

1. Stansted expansion decision:

10th October 2008. As you will probably have seen in the news yesterday, the Government has decided to give permission for another 10 million passengers per year at Stansted, on the existing runway. This is a truly dreadful decision.

It is the outcome of the Public Inquiry that took place last year - and is a very delayed decision. The increase will amount to approximately 120 more flights per day. There is much more on the SSE website at: <http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com>

The consultation period for the application for a second runway at Stansted ended on 26th September, and the Public Inquiry on it is due to start on 15th April 2009. The Public Inquiry is expected to take around 12 months, followed by the submission of the Inspector's report to the Government, with a final decision unlikely before 2011.

Stop Stansted Expansion - who have put up an incredible fight over many years, and will continue to do so tirelessly - put out a statement on the decision. The **Woodland Trust**, which has been campaigning very actively on Stansted expansion, have also put out a statement. So has **HACAN**. All are below.

AirportWatch has made a statement too. We said:

Press Statement

AirportWatch, the umbrella body which consists of national environmental organisations and local airport campaign groups, has condemned the Government's decision to allow expansion at Stansted Airport. The decision, which will cause immense damage to the local community, borders on the farcical. The Government has argued that the impact on climate change was not relevant when making its decision to permit the expansion at a time when aviation is the fastest-growing contributor to global warming emissions! All the AirportWatch organisations will be supporting Stop Stansted Expansion in the continued fight to reverse this ludicrous decision.

The Government's outdated policy on aviation was further exposed when, less than 12 hours before the Stansted decision was announced, the Labour dominated Newham Council gave permission for a 50% increase in flights at London's City Airport.

2. London City Airport:



On Wednesday October 8th, Newham Council decided to give consent for expansion of flight numbers by 50%. Local opponents have campaigned very actively on this, and are not giving up.

A flash mob assembled outside the Town Hall before the meeting.

Story at:

[Uprou as Newham Council gives go-ahead to City Airport Expansion](#) including BBC video clip.

3. Join us at the Climate Rush on Parliament on Monday 13th October at 5.30pm in Parliament Square:



To commemorate the centenary of the Rush on Parliament by the Suffragettes, another Rush has been organised by new Suffragettes, this coming Monday. In the wake of yesterday's announcement on Stansted expansion, you might like to join us to show the Government your disapproval of the plans for the airport at an event outside the Houses of Parliament, in Parliament Square, this Monday at 5.30pm for about an hour. Nearest tube is Westminster.

Take part in the rally, listen to the speeches (Caroline Lucas, Rosie Boycott, Joy Greasley, Baroness Jenny Tonge and more), and present Gordon Brown with the latest climate research, and our demands - **including for NO airport expansion**. You can wear Edwardian type clothes - or just white. Men are welcome too and children, so it is not entirely an all-female occasion. [Details](#)

4. Coventry Airport expansion appeal was rejected:

The good news was that a High Court judge in London rejected the airport's appeal over its proposal to build a new passenger terminal. The airport had challenged the government's decision to block the expansion, which would have doubled passenger numbers to two million each year. [Details.](#)

5. Aviation emissions set to be left out of key UK climate policy - AEF press release:

The Government-appointed Committee on Climate Change announced earlier this week that the UK target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions needs to increase from 60% by 2050 to at least 80%. This should include the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions. However, the Committee said aviation and shipping emissions should be left out of the five-yearly budgets in the Climate Bill, that will apply to other UK sectors - so aviation can grow as long as some other sector makes cuts in emissions on its behalf.

The AEF (Aviation Environment Federation) - AirportWatch's parent organisation - put out a press release on the dottiness of this:

[Aviation emissions set to be left out of key UK climate policy](#) 7.10.2008

6. Flash mob at Labour Party Conference in Manchester



on 23rd September.

Details and photo at [Manchester 'Flash mob' protest over airport](#)

[Stansted Airport expansion statements from SSE, HACAN and the Woodland Trust:](#)

[Stop Stansted Expansion \(SSE\)](#)

"PREDICTABLE, CYNICAL AND UNJUSTIFIED" - says SSE in response to Government's approval for an extra 10 million passengers a year at Stansted

9.10.2008 (Stop Stansted Expansion Press Release)

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) has described today's decision by the Government to approve an increase in Stansted's permitted passenger throughput from 25 million passengers per annum (mppa) to 35mppa as entirely predictable, cynical and unjustified.

However, the campaign group is warning BAA and its Spanish owners Ferrovial not to assume the matter is settled since initial readings of the Inspector's report and Government decision letter indicate that there may well be scope for legal challenge. SSE has already referred the matter to its legal advisors.

The decision has taken a year to emerge from Whitehall following a Public Inquiry held between May and October 2007 to consider BAA's appeal against a refusal from the local planning authority for intensifying the use of the Stansted runway. Since then, BAA has submitted another planning application, this time for a second runway at Stansted which would make the airport bigger than Heathrow.

Commenting on the decision, SSE Chairman Peter Sanders said: "Given the Government's gung ho approach to airport expansion, we always knew that the dice were loaded in favour of BAA, not least since the Government wouldn't want to see the policies set down in its Air Transport White Paper fall at the first hurdle. Nevertheless, it beggars belief that there has been such a cynical disregard for the evidence presented to last year's Inquiry. BAA failed to bring forward any direct evidence even to support an economic case for its application. Today's decision is wholly unjustified on the basis of the evidence."

