United Kingdom, aviation accounts for 7% of total greenhouse gas emissions and is projected to increase to 11% in 2030¹. It is on track to become the largest emitting sector before 2040². The UK government has set out a pathway for the industry to reach net zero emissions by 2050 namely the 'Jet Zero strategy'³. This, however, has been widely criticised as inadequate⁴. The industry also has a poor track record when it comes to meeting its own emissions reduction and efficiency targets⁵.

The UK government is continuing to expand every major airport⁶, a decision that has been supported by trade unions⁷, against the advice of the government's own advisors, the Climate Change Committee⁸, in their sixth carbon budget. This advice changed subtly in the seventh carbon budget to say that airport expansion didn't need to be restricted and instead demand growth management could be achieved through increased carbon pricing and ticket prices rising as decarbonisation technologies are rolled out⁹.

Despite the scientific advice, the general principle followed by both the government and some trade unions is that conventional airport and industry expansion is how the industry continues to prosper, create jobs and protect livelihoods. We disagree and lay out our alternative, bold and pioneering policy proposals and rationale below.

¹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8826/>

² <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-seventh-carbon-budget/>

³ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62e931d48fa8f5033896888a/jet-zero-strategy.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.aef.org.uk/2022/08/15/aef-responds-to-governments-jet-zero-strategy/>

⁵ <https://www.wearepossible.org/our-reports/missed-target-a-brief-history-of-aviation-climate-targets>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2jpn881w0o>

⁷ <https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2025/august/heathrow-expansion-plans-need-firm-commitment-from-government-says-unite>

⁸ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

⁹ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-seventh-carbon-budget/>

TR351-352: Aims & Objectives

TR351 We want to transform the aviation industry into one that contributes positively towards society; is environmentally sustainable and fair to its workers.

TR352 The Green Party seeks to reduce air travel and air freight and substitute, wherever possible, with other more sustainable modes of transport.

It is important that not only do we reduce aviation's carbon and non-carbon emissions as much as possible, but we transform the industry into one that is fair to its workers and wider society. We want to transform aviation, increase workers' and citizens' input, increase health and safety for workers, boost innovation and research, and price tickets fairly. It is also important that we provide (or investigate) alternative, cheaper, lower carbon options to flying for domestic and international travel.

TR355-356: CO2 and non-CO2 targets

TR355 The Green Party will set an ambitious national carbon budget for aviation and will put a halt on airport expansion.

Rationale

An ambitious national aviation carbon budget will be set in line with national Green Party decarbonisation policies. To enforce this, aviation workers group *Safe Landing* suggests distributing the budget equitably amongst UK airports. An airport's carbon budget would be based on the fossil jet fuel bought for each individual airport, as fuel burn is a close proxy to carbon emissions¹⁰. Larger airports would have a larger proportion of the carbon budget and smaller airports less. Private jet airports would be allocated a stricter carbon budget. It would be easier to manage airport carbon budgets via fossil jet fuel purchased than have a national target managed by airlines reporting emissions.

Other options open to the Green Party to manage degrowth in emissions would be capping the number of passengers airports can serve, limiting the number of slots at an airport and reducing them over time, and banning night flights.

¹⁰ <https://safe-landing.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/GB-Aviation-Policies.pdf>

The airport carbon budgets, passenger numbers or slots, would reduce annually in line with the Green Party's overall emissions reduction targets. This would reduce emissions from the supply side whilst our taxation policies (below) reduce demand in a fair and equitable manner.

Whilst we leave open the possibility for a step-change in zero carbon flight innovation and the ability for some of those airports to become zero emission flight hubs (TR381), some airports may become economically unviable because of these measures. Consultations with local communities and airport workers would take place on what those airports should be transitioned to as an alternative. A plan would be co-created to transition the airport workers into alternative employment.

TR356 A binding and ambitious non-CO₂ climate target will be created. The Green Party will support a monitoring, reporting and validation (MRV) scheme and contrail avoidance trials across its own controlled airspace and in partnership with other countries. The party will campaign for more stringent international engine standards, to mitigate aviation nitrogen oxide and particulate matter emissions across all flight phases.

Rationale

Carbon dioxide emissions are responsible for a mere third of aviation-induced climate change. The remaining two-thirds are due to non-CO₂ effects, primarily condensation trail (contrail) cirrus (high-altitude ice clouds) and NO_x-driven chemical reactions. Such phenomena are short-lived yet strongly influence the temperature response throughout their lifetimes.

Carbon dioxide is a stable, long-lived greenhouse gas, which makes it directly attributable to fuel burn, an unambiguous metric for climate budgets. NO_x and contrail effects on the other hand differ in magnitude depending on the time and location of emission. This is because the temperature, humidity, solar intensity, and chemical composition affect the eventual climate impact of non-CO₂ emissions. Therefore, associated warming is difficult to accurately measure, with scientific uncertainties and a lack of political consensus resulting in a CO₂-centric policy landscape. Zero-carbon aviation targets are predicated on incremental efficiency improvements, widespread SAF adoption and nascent electric and hydrogen technologies that are difficult to scale and could take several decades to meaningfully reduce emissions.

