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## **London Luton Airport Expansion – Adequacy of Consultation Request**

Dear Siân,

I am responding on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council to your email communication of Friday 28th February 2023 regarding the above. I wish to summarise how while the consultation has been adequate, there is still significant frustration at Cambridgeshire as to the way these proposals have been developed.

The overriding concern for the County Council remains the way in which the NATS consultation was divorced entirely from the DCO application for the expansion of Luton Airport, given the extent to which one greatly informs the other. The County Council has already responded to the NATS consultation, highlighting its concerns that the proposed stack will have on the region, and in particular certain communities in South Cambridgeshire. This consultation received significant local member interest, with a response to a Written Question in a meeting of Full Council resolving to ask Executive Director of Place & Sustainability, Steve Cox, to request more detailed information from NATS and Luton Airport on how the proposals affect particular areas within the county. The County Council was disappointed to see that the response, received on 26<sup>th</sup> January, provided no further information beyond that which officers already had access to in the consultation materials, and that the specific requests for information were side lined in favour of a high level response.

The County Council has previously expressed concern at the manner in which these proposals have been consulted upon. Officers from NATS confirmed in a meeting on 8th January 2021 that Cambridgeshire County Council was not invited to stakeholder engagement sessions which informed the Stage 2a Option Appraisal process in 2019, despite other authorities in the area being asked to attend. In terms of the two options that have been presented around the holding stack at Huntingdon, the County Council would have liked to have been involved much earlier in the process to understand the alternatives for the location of this stack and how they might have delivered similar outcomes without creating local concerns for the county, especially in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire.

In a similar vein, the consultation report for the expansion of London Luton Airport refers to the establishment of “a group of wider planning officers, initially called the Technical Stakeholder Group. The group was made up of officers from the host authorities involved in the POCG, in addition to officers from the neighbouring authorities” (1.4.8). The County Council has not found any record of an invitation to this group being received. If this is the case, the County Council is frustrated that the officers were not able to inform the proposals at a critical time, and articulate concerns which are being felt locally.

It is noted that the Applicant has correctly identified Cambridgeshire County Council as a neighbouring authority to be a Section 43 consultees of the statutory consultation. To that end we can confirm we received the following on February 16<sup>th</sup> 2022:

- A Section 42 covering letter, including a link to the consultation materials and an offer to provide materials free-of-charge on USB by request
- A Consultation Feedback form, allowing the authority to provide feedback on the scheme, and means for the wider community to input into the process as well in addition to the above
- A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge)

Having had regard to Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Planning Act, I am of the view that London Luton Airport Limited has carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the provisions as set out in Sections 42, 47 and 48. However Cambridgeshire County Council remains frustrated at the way it has not been able to be more involved with the process at an earlier stage, both through the NATS consultation, and through participation in the Technical Working Group, and finds this dissatisfactory.

Kind regards,

**James Barwise**  
Consents Team Leader  
Cambridgeshire County Council