"However," he added, "the Government's determination to approve this application could prove be its undoing. The flaws in the process and the rationale given by the Government in reaching its decision may well provide scope for challenge. That is why we are seeking advice from our legal advisors. We have six weeks to decide whether to appeal."

Apart from the cynical manner in which the Government has approved the extra 10mppa, there is enormous cynicism in the decision itself. Aviation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions and yet the Government claims global leadership in combating climate change. "This exposes the Government's climate change rhetoric as entirely hollow," said Mr Sanders.

There is one piece of good news for local residents in the conditions imposed upon BAA as part of the approval. The Inspector has taken on board SSE's recommendation for a reduction in the number of 'non commercial' flights at Stansted. Last year there were a staggering 17,000 such flights mostly involving noisy business jets and the repositioning of aircraft at night. A limit of 10,000 will apply in future.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1) Background:

The decision to allow an additional 10mppa at Stansted comes 2½ years after BAA submitted a planning application to the local planning authority, Uttlesford District Council, (UDC) for unlimited passenger throughput on the existing runway. UDC refused the application in November 2006 leading to the setting up of a Public Inquiry which sat from May to October 2008. Just prior to the start of the Inquiry BAA changed its position and offered to accept a 35mppa limit.

2) Documents:

Today's decision was made jointly by the Secretary of State for Transport (Geoff Hoon) and the Secretary of State for Communities (Hazel Blears). The decision letter and Inspector's Report are available for download at www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/airports/decisionletters/stansted.

3) Second runway proposal:

BAA submitted another (much bigger) planning application in March 2008 for a second runway at Stansted. A Public Inquiry is due to start in April 2009 to consider this. The Inquiry is expected to take at least 12 months and it is estimated that it will take a further 6-9 months for the Inspector to submit his report to the Government. A final decision is not likely to be made until 2011 or even 2012.

4) Current level of business:

Passenger traffic at Stansted continues to fall sharply. The airport is likely to handle about 22.4m passengers this year compared to 23.8m passengers last year – a 6 per cent fall. It therefore seems unlikely that increasing its permitted throughput from 25mppa to 35mppa will make any difference in the short term. Indeed, with the recent dramatic deterioration in the economic situation – both domestically and internationally – we are entering uncharted territory with regard to the future demand for air travel.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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The Woodland Trust comment:

The new Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon has wasted little time in making his contribution to the [incoherent Government approach to climate change](#) and environmental protection. Today Mr Hoon and Hazel Blears, Communities Secretary, have approved BAA's plans to [increase the cap in passenger numbers at Stansted Airport](#).

This is an odd move given that the Government's advisors on climate change raised concerns [earlier this week](#) about the climate change impacts of aviation. It sounds like the climate change issue doesn't apply to the Department for Transport. Indeed there is one standout sentence in the [decision letter](#), paragraph 23 where it actually states:

"The Secretaries of State note that neither the Planning Bill nor Climate Change Bill have been enacted, and afford them little weight, as they might be subject to change. "

The Climate Change Bill may well be subject to change but it won't be in a way which makes it OK to continue to ignore the need for emissions reductions - it will be, if anything, more stringent in its targets. The idea of affording the Government's climate change policy which is being pursued through the climate change bill "little weight" is bizarre.

It's worth remembering that one of the reasons Uttlesford District Council initially turned down the planning application was due to the impacts on climate change - the local council understood the conflicts with climate change policy, but the Transport Secretary doesn't. Perhaps Mr Hoon hasn't quite grasped the urgency of addressing climate change or perhaps his head has been turned by a flawed economic argument, but whatever the reason this is a bad move environmentally.

Aside from the climate change impacts, we're concerned that this gives BAA encouragement to press ahead with its other planning application for a new second runway at the airport - a second runway which would destroy five irreplaceable ancient woods. The plans to expand permitted passenger numbers simply increases the pressure on decision makers to roll over and let BAA go ahead with its destructive plans for a second runway. This will all come to a head at a public inquiry next year and anyone who cares about climate change and environmental protection will have to be ready to make their voices heard then.

You can read all the documents relating to the Inspector's conclusions and the decision letter here <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/airports/decisionletters/stansted/>

The HACAN Comment:

Following today's announcement (1) by Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon granting permission for BAA to increase the number of flights on the existing runway at Stansted:

John Stewart, the Chair of HACAN, the Heathrow Campaign, said, "we stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Stansted in opposing airport expansion." He added "I'd love to know who Geoff Hoon banks with. He seems oblivious to the credit crunch."

(1). The Government today backed plans to allow the expansion of Stansted Airport to handle an extra 10 million passengers a year. Transport Secretary Geoff Hoon granted permission for the airport to increase the number of flights from 241,000 to 264,000 and raise the number of passengers from 25 million to 35 million. He made the announcement, changing Stansted's planning conditions, in a written statement to Parliament. Planning permission for the expansion was originally refused on grounds of noise and environmental concerns by Uttlesford District Council in November 2006. But the Government today overruled the council following an appeal by airport operator BAA which was heard at a Public Inquiry last year.