Incorporating non-CO₂ emissions into policy frameworks increases the apparent scale of the aviation climate problem. However, it reveals what could be the most effective near-term mitigation lever available to the industry: operational avoidance of contrail- and NO_x-sensitive regions.

We therefore propose a binding non-CO₂ climate target, which runs parallel to decarbonisation strategy. This framework would incentivise research and development into minimally invasive mitigation methods, while allowing demand management to address any remaining emissions

gap. Treating non-CO₂ impacts as a core policy objective would enable faster climate benefits and ensure aviation claims responsibility for its full scope of induced warming effects.

The UK will pioneer a monitoring, reporting and validation (MRV) scheme and contrail avoidance trials across its own controlled airspace and in partnership with other countries. An example of trials conducted elsewhere is the EUROCONTROL Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre (MUAC) research program¹¹.

Aircraft emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x=NO+NO₂), aerosols, and aerosol precursors provide a non-negligible contribution to the climate impact of air traffic, and the uncertainty on their Effective Radiative Forcing (ERF) of climate remains significant¹². Engine standards are set at International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) level, so the Green Party will therefore campaign at ICAO for stricter engine standards to reduce emissions of NO_x during flight.

Climate Mitigation

Demand management and taxation

TR360-361: Progressive taxation

TR360 Demand management, including progressive taxation, will be introduced to reduce the impact of flying on the climate and the environment.

TR361 The highest emitters – frequent flyers, premium class passengers and private jet users - will pay additional tax to disincentivise excessive and inefficient flying. The lowest emitters, occasional flyers, for example those who fly once a year or less, and tend to be in lower/middle income brackets, will pay the least tax.

Rationale

It is crucial to reduce the impact of flying on the climate and environment. Demand management and progressive taxation will not only reduce the amount we fly but also raise taxation that could be spent on lower carbon ground-based travel alternatives (TR380) and boosting innovation in lower/zero carbon flight (TR381).

The Green Party will reduce the impact of and the demand for flying in a way that puts the burden on those that fly the most aligning with the polluter pays principle. Frequent flyers generally are wealthier, higher-income passengers and infrequent flyers are generally middle or

¹¹ <https://www.eurocontrol.int/article/research-operations-muac-pioneering-atm-condensation-trail-contrail-avoidance-measures>

¹² <https://egusphere.copernicus.org/preprints/2025/egusphere-2025-4273/egusphere-2025-4273.pdf>

lower-income passengers¹³¹⁴. Higher taxation of wealthier passengers is not only fair but aligns with the party's goal of reducing inequality and redistributing wealth (EC203).

Frequent Flyer Levy

To increase the progressiveness of aviation taxation and shift the tax burden onto frequent high-income passengers, a frequent flyer levy, or similar mechanism, is needed. A frequent flyer levy has very high public demand¹⁵ and remains an aspiration, but there is difficulty in implementation¹⁶. Other demand management policies can be used in the meantime, such as an ultra-frequent flyer levy (proposed by the New Economics Foundation), which would require those who fly 6 or more times a year to pay the levy via their annual tax return. Research has shown this policy to be quicker and easier to implement than a frequent flyer levy¹⁷. Until the implementation of a frequent flyer levy is better understood, we have *not* included it in our policy proposals.

TR362: Private jets

TR362 The Green Party will expeditiously phase out the use of fossil fuel-powered private jets.

Rationale

Private jets should be phased out in the UK because they are the most carbon-intensive form of transport per passenger, emitting up to 20–30 times more CO₂ per person than commercial flights while serving a tiny, wealthy minority¹⁸. Their disproportionate climate impact is impossible to justify in a period where all sectors must cut emissions rapidly to meet the UK's legally binding carbon budgets. Phasing out private jet use would reduce high-carbon luxury emissions, free up scarce airport capacity for essential travel, and signal that climate action applies fairly across society — not only to those with fewer resources.

Whilst emissions from private jets are only a small proportion of UK aviation emissions, around 2%¹⁹²⁰, their emissions are the highest per passenger and present us with low hanging fruit in terms of emissions reductions and tax revenue potential.

