



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Council must take cue from scientists, demand opponents of airport's expansion**

Following last week's stark warnings from scientists at the Copenhagen conference on climate change, campaigners opposing the expansion of Bristol airport are demanding that North Somerset Council (NSC) says "No" to plans which could see passenger numbers at the airport grow from the current 6.2 million to 10 million by 2016.

The 2500 scientists meeting at Copenhagen directly called on politicians to stand up to vested interests that increase greenhouse gas emissions. Only by taking such a stand could dangerous climate change be prevented.<sup>1</sup> The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion group (SBAE) said that NSC must take this message on climate change into account when it comes to consider airport's imminent planning application for massive growth.

The campaigners highlighted that emissions from flights are the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases. If all the UK's airports continue to grow according to Government projections, by 2050 they will account for 50% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.

"You cannot continue to expand airports and even begin to hope that the UK will reach its targets for cutting CO2 emissions by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. If the huge growth in this sector continues, it will outstrip all other industries – who are already taking steps to cut emissions," said SBAE spokesman Jeremy Birch.

"North Somerset's councillors must stop burying their heads in the sand and make sure they fully consider the climate change implications when they debate the airport's plans. The scientists' data show that sea level rises will severely impact on Weston-super-Mare and much of North Somerset by the end of the century<sup>2</sup> – climate change will be very relevant to us locally."

Addressing the councillors directly, he said: "It may seem that the amount of emissions you can prevent by blocking the airport's expansion are small on a global scale – but you can and must take power in your local patch. The scientists' message from Copenhagen is clear – there is no excuse for inaction to help avert abrupt or irreversible shifts in climate and that politicians must stand up to big business and vested interests."

He went on to point out that Lord Stern, the World Bank chief economist whose 2006 report on the economics of climate change highlighted the severe economic consequences of ignoring climate change, told the conference that unless politicians grasped the gravity of the situation it would be "devastating."

Stern's conclusions are very clear, he said. Our solutions to the current economic meltdown must be sustainable – we must not rely on massive growth from what is fast becoming the UK's most polluting sector.

Jeremy Birch concluded: "We recognise that Bristol airport provides international links for local business and we are not trying to shut it down. But expansion caters for a growth in outbound tourism, which is of no benefit to local businesses or the environment."

## **ENDS**

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

### Notes for editors

1. For further information on the Copenhagen conference on climate change, and full text of the key messages from the conference visit:

[http://climatecongress.ku.dk/newsroom/congress\\_key\\_messages/](http://climatecongress.ku.dk/newsroom/congress_key_messages/)

2. See Environment Agency flood risk map for WsM here:

<http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController#x=332081&y=161141&lg=1,&scale=4>