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'Greenwashing' Councillor hits out at airport carbon neutral claims

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BRISTOL Airport has announced plans to be carbon neutral by the end of the year.

But a prominent Green Party councillor has accused the airport of 'greenwashing'.

Bristol Airport announced it would achieve being a carbon neutral airport four years ahead of schedule and that it would also be the UK's first net zero airport by 2030, which is 20 years before the Government's own target.

Bristol Airport has said its plans go further than making the airport net zero and, for instance, is expanding public transport and making buses zero emissions while supporting aviation to decarbonise through a new £250,000 innovation fund.

However, a Green Party councillor in Bristol has criticised the airport for its 'net zero' claims.

Carla Denyer, councillor for Clifton Down, said: "Bristol Airport's claims are an utter nonsense and a cynical form greenwashing.

"Of course any work to improve

the airport's climate targets are welcome, but to brand yourself as a 'net zero airport' without including flights, car parking or journeys to and from the airport is highly misleading.

"The environmental impact of aviation is well documented but is something they seem unwilling or unable to talk about.

"It's not only the flights they seem to want to pretend aren't happening, but also the car parking operation that remains central to their business model.

"An estimated 87.5% of passengers arrive at the airport by car and the airport profits massively from this - which is why they are so keen to concrete over green fields to grow this car parking operation."

Bristol Airport has committed to be a "net zero airfield, with net zero buildings and operate a net zero fleet of vehicles".

In 2019, the airport introduced a scheme to offset all passenger journeys to and from the airport by road, purchasing offsets retrospectively based on an annual passenger survey showing the different modes of travel used by passen-



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gers. asyJet - which operates more than 50 per cent of flights to and from Bristol Airport - became the first major airline to offset carbon emissions from fuel used by its aircraft at the end of 2018.

A carbon offset refers to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions - or an increase in carbon storage (for instance, through the planting of trees) - used to compensate for emissions that occur elsewhere.

Bristol Airport has appealed against a decision by North Somerset Council to reject its expansion plans which would see passenger numbers grow from 10 million to

12 million a year.

A public inquiry is due to be held in mid July.

In a statement, Bristol Airport said: "We aim to be the UK's first net zero airport by 2030, 20 years ahead of the Government's target date.

"Achieving this will mean a new fleet of zero emission vehicles at the airport, updating our buildings, and making best use of renewable energy.

"Our plan is to go further than making just the airport net zero - expanding public transport, making buses zero emissions, and supporting our customers who drive to

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