

**SCRAP RUNWAY PLANS NOW RATHER THAN PROLONG THE BLIGHT**

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) has called on BAA to withdraw its second runway plans as issues over the future ownership of Stansted Airport threaten to drag on for years, prolonging the blight and uncertainty for the local community.

The call comes in the wake of today's Competition Appeal Tribunal (CAT) ruling which upheld one of the grounds of BAA's appeal relating to apparent bias on the part of the Competition Commission in reaching its decision that BAA must sell three of its airports, including Stansted. The CAT was at pains to emphasise that there was no suggestion of actual bias by the Competition Commission but that it had to abide by the maxim that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done.

The CAT ruled against BAA's second ground of appeal, namely, that the timetable laid down by the Competition Commission for the sale of the three airports was too short. The CAT considered there was no merit in BAA's arguments on this point.

In terms of the way forward the CAT has said it is for the Competition Commission and BAA to agree this but that if no agreement can be reached the CAT will hear further arguments from both sides before making a decision. One distinct possibility is that the whole Competition Commission inquiry into BAA's monopoly would have to be re-run, a process which could take two years.

It remains to be seen how the Government will decide to deal with the second runway public inquiry having previously put this on hold until the uncertainty about the future ownership of Stansted was resolved.

SSE Campaign Director Carol Barbone commented: "Today's ruling has the potential to blight this local community for many more years despite the fact that the case for a second Stansted runway is dead in the water. BAA should face up to this now and end the uncertainty by announcing the cancellation of its second runway plans."

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Competition Appeal Tribunal judgment is [available online](#).