To address their disproportionate climate impact and social inequity, several policy options are available. First, introduce an escalating tax and landing fee regime for private jets, culminating

¹³ https://theicct.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ID-302-%E2%80%93Aviation-levy_report_final-v2.pdf

¹⁴ <https://new-economicsf.files.svdcn.com/production/files/Flying-fair.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.moreincommon.org.uk/media/vfrjyxga/europe-talks-flying-report-9th-april-2024.pdf>

¹⁶ https://theicct.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ID-302-%E2%80%93Aviation-levy_report_final-v2.pdf

¹⁷ <https://neweconomics.org/2025/06/introducing-the-ultra-frequent-flyer>

¹⁸ <https://theicct.org/pr-air-and-ghg-pollution-from-private-jets-2023-jun25/>

¹⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-statistics-notes-and-definitions/technical-note-a-comparison-of-aviation-emissions-methodologies?utm_source=copilot.com

²⁰ <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/private-jet-flights-in-the-uk-soar-to-new-heights-analysis>

in a full ban on fossil fuel-powered aircraft by a certain date. Second, restrict airport slots and prohibit short-haul private jet flights where rail alternatives exist. Third, include private jet operators fully in the UK ETS with no free allocation and a higher carbon-price floor. Finally, support zero-emission alternatives for essential travel only. Together, these measures would phase out high-carbon luxury emissions while ensuring climate action applies fairly across society.

TR363: UK Emissions Trading Scheme

TR363 The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) will be strengthened to include all domestic and international flights.

Rationale

Currently, CO₂ emissions are priced too low, and jet fuel remains untaxed. The cap-and-trade UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) only applies to UK domestic flights, UK–Gibraltar, and departures from the UK to the EEA and Switzerland. It does not cover long-haul flights, meaning 83% of UK aviation emissions remain unpriced²¹. Two-thirds of emissions are emitted on flights outside of the EEA and are covered by the weak and low-cost ICAO Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) scheme.

We propose to increase the carbon price for aviation. This could be achieved by lifting the price floor for all ETS auctions (with wider ramifications), by levying a top-up charge just on aviation purchases, or by creating a separate market for aviation permits (similar to the way the EU has created a separate market for ETS₂). The New Economics Foundation recommends that the price floor for aviation ETS permits should be increased to £150 per tonne by 2030 to align it with the government's Jet Zero strategy²². We also propose to include all international flights in the ETS.

In addition, aviation workers group *Safe Landing* proposes to separate aviation emissions from other sectors and apply a different carbon price for flights vs. the ETS price for other sectors. This would allow improved price control over aviation without impacting other sectors²³.

The UK ETS cap can be aligned with the Green Party's aviation decarbonisation targets therefore creating a carbon price at an appropriate level.

TR364: Supplementary taxation

²¹ https://uploads.transportenvironment.org/production/files/UK-ETS-FINAL-REPORT-2025.pdf?utm_source=copilot.com

²² https://new-economicsf.files.svdcdn.com/production/files/Flying-fair_2025-06-20-105355_zfpj.pdf

²³ <https://safe-landing.org/uk-eac-airport-expansion/>

TR364 To supplement expanding the UK ETS (TR363), further aviation taxes will be set at a level that reflects the disproportionately higher impact of aviation on the climate, air and noise pollution and the impact of non-carbon emissions.

Rationale

To ensure carbon emissions are priced in a way that takes full of its externalities (I.e. the impact of carbon, the heating impact of non-CO2 emissions, noise and air pollution), supplementary taxation will be introduced.

Such taxes could include a jet fuel tax. Implementing a jet fuel tax would address the imbalance whereby it is currently tax-free whilst car fuel is taxed via fuel duty and VAT. At present this acts as a subsidy²⁴ and incentivises frequent flying, an activity generally conducted by people with higher income and wealth.

The Chicago Convention is often falsely quoted as a reason why aviation fuel cannot be taxed. The Aviation Environment Federation outlines on their website why this is not actually the case:

“Many people believe that aviation cannot be taxed because of provisions in the Chicago Convention, signed in 1944 and which established the International Civil Aviation Organisation as a specialised agency of the United Nations. This is not true. Fuel already onboard planes cannot be taxed, but there is no ban on taxing the fuel uplifted in any country. The obstacle lies in the multitude of Air Service Agreements (bilateral agreements between states that govern how aviation operates between those countries/regions). Currently, most ASAs are interpreted as prohibiting their signatories from levying a fuel tax on international flights without the consent of both parties. But fuel duty can be applied to kerosene for domestic flights and the ASA negotiated between Europe and the UK after the latter left the European Union, allows the UK to impose a tax on the fuel used on routes to EEA destinations. This could be done without fear of widespread tankering – airlines filling up at non-UK airports – because EU regulation requires the majority of fuel to be uplifted at the airport of departure.

Through bilateral negotiations the UK and like-minded partners could create a system to tax kerosene. In fact, negotiating a fuel tax through ASAs with just ten non-EEA countries would cover over 50% of total aircraft fuel sold annually in the UK.

Taxing domestic fuel, and fuel for flights to EEA destinations plus the top ten non-EEA destinations, would cover an estimated 82.2% of UK aircraft fuel sales.”²⁵

This carbon tax is progressive in the sense that it does not impact the 50% of the UK population that do not fly in a given year²⁶, and the more someone flies, the more tax they pay.

