

Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Committee
House of Commons

By email

12 October 2021

Dear Mr Merriman,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Transport Committee in September about the recovery of UK aviation.

Following a question during the session, I am writing to provide further information about easyJet's support for the development of new technology to decarbonise aviation.

We believe that the action needed to address aviation's impact on climate change will only be achieved through a collaborative approach. We are working closely with companies developing new aviation technology and we are committed to transitioning to these technologies as soon as they become viable. The role that we play, which is critical during the current development phase, is our partnerships with other companies to provide an airline's perspective. To ensure that operational and commercial parameters are built into designs, which will make it easier for airlines to transition to these new technologies.

In 2019 we established a joint research project with Airbus about hybrid-electric and hydrogen aircraft. This is looking at the operational and infrastructure opportunities and challenges with new propulsion technologies. Last year Airbus unveiled three hydrogen-powered concept planes, using either a modified gas-turbine engine running on hydrogen combustion or hydrogen fuel cells to create electrical power and run electrical engines. Airbus' intention is to launch the ZEROe aircraft programme with a full-scale prototype by late 2020s and for entry into service by 2035.

We are also working with Wright Electric, a US company who are developing the Wright 1, a single-aisle aircraft capable of covering a distance of around 1200 km, which would include many key city pairs like London to Belfast, Paris and Amsterdam. Wright Electric is targeting 2030 as the earliest date for entry into service

As well as the manufacturers developing new technology, we are also working on the other aspects of aviation that have a carbon impact with our airport partners. This year we have formed a partnership with Bristol Airport to trial a range of initiatives to support the airport's ambition for net-zero operations and contribute towards reducing our own overall carbon footprint. We will be using the airport as a testbed to trial and implement new ways of operating, such as the use of electric ground power units (rather than use of aircraft engines) and electric passenger coach transport.

We will also later this month be beginning a trial with Gatwick Airport to use Sustainable Aviation Fuels in some easyJet flights. This is the first time that any airline at Gatwick has used SAFs and is a step towards extending the use of this fuel at the airport. SAFs will be part of the decarbonisation pathway for aviation as and when they become more widely available and affordable. Though for short haul aviation we believe we can then go further through the development of new technology, such as hydrogen propulsion.

In the meantime, we continue to purchase the latest aircraft technology that is available today. In 2017 we began operating the Airbus A320 Neo family aircraft, which are 15% more fuel efficient than previous generation aircraft. We are the largest operator of Neo aircraft in Europe and these next generation aircraft now make up 16% of our fleet. In our new financial year, which began at the start of this month, we will take delivery of a further eight new Neo aircraft. We have also taken many actions across our operations to further reduce fuel burn, such as taxiing using a single engine and using lighter passenger seats.

Finally, on every single flight we operate we offset the carbon from the fuel used, by investing in certified projects that include the planting of trees or protecting against deforestation and renewable energy projects. All this comes at no additional cost to our customers. This is an interim measure while new technologies are developed, however at the moment we believe it's one of the best ways we can take action now.

I hope this further information is help to you and the Committee. If you have any further questions please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Dekkers
Chief Commercial Officer