



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 the **morning of Thursday 25 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 in the area directly surrounding the airport, Wigmore Park and the County Wildlife site, the footpath network surrounding the airport, Someries Castle and areas of proposed landscape mitigation.

Particulars of the Site Visit

The visit was undertaken by: Beth Davies, Jo Dowling, Sarah Holmes Richard Hunt and Andrew Robinson. The ExA was accompanied by Martin Almond, Operations Manager at the Planning Inspectorate.

The visit was undertaken on foot. Weather conditions were dry and mainly cloudy although included some sunny intervals with temperatures between 10 to 14 degrees centigrade. Weather conditions were at all times 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, where internet connectivity allowed.

The inspections commenced at approximately 09:30 and finished at approximately 12:30. A list of the locations visited is attached at Annex A, and an overview of the inspection route is attached at Annex B.



Annex A: List of locations visited on Thursday 25 May 2023

The site inspection commenced in the car park at **Wigmore Valley Park** and proceeded to the location of Assessment Viewpoint 13 and its associated Representative Viewpoint [APP-095 and AS-038]. The ExA observed the character and appearance of the park and views of the existing built form of the airport. The ExA noted the location of the proposed built form as described in the Assessment Viewpoint [APP-095] and illustrated in the Representative Viewpoint [AS-038], which mainly comprises the proposed new terminal building (Work No. 3b), hotel (Work No. 4a), hangers (Work No. 4b) car park P12 (Work No. 4r), and earthworks (Work No. 1a).

The ExA walked eastwards through the park and stopped at **Assessment Viewpoint 58** [APP-100] to observe views of the park and existing tree planting, the airport, and the anticipated change to the view as a result of the proposed works described within the Assessment Viewpoint.

The ExA then walked northwards through the Valley Park Orchard passing the allotments and onto Eaton Green Road to join onto **Footpath FP29**. The ExA followed the route of FP29 to the County Wildlife site passing through the area of woodland noting that this is proposed to be removed to accommodate the proposed development. The ExA stopped to observe the existing fire training ground and planes both departing and arriving and continued onto footpaths BW28, noting the existing raised embankments that form the airport apron. The ExA considered the effect of plane take off and landing on the noise environment in Wigmore Park, including the degree of intermittency in activity.

The ExA continued onto **footpath BW37** and stopped in the southern part of the field where car park P10 (Work No. 4p) is proposed. The ExA took in views mainly looking northwards over the field to observe the character and appearance of the landscape and the works proposed in this location, which would comprise surface car parks P10 and P11 (Works Nos. 4p and 4q), earthworks (Work No. 1a), a water treatment plant (Work No. 4d), fuel storage facility (Work No. 4c) and replacement open space further to the north (Work No. 5b(02)).

The site visit continued along **footpath BW37 to Winch Hill Road** where the ExA stopped under the flight path to observe the existing lighting, raised platform forming the runway and the proposed location of an Emergency Water Supply. The ExA continued walking southwards along Winch Hill Road and turned right onto Dane Street. At the junction



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with Chiltern Green Road, the ExA walked the minor road towards the perimeter fence of the airport to observe views of the airport and planes departing and arriving.

The ExA walked back along the minor road towards Chiltern Green Road and walked this road until meeting **bridleway HYDE 3A**. The ExA walked west along the bridleway and stopped at the location of **Assessment Viewpoint 27** [APP-097] to observe the character and appearance of the landscape, views towards the airport, and the anticipated change to the view as a result of the proposed works described within the Assessment Viewpoint, which mainly includes the proposed new terminal (Works Nos. 3b(01) and 3c(01)) and new airfield equipment (Work No. 2b(02)).

The ExA continued walking westerly along bridleway Hyde 3A and then footpath Hyde 5A where the current gaps in the existing hedgerow were noted and where hedgerow restoration is proposed as part of Work No. 5e. The ExA stopped at **Assessment Viewpoint 20** [APP-096] to observe the character and appearance of the landscape, views towards the airport and the proposed works that are anticipated to be seen at the viewpoint.

The ExA continued onto Footpath Hyde 4B and walked to **Somerles Castle**, which is a Scheduled Monument dating back to the 15th Century. It was noted that an information board detailing the history and features of the castle is situated at the entrance to the castle grounds. The ExA walked into the grounds to observe the remains of the asset where attention was paid to the setting of the castle, the condition of the brickwork, the presence of buildings and structures situated to the north and east and background noise. The ExA observed Assessment Viewpoint 24 and the associated Representative Viewpoint [APP-096 and AS-039] taken within the castle grounds noting views towards the airport and tree planting that exists, the presence of Somerles Farmhouse, and elements of the Proposed Development likely to be visible.

The ExA then observed **Assessment Viewpoint 23** and the accompanying Representative Viewpoint [APP-096 and AS-039] which is taken looking in a north easterly direction and noted the location of a compound associated with the adjoining business in relation to this view.

The ExA then continued walking westerly along Footpath Hyde 4B and stopped to observe **Assessment Viewpoint 21 followed by Assessment Viewpoint 22** located further to the west [APP-096], taking in views towards the airport where the runway, airport tower, hangers



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and multi-storey car parks were all noticeable features. The anticipated change to the views through the proposed airport works that would likely be visible from these locations were noted. The ExA noted the undulating topography of the landscape in this location, particularly as a result of the platform forming the runway and slopes of agricultural land to the south.

The ExA then walked westerly through the field towards the railway passing residential properties at Someries Arch and walked through the tunnel under the railway line and completed the visit.



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Annex B: Map of route taken on the morning of 25 May 2023



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