



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**15 May 2008**

## **Council demands full planning process for proposed airport 'walkway'**

Campaigners fighting expansion at Bristol airport (BIA) are celebrating a major victory today (Thursday) following last night's unanimous decision by North Somerset Council (NSC) to demand that the airport's plans for a controversial 'walkway' are submitted as a full planning application and that an environmental impact assessment be considered.

The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion group (SBAE) said that the councillors' decision was crucial to allow full scrutiny of BIA's plans which appear as an attempt to 'expand by stealth' by hiding a development that could allow more flights and passengers under 'permitted development.'

Councillors at the South Area Committee meeting unanimously rejected BIA's 'permitted development' consultation. They gave concerns such as 'size, bulk and scope' and the effect of increased noise on children at nearby Felton school, saying that it was essential that they could put conditions on any such development.

They warned BIA that they had made a major PR blunder by attempting to bypass the planning process for a development of this scale, antagonising both the public and the council.

The meeting also voted to re-examine the issue of whether a full environmental impact assessment (EIA) should be required. Parish councillors have asked the Secretary of State to review the need for an EIA.

SBAE spokesman Hilary Burn said: "This decision is a great victory. Councillors did not buy the line that the 'walkway' was crucial to BIA's current operation and would not facilitate an increase in flights and passengers.

"If you look at BIA's plans you can see that using permitted development rules for this development would be like building a house in your back garden and calling it a shed!

"Our determination to challenge BIA has been vindicated by the community's elected representatives. They have taken a courageous step in the face of enormous pressure.

"Expanding Bristol Airport will cause increasing misery for the communities surrounding it as noise and traffic congestion increase. A full environmental impact assessment for any large new development is essential. Aviation is also the fastest growing source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We all now know how urgent it is to halt climate change – we need to stop expanding airports"

**ENDS**

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

For more information on SBAE, visit: [www.stopbia.com](http://www.stopbia.com)

## Notes

SBAE solicitors have advised that:

1) "...the proposed development is ....a significant part of the airport's expansion plans and .....does not benefit from permitted development rights, as the BIA Master Plan acknowledges."

BIA have claimed that the proposal benefits from permitted development rights under Part 18 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

Part 18 A.1 of the Order does not however permit development which consists of, or includes;

- the extension or alteration of a passenger terminal, where the floorspace of the building as existing at 5 December 1988 or, if built after that date, of the building as built, would be exceeded by more than 15%

Planning permission is therefore required for the proposal.

The BIA Master Plan itself accepts the need for planning permission for further extensions to the terminal building:

2) The construction of, or modifications to, airports must be subject to EIA [Environmental Impact Assessment] before development consent if the environmental effects of the development are likely to be significant (*EIA Regulations: Regulations 2(1),3 and Schedules 1 and 2. Case C-435/97 WWF and Dozen*)

"The cumulative effect of separate expansion projects at the airport must be specifically considered in determining the likely environment effects of the proposal (*Schedule 3 to the EIA Regulations (Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development)* Moreover, as this development is specifically mentioned in the Master Plan, this must be considered part of the planned expansion of the airport and should be covered by environmental and other assessments associated with that whole expansion package."

Government guidance makes clear that the increased activity from what might otherwise be considered a relatively small extension to an airport can generate significant environmental effects.