

Annual Review 2014



Introduction

As 2014 began, the very welcome news that Stansted was not on the Airports Commission's shortlist for an additional runway, announced just prior to Christmas, was still sinking in. We did however recognise that, although the spotlight was now on Heathrow and Gatwick, we were not entirely out of the woods.

The Airports Commission would not be producing its final report until the summer of 2015, just after the next General Election, and there was always the possibility that the Commission's views might change. Moreover, the Commission was only advisory and it would be down to the next Government to make the final decisions. A further concern was that the Commission had indicated that its final report might also make a preliminary recommendation for another additional runway in the South East or the Midlands during the period 2030-2050 and that Stansted could be a candidate for this.

It was however very clear, right from the start of 2014, that the runway capacity debate would now focus very largely on Heathrow and Gatwick for the next 18 months at least. It was time for SSE to adopt a low profile and whilst keeping closely in touch with every aspect of the work of the Airports Commission and its political context, this was a time for SSE's campaigning to become more subdued. Thus, 2014 has largely been a year of watching and waiting.

January 2014

- * By early January the SSE Calendar has, once again, completely sold out.
- * SSE hosts a debriefing seminar for local District Councillors and Parish and Town Councils to discuss the implications of the Airports Commission's interim report.
- * MAG announces annual traffic figures for Stansted showing a throughput of 17.8 million passengers in 2013, an increase of 400,000 (2.2%) on 2012. The number of commercial flights in 2013 was 132,200, just 800 (0.6%) more than the previous year. By comparison, in its peak year (2007) Stansted handled 23.8 million passengers and 191,500 flights.
- * Responding to a Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on night flying restrictions, SSE calls for Government action to gradually phase out all night flights at Stansted.

February 2014

- * SSE makes its ninth evidence submission to the Airports Commission, responding to the Commission's consultation on its Draft Appraisal Framework.
- * SSE responds to a Department for Transport ('DfT') consultation on Airport Consultative Committees. SSE has a seat on the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee ('STACC') and, in responding to this DfT consultation, SSE's main plea is for ACCs to be made fully independent (including financially independent) of the airport operator.

March 2014

- * SSE attends Airports Commission seminar to discuss the Commission's work to date, the rationale behind its Interim Report and its programme of work for the next 12-15 months.
- * Ryanair announces a significant expansion of its operations at Stansted which will take its market share at Stansted to around 80%. SSE expresses concern on the ground of 'too many eggs in one basket' and also criticises Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary for his wildly exaggerated claim of an extra 2,000 jobs.

April 2014

- * SSE is shocked and saddened by the death of Chris Bennett, one of its founder members and its former expert on aircraft noise. Chris was a leading member of SSE's 2007 Public Inquiry team and made an outstanding contribution to SSE over the years.
- * British Airways World Cargo, which had operated 3 very large Boeing 747 freighters from Stansted for many years - by day and night - decides to cease its operations at Stansted.

* At the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee ('STACC'), SSE again raises the issue of the airport's ongoing ownership of some 270 properties around the airport - acquired in connection with the plans for a second Stansted runway. SSE continues to press MAG for a timetable for these homes to be returned to private ownership.

May 2014

* The night noise relief arising from the ending of British Airways World Cargo flights at Stansted is short-lived as Manston Airport suddenly closes and its two remaining cargo airlines decide to transfer their operations to Stansted.

June 2014

* Airports Commission publishes discussion on improving the utilisation of the UK's existing airport capacity. In view of the potential implications for Stansted, SSE starts work on preparing its response to the Commission.

* NATS launches a consultation on changing the use of the existing departure routes from Stansted, proposing a doubling of day-time easterly departures and the phasing out of day-time southerly departures. NATS claims there will be net environmental benefits but SSE urges caution, insisting that there must be clear and compelling benefits for local residents before any changes are implemented.

July 2014

* SSE makes its tenth evidence submission to the Airports Commission, providing a detailed response - very much focused on issues relating to Stansted - to the Commission's discussion paper on improving the utilisation of the UK's existing airport capacity.

August 2014

* Having carefully weighed the potential benefits and disbenefits of NATS' proposed changes to the operation of Stansted departure routes, SSE concludes that there would be a net adverse impact on the local community and so calls upon NATS to postpone any changes until they can be assessed in the context of the major airspace redesign planned by NATS for 2018/19.

September 2014

* SSE campaign trailer has no shortage of visitors at the Woodfest weekend in Hatfield Forest - just one of the many outings for the SSE trailer and its support team at local festivals, fêtes and shows in 2014.

* MAG publishes its draft 'Sustainable Development Plan' for Stansted setting out its long term expansion proposals for Stansted based on maximum use of the existing runway.

* SSE attends the Labour and Tory party conferences so as to keep closely in touch with the political debate on new runway capacity for the south east and also to maintain its links with key politicians, political journalists and leading figures in the aviation industry.

October 2014

* SSE attends the Liberal Democrat party conference and is active in lobbying for no change to the Lib Dem policy of opposing a second Stansted runway. A motion had been put forward which would have softened the party's opposition to expansion at Stansted. Fortunately this motion was defeated by a vote on the floor of the Conference Hall.

* Launch of the SSE Community Calendar 2015 - the thirteenth year that the SSE Calendar has been produced. Apart from actual printing costs, it is produced and sold entirely by volunteers, with all proceeds going to help fund the SSE campaign.

November 2014

* SSE responds to the consultation on MAG's draft Sustainable Development Plan for Stansted making 15 key recommendations for improving Stansted's sustainability.

* Despite overwhelming local opposition, NATS announces its intention to seek Civil Aviation Authority approval to implement its proposed changes to the operation of Stansted departure routes. NATS received over 400 responses to its consultation, 82% of which opposed the proposed changes.

* SSE commemorates the tenth anniversary of the SSE Wood at Broxted Hill Farm with a

ceremony at the Wood where a tenth anniversary tree is planted by SSE Chairman Peter Sanders who also reads out a message of support from SSE Patron Terry Waite.

December 2014

* SSE meets with economists from the Airports Commission and Department for Transport to discuss the Commission's methodology for assessing the economic costs and benefits of airport expansion.

Stop Stansted Expansion

January 2015