

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Luton Airport](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]@parliament.uk
Subject: Luton Airport Expansion
Date: 05 September 2024 19:40:36

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Subject: Luton Airport Expansion Concerns

Dear Sirs,

I have serious concerns regarding the proposed airport expansion. Rushden village in North Herts is blighted by low flying aircraft noise. This is a peaceful rural location with low ambient noise levels.

Since the AD6 routing came into place, most aircraft fly directly over the village (and my property). This noise disruption could be avoided so that villages suffer less aircraft noise by shifting the flight path predominantly to above the main roads or a small rerouting around Rushden of literally ½ mile.

I strongly believe that the two major issues currently under review, the AD6 Airspace Design Consultation and the DCO Planning Application for Luton Airport expansion are closely linked. However, the regulatory bodies responsible for these matters have different roles:

- The CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) handles airspace safety and compliance with aviation rules.
- The Planning Inspectorate oversees infrastructure planning, including expansion proposals like Luton's.

Despite their separate remits, it is clear that airspace and infrastructure cannot be considered in isolation. No expansion should proceed until the AD6 airspace design is proven safe and effective.

My key concerns are:

1. Timing of the Consultation

The timing of this consultation, taking place during the peak holiday season, is highly problematic. It limits the ability of residents, representatives, and politicians to provide meaningful input.

2. Misaligned Deadlines

There is a troubling mismatch in deadlines:

- September 6, 2024: Deadline for the DCO Planning Application.
- September 11, 2024: Deadline for feedback on the AD6 Airspace Design

Consultation.

This raises serious concerns about whether decisions on infrastructure will be made before the airspace design has been fully evaluated, potentially compromising safety and the process's integrity.

3. Poor Performance Metrics

Eurocontrol data already identifies Luton as the worst-performing London airport in terms of noise pollution and environmental impact. Approving further expansion under these conditions is irresponsible unless substantial improvements are made.

4. Impact on Local Communities

Residents in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire have reported severe disruption due to the current AD6 airspace design. These issues must be resolved before any expansion is considered.

5. Tactical Airspace Behaviours

There is growing concern over the tactical behaviours observed in Luton's airspace, with flights occurring at all hours, often just minutes apart. No increase in arrivals should be approved until Luton Airport complies with the AD6 consultation standards.

6. Infrastructure and Airspace Are Inseparable

While the Planning Inspectorate and the CAA may claim to have distinct roles, the truth is that Luton's expansion plans cannot be considered in isolation from the airspace issues. The airspace must be safe, effective, and fit for purpose before any infrastructure decisions are made.

Call to Action:

I urge the Planning Inspectorate to review the RELAS report (RELAS_AD6_Stage_7_Common_Submission_version_1.0), which has already been submitted to the CAA as part of the AD6 consultation. This report provides critical evidence of the problems caused by the current airspace design, as well as detailed recommendations for improvement.

The Planning Inspectorate must hold Luton Airport accountable for addressing these concerns before any infrastructure approvals are granted.

Regards

Nicola Martindale

