



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 Thursday 30 November 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 visit the Chilterns National Landscape¹ at night in order to gain further understanding of the character of the area in hours of darkness, extent of tranquillity experienced, existing levels of light pollution and noise from overlying aircraft.

Particulars of the Site Inspection

The inspection was undertaken by: Richard Hunt and Andrew Robinson. The ExA was accompanied by Rammiel Burnie (Case Officer).

The inspection was undertaken by car and on foot. Weather conditions were dry and, with the exception of Ivinghoe Beacon car park (which was misty), clear with a temperature of circa zero degrees centigrade. Weather conditions were at all times suitable to appreciate long range views. A gibbous moon was visible, creating some illumination. Due to the cold temperatures, it is possible that a temperature inversion affected the transmission of sound during the site inspection.

The airport was operating in easterly mode. During the inspections, the ExA used Flightradar24 to identify which planes were passing overhead at

¹ On 22 November 2023 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were renamed National Landscapes



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the various locations that they visited, when internet connectivity allowed.

The inspections commenced at approximately 19:30 and finished at approximately 22:15. 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 the Unaccompanied Site Inspection on Thursday 30 November 2023

The ExA undertook a site inspection at the following locations.

The ExA drove from Luton to the village of **Ivinghoe** via the B4540 through Slip End to Markyate; turning right onto the A5183 at Markyate and then left onto the B4540 through Kensworth and Whipsnade; right onto the B4506 and then left onto the B489 to Ivinghoe. Throughout the journey, the ExA observed light in the night sky consisting of lighting from surrounding villages, lights from vehicles using roads and also 'sky glow' from distant settlements. Lighting from aircraft approaching London Luton Airport was also observed.

At Ivinghoe, the ExA observed the ambient noise, the extent of lighting within the village and the sound of approaching aircraft at an altitude of approximately 4,000 ft.

The ExA then drove along the B489 to **Ivinghoe Beacon** and drove to the public car park on Beacon Road where a few cars were observed parked in the car park. Weather conditions were misty at this location, so the ExA continued along Beacon Road to **Ringshall**, where weather conditions returned to clear skies. It was noticed by the ExA that limited street lighting was evident and the location experienced a quiet character. Noise from arriving aircraft was audible, although noise from vehicles using the B4506 was noted to be more regular and intrusive.

The ExA returned to the car park at **Ivinghoe Beacon** and parked in the car park where a few other parked cars were present. The ExA observed two flights approaching the airport at an altitude of approximately 3,800 ft and the noise from aircraft and extent of lights emitted from the aircraft were observed. Weather conditions were misty at this location although the aircraft were visible as well as light from the moon.

The ExA departed Ivinghoe Beacon and drove to **Dagnall** via the B489 and B440. Weather conditions were clear and the ExA parked in the car park at the village hall to observe existing light levels within the village from street lighting, background noise and the sight and sound of aircraft approaching at an altitude of approximately 3,500 ft. Aircraft lighting and moonlight were evident.

The ExA then left the car park and drove along the B4506 and B4540 to **Whipsnade**. The ExA parked on the side of the road close to the village hall and observed limited street lighting in this location along with a quiet



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character. The ExA observed traffic noise using the B4540 and observed approaching aircraft at an altitude of approximately 3,000 ft.

The ExA continued along the B4540 to Kensworth and parked on Common Road which runs parallel to the main B4540 road through the village. The ExA observed existing low level street lighting and lights from moving vehicles as well as the sight and sound from approaching aircraft at an altitude of approximately 2,500 ft.

The ExA then drove to **Dunstable Downs** via the B4540 and B4541 and parked in a car park just off the main road close to the entrance to Dunstable Downs Golf Club. The ExA noted other cars were parked at other nearby car parks along this road. The ExA observed westerly views over the surrounding Chilterns landscape at this elevated position where weather conditions were clear. The sight of lights from approaching aircraft was evident as was lighting from nearby settlements and villages. The sound from aircraft was audible although relatively distant due to the location off the main flight path.

The ExA departed Dunstable Downs and returned to Luton via Dunstable completing the site inspection.



Annex B: Overview of the Inspection Route

