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Holly Dutton
The Planning Inspectorate
Room 31 Temple Quay House
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Case Ref: DC24830

22 May 2022

Dear Holly Dutton,

Regularisation of noise pollution levels and excess passenger throughput at Luton Airport Planning Inquiry Reference APP/B0230/V/22/3296455

I am writing in my capacity as Member of Parliament for St Albans, regarding planning application 21/00031/VARCON to vary conditions relating to passenger throughput, and relax restrictions on noise pollution generated, at Luton Airport.

Please note my strong **OBJECTION** to this application.

Prior to the temporary reduction in flights as a result of the pandemic, my constituents were already blighted by ever increasing aircraft noise from Luton Airport. To increase the frequency of flight departures and arrivals and relax existing noise restrictions would be intolerable.

Local residents, and stakeholders such as St Albans for Quieter Skies and Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise, have been given assurances by Luton Airport that no expansion of the airport would take place before airlines based there had switched to quieter aircraft. These assurances were given in response to the numerous complaints - from my constituents and others - of the impact that aircraft noise is having on their health and well-being. This application seeks to undermine that undertaking from Luton Airport by increasing passenger numbers to 19 million per year. Astonishingly, this comes just as the airport operators acknowledge that new aircraft, expected to reduce the noise pollution inflicted on residents in the airport flight path, are not performing as expected.

The negative health effects of aircraft noise are well documented. There is compelling evidence that aircraft noise during the time when most people are asleep directly contributes to high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks. Road and occupational

accidents are more likely in areas of high night time aircraft noise, and the stress caused by continual overhