

The Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP
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Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 26^h June 03

Dear Mr Darling

Future Development of Air Transport in the UK – South East

This is the response of the London Sustainable Development Commission, appointed by the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone to advise him on sustainable development issues. The Commission's first Annual Report and its Framework, launched on 5 June, are attached.

This response concentrates on the interests of London and Londoners overall, including their economic, social and environmental interests. It does not concentrate on the interests on any specific economic sector, such as the air transport industry.

There are several aspects to this, including

- Londoners' views as both consumers of air travel and people affected by environmental damage
- London as a travel destination for business and tourism
- The interests of the diverse communities in London
- A level playing field for different forms of transport
- Curbing the contribution to global warming

While Londoners on average use air travel more than other UK residents, they also already suffer environmental degradation disproportionately as a result air travel. This includes:

- Noise and its associated health effects
- Aggravated air quality
- Loss of amenity and increased urbanisation of London's surroundings
- Road traffic growth and congestion
- More crowded public transport

In addition, climate change will have serious impacts on London, as demonstrated in the London Climate Change Partnership's report "London's warming".

London should maintain its role as a world city. Air travel which supports London's economy, such as business travel and inward tourist travel, is of more benefit to London and the country than outward leisure travel, as are journeys which help support social

and family networks. Delays due to heavy loading at airports (Heathrow in particular) can be a deterrent in the location of business.

It is not in the interests of London and Londoners for traffic which does not need to start or end in London and the immediate surroundings to be serviced by London's airports. This includes through-traffic and much leisure travel by people living outside London and its immediate surroundings.

A level playing field is needed between air travel and other forms of transport e.g. Eurostar. The pricing structure for travel needs to be undistorted and to include the full economic, social and environmental costs. We need to consider the impact of air travel on the world, especially through the increasing contribution to man made global warming.

The Government has published much background information to its consultation document. We expect that when more specific proposals are made, the Government will publish full flightpath information.

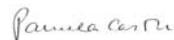
The Commission believes that the unconstrained growth of air travel is not in the long-term interest of the world, and that the case for expansion of London's airports is not proven.

If the Government comes forward with more specific proposals for the expansion of airports in the South East, the Commission will use its Sustainable Development Framework to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals and whether they are justified.

Yours sincerely



Ian Coull
Co-Chair



Pamela Castle
Co-Chair

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