

Press Release - 21 July 2008

COMMUNITY AGAIN TO THE FORE IN FIGHTING SECOND RUNWAY PLANS

In an unprecedented move, the Government has started the clock running for a Public Inquiry on BAA's plans for a second Stansted runway before the outcome is known of BAA's 2006 planning application for unlimited passenger throughput on the existing Stansted runway. This earlier BAA planning application was considered last year at a Public Inquiry which ended on 19 October 2007 and now - some nine months later - the Government has still not announced a decision.

Commenting on this controversial news, SSE Campaign Director Carol Barbone said: "It beggars belief that the Government has decided to move the process forward on BAA's second planning application before it has even decided BAA's first application - all the more so because BAA's application for a second runway assumes permission for its earlier application has been approved. The Government is now proceeding on the same basis."

Nevertheless, SSE is confident that the airport operator's plans for a second runway will be soundly defeated at the Public Inquiry - just as two previous Public Inquiries and a Royal Commission over the last 40 years have all ruled out additional runways on environmental grounds. In addition, when the new terminal was approved in the mid-1980s the Government 'unreservedly' accepted the recommendation of the independent Inspector that there should never be a second runway at Stansted.

On each occasion, the community mobilised to oppose the plans and SSE is determined that once again a mass of economic and environmental evidence will be presented at Public Inquiry to demonstrate the reasons why this latest application should also be turned down.

A key part of the campaign is to encourage responses to the application to Uttlesford District Council and SSE has produced guidance on key points about the application and where to write, [accessible here](#) or from the Campaign Office on 01279 870558. The Council has received over a thousand letters of opposition to date with many more expected to follow before the end of September.

SSE Campaign Director Carol Barbone said: "While Stop Stansted Expansion will again present evidence to the Public Inquiry, largely focusing on the technical detail of the application, it is the individual responses from members of the public which will best describe the madness of the proposal to make Stansted bigger than today's Heathrow and indeed bigger than any other airport in Europe. These personal accounts make a powerful impact in giving a clear view of what we stand to lose if BAA's plans go ahead and we urge everyone to make their views known in as much or as little detail as they choose."

It has always been Stansted's unique rural location, in unspoilt countryside on the border between North West Essex and East Herts, which has convinced previous public inquiries that a second runway would be wholly unacceptable from an environmental standpoint. Climate change has now been added to the environmental case against major airport expansion; if BAA's planning application were to be approved, it would lead to the equivalent of an additional 11 million tonnes of CO2 emissions each year.

Some 800 hectares of land would be required for the airport site and related applications beyond its perimeter, crippling communities by destroying homes and heritage including historic buildings, vast tracts of unspoilt countryside and ancient woodlands. The effect would be devastating for those living up to 70 miles away across Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire with almost triple the current number of planes overflying the region.

At ground level, damaging ripple effects would be felt across the region. Road and rail congestion, air pollution and urbanization would create significant issues for the four counties and the scale of the development would radically alter local quality of life. Meanwhile, the climate change impacts from some 500,000 aircraft envisaged for Stansted by 2030 would counter the efforts being made elsewhere to reduce carbon impacts in other sectors.

The decision to 'call in' the BAA's plans for Stansted Airport was announced today in letters sent by the Government Office for the East of England to the local planning authority, Uttlesford District Council, which has been responsible for processing the application since its receipt in mid-March, and to BAA.

The Public Inquiry is expected to start in early 2009 and take around twelve months, followed by the submission of the Inspector's report to the Government, with a final decision unlikely before 2011.

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