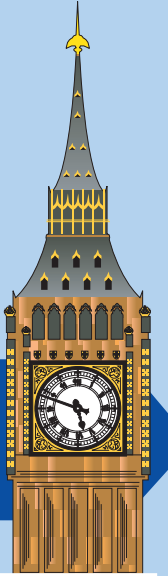




# James Duddridge MP IN TOUCH WITH ROCHFORD AND SOUTHEND EAST

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**INSIDE**

Page 2  
**RECESSION HITS  
LOCAL BUSINESS**

Page 3  
**MPs WANT  
ACCURATE CENSUS**

Page 4  
**HOW TO CONTACT  
JAMES**

# JAMES BACKS PLANS FOR AIRPORT

**SOUTHEND is already a great place to live and work, but the proposals to develop the airport are a chance for Southend to enter into a new era of prosperity and growth - an opportunity which James Duddridge MP believes is just too good to miss.**

I have given the topic of airport expansion much thought over the last few months. In the House of Commons there was extensive debate about the third runway at Heathrow,

which after careful consideration, I opposed. However, it is obviously the proposals for the development of London Southend Airport that I have taken the most interest in and I believe the expansion of the airport is a wonderful opportunity for Southend, one that needs to be grasped with both hands.

Southend's economy is heavily interwoven with tourism, and a fully functioning passenger airport would provide a major boost to the town. However, Southend cannot rely on tourism alone and the local economy is heavily influenced by the growing

business sector. The airport plays an important part in that as well and its development will further boost the attractiveness of the area as a place to live, work and do business.

It is for these reasons that businesses have also pledged support for the expansion. In a recent survey conducted by the Essex Chambers of Commerce, 80% of businesses said they support the development of the airport and when Southend Business Partnership surveyed their members, over 85% offered support for the development. In my annual business survey which I sent out to all businesses in the constituency this year, I asked whether the proposed extension of Southend Airport would have a positive effect on local businesses. 62% of the respondents thought that it would and only 13% thought it would not.

One of the most noticeable impacts of the recession has been the rising levels of unemployment - in Rochford and Southend East the number unemployed has been consistently above 3,000 for the last six months.

Without available employment jobseekers are often forced to search further afield and move away, resulting in further losses to the local economy. Not only will the expansion boost tourism and business, it will also create a large number of opportunities for employment. The airport already employs 1,300 people the expansion will create at least a further 1,000 jobs, which will directly benefit local people.

The proposed airport expansion is not solely about increasing aviation facilities in Southend. Rochford and Southend Councils have also published a Joint Area Action Plan, which details plans to invigorate and improve the airport's surrounding area, whilst creating the necessary infrastructure to serve the expanded airport. Through the Joint Area Action Plan, both councils have also committed to a new business park, offering companies the opportunity to base or relocate their offices in Southend, which would also create additional jobs.

I hope that interest in this issue continues to grow and that local people will have the opportunity to engage with the developers of the airport, the Stobart Group, in order to discuss both their legitimate concerns about the expansion and the benefits that it would bring.

## The key proposals for expansion of London Southend Airport are:

- A new airport railway station providing fast and frequent train services direct to Stratford (for Docklands and Canary Wharf) and to central London's Liverpool Street Station.
- Increasing the usable length of the runway from 1,605 to 1,799 metres, to accommodate quieter modern fuel efficient aircraft carrying between 100 and 160 passengers.
- A new terminal building, control tower and hotel.



James discussing plans for the airport with Managing Director Alistair Welch



James presents VinInvolved award to Samantha Anderson in recognition for all the volunteering she has done in the local community in Rochford



James meeting with Chelsea Pensioner Wally Hilling, who lived in Southend before moving to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea



James adds a few things to the collection for troops at Asda



James with David Amess, MP for Southend West and Mark Francois, MP for Rayleigh at the Southend Taxi Drivers' Charity Fund

[www.jamesduddridge.com](http://www.jamesduddridge.com)



## Get the 'In Touch' in Audio or Braille

If you would find it useful to receive an audio or Braille version - for yourself or a friend or relative, then please get in touch with James' office on **01702 616 135** or email [james@jamesduddridge.com](mailto:james@jamesduddridge.com).

## Have you been overpaid Tax Credits?

**JAMES is often contacted by anxious constituents who have received letters from HM Revenue and Customs saying that they have been overpaid tax credits, and are therefore required to make repayments.**

James is always happy to help any constituent in raising a dispute with the Tax Credits Office, but has found the response rate and quality of replies from the Tax Credits Office to be unsatisfactory.

James recently raised his dissatisfaction in a letter to the Minister responsible and in a debate in the House of Commons criticised the system as 'a mess' and the responses as 'poor, untimely' and 'sometimes not especially comprehensive'.

James said, "This is a really important issue for many local people and I completely understand why they get worried and stressed when they receive a letter demanding that they re-pay money. I am very concerned about the poor service that constituents receive from the Tax Credits Office and will continue to press the Government on this issue."

There are steps that you can take to avoid being saddled with overpayments of tax credits. James advises, "It is essential that the Tax Credits Office is informed of any changes to your personal circumstances which influence the amount of tax credits you receive. Once you have informed the Tax Credits Office it is vital that you check and then double check that changes in circumstances have been taken into account. Unfortunately, it is down to the recipient to make sure they have not been overpaid as the Tax Credits Office can demand a repayment even if it is an error."

If you would like any advice about Tax Credits or help with a dispute, then please do get in touch with James.

## Are you registered to vote?

**You can't vote unless you are on the electoral roll and with a General Election coming up next year it is really important to make sure you are eligible.**

**If you have access to the internet the visit [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) or alternatively call your local council to speak to someone about voter registration.**

● **Southend Borough Council:**  
**01702 215010**

● **Rochford District Council:**  
**01702 318187**



# Recession hits local business

**THIS summer, James sent out his fourth annual business survey, which this year focused on the impact of the recession on local business and on the steps the Government is taking to help small businesses.**

James wants to thank local businesses for their overwhelming response to this year's business survey. Unfortunately the results are concerning showing that many companies are being further hit by the recession. Some of the key findings from the survey were:

- **Only 5% of people said they had not been affected in some way by the recession.**
- **Over 77% of people said they had seen a decrease in business over the last 12 months.**
- **39% of businesses expect to be worse off in 12 months time.**
- **Most businesses have taken steps to make various cutbacks in recent months, with the largest percentage being trying to reduce wastage and reducing the number of full time staff and cutting back on staff working hours.**
- **When asked what the Government could do to help businesses, 33% said there should be a cut in Corporation Tax and 34% said there should be a cut in National Insurance for businesses with fewer than 5 employees.**
- **The majority of respondents also felt that the benefits of last year's cut in VAT from 17.5% down to 15% did not outweigh the disruption caused.**

Commenting on the results James said, "I am very grateful to all the local business people who took the time to fill in this year's survey. I always find the results really helpful in giving me an idea of how local businesses are faring, but it was particularly useful this year to see how local companies are doing in the recession. The results of the survey really push home the need for us to support our local businesses."

"It is concerning that the majority respondents have seen a decrease in business over the last year and many fearing that things will get worse. If any local businesses need help or advice, then please do get in touch."



James meeting with Andrew and Paul Bawden at the new Altex Showroom

# James attends launch of new business venture

**JAMES was delighted to officially open the new showroom of Altex, a local business whose latest venture specialises in renewable energy.**

James was invited to the opening of the Altex showroom by the Director Andrew Bawden, who wrote to James after completing his business survey.

James cut the ribbon at the new showroom of Altex, who manufacture and install windows, doors and

conservatories. Altex have recently invested in renewable energy and now also produce solar heating systems.

### ENCOURAGING

James said, "With many local businesses suffering in the economic

downturn, it is really encouraging to see companies investing in new ventures.

"Renewable energy is key to ensuring a low carbon economy and housing is responsible for over 25% of carbon emissions. Solar heating is a great way to make homes more energy efficient and I am delighted that local businesses are showing a commitment to renewable energy."