

Press Release - 8 March 2010

YET MORE DELAY ON SECOND RUNWAY: WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS

It could be another two years before a Public Inquiry into a second Stansted runway is held, the Government has been told.

The news came in a letter from BAA to Communities Minister John Denham, copied to SSE. The airport operator told the Secretary of State that it would need 12 to 18 months to update its March 2008 planning application and that it could not realistically begin this until there is an end to the present uncertainty about the future ownership of the airport. That of itself could also take well over a year, meaning a further delay of between two and three years before any Public Inquiry could even start to consider BAA's second runway planning application.

The Public Inquiry to consider BAA's March 2008 planning application for a second runway was originally due to start in April last year. BAA is now indicating that it could not start until 2012 or even 2013.

If the Public Inquiry does not start until 2013, it would be 2015 before a final decision could be announced, meaning that local residents and businesses who received compulsory purchase notifications from BAA in March 2008 would have endured seven years of blight and uncertainty before the final outcome was known. In reality, the blight on local communities in East Hertfordshire and North Essex began in July 2002 when the Government first published its proposals for making Stansted bigger than Heathrow.

SSE has repeatedly called on BAA to withdraw its application and thereby allow local communities to return to some form of normality. However, BAA clearly sees some commercial advantage in trying to keep its second runway application on life support, pending an upturn in the market, a more favourable political climate or simply as a possible means of obtaining a higher price for Stansted in the event of a forced sale.

Commenting on the news, SSE Chairman Peter Sanders said: "BAA's response to the Secretary of State shows an appalling disregard for the local community. We have lived under the threat of a second runway for almost eight years now. The only honourable course open to BAA is to withdraw its applications and to give a clear and unequivocal statement that it will not be making new applications for a project which creates blight without any real prospect of success."

He added: "With the support of our community, we will continue our campaign to prevent the catastrophic damage that would be caused by expansion at Stansted for as long as it takes - whoever the owner."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

The letter from BAA's Infrastructure and Sustainability Director, Mike Forster, to John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, can be [viewed here](#).