



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**1 March 2010**

## **Campaigners call for postponement on airport decision**

Campaigners have called for a delay in Wednesday's decision on Bristol International Airport's (BIA) major expansion plans because of a change in recommendations from North Somerset Council (NSC) on night flights.

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion (SBAE) said that NSC's South Area Meeting cannot make a decision at this point because proposed conditions on noise from night flights have suddenly introduced new changes to the night noise quota system<sup>1,2,3</sup> without any consultation with the public. These changes also go against widely documented promises from BIA not to change the basis of the night noise quota system.<sup>4</sup>

The campaigners said they were in doubt about the transparency of NSC's decision-making process and that the implications of the changes on night flights introduced in NSC officer's recommendations require a new consultation with the public and a new environmental statement.

They also said there were further reasons to defer the decision because the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Carbon Management plan have not been made available in time for the public to view and comment and that the staff travel plan for all employees on BIA's site is still incomplete.

Spokesperson Hilary Burn said:

"North Somerset Council has always assured us that the process for determining this application would be transparent – yet this doesn't appear to be the case. They have suddenly introduced a significant change to the night noise quota system which could have major implications for how much noise from night flights will be suffered by local residents.

"A decision on Wednesday would be premature as the report containing the details of council officers' recommended conditions includes errors. It is essential that District Councillors are supplied with all the correct information and can see a record of BIA's obligations to mitigate the impact of the development before they can make a fully informed decision.

"We are calling on NSC to defer the decision and go back to the drawing board to propose acceptable conditions on noise which can first be seen by the public. NSC also needs to ensure that all information on issues such as staff travel, biodiversity and carbon management are complete.

"Our aim remains the same: to get the application turned down or capped at 8 million passengers a year until road improvements are made, the bus rapid transit is up and running and carbon emissions from planes have been reduced in line with December 2009's Committee on Climate Change report."

There will be a *peaceful gathering* of those opposing Bristol Airport's plans for a press photo at 5.30pm this Wednesday, 3 March, in front of Weston-super-Mare Town Hall.

## ENDS

For media enquiries contact Susan Pearson on: 07891 460942 or Hilary Burn on: 07854 444609.

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

### Notes

[1] Night flights are controlled by a noise "quota system" which allocates a total number of points depending on the plane type and whether it is arriving or departing. The latest jets are allocated fewer points than the older noisier planes.

A new jet that is only 3dB (decibels) quieter than older models could have its quota points halved from two to one, allowing twice as many flights within the same points total.

However, this does not allow for the way the human ear perceives noise – it takes a drop of 10dB for a person to hear a noise as half as loud. A drop of 3dB is almost imperceptible.

[2] The proposed conditions contain reference to a new 'Quota Count' of 0.25.

For example, easyJet A319s previously classified under night flight quotas at 0.5 have suddenly been re-classified at 0.25. These are the same planes, they have not suddenly become quieter, they have simply been re-classified as if they were quieter.

This introduces material which is considerably different to that within the consultation and application documents. The material is so different, and the implications are so significant, that we believe this application **cannot** be determined at the South Area meeting on 3 March.

The impact on night flights requires a new consultation with the public. Furthermore, the condition is contrary to the Statement of Community Involvement and would require a new Environmental Impact Statement.

[3] The present night quota system, set out in the Planning Support Statement, Appendix B Proposed Planning Conditions, as part of the present application, obliges BIA (clause 48) to undertake public consultation before seeking a review of the quota system:

- (b) Before seeking any review of the quotas or any aspect of the night restrictions under paragraph (a) the airport manager shall consult on this matter in accordance with section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 and shall place the views of those consulted before the local planning authority and the local planning authority shall take those views into account in reaching their decision on the outcome of the review.

This safeguard is **entirely absent** from the *proposed conditions* presented to the NSC South Area Committee

[4] In its current planning application, BIA has repeated its Master Plan statement that it **would not seek revision to increase the present night quota**. The present night quota system was set out in the *Planning Support Statement, Appendix B Proposed Planning Conditions* as part of the present application.

Noise Classification	Quota Count
Less than 90 EPNdB	0.5
90 – 92.9 EPNdB	1
93 - 95.9 EPNdB	2
96 - 98.9 EPNdB	4
99 – 101.9 EPNdB	8
Greater than 101.9 EPNdB	16

However the NSC officers have proposed conditions (no.35 (b) (ii)) which indicate a different relationship

Noise Classification	Quota Count
Less than 84 EPNdB	0
<b>84- 86.9 EPNdB</b>	<b>0.25</b>
87-89.9 EPNdB	0.5
90 – 92.9 EPNdB	1
93 - 95.9 EPNdB	2
96 - 98.9 EPNdB	4
99 – 101.9 EPNdB	8
Greater than 101.9 EPNdB	16

BIA has vehemently denied, both orally and in writing, that it had any intention of introducing the 0.25 QC band. For example on 14 October there appeared on the NSC Public Access website, a pdf file of a nine page letter (dated 7.x.09) from the Planning and Environment Director of BIA in which he "reviews" the PCAA Submission to the planning application and in section 2.5 of his appendix clearly states: *"The new quota count of 0.25 which applies to aircraft with a noise classification of between 84 and 86.9 EPNdB at the London airports are rated at a quota count of 0.5 at BIA"*

Further, similar statements can be viewed in the BIA Master Plan document e.g. point 8.63 *BIA is prepared to accept a suitably worded condition attached to a planning approval of future development related to night flying. As part of this BIA would propose that the current restrictions remain in place until 2015.*

Alan Davies, of BIA, has explicitly denied any intention of introducing the 0.25 QC band, both orally and in writing. For example, a BIA document from the B&NES website states that: *"Our proposal is to retain the condition as currently applied so technical changes to the Secretary of State's regulation of the London Airports do not affect Bristol. In particular the provisions for a quota count 0.25 do not apply here"* [source: Bristol International Airport – Outline Planning Application for Development and Enhancement of the Airport (NSC reference: 09/P/1020/OT2). Comments on the observations provided to B&NES Council by the Parish Councils' Airport Association.]

BIA planning presentation from July 2009 shows the QC system starts at 0.5 for 90dB.  
<http://www.bristolairport.co.uk/about-us/our-future/~media/files/brs-airport/content/planning-presentation-july-2009.ashx>

The Noise Action Plan consultation 2010-2015, which finished in December 2009, had no reference to the new classification of new quota bands. In fact it states on P16 *"We have proposed that the quota count system would remain unchanged in the recently submitted planning application for the development of the airport"*.

There is no doubt that these changes have not been consulted on.