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Ms Maria Eagle
Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

By email

Dear Ms Eagle

Labour Transport Policy Review

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) was established in 2002 in response to the Labour Government's consultation on the future provision of air transport capacity. We have been active since that time in opposing the resulting air transport policy, enshrined in the 2003 Future of Air Transport White Paper. We represent over 7,500 members and supporters including 150 parish and town councils, residents' associations, environmental groups and other organisations.

We welcome your invitation to contribute to the second stage of the Labour Transport Policy Review. This letter and two attached reports on (i) social mobility and (ii) aviation, jobs and the UK economy, represent our formal submission to the consultation.

The first of these papers examines the alleged democratisation of air travel and the 'benefit' of cheap flights in terms of the social mobility it has brought to air travel. It demonstrates that despite the rise of the low cost carriers (who predominate at Stansted) and despite the increase of air travel in absolute terms, the socio-economic and income characteristics of UK leisure travellers have barely changed over the last 15 years.

The second paper challenges the assumption that the expansion of air travel is automatically good for the economy and good for UK jobs – something which clearly does not apply in the case of Stansted because of its passenger profile.

Given that the Government's revised air passenger forecasts and response to the Climate Change Committee's report on UK aviation have both been delayed, we reserve the right to make a further contribution once these appear, given the bearing that they will have on the policy review in terms of predicted demand and climate change implications from aviation emissions.

Where are we now?

The last nine years have taken a heavy toll on a wide community around Stansted in terms of the blight which plans for a second runway have cast. Despite the withdrawal by BAA of its second runway planning application in May 2010 after the Coalition Government rescinded policy support given by the previous Government, this blight remains. The most tangible fear results from BAA's refusal to sell any of the 80 'second runway' zone homes (out of a total portfolio of more than 300) bought up in anticipation of the planning approval which it was confident of securing from a Labour government. The concern is that the airport operator is holding onto the properties in order to safeguard

Patron: Terry Waite CBE

Stop Stansted Expansion is a working group of the North West Essex and East Herts Preservation Association

them for a future date when it hopes that expansion plans will be looked on more favourably by another administration.

Since the withdrawal of the second runway planning application in May 2010, SSE has been calling for BAA to sell back all the homes and other properties it acquired in connection with its expansion plans, offering the original owners first refusal, followed by existing tenants. Sales of the properties within the perimeter would be a symbol of BAA's good faith and would instil some confidence that we can start to rebuild our community. Yet it is not for want of potential buyers. SSE is aware of tenants and former owners who have approached BAA to request that they be allowed to buy some of the properties. On each occasion, they have been rebuffed by BAA.

On four separate occasions in the past 50 years¹ the local community around Stansted has been threatened by proposals to make Stansted bigger than Heathrow. On each of these occasions the community has ultimately been able to defeat the threat but only to find that similar proposals are resurrected a decade or so later. We believe this is profoundly unfair and that it is time to bring an end to the blight and uncertainty. Accordingly, SSE maintains that BAA and any future owner of Stansted should be prohibited from building a second runway at Stansted for at least 50 years – either by voluntary agreement with the local authority or imposed by government.

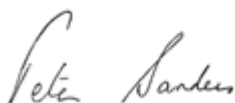
Going forward

Stansted Airport currently has permission to expand to a throughput of 35m passengers per annum (with a theoretical capacity of up to 50m), although it is handling only 18m passengers at present, down from its 2007 peak of 24m. The lack of any real change in the social profile of those using the airport and the detrimental effect which growth of the airport would have in terms of the Balance of Payments should be taken into account when assessing policy on Stansted's future role. Furthermore, in view of the climate change impact of aviation, as well as its impact upon the local environment and communities, our view is that the expansion of air travel and airports must be contained within truly sustainable limits. Accordingly, our position is that:

- (i) The Labour policy, set down in the 2003 'Future of Air Transport' White Paper supporting new runways at Heathrow and Stansted airports, should be abandoned
- (ii) No new runway should be permitted at Stansted, enshrined in a moratorium
- (iii) In view of the importance of having a stable long term airports policy, the UK's three main political parties should be encouraged to reach tripartite agreement.

I hope this is helpful. We would be happy to meet with you or your colleagues to participate further in your transport review should you wish to explore further.

Yours sincerely



Peter Sanders
Chairman

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¹ See Timeline on the SSE website at www.stopstanstedexpansion.com/timeline.html.