



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 September 2008

Campaigners welcome watchdog calls for airport expansion to be put on hold

The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign (SBAE) has strongly welcomed a repeated call today [16 September] for decisions on major airport expansion to be put on hold until there has been a full independent review of the Government's 2003 Air Transport White Paper.

The recommendation has been made by the Government's own environmental watchdog, the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in a study entitled "Contested Evidence: The case for an independent review of aviation policy." This follows up on its May 2008 Report "Breaking the Holding Pattern" and puts the Government under increased pressure to review its plans for airport expansion around the country. It concludes:

- "The context itself has changed markedly since the 2003 Air Transport White Paper was produced. Climate change science has advanced significantly, and the Stern Review has framed the debate on the economic case for early action."
- "The Climate Change Act will set carbon budgets... If the 2050 target is increased to a reduction of 80% compared to 1990 levels then, on the basis of those projections, aviation would account for over 70% of UK emissions."
- "The economic downturn and soaring fuel prices have hit the number of business and leisure flights, and public attitudes to flying are more ambivalent..."

The report's authors believe that the risks of decisions in favour of expansion outweigh the possible benefits as long as the outcomes of political decisions on climate change remain uncertain and while there is controversy between different stakeholder groups.

SBAE spokesperson Hilary Burn commented: "The Government is becoming ever more isolated in clinging to the airport expansion plans set down in the 2003 Air Transport White Paper, yet the world has changed dramatically since then.

"Locally, Bristol airport has failed to recognise the new realities required to move to a low carbon economy and is pushing ahead with ever more ambitious expansion plans. Climate change is a global issue that urgently requires local, regional and national as well as global solutions."

ENDS

For media enquiries, contact Susan Pearson on: 07891 460942 or susan@wordways.co.uk

For further information on SBAE visit: www.stopbia.com

Notes for editors

The SDC paper, "Contested Evidence" was produced jointly with the IPPR (Institute of Public Policy Research) and was published on 16 September 2008. It is a follow-up to their May 2008 report "Breaking the Holding Pattern". Both reports are available on the SDC website at: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/aviation.html>.