²⁴ <https://fullfact.org/news/does-government-subsidise-airlines-10-billion/>

²⁵ <https://www.aef.org.uk/2024/10/29/its-time-to-tax-aviation-more/>

²⁶ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/flight-shame-is-it-taking-off/>

Non-CO2 taxation

Contrail avoidance and mitigation is relatively cheap compared to decarbonising aviation. It's very difficult to ascertain the contrail impact of a flight, but we can predict which flights are most likely to cause contrails at the planning stage - e.g. transatlantic flights, at night. It's very difficult to price the impacts of contrails as each contrail has many variables. Once the impact of contrails is better understood the Green Party could introduce a specific non-CO2 levy to price this impact and incentivise their rapid reduction or increase the carbon/jet fuel tax to include the impact of non-CO2 and contrails.

TR365: Air Passenger Duty

TR365 Air Passenger Duty (APD) will be reformed by increasing the number of distance bands and significantly increasing the price paid in the higher rate band. We remain open to replacing APD with a more effective and equitable tax mechanism.

Rationale

The only existing duty paid by passengers is Air Passenger Duty (APD)²⁷. APD is a duty chargeable per passenger flying from UK airports to domestic and international destinations. APD follows a band structure, where duty rates vary by destination and by class of travel. It contributes to public finance, having raised an estimated £3.8 billion in 2023-4²⁸. Airlines have long campaigned against APD. We and other climate advocates say APD doesn't go far enough and needs to be reformed or replaced.

We agree with the position of the Aviation Environment Federation:

*"APD is not an environmental tax, but there is a strong climate rationale for increasing the duty. A business class seat accounts for three times more emissions than an economy seat, yet standard rate APD is only about 2-2.2 times the reduced rate paid by economy passengers. There is also a strong fairness case as these kinds of flights are very much an elite activity (with more than 70% of passengers flying domestic/short-haul economy)."*²⁹

We suggest increasing the number of distance bands so that long-haul flights are fairly priced. We also suggest increasing the price for the higher rate charge so that it more accurately reflects a similar proportion to the total ticket price as the standard and reduced rate charges. The charity Possible has suggested making the higher rate 30 times the current highest rate.³⁰

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rates-and-allowances-for-air-passenger-duty>

²⁸ <https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/tax-by-tax-spend-by-spend/air-passenger-duty/>

²⁹ <https://www.aef.org.uk/air-passenger-duty/>

³⁰ <https://www.wearepossible.org/latest-news/taxing-private-jets-fairly>

Scotland is introducing a replacement for APD called Air Departure Tax (ADT) and will take effect on 1st April 2027³¹. ADT proposes to keep the current exemption for flights to and from the highlands and islands and to increase the price for private jets. The Scottish government is soon to respond to a recent consultation on ADT that closed in March 2026.

If another form of taxation is found to be more effective and fairer than APD and ADT, they will be replaced.

TR366: Value-Added Tax (VAT)

TR366 We will introduce standard-rate VAT for air fares.

Rationale

The Green Party will end the VAT exemption for aviation, which keeps air fares artificially low, to bring it in line with other modes of transport. If aviation paid the same level of duty and VAT on its fuel, as motorists currently do on theirs, revenue for the Chancellor would increase to over £11billion a year compared to the £3.8billion that APD raises today³².

Introducing VAT on UK aviation tickets could face significant legal and diplomatic hurdles. While domestic law could be amended to remove the current zero-rating under the VAT Act 1994, international treaties such as the Chicago Convention and numerous bilateral Air Service Agreements restrict taxation of international air transport and could require renegotiation. Applying VAT alongside Air Passenger Duty, for example, risks double taxation and could complicate fare structures, especially for connecting flights. Despite this, the Green Party will endeavour to end the unfair VAT exemption for aviation.

TR367: Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)

TR367 The Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and other carbon offset schemes should not be used as a means of carbon accounting (CC018).

Rationale

The International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) CORSIA scheme is a market-based carbon offset scheme. Airline operators offset any emissions above a baseline, which is set at

³¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/taxes/air-departure-tax/>

³² <https://www.aef.org.uk/air-passenger-duty/>

85% of their 2019 emissions, by purchasing credits from carbon offsetting projects approved by the ICAO. This is currently voluntary but set to become mandatory from 2027 for airlines in the 193 member countries that are eligible based on economic development and amount of aviation activity³³.

CORSIA has been shown to be the “worst option” for the climate³⁴. Carbon offsets cannot deliver “carbon neutral growth” for aviation³⁵ as claimed by CORSIA³⁶. We therefore propose for this scheme not to be used for national carbon accounting as per CC018.

TR368: Tankering

TR368 To mitigate aircraft arriving in the UK with enough fuel for their return flight to avoid increased costs from taxation inside the UK, the Green Party would introduce a minimum local fuel uplift requirement set at levels that do not compromise safety.

