



PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Planning proposals mean less democracy and more climate change

The Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign (SBAE) today condemned the government's plans for reforming the planning system to speed up the building of major infrastructure projects, including airports. SBAE said the reforms would mean that local communities would be consulted less about proposals that affect them, and could also lead to an increase in carbon emissions.

The government's draft Planning White Paper, published today, contains proposals for the government to set national strategic planning guidelines. This would mean that the government would decide centrally what is in the national interest, and local communities would not be allowed to debate the major development schemes such as Bristol airport or other projects such as road building schemes when they come to public inquiry. The need for the scheme would already have been decided by Whitehall with no local input. Local authorities, such as North Somerset Council, would be left to grant themselves planning permission on major local developments, despite the concerns of local people. The Government would effectively be washing its hands of local decisions, leaving no room for further public inquiry.

The planning proposals will make it easier for the government to push through these schemes, which will lead to higher carbon emissions.

The government also proposes to set up a new government appointed planning commission to make decisions on major infrastructure projects, raising concerns that it could be stuffed full of government "cronies".

SBAE spokesperson Jeremy Birch said:

"The Government has called this a greening of the planning system, but in fact it only give the green light to more airports and motorways which will make climate change worse, and nuclear power stations which are the wrong way to reduce emissions. They are doing this to remove any right for people to object to the projects that the government has chosen, whether it is for local or wider reasons.

The reason past inquiries took a long time was because the projects were wrongly devised in the first place. With these new policies, the Government will be able to rush through bad expensive projects.

We call upon the Government to rethink this new policy and retain the best parts of the current system that allow local people and local government to influence what happens in their area."

For media enquiries contact: Susan Pearson on 07891 460942.

For further information on the Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign, visit:

www.stopbia.com

Notes to Editors

Under the new proposals, the local communities around Bristol airport would have less say about the impact of the airport's expansion scheme, which if it goes ahead as planned will increase traffic and noise for local residents, impact on an area of outstanding natural beauty, and increase North Somerset's carbon emissions.

For more information on the Planning White Paper, see the Planning Disaster website at <http://www.planningdisaster.co.uk/>.

Planning Disaster is a coalition of groups including Transport 2000, CPRE, and Friends of the Earth.