

Roger Thomson

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Registration identification number: 20040724

Letter to: **The Planning Inspectorate;**

Re: Luton Airport expansion proposal

To whom it may concern,

I would like to take this opportunity to state my, and my family's, objection to the proposed Luton Airport expansion. This follows my previous letter "Letter of objection to the proposed extension of Luton Airport" of 21 June 2023, submitted as 'Relevant Representation', to become an interested party. This went as follows;

"I'd like to state my objection to the proposed extension of Luton Airport from the current 18 million passengers per year to the proposed 32 million passengers per year following the proposed expansion.

There are many reasons; purely selfish ones and existential ones. Let's start with the selfish reasons. We already have planes flying right over our house every day, all day and at night into the early hours. These planes are very loud and disturbing. The Luton Airport expansion will almost double the number of planes flying overhead.

Now for the main reason of my objection. This project completely ignores our national and international Net Zero targets and obligations.

We have national and international targets for carbon and CO2 reduction. Please refer to the Government's Net Zero Strategy targets and 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution. This project just rides rough-shod over them. This week the waters off the east coast of the United Kingdom were 4 degrees C warmer than average for this time of year. The forecast is that we'll experience temperatures over 40 degrees C this summer. Only a few years ago temperatures over 30 degrees were considered exceptional. It's becoming clearer that the climate issue is worse than we thought and is worsening faster than anticipated.

Luton Rising presents the airport expansion project as though it has exceptional green credentials. It does on the ground but not in the air. The ground based initiatives affect only 3% of the CO2 impact of the project leaving 97% undiminished. Almost doubling the number of flights has a very negative impact and radically increases our carbon footprint. Real progress on sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) is currently very slow.

The only aspect of the project that I like is related to the jobs that it would create, however these are hardly the kind of jobs that will contribute to a cleaner and safer environment for future generations. I believe Luton Rising - Luton Council urgently needs to create thousands of new green jobs in retrofitting all of the existing building and housing stock across the entire portfolio and applying other available sustainable strategies to reach Net Zero Plus.

Children of the future will be very unimpressed if we make decisions today that deny the available clear scientific evidence, leaving them with an irreparably damaged, unbalanced, unsafe environment. The time-frame to fix the climate change issue is very short. We may have already gone too far passing critical tipping points, that we were unaware of previously, such as melting permafrost. What is clear and undeniable is that this is not a time to almost double the size of any airport. We do not have enough time to continue with business as usual. Our focus needs to be on fixing the problem, not on extending and expanding it. We need to take this problem very seriously even at the cost of making less profit than would be possible if we were to carry on with business as usual.”

Now, to follow on from that previous letter.

We know “a hard rain’s a gonna fall”. It’s already falling. In 2022, many insurers felt the pain with three of the most costly Climate Change related disasters of the decade bringing eye-watering damages; \$30 billion (with a B) with the flooding of huge swathes of Pakistan, \$10 billion (with a B) in summer heatwave losses for Europe and \$100 billion (with a B) caused by Hurricane Ian flattening parts of Florida and South Carolina, according to risk modelling firm RMS. Let us for a moment consider one of the most celebrated benefits to the Luton community to come from the Luton Airport expansion proposal and the annual charitable contributions of £14 million (with a M). Whilst being a positive step in the right direction, it is also of such a minuscule order of magnitude when compared to the damages mentioned above. There are many other damages across the world, caused by Climate Change, every year. The wild fires sweeping across the Hawaiian island of Maui last week, second week of August 2023, have caused damages of \$5 billion. The massive damages from Tropical Storm Hilary that made landfall last weekend, third week of August 2023, over the Baja California peninsula and into southern California, have yet to be calculated.

We have all noticed that extreme weather disasters are becoming more and more frequent; including melting glaciers in Europe and India, horrendous drought inflicting famine on millions in East Africa as well as record heatwaves from China to the Unites States. Science and scientists are clear about the causes of Climate Change. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has sought repeatedly to highlight to the business community the need for courageous decisions. Following COP27 in Nov 2022, he stated “Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising. And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator”.

The U.N climate conference in Egypt, COP 27, saw countries reaching a long overdue mile-stone, landmark agreement, setting up a ‘loss and damage’ fund of \$100 billion per year to compensate developing countries worst hit by climate change, whilst not responsible for the emissions, (to be paid out by developed countries). Britain has increased its’ commitment to £11.6 billion for the period 2021 to 2026 as its’ international climate finance (ICF) spend share of this annual retribution fund. (House of Commons Library. COP26: Delivering on \$100 billion climate finance, 03 November, 2021).

An inevitable fact of the almost doubling of the passenger numbers from 18 million to 32 million is that the Luton Airport expansion proposal will be contributing far more Green House Gases (GHGs) to the atmosphere, not less. Any increase is to be avoided at all costs. The nation is working hard at decreasing GHGs and at great expense. In the best case scenarios, SAFs (Sustainable Aviation Fuels) which are a very long way from being available, may eventually provide significant reductions of CO2 emissions. However that may take decades and may never reach the CO2 reductions that are required. Currently only 0.5% of airline planes use SAFs. This still means an increase in dangerous GHGs contributing to the wild damages mentioned above. It is not surprising therefore that the Government's own Climate Change Committee (CCC), the experts and advisors who are guiding the Government on how to reach Net Zero by 2050, have stated that "there should be no airport expansions until emissions will not affect our national Net Zero target".

The Luton Airport extension proposal does have several positive aspects; new jobs and charitable contributions. In some parts of the LLA website there is a mention of the creation of 6,000 new jobs, elsewhere it mentions 9,000 new jobs, on some brochures it mentions 11,000. It also mentions the creation of a community charity fund of £1 per additional passenger per year. Elsewhere it mentions £0.40 per additional passenger. For an increase of 14 million passengers this equates to a charitable contribution of either £14 million or £5.6 million per year. Local jobs and local charity support are undoubtedly excellent objectives however not at the cost of additional Greenhouse Gas in the atmosphere. The meager benefits will be so far out-weighted by the further devastating impacts across the world caused by our far too slow reduction in GHG. "The impacts of climate change will be felt most severely in the developing world, where 100 million people could be pushed into poverty by climate impacts as soon as 2030, according to the World Bank." (Gov.uk press release, 23 Sept 2019).

As mentioned previously there is a great opportunity for Luton Council to create thousands of new local green jobs in retrofitting the entire Council housing stock to enable us to reach our legally binding national Net Zero target by 2050.

I hope that the Planning Inspectorate will give due weight to the world leading efforts of the UK, with its' Climate Change Act 2008, subsequent risk assessments and the creation of targets to reach Net Zero by 2050. The Climate Change Act 2008 provides a legally binding framework to cut UK greenhouse gas emissions. It also established the Climate Change Committee (CCC) itself. Please may the Planning Inspectorate consider the advice given by the CCC to the Government regarding airport expansions. It would be pointless to invest so much effort and resource into decarbonizing our buildings and our industries, if we then let the team down by closing an eye to projects that will increase GHGs.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Thomson