Rationale

Tankering is a practice whereby an aircraft uplifts excess fuel in one airport to cover its return trip in addition to its outward journey. Airlines tanker to save fuel cost when fuel is cheaper at the departing airport than at the destination airport³⁷. There is a risk that airlines will tanker to avoid the higher costs of fuel in the UK under a carbon tax or strengthened UK ETS. To avoid tankering and eliminate the most common avoidance routes, there are several targeted operational rules available to consider. For example, a minimum local fuel uplift requirement would prevent operators from arriving heavily fuelled from lower-tax jurisdictions and departing without meaningful UK uplift.

Alongside this, regulators could cap discretionary fuel carried above standard safety minimums, limiting the use of inflated “contingency” fuel as a tankering workaround. Furthermore, establishing clear thresholds that flag abnormally low uplift or unusually high fuel remaining on arrival would give regulators a practical basis for investigation and enforcement.

Together, these measures close the main loopholes without compromising safety, but the authors of this report acknowledge that there are several other mechanisms and approaches available that would also prevent operators from avoiding any proposed tax on or increased cost of fossil jet fuel.

³³ <https://es.catapult.org.uk/insight/mixed-signals-for-aviation-todays-carbon-pricing-wrong-flight-path-to-net-zero/>

³⁴

https://www.transportenvironment.org/uploads/files/2021_03_Briefing_Corsia_EU_assesment_2021.pdf

³⁵ <https://carbonmarketwatch.org/2026/03/04/with-or-without-penalties-corsia-doesnt-score-for-the-climate/>

³⁶ <https://www.icao.int/CORSIA>

³⁷ <https://www.transportenvironment.org/articles/tankering-in-aviation>

The same concerns about tankering apply to the higher price of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) too. To overcome this in Europe, the ReFuelEU regulation specifies that aircraft operators must uplift at least 90% of their annual aviation fuel at EU airports to discourage excess fuel being carried³⁸. That creates a precedent that the UK could adopt in relation to aviation taxation.

TR369: Tax exemptions

TR369 Emergency and appropriate medical service flights will be eligible for tax rebates.

Rationale

Medical and emergency flights would be exempt from any of our proposed taxations and/or be eligible for rebates. Medical and emergency flights in the UK are largely already exempt from tax, but the details depend on the type of tax and who operates the flight. Medical transport provided by or under the supervision of registered healthcare professionals is exempt from VAT. Emergency and medical flights are exempt from APD under the Finance Act 1994. Emergency and medical flights are excluded from the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS).

General aviation

General aviation accounts for approximately 2–3 % of UK aviation CO₂ emissions³⁹. General aviation, unlike commercial aviation, contributes to UK aviation taxation mainly through fuel duty on avgas, as most operations fall outside both Air Passenger Duty and the UK Emissions Trading Scheme. Only a small subset of business aviation operators exceed ETS thresholds, while the majority of GA activity—private leisure flying, training, and aerial work—remains exempt. Consequently, decarbonisation in this segment is expected to arise from electrification and fuel transition rather than carbon pricing.

The UK ETS Authority has signalled in recent consultations that it may review thresholds and exemptions, but at present only a very small fraction of GA activity falls under carbon pricing.

Tax combinations

As one can see above, there are several tax mechanisms the party could use to reduce demand for aviation and increase tax revenue in a fair and effective way. Currently, there are uncertainties around how these tax mechanisms may interact with each other, as very few of them have been implemented in the real world.

³⁸ <https://www.iata.org/contentassets/d13875e9ed784f75bac90f000760e998/refuel-eu-aviation-handbook.pdf>

³⁹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6454c4ad2f6222000ca6a581/decarbonising-ga.pdf>

The International Council on Clean Transportation analysis on aviation taxation cited throughout this paper concludes the following about future research needed on implementing multiple tax mechanisms:

*“More policy analysis would be required to understand the implication of having multiple levies in place concurrently, especially if their tax bases overlap. Additionally, as aviation decarbonises, the tax base for emissions-based levies could change significantly. We plan to conduct a follow-up study focusing on tax base and revenue projection. Lastly, airlines implement complex pricing strategies to stimulate travel demand and maximize profits. They could distribute more of the increased fuel cost due to a fuel tax or carbon price onto frequent flyers and premium-class passengers who are less price sensitive. Business travel bookings would also be a natural place to place these increased costs. Airline economics research could help inform whether airline behaviour would naturally distribute the impacts of a fuel tax or carbon price equitably among air travellers.”*⁴⁰

Once these interactions between taxes are better understood, including how something like a frequent flyer levy could be implemented, and we have more guidance on national Green Party emissions reductions targets, the Green Party can commit to a specific package of aviation demand management and taxation policies.

Examples of aviation taxes around the world

Aviation taxes worldwide include a mix of passenger levies, fuel taxes, and environmental charges — with the UK’s Air Passenger Duty (APD) and Australia’s Passenger Movement Charge among the highest globally⁴¹.

