



PRESS STATEMENT

16 October 2009

Councillors opposed to airport development on Green Belt

Councillors at last night's West Area committee meeting expressed strong opposition to any plans by Bristol Airport to extend its car parks onto Green Belt land as part of its proposed expansion.

They also called for improved infrastructure and new transport links to be in place before the airport's expansion goes ahead, echoing the grave concern of North and Central Area committees last week that the area's already overloaded road system is completely inadequate to absorb the increase in traffic caused by expanding the airport.

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion (SBAE) has welcomed the councillors' recognition of these concerns.

However, SBAE spokesman Jeremy Birch also said: "Although councillors were keen to realise the benefits of any extra jobs from the airport's expansion, we believe the actual number of jobs that will be available is being misrepresented.

"The question that really needs to be asked: since the airport has already quadrupled in size since 1997, what real benefits in terms of jobs and the economy has Weston-super-Mare seen so far? Has the airport's already huge growth helped Weston to boom?

"We believe that the airport's previous growth has had a negligible impact on employment for Weston residents. There is no reason to believe that the airport's further expansion will be any better. Significantly, as the airport's passenger numbers have dropped by 10% on average against last year's levels, Weston has enjoyed a 'bumper' summer this year and visitors to local tourist attractions have increased by around 10% [1].

ENDS

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Notes

[1] North Somerset Tourist board