

City airport public inquiry

Speaking as:

- Cabinet member for environment and sustainability at LBR
- Councillor for Wanstead Village – which is particularly impacted as it is directly under the flight path
- Not an expert on aircraft noise – just sharing LBR perspective and concerns flagged to me by residents

As outlined in the statement we submitted to the inquiry, Redbridge Council is concerned about the profound noise and environmental impact these proposals will have on residents of Redbridge, particularly those living under the concentrated flight paths. For this reason we have submitted formal objections to the plans as they progressed through the planning process.

I also signed a joint letter with other cabinet members for the environment from Lewisham, Waltham Forest, Southwark, Greenwich, Hackney and Havering. This shows the strength of feeling across London councils impacted by the proposals. The cabinet members for Waltham Forest and Lewisham whose boroughs are particularly impacted are sorry they can't make today but asked me to highlight their opposition to these plans on their behalf.

Flight path is concentrated on a number of wards in the borough: Wanstead Village, Wanstead Park, Clayhall, Barkingside in particular, though lack of clarity re planned flight paths means other areas may be impacted by the expansion plans

Increasing passenger numbers from 6.5m to 9m, increased flying times on Saturdays and early mornings – unacceptable for our residents. Also times when most intrusive – early and late in the day.

Residents already raising concerns about flights and oppose expansion plans. Plans don't take into account the increased cumulative impact of flights from other airports eg combined impact of the expansion of Heathrow.

Loss of respite: as Stephen Timms outlined, this was considered a crucial condition that was part of the original agreement to allow residents a break from aircraft noise. This has not changed since then, if anything it is now more necessary as flights during permitted times have increased as has the population impacted.

Our residents believe that it will further impact noise pollution, air quality – adversely impacting health and quality of life. I think this is best articulated in their own words and have some quotes to share here:

"We've been here ten years and this summer has been unbearable. We no longer sit outside and close all the windows and doors. We will move if it continues."

"the early starts wake me up and the noise prohibits normal conversation outside"

"If things are going to 'expand' they will only get worse and they are unbearable already. Wanstead used to be a nice, quiet suburb but not any more. What really annoys us is that the one quiet refuge for humans and wildlife - Wanstead Park, now has dozens of flights roaring overhead every hour. Not only is this environmentally unsound it is not good for human health either."

"off peak and weekends are the only time we get any respite from the drone of aircraft overhead, jangling the nerves and setting the dogs to barking throughout the day."

Redbridge also has substantial housing growth targets set out in the Redbridge Local Plan up to 2030. These include a total of 17,237 new homes for the borough, planned for development largely in Investment and Growth Areas (key town centres) across the borough.

So we're not just talking about the impact on existing residents, but also on the new anticipated population growth associated with housing growth in our Investment and Growth Areas.

The noise and emission impacts upon sensitive areas such as historic parks and gardens, medical centres/hospitals, tall buildings of the borough and Epping Forest, should also be considered, as we are concerned about adverse impacts on them too.

As trustee of Epping Forest Heritage Trust, I have specific concerns about the impact on Epping Forest which is a SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

- internationally important site it is afforded the highest level of protection due to its habitats and species that are vulnerable or rare and under threat.
- Known for its beech trees and wet and dry heaths and for its population of stag beetle.
- Would be adversely impacted by flights, noise and air pollution, as well as emission.

Climate change (which we know is exacerbated by emission from flights) is already impacting the ecology of the Forest with changes in weather patterns, drier summers and warmer winters, ponds dry up and more pests survive in warmer winters

Sceptical of argument that it will encourage airlines to speed up the process of introducing new generation aircraft into their fleet which are quieter. Any noise reduction should be used to improve the current situation for residents rather than to justify expansion.

We also share residents' concerns about the impact on emissions and the detrimental effect on climate change. Our borough has suffered from more extreme weather events – droughts and flooding, an increase in emissions has both global and local impacts via changes in the climate.

In summary, Redbridge Council, along with many other councils, opposes the expansion proposals because of the detrimental effect of noise and air pollution on the health and well-being of residents of the borough, and wider climate impacts. I hope these concerns will be taken into account. I thank HACAN East for their work. And I thank the inquiry for the opportunity to present these views today.