

Press Release - 16 September 2008

SSE WELCOMES WATCHDOG CALLS FOR AIRPORT EXPANSION TO BE PUT ON HOLD

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) has strongly welcomed a repeated call today [16 September] for decisions on major airport expansion to be put on hold until there has been a full independent review of the Government's 2003 Air Transport White Paper.

The recommendation has been made by the Government's own environmental watchdog, the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in a study entitled "Contested Evidence: The case for an independent review of aviation policy." This follows up on its May 2008 Report "Breaking the Holding Pattern" and puts the Government under increased pressure to review its plans for new runways at Stansted and Heathrow." It concludes:

- * "The context itself has changed markedly since the 2003 Air Transport White Paper was produced. Climate change science has advanced significantly, and the Stern Review has framed the debate on the economic case for early action."
- * "The Climate Change Act will set carbon budgets... If the 2050 target is increased to a reduction of 80% compared to 1990 levels then, on the basis of those projections, aviation would account for over 70% of UK emissions."
- * "The economic downturn and soaring fuel prices have hit the number of business and leisure flights, and public attitudes to flying are more ambivalent..."

The report's authors believe that the risks of decisions in favour of expansion outweigh the possible benefits as long as the outcomes of political decisions on climate change remain uncertain and while there is controversy between different stakeholder groups.

SSE Campaign Director Carol Barbone commented: "The Government is becoming ever more isolated in clinging to the airport expansion plans set down in the 2003 Air Transport White Paper. This was written in an era when oil was \$25 a barrel, when Stansted was growing at 20 per cent a year and when BAA was a successful UK company. The world has changed dramatically since then and Government policy must also change."

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