



PRESS RELEASE

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Airport development plans out of date on climate change says new report - campaigners call for council to delay expansion

The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign (SBAE) is calling for North Somerset Council to delay expansion of Bristol International Airport (BIA) following findings from a new independent report, which says that BIA's current Master Plan is out of date on climate change for expansion and needs updating.

SBAE spokesman Jeremy Birch said: "This report has identified flaws in the climate change section of the airport's Master Plan, which indicates that it hasn't covered the ground correctly and is out of date on Government policy and the latest findings on climate change.

"We are calling on North Somerset to vote to delay any ruling on the airport's plans until the recommended adjustments have been made, when they debate on the airport's plans at tomorrow's full council meeting."

The report was commissioned by North Somerset Council itself and was prepared by environmental specialists from the Parsons Brinckerhoff consultancy. It details flaws in the climate change section of BIA's Master Plan for expansion and shows that it has not taken account of recent significant developments on climate change and government policy. The report concludes by recommending that the Master Plan be updated on climate change.

The latest government policy and climate change developments referred to in the report are last December's review of the Air Transport White Paper (ATWP PR), the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, EU announcements on emissions trading and the decision by Uttlesford District Council to refuse planning permission for further expansion at Stansted Airport.

Uttlesford's decision is significant because, not only was this first time ever that climate change has been listed as a reason to turn down a planning application, but it also challenges the use of government policy as a background for local decisions on airport expansion, particularly in relation to climate change.

The new report also highlights how the government's policy on aviation now says that major decisions on airport expansion should take into account the impact of aviation on the wider climate, alongside local environmental effects.

“The report suggests that Government policy expects local planners to take some responsibility on aviation emissions into their own hands by imposing caps or physical constraints to expansion,” says Jeremy Birch.

“In recent weeks the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed how human activities have affected global warming, leading to melting glaciers, rises in sea levels and extreme weather conditions. We now know that even if no more greenhouse gases were ever pumped out, these effects will still continue for centuries. In the meantime, aviation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

“In this context we are calling for North Somerset to follow Uttlesford’s lead in considering climate change, alongside local concerns such as increased traffic congestion and increased noise for local communities, as grounds for constraining the development of Bristol airport.

“Given the importance of climate change as a global issue and the bulk of evidence that shows the limited time left for all sectors to cut their emissions, we actually believe there is a sound case for halting the airport’s expansion altogether.”

North Somerset Council will be finalising their views on BIA’s Master Plan at a full council meeting on Tuesday 20 February, 6pm, Weston-super-Mare Town Hall. The meeting is open to the public.

ENDS

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For more information visit: www.stopbia.com