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30 June 2008

The Eco-towns Team
Housing and Growth Programmes
Department for Communities and Local Government
2/H9 Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

BY EMAIL

Dear Sirs

Response to the Proposal for an Eco-town at Elsenham/Henham

Stop Stansted Expansion has repeatedly drawn attention to the threat of massive urbanisation in this area as a result of the proposed expansion of Stansted Airport.

We are neither for nor against eco-towns as such. Indeed we support the idea that if any new settlements are to be created they should be as environmentally sustainable as possible. But the sites for any such settlements must be determined on sound environmental principles as well, and the Government has made it clear that its choice of the Elsenham/Henham area is closely linked with the proposal to expand Stansted Airport, which in our view is inherently unsustainable. For this reason we view this as an airport town, not an eco-town

It seems grotesquely incongruous to us that, while trying to reduce the environmental footprints of new settlements, the Government is choosing the Elsenham/Henham area for a new eco-town because of its proximity to an airport whose proposed expansion would wreak havoc on both the local and global environment. Indeed the proposed eco-town at Elsenham/Henham, coupled with the proposed eco-town at Hanley Grange, would lead to precisely the kind of urbanisation and degradation of this beautiful and precious area of countryside of which we have warned so strongly in the past.

It must also be borne in mind that the expansion of Stansted Airport, certainly the development of a second runway, is unlikely to be approved – for reasons which we have expounded elsewhere and of which the Government is well aware. It would be irresponsible to cover a vast area of countryside with concrete for the sake of a development which will not take place.

Continued/...

Patron: Terry Waite CBE

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

There are many other factors which suggest that the Elsenham/Henham area is unsuitable for a new eco-town. We have confined ourselves to those factors relating to the proposed expansion of Stansted Airport. On these grounds alone the eco-town in the Elsenham/Henham area should be rejected.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Sanders".

Peter Sanders
Chairman

cc The Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP, Minister for Housing
The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP