

Press Release - 17 March 2008

STORM FORCE OF OPPOSITION LINES UP TO CHALLENGE BAA PLANS

A storm force of opposition to BAA's plans for an airport bigger than Heathrow at Stansted is being lined up as Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) prepares to stage a major rally on Wednesday 2 April in Bishop's Stortford.

The event, to be held at the Rhodes Centre, South Road at 8pm, will be an important opportunity for the community and its allies to reaffirm commitment to fighting the airport expansion proposals which would have far-reaching implications.

Chaired by Hertford and Stortford MP Mark Prisk, SSE speakers Peter Sanders (Chairman) and Carol Barbone (Campaign Director) will be joined at the rally by Parliamentarians and peers, council leaders and representatives of special interest and environmental groups.

To date, some 15 speakers have confirmed that they will be attending to vocalize their opposition to BAA's plans, including the Conservative Shadow Aviation Minister Julian Brazier MP, Labour peer Baroness McIntosh, Christopher Beazley MEP, Lord Hanningfield and Caroline Lucas MEP. The National Trust, Woodland Trust, CPRE and Greenpeace will also address the rally. Messages of support from Harlow MP Bill Rammell, who will be out of the country on that date, and the Liberal Democrat Transport Spokesman Norman Baker MP are also expected. Saffron Walden MP Sir Alan Haselhurst will provide the closing address.

If BAA's plans for a second runway at Stansted were to be approved it would be the UK's biggest airport development project since the Second World War. Over a thousand acres of unspoilt countryside and ancient woodlands would be bulldozed, cutting a swathe through the heritage-rich villages of Molehill Green and Broxted, but the effects of BAA's proposals would be felt across the region and beyond.

Speaking ahead of the event, SSE Campaign Director Carol Barbone said: "The level of opposition to BAA's plans is unprecedented as we prepare to fight - and overturn - its wholly unsustainable proposals."

Admission to the rally is free. A number of seats are available for advance reservation and can be obtained by contacting SSE on info@stopstanstedexpansion.com or 01279 870558.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS

The full list of acceptances to date is as follows:

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
Julian Brazier MP, Shadow Transport Minister
Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
Christopher Beazley MEP
Dr Caroline Lucas MEP
The Lord Hanningfield, Leader, Essex County Council
Cllr David Lloyd, Deputy Leader, Herts County Council
Cllr Jackie Cheetham, Deputy Leader, Uttlesford District Council
Douglas Kent, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
Lawrence Wragg, CPRE East of England
(name to be confirmed) Friends of the Earth
Anita Goldsmith, Greenpeace
Ed Pomfret, The Woodland Trust
Keith Turner, The National Trust
(name to be confirmed) Stop Heathrow Expansion

Messages of support are expected from:

Bill Rammell MP
Norman Baker MP
Tim Yeo MP
Geoffrey van Orden MEP