Air Passenger Taxes — levied per ticket, often for environmental or fiscal reasons. Examples include the UK’s Air Passenger Duty and Germany’s Air Transport Tax (€12.73–€58.06 depending on distance).

Departure or Movement Charges — flat fees applied to passengers leaving a country, such as Australia’s Passenger Movement Charge (A\$55 per international departure) and Russia’s airport departure taxes (up to \$272 for long-haul flights).

Fuel Taxes — applied to domestic aviation fuel in some jurisdictions. The United States taxes jet fuel at 4.3¢ per gallon for commercial flights and higher rates for private aviation; Norway and Switzerland levy €0.17–€0.45 per litre on kerosene for domestic flights.

Solidarity or Health Levies — France’s Chirac Tax adds €1–€40 per ticket to fund global health initiatives through Unitaid.

⁴⁰ https://theicct.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ID-302-%E2%80%93Aviation-levy_report_final-v2.pdf

⁴¹ <https://www.iata.org/en/iata-repository/publications/economic-reports/specific-taxes-on-the-use-of-air-transport/>

Security and Customs Fees — the U.S. September 11th Security Fee (\$5.60 per flight segment) and Customs User Fee (\$6.97) are collected alongside ticket taxes.

TR375: Alternative fuels

TR375 Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) should be derived from sources which satisfy strict sustainability criteria covering lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, land-use and biodiversity impacts. Given the limited availability and high demand of renewable energy and sustainable biomass across sectors, SAF will only be deployed when it provides sufficient reductions in climate impacts compared with ground-based uses, via reduced lifecycle CO₂ emissions and alleviated contrail warming. Crop-based feedstocks will remain forbidden to avoid competition with food and ecosystems for land resources.

Rationale

Synthetic fuels, also known as Sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs), are a limited and constrained resource and cannot replace fossil jet fuel at scale without causing significant land-use, biodiversity, or energy-system impacts. While SAF can reduce lifecycle CO₂ emissions for some flights, supply constraints mean it cannot support continued growth in aviation demand. SAF policy should therefore avoid reliance on crop-based feedstocks and explicitly recognise that SAF can only play a supporting role alongside demand management and operational mitigation, rather than being treated as a primary decarbonisation pathway.

The UK government in 2025 introduced a SAF Mandate⁴². The idea was that it secures demand for SAF by obligating the supply of an increasing amount of SAF in the overall UK aviation fuel mix and incentivising SAF supply through the award of tradeable certificates with a cash value. The SAF Mandate started in 2025 at 2% of total UK jet fuel demand, increasing linearly to 10% in 2030 and then to 22% in 2040. From 2040, the obligation will remain at 22% of total UK jet fuel demand until there is greater certainty regarding SAF supply. However, use of SAF is already falling short of the mandate with only a 1.6% usage in 2025⁴³.

It is therefore all the more important to prioritise sustainability criteria over volumetric requirements. Many of the future aviation technologies, such as hydrogen and power to liquid (PtL) fuels (a form of SAF), will require large amount of renewable energy to produce. The priority for renewable energy should be for the national grid, ground transportation, heat pumps, etc where its use is far more efficient and effective at decarbonising these sectors⁴⁴. Only once

⁴² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sustainable-aviation-fuel-saf-mandate>

⁴³ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/dec/26/sustainable-aviation-fuel-mandate-uk-government-data-2025>

⁴⁴ <https://www.fzt.haw-hamburg.de/pers/Scholz/Aero/RenewableEnergyToReplaceCoalOrKerosene.pdf>

we have an abundance and excess of renewable energy should it be used for aviation hydrogen and PtL fuel production.

SAF is best used for high contrail forming flights because it produces fewer contrails. This is due to its lower aromatic and sulphur content leading to cleaner combustion and fewer soot particles - the nuclei around which ice crystals form⁴⁵. This may help contribute to a reduction in the heating impact of contrails (TR356).

Hydrogen

Hydrogen-powered flight offers long-term potential for decarbonising UK aviation but faces major near-term limitations. Liquid hydrogen's low volumetric energy density demands larger tanks and new aircraft designs, while cryogenic storage at -253°C introduces safety and certification challenges. The UK lacks airport infrastructure for hydrogen production, liquefaction, and refuelling, and green hydrogen supply remains constrained by competition from other sectors. Economic barriers—high research and development costs, uncertain commercial timelines, and limited renewable electricity—further restrict scalability. Regulatory frameworks and skills for hydrogen handling are still emerging, and lifecycle emissions depend heavily on renewable energy inputs. As a result, hydrogen is unlikely to deliver significant emissions reductions before 2035, leaving demand management as the Green Party's primary decarbonisation tool in the interim.⁴⁶⁴⁷ We aim in the near-term to create a nascent market for zero emission flight (TR381).

