

PRESS RELEASE FROM UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL LIBERAL DEMOCRAT COUNCILLORS

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**SUBJECT: "STEP UP TO THE MARK ON STANSTED EXPANSION, UTTLESFORD!",
SAYS LIB DEM LEADER**

Uttlesford's Liberal Democrat group leader, Cllr Alan Dean, says "Uttlesford must step up to the mark over airport expansion at Stansted. Its approach so far has been too laid back and opaque. UDC has given the impression that the airport's application to have 43 million passengers a year is a deal already done. The proposed uplift is almost as big as the last one 12 years ago."

The Liberal Democrats were in charge of the council in 2005/6 when the present annual passenger limit was requested. The council held a total of 30 meetings leading up to the decision to refuse that application. This included seven extraordinary meetings of the planning committee to consider technical issues such as noise, air pollution, climate change emissions, and surface transport plus economic, employment, housing and health impacts. On top of those, there were seven public hearings at which people were invited to make representations. The hearings totalled twenty-one hours and forty-five minutes (21 hours 45 minutes).

Cllr Dean said: "Last time the public was well and truly involved and was listened to. The present Conservative administration isn't taking the current application anywhere near as seriously as when the last similar application was dealt with twelve year ago. Potential economic spin-offs to the area don't excuse the relatively laid-back approach this time round. The environment also matters.

"So far only one public meeting is planned, and that's to decide whether to approve or refuse the application on July 18th. To slash 30 public council meetings over nearly two years down to one meeting of the decision-making planning committee only four months from now is shamefully inadequate. Only a superficial evaluation would be possible of what is an environmentally significant proposal. The people of Uttlesford, East Hertfordshire and beyond deserve much better."

Alan Dean added: "I met with the council's other political group leaders, Howard Rolfe for the Conservatives and John Lodge for Residents for Uttlesford, last Friday (March 16th). I set out Liberal Democrat demands for a thorough examination by the council and the public of Manchester Airport Group's proposals for Stansted Airport growth. An urgent rethink is needed." **ENDS**