

I would like to strongly object to this application by Luton Airport to increase passenger numbers to 32 million a year and the related other measures.

Because -

It would be seriously damaging to local quality of life and the health of many communities.

I & my family live in Sandridge. Luton's flight path to the east has been created to directly overfly this formerly peaceful village and the nearby area of Jersey Farm. Although we are some 14 miles from the end of the runway, flights are low and extremely noisy. At busy periods planes pass over at 3 or 4 minute intervals. They have to be low, we are told, because of conflict with flights from other airports. As well as early morning and late-night flights, there are noisy over-night freight flights. There are 3 schools and a large care home in the village. Luton's application contains no proposal for flight path changes (e.g., getting aircraft higher sooner, respite alternative routes) or any recognition that they are currently damaging to the quality of life of many communities like this one. For anyone living where we do, the idea of 70+% more aircraft noise overhead is horrific. Subjecting large numbers of people to regular loud noise in the own homes is not just highly disturbing and destructive of normal life, it is also a well-documented serious health hazard.

It would damage Local Transport systems

There are very serious concerns about the impact Luton's proposals would have on already heavily used local transport networks. As well as congestion, all those extra journeys to/from the airport would generate significant additional pollution. It ignores the climate emergency and global warming.

Luton Borough Council has declared a climate emergency. How can massive growth at its airport possibly be compatible with this? Extra flights, larger planes, more journeys to and from the airport, all generating more pollution and contributing to global warming and climate change.

Green Controlled Growth

Luton Airport seeks to reassure objectors by saying that this massive growth will be carefully controlled using 'green', environmentally aware principles. Control will be managed by an independent Environmental Scrutiny Group. (London Luton Airport Expansion. Planning Inspectorate Scheme Ref: TR020001. Volume 7 Other Documents 7.07 Green Controlled Growth Explanatory Note.)

Objections to the GCG document

Greenhouse gas emissions. Controls only apply to onsite activities within the airport (said to be 5% of the total generated). There is no attempt to control the other 95%, i.e., that generated by the flights themselves. The Airport and LBC do not accept responsibility for an 70+% increase in these pollutants. This is a major flaw from the point of view of many objectors concerned about the climate emergency.

Air quality. There are detection sensors for 2 types of microparticles and of nitrogen dioxide at 15 locations mostly only within Luton. What about other areas? The limits will be tightened in 2040 when legislation requires it.

Noise. Appears to only be considered for the areas within the defined contours. For those further out in areas affected by flight paths, issues such as frequency of overflying, altitude flights reach when overhead, especially noisy flights such as freight, night flying and airspace review are of real concern to the hundreds of thousand people overflown.

Noise containment. For most living near the airport or flight paths this is the major intrusive problem affecting daily life, this is the issue that gets you where you live, affects sleep and health. Control appears to rely on the introduction of a new generation of quieter aircraft sometime in the mid-2030s, and of airspace re-design in SE England in the same period.

These developments may or may not be effective, but this expansion is being proposed 10 or 15 years before they are available. The only operational noise limit mentioned in the GCG is the size of the area (km²) enclosed by the noise contours for day (54dB) and for night. Unsurprisingly it shows an increase from the current planning permission.

Surface access. The identified issue being addressed is 'Increased congestion on local and strategic road networks'. The control measure proposed in GCG is the percentage travelling by unsustainable means. This measure does not address the issue of congestion, whether sustainable or unsustainable it's still congestion – there will be 14M more people travelling on local networks.

Environmental Scrutiny Group. Chair of the ESG will be chosen by the airport operator, this person also appoints the separate chairs of the 4 Technical Panels. There will be a further aviation expert member and a representative of the airline industry, all appointed by the airport operator. The other 4 members representing local authorities will be senior planning professionals. There will be no community members. The airport operator will pay 'for the costs' of the chair of the ESG, the specialist in aviation on the ESG, the chairs of the 4 Technical Panels, and other admin costs of these groups. Does this describe an independent group who can represent communities blighted by this expansion or is it a group of paid consultants with a background in the aviation industry unwilling to challenge their Luton co-professionals? Control if environmental limits are exceeded. A very complex bureaucratic network of different groups, monitoring, re-measuring, re-monitoring, etc is described. The process of 7 months advanced selling of 'slots' giving landing rights to airlines is described. Any pause or control of growth would be a difficult and lengthy process. No standards of timeliness in delivering any pause in growth are given.