TR380-381: Alternative and future travel

TR380 Funds will be made available to:

- a. Support research and development into low carbon flight technology and operations (see also IN215).**
- b. Develop and initially subsidise lower carbon alternative modes of transport;**
- c. Support the development of sustainable tourism (HT1301, HT1401);**

TR381 The government will invest in a nascent zero carbon flight network that attracts the best start-ups to Britain, encourages innovation, supports technology development and skilled green jobs, whilst ensuring that this technology keeps the sector within

⁴⁵ <https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-dlr-study-finds-sustainable-aviation-fuel-can-reduce-contrails/>

⁴⁶ https://www.ati.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ATI-HCN_Conclusions_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁷ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69b83aa0b84f01b2be53a301/jet-zero-taskforce-hydrogen-task-and-finish-group-report.pdf>

planetary boundaries (EC202/221). This investment would include targeted support for transitioning regional and private jet airports to become zero carbon flight hubs.

Rationale

We recognise that as well as disincentivising flying we also need to provide cleaner and cheaper alternatives. TR380 makes clear the Green Party's intention to invest in low carbon ground-based transport and sustainable tourism.

Zero and low-carbon aircraft could be the future of air travel and will enable greener, cleaner and quieter flights. To make this happen, the government will regulate more polluting flights and invest in zero carbon flight start-ups to base their operations in the UK. This will encourage innovation and develop technology and talent that will benefit us across the clean tech economy.

Smaller regional and private jet airports are well placed to become zero emission flight hubs. They are less utilised so they have existing capacity rather than needing to expand large airports. They are more spread around the country to facilitate regional flights and are used to catering to smaller aircraft with lower passenger capacities. Polluting private jets need to be regulated more and phased out, so this will create a window of opportunity to transition that existing infrastructure to a new, cleaner way of flying. Private jet users are wealthy and make useful early adopters of clean flight tech to bring down costs for more widespread later use (as Tesla did with electric cars).

To be clear, the intention is to eventually replace existing flights and routes with low carbon aircraft rather than creating entirely new routes.

If some airports do become commercially unviable, the land could be returned to public ownership and utilised in ways that benefit the wider community, such as social housing or re-wilding. A transition plan for people employed at the airport would be co-created in collaboration with those workers.

TR385-386: Citizens' and Workers' engagement

TR385 The party seeks to decarbonise and transform aviation with input from the general population, particularly communities surrounding airports and flightpaths, and aviation workers (WR604, 620 and 632), for example through deliberative, participatory assemblies.

TR386 We will ensure that workers' rights and workers' health and safety are strengthened throughout the transformation of the industry. Where necessary, workers

that need to transition to other industries will be supported in doing so (IN214, IN302, IN305, IN306).

Rationale

There is a growing recognition that the future of aviation cannot be shaped by any single perspective. A collective conversation is needed: one that brings together the ambition for economic success, the pride and passion of the workforce, and the responsibility to protect communities and the environment.

While governments, policymakers, and large-scale operators shape the industrial strategy for aviation, a crucial dimension is missing: the voices of those who live and work within the system — aviation workers with deep operational insight. Their agency and engagement in decisions that influence the industry's direction are minimal. Plans for decarbonisation, expansion and operational change are one-sided: driven by institutional interests, rather than participatory processes that harness frontline expertise.

The Green Party champions and implements participatory and democratic mechanisms that enable aviation workers and citizens to envision a sustainable future for the aviation industry to shape a just and sustainable transition.

Participatory assemblies, such as Workers' and Citizens' Assemblies, provide a structured, inclusive space for the workforce and citizens to deliberate on key industry questions, such as how aviation can decarbonise while protecting jobs and communities⁴⁸. Participants are selected by sortition to reflect the diversity of the workforce and wider society, are presented with balanced evidence from experts and stakeholders, and work collaboratively to form practical, consensus-driven recommendations.

This process strengthens democratic participation within the sector and wider society, ensuring that the people most affected by industrial and environmental decisions can contribute meaningfully to shaping them. The model augments, rather than replaces, existing government and party processes — enriching them with grounded, representative insight from within the workforce itself.

Further, the Green Party is seeking to build a better relationship with high carbon workers. Workers' Assemblies and similar mechanisms are a great way to prove to these workers that whilst the Green Party wants to decarbonise the British economy, we are also on the side of workers and communities. We stand in full solidarity with workers fighting against stagnating pay, exposure to dangerous air quality and noise, and worsening terms and conditions.

The demand management policies proposed by the party may lead to some front-line job losses as flights inevitably reduce in number. Green Party policy is that workers who need to transition to other industries will be supported in doing so (IN214, IN215, IN302, IN306). Jobs in research and development (R&D) will be shifted towards nascent zero emission technology (TR381)

⁴⁸ <https://safe-landing.org/workersassemblies>

leading to rapid growth in R&D into sustainable and socially useful technology and stimulate the demand for new skills and/or training elsewhere (IN504).

The charity Possible⁴⁹, Safe Landing⁵⁰ and the Green New Deal for Gatwick⁵¹ have produced examples of what a 'Just Transition' for aviation workers could look like.

TR390-391: Air quality and noise

TR390 Whilst reducing demand for aviation and incentivising the most efficient and low-carbon aircraft will reduce noise and air pollution, more measures are needed.

TR391 Air quality and noise impacts will be reduced by aircraft and airport electrification, and stricter airport regulations and night curfews. We will also negotiate for stricter international engine standards at ICAO.

Rationale

Aviation causes significant local air-quality and health impacts, particularly around airports, through emissions during landing and take-off, ground operations, and associated surface transport⁵². These emissions include nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, which contribute to respiratory and cardiovascular illness, as well as noise pollution that damages wellbeing and quality of life for airport workers and nearby communities.

Reducing demand for aviation through the above taxation methods would reduce the number of flights out of airports and therefore reduce noise and air pollution. Future zero and low-carbon aircraft will be quieter and emit less particulate matter. However, more measures are needed.

We propose that the industry should therefore be required to strengthen action on air quality and noise through stricter international engine standards, airport electrification, and stricter airport regulations (such as Auxiliary Power Unit usage and single-engine taxi).

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d30896202a18c0001b49180/t/61fab1fc6d428a739662a7c0/1643819535463/The+Right+Track+for+Green+Jobs.pdf>

⁵⁰ <https://safe-landing.org/just-transition-workers-assemblies/>

⁵¹ <https://www.greennewdealuk.org/updates/a-green-new-deal-for-gatwick/>

⁵² <https://www.transportenvironment.org/articles/ultrafine-particles-from-planes-put-52-million-europeans-at-risk-of-serious-health-conditions>

TR393: Surface access

TR393 We will ensure that as high a proportion of journeys as possible to and from airports are made using sustainable public transport.

TR394 We will require all major airports to develop active travel plans to ensure that access from nearby areas by walking, wheeling and cycling is safe and convenient, focused mainly on travel by workers.

Rationale

A significant proportion of the carbon emissions associated with air travel relates to travel to and from airports by passengers, workers (both land- and air-side) and freight. Increasing the proportion of trips by public transport will help to reduce the impact of car trips and the demand for new road construction.

Shifting workers' commutes to public transport is especially important for reducing emissions and reducing the financial cost to workers of commuting. These need to take account of issues such as shift patterns.

Surface access strategies should ensure equivalent accessibility and continuity of assistance for disabled passengers across all transport modes.

TR395: Accessibility

TR395 Elected Greens will work with disability groups to improve disabled access in aviation (DY701, TR501).

Rationale

The UK's current aviation rules leave millions of disabled passengers without reliable, dignified access to air travel, with no enforceable service standards, no meaningful penalties for poor treatment, and no legal protections for essential mobility equipment. Despite years of guidance, disabled travellers still face long waits for assistance, inaccessible airport and aircraft infrastructure, frequent damage to mobility aids, and inconsistent support across airports and airlines.

Groups like *Rights on Flights*⁵³ have proposed the Assisted Air Travel Act⁵⁴, which provides the modern, enforceable framework that is currently missing: clear accessibility requirements, strict response times, proper training, transparent reporting, robust protection for mobility aids, and—crucially—real enforcement powers and compensation mechanisms. It offers Parliament a

⁵³ <https://rightsonflights.com/>

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64aa626672b4c340045a6112/t/65096924ab9bc86dc2b8eb0e/1695115558522/AssistedAirTravelAct.pdf>

practical, sector-supported route to end systemic failures and ensure disabled people can travel with the same safety, independence and dignity as everyone else.

The Green Party will work with groups like *Rights on Flights* and *All Wheels Up*⁵⁵ to make sure disabled people's voices are central to any disability policy (DY702).

Global negotiation and policy

TR398 The Green Party will campaign for the UK Government, the European Union and the relevant international bodies to create a global decarbonisation and demand management strategy for air travel, considering global equity.

Rationale

It is essential for the UK Government to campaign for a coordinated global decarbonisation and demand management strategy for air travel because aviation is an inherently international activity whose emissions cannot be effectively mitigated through national measures alone. A unified approach—developed jointly by the UK, the EU, and relevant international bodies—would ensure consistent carbon pricing, sustainable aviation fuel standards, and equitable demand management across borders.

Global equity must underpin this strategy: high-income countries, which account for most aviation emissions, should lead in reducing demand and financing cleaner technologies, while lower-income nations must retain fair access to air connectivity vital for development. Such cooperation would prevent carbon leakage, align climate ambition with fairness, and secure a just transition for the global aviation workforce and travellers alike.

In the meantime, the UK can position itself as global leaders in progressive aviation decarbonisation policy and zero carbon business and innovation.

⁵⁵ <https://www.allwheelsup.org/>