



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 JULY 2007

Airport poised to go way over targets for passenger numbers

The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion group (SBAE) has responded strongly to airport boss Paul Kehoe's move to re-appraise BIA's expansion plans, emphasising that while such a review is welcome, the airport must be transparent about the real rise in volume of airport passengers in the next few years, and must genuinely take into consideration the impact of their plans on local communities and the environment.

SBAE want BIA to acknowledge the real degree of expansion that local people can expect as passenger numbers have soared by an annual rate of 10% per year since 2001, double the national level of airport expansion elsewhere in the UK.

This level of growth will see passenger numbers rise to 9 million long before 2015, the date BIA's Master Plan outlines, say campaigners, especially as the new Ryanair flights are likely to increase numbers by another million from this autumn.

SBAE is now questioning whether the airport will stop at 9 million passengers per year, saying that the inclusion of 12 new aircraft stands indicate that the target of 12.5 million passengers a year could be reached far earlier than the publicised 2030 date.

SBAE spokesperson Hilary Burn said: "We do not believe that BIA are being transparent about their timetable for expansion as every indication suggests that the target of 9 million passengers will be reached long before 2015, and 12.5 million long before 2030.

"The rapid growth which is already taking place means that BIA is likely to exceed its own predictions for growth as laid out in its Master Plan.

"The projected increase in flights movements at 9 million passengers will mean 17 flights an hour, that's one every 3.5 minutes, 16 hours a day. Local communities will have to live with this frequency of disturbance, plus more traffic on unsuitable roads through small villages and picturesque countryside.

"The airport is also situated in the Green Belt and plans to build a new car park on 12.5 hectares of agricultural grassland. This will be visible for miles around including from the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

"Just how far will the airport go to increase its profits at the expense of local people and the environment?"

SBAE's latest opposition comes hard on the heels of Macclesfield Borough Council's rejection last week of Manchester airport's bid to expand into green belt land. Plans at Coventry airport have also recently been kicked out due to inadequate road and rail access, while expansion at Stansted is currently being challenged by a high profile public enquiry.

ENDS

For media enquiries and more information, contact Susan Pearson on: 07891 460942

For more information on Stop Bristol Airport Expansion, visit: www.stopbia.com

Notes

Six times more tourists fly out of Bristol than fly in, creating a loss to the South West of over £60 million in tourist revenue each year.

Less than 20% of passengers using BIA are business travellers.
