

Press Release - 4 April 2008

BAA WILL BE BEATEN ON SECOND RUNWAY PLANS

BAA's plans to build a second runway at Stansted Airport WILL be beaten. That was the unanimous and resounding message from speakers at a rally at the Rhodes Centre, Bishop's Stortford, organised by Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) this week (Wednesday 2 April).

A capacity audience witnessed an impressive show of the scale of opposition to BAA's plans from politicians of all parties and every one of the UK's leading environmental groups. The convergence of so many powerful and influential organisations and individuals sends a clear message to BAA and the present Government that they face an impossible task in seeking planning permission for a second Stansted runway.

In his opening address, SSE Chairman **Peter Sanders** warned that the capacity throughput of 68 million passengers a year quoted by BAA was in reality 85 million passengers a year, based on BAA's own projections. Quoting Inspector Graham Eyre at the 1980's public inquiry into Stansted expansion proposals, he told the audience that such a monster cannot and must not be inflicted on this landscape. "Yet," he continued, "this is the monster that BAA wants to let loose. The loss of what is priceless and irreplaceable cannot be mitigated. What can you put onto the scales to cancel out an environmental disaster?"

Lord Hanningfield, leader of Essex County Council and Transport Spokesman for the Conservatives in the House of Lords pledged to do everything possible to stop airport expansion at Stansted: "We'll put all the resources and efforts needed into stopping it. There is no scope for such an enormous amount of infrastructure in North Essex and no economic justification for such expansion. We will fight to the very last breath."

Hertfordshire County Council's Deputy Leader **Cllr David Lloyd** warned that "If we lose this time, we'll lose again and again. We know we are seeing an environmental disaster in slow motion. We mustn't be fooled by the application. A third runway is what BAA has in mind." He stressed his belief that "We'll win because our arguments are right. Predict and provide is discredited. The mood is changing and that is what will win it for us."

Cllr Jackie Cheetham, Deputy Leader of Uttlesford District Council, told the meeting: "Uttlesford District Council is clear that a second runway will bring catastrophic change to the character of our beautiful rural landscape. Anyone who has visited Heathrow will be aware of what could happen should this plan ever become a reality."

Anita Goldsmith, climate campaigner from Greenpeace, said: "Climate change is the biggest threat we face, and it's already happening, it is already taking lives." She criticised BAA for its attempt to portray aviation as "the much maligned and misunderstood fall guy."

Ed Pomfret, Woodland Trust, spoke about the vast tracts of ancient woodland that would be lost: "Once lost, we can't get it back. BAA is suggesting new woodland be planted but they are trying to replace the irreplaceable. It's like going into the British Museum, smashing up the exhibits and then offering a few paper models as replacements."

Chris White, leader of the Liberal Democrats on the East of England Regional Assembly paraphrased Bill Clinton's famous phrase - "It's the economy, stupid" saying that, in the case of Stansted, "It's the environment, stupid."

Douglas Kent, for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings described the Air Transport White Paper and planning application as "a national scandal which would devastate the unique architectural heritage of the area and compromise 128 listed buildings within a one mile radius of the airport. The destruction of historic buildings would be the biggest single act of vandalism since the Second World War."

Keith Turner for the National Trust, confirmed the NT's outright opposition to a second runway at Stansted on the grounds of damage to air quality, climate change impacts and the impact on Hatfield Forest.

Geraldine Nicholson from the Stop Heathrow Expansion campaign spoke about the experience of the local community around Heathrow over the past 20 years and warned against ever accepting BAA's promises "If BAA gets its way with this application it will be licking its lips and will come back for more." She drew encouragement from the fact that the government is now facing what is becoming the biggest coalition against airport expansion. "We're not alone anymore," she said, "We will fight and we will win and we will do it together."

Closing the meeting, **Sir Alan Haselhurst** said: "The proceedings can be summed up in a simple three word message: NO, NO, NO to a second runway. Let the drumbeat of resistance sound. The organisation of SSE is

strengthening. Support at Westminster has emerged. We are determined our voice will be heard. We can and we will prevail."

The rally also heard from **Lawrence Wragg**, Chair, CPRE East of England and Chair of the CPRE National Aviation Advisory Group, **Baroness McIntosh** of Hudnall and **Mary Edwards**, Friends of the Earth.

Messages of support were read from MPs and MEPs including Shadow Aviation Minister Julian Brazier MP and Liberal Democrat Transport Spokesman Norman Baker, Harlow MP Bill Rammell (Labour), Colchester MP Bob Russell (Liberal Democrat), MEPs Andrew Duff (Liberal Democrat), Dr Caroline Lucas (Green Party) and (Conservatives) Geoffrey van Orden, Christopher Beazley and Suffolk South MP Tim Yeo who is also Chair of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. Oliver Heald MP (North East Herts) was also present.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS

The full list of speakers at the rally is as follows. Further quotes in addition to those above are available on request:

Chair: Mark Prisk MP (Hertford & Stortford)
Peter Sanders, Chairman, Stop Stansted Expansion
Geraldine Nicholson, Stop Heathrow Expansion (No Third Runway Action Group)
Cllr Jackie Cheetham, Deputy Leader, Uttlesford District Council
Lawrence Wragg, Chair, CPRE East of England and Chair of the CPRE National Aviation Advisory Group
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
The Lord Hanningfield, Leader, Essex County Council and Conservative Transport Spokesman, House of Lords
Anita Goldsmith, Greenpeace
Cllr David Lloyd, Deputy Leader, Herts County Council
Mary Edwards, Friends of the Earth
Ed Pomfret, The Woodland Trust
Cllr Alan Dean, Uttlesford District Council (reading messages of support from Bob Russell MP (Colchester) and Norman Baker MP, Liberal Democrat Transport Spokesman)
Cllr Chris White, Herts County Council, Liberal Democrat Leader on EERA
Douglas Kent, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
Keith Turner, The National Trust
Carol Barbone, Campaign Director, Stop Stansted Expansion
Sir Alan Haselhurst MP (Saffron Walden)