



# The Planning Inspectorate

## **The Planning Act 2008**

### **Application for Development Consent for London Luton Airport Expansion project**

**Case Ref: TR020001**

### **The Examining Authority's Note of an Unaccompanied Site Inspection**

#### **Background**

The Examining Authority ('the ExA') undertook an unaccompanied site inspection to support the examination of an application for development consent for the proposed London Luton Airport Expansion project ('the application') on **Tuesday 23 May 2023**.

The ExA carried out its unaccompanied site inspection from publicly accessible land (roads, footpaths and bridleways). No inspections were undertaken on private land, and advance permission to enter land was not required so these inspections could be undertaken on an unaccompanied basis.

The site inspection was undertaken in order to view the location of the proposed development from the surrounding area, to visit surrounding villages and areas within the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to observe background noise in the AONB and rural areas to the west, north and east of the airport, offsite highways works on the M1, Luton, the wider area and the existing highway network.

#### **Particulars of the Site Visit**

The visit was undertaken by: Jo Dowling, Richard Hunt and Andrew Robinson.

The visit was undertaken by car and on foot. Weather conditions were dry and included both cloudy and sunny intervals with temperatures between 14 and 17 degrees centigrade. Weather conditions were suitable to appreciate long range views. The airport was operating in easterly mode. During the site inspection the ExA used Flightradar24 to identify which planes were passing overhead at the various locations that they visited, when connectivity allowed.

The inspections commenced at approximately 08:45 and finished at approximately 19:15. A list of the locations visited is attached at Annex A and maps showing the walking routes are attached at Annex B.



## **Annex A: List of locations visited on Tuesday 23 May 2023**

The ExA commenced the site inspection by car on Osborne Road and turned left onto Park Street, right onto Cutenhoe Road and right onto West Hill Road and stopped to visit **Luton Hoo Memorial Park**. The ExA walked into the park to observe its character and setting (noting its location within the Luton South Conservation Area and the presence of Luton Hoo War Memorial and Bailey Hill Water Tower listed buildings), the arrival of a number of flights approaching the airport from the west and visited Assessment Viewpoint 7 [APP-094].

The ExA then drove from West Hill Road to Assessment Viewpoint 37 and the accompanying Representative Viewpoint [APP-098 and AS-040] on **Cutenhoe Road** at the junction with Seymour Road. Here, they stopped to observe views of the airport, the proposed works as annotated in the Representative Viewpoints, and witnessed a number of planes approaching to land at the airport.

The ExA then drove along Seymour Road, Seymour Avenue, Strathmore Avenue, West Hill Road then left onto London Road before turning right into **Stockwood Park** at the junction with Cutenhoe Road. The ExA stopped by the entrance to the Golf Centre to observe planes arriving from the west.

The ExA then drove from Stockwood Park to **All Saints Church** in Caddington (via London Road, Whitehill Avenue, Farley Hill and Luton Road) where the ExA sat within the church grounds to observe background noise, noise from aircraft both arriving and taking off from the airport, and the setting of the church and general character of the surrounding area.

From All Saints Church, the ExA drove to **St Andrew's Church** at Slip End (via Manor Road, Woodside Road, Mancroft Road, Markyate Road (B4540) and Church Road) and visited the church grounds to observe background noise, noting the presence of the M1, and noise from flights for both Luton Airport and at higher altitude for Stansted Airport.

The ExA then drove back along Church Road towards Slip End and turned left on to Summer Street, right onto New Street where a short stop at **Slip End Social Club** was made to observe background noise, right onto Front Street continuing straight on at the crossroads onto Grove Road before turning left to view the **Airparks** compound where the size, capacity and number of vehicles using the facility were observed.



## The Planning Inspectorate

Following the Airparks, the ExA drove to the bridge over the M1 on **Half Moon Lane** to the south east of Slip End and stood on the bridge, where the time was 10:45, to observe both noise levels and traffic volumes on the motorway and at Junction 10.

The ExA then drove to **Markyate** via Pepsal End Road, Windmill Road and Hicks Road. Enroute, a short stop was made outside Bonners Farm (on Windmill Road, which is a complex of grade II and II\* listed buildings) to observe background noise levels. After arriving at Markyate, the character of the village was observed as was the existing background noise, which included road noise from the nearby A5183.

The ExA then continued to the village of **Flamstead** (via the A5183 and Hollybush Lane) to observe its character and background noise levels. The ExA stopped at a parking area on Friendless Lane and stood on the edge of an agricultural field to observe background noise.

From Flamstead, the ExA then entered the Chiltern Hills AONB and visited **Gaddesden Row** (via Valley Lane and Beechwood Lane) and parked close to the bus stop to observe background noise of the surrounding area. The ExA then continued to **Great Gaddesden** (via Ledgemore Lane) and parked in the car park at the Garden Centre.

The ExA then turned right out of the Garden Centre's car park onto Pipers Hill and drove to **Nettleden**, turning right on to Nettleden Road and stopping to observe background noise levels, the character and appearance of the landscape, and the sight of planes to the north approaching Luton Airport. The ExA then continued northwards on Nettleden Road towards Little Gaddesden and stopped in a small car park beyond the junction with Hudnall Lane at Little Gaddesden to observe background noise and character of the area.

The ExA continued on Nettleden Road and drove to the **Ashridge Estate**, parking in the National Trust's car park accessed from the B4506. The ExA walked from the car park to Bridgewater Monument where background noise mainly from planes and birds was observed.

The ExA then exited the Estate and turned left onto the B4506, left onto Beacon Road at Ringshall and then parked at the Ivinghoe Beacon Car Park. From there, the ExA walked to **Ivinghoe Beacon** where weather conditions were cloudy with a moderate wind. The ExA observed a number of flights approaching the airport from the west and noted that the footpath leading to the Beacon is under the flight path. At the Beacon, the ExA observed background noise levels, the character and appearance



## The Planning Inspectorate

of the surrounding landscape and Assessment Viewpoint 45 [APP-099]. The walk took around 45 minutes and the route is shown in **Map A** below.

Following the walk, the ExA departed the car park and turned right onto Beacon Road, left onto the B489, left onto the B488 (leaving the AONB), right onto Westfield Road and right on Marsworth Road (B489) into the village of Pitstone. A further right turn was made into Vicarage Road where the ExA visited **St Mary's Church** and sat in the churchyard where they observed the surroundings, background noise levels and a number of planes on their approach to Luton Airport.

The ExA then drove along the B488, B489 roads and B440 roads towards Dagnal (re-entering the AONB) and stopped at the Village Hall to observe background noise levels and the character of the village. The ExA then continued along the B4506 Dunstable Road and B4540 to **Whipsnade Tree Cathedral** where the ExA parked in the National Trust Car Park and walked into the grounds of the garden to observe its character and appearance and background noise.

The ExA then continued along the B4540, turned left onto Hollicks Lane, and left onto Beech Road and stopped at the location of Assessment Viewpoint 50 and the accompanying Representative Viewpoint on **Beech Road** [APP-099 and AS-105] to observe views of the airport and aspects of the Proposed Development that would be visible as illustrated in the Representative Viewpoint.

The ExA continued along Beech Road and turned right onto the A5183, left onto Dunstable Road (exiting the AONB) through Caddington and into Luton and drove to Weybourne Drive situated in a residential area in the northern part of the town. The ExA parked on Blakeney Drive and walked on the Public Right of Way (PRoW) into the AONB to **Warden Hill** and stopped at the location of Assessment Viewpoint 1 and the accompanying Representative Viewpoint [APP-093 and AS-037] to observe views of the airport and aspects of the Proposed Development that would be visible. The ExA also observed the views from this location and planes approaching the airport. The walk took around 1 hour and the route is shown in **Map B** below where weather conditions were sunny and clear for the duration of the walk.

The ExA then drove back into Luton along the A6 and turned left on to Stockingstone Road (A5228), left onto Hitchin Road, right onto Vauxhall Way, left on to Crawley Green Road, right onto Wigmore Lane, and left onto Eaton Green Road where the ExA parked in a layby to visit the



## The Planning Inspectorate

location of **Viewpoint 11** [APP-095], which is situated where Footpath FP39 joins Eaton Green Road. The ExA observed the existing view including existing tree and hedgerow planting and the proposed works that are anticipated to be visible in this location, notably the replacement open space (proposed Work No. 5b(02)).

The ExA then proceeded towards the location of **Viewpoint 10b** [APP-094], which is situated on Darley Road a short walk from Viewpoint 11. The ExA observed views of the airport from footpath Kings Walden 041 alongside the current landscape setting with an uninterrupted view of the runway and watched a number of planes taking off and landing. Noise from planes taking off and arriving were noted. Elements of the Proposed Works that would be visible from this location, as illustrated in Representative Viewpoint 10b [AS-038], were observed by the ExA; notably the area of replacement open space (proposed Work No. 5b(02)), earthworks (proposed Work 1a), new terminal building and piers (proposed Works Nos. 3b(01) and (02) and 3c (01) and (02)), and landscape mitigation.

The ExA then made the short walk westwards along Footpath Offley 001 to observe **Viewpoint 10a** [APP-094] and the existing view of the airport from this location. The ExA observed the character of the landscape and current hedgerow and tree planting and background noise levels. The ExA noted the proposed works that are anticipated to be visible at this location.

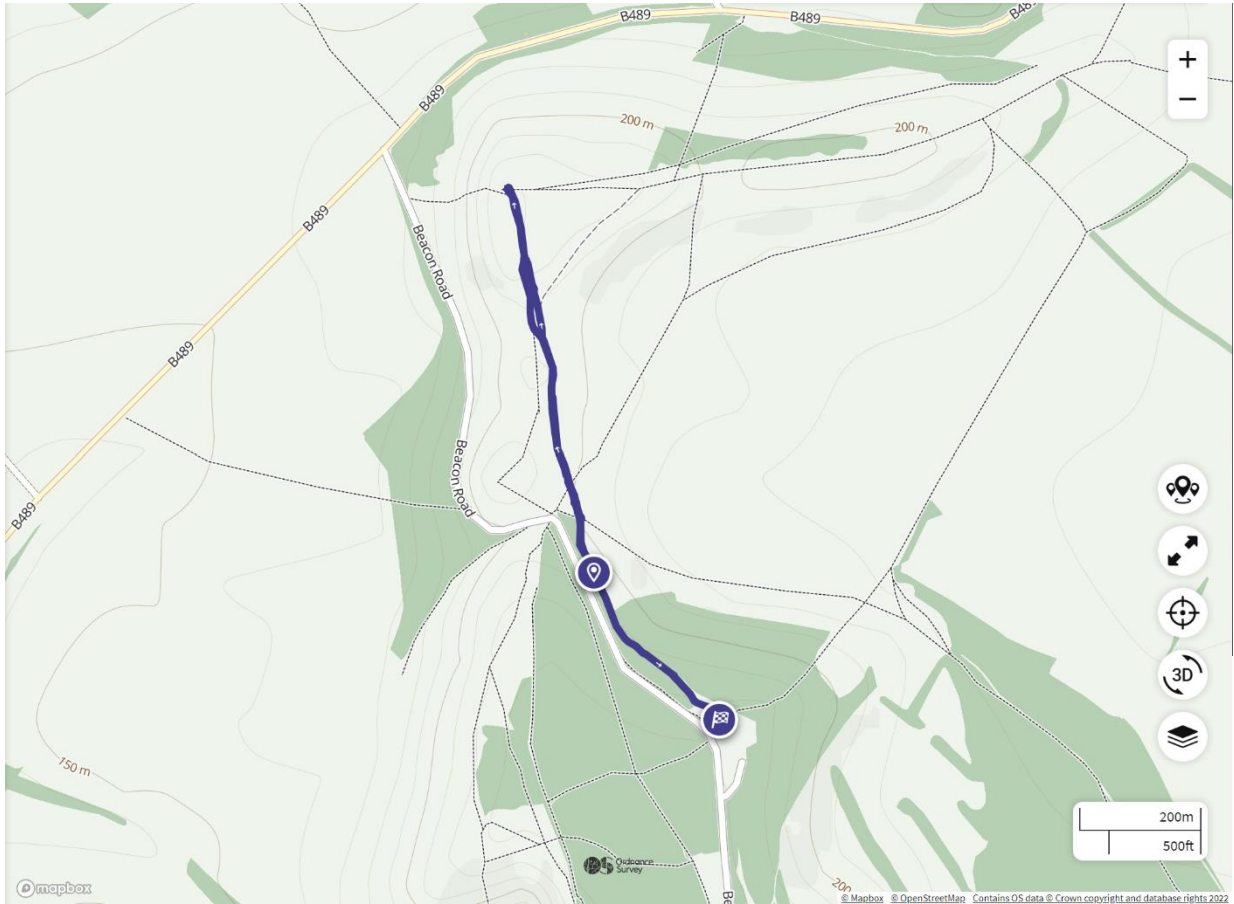
The ExA returned to the parked vehicle walking along the PRow situated in the field bounding the south-east side of Darley Road drove to Breachwood Green to observe the sound levels of planes taking off from the airport.



# The Planning Inspectorate

## Annex B: Maps of routes taken on Tuesday 23 May 2023

Map A: Ivinghoe Beacon



Map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/)



# The Planning Inspectorate

Map B: Warden Hill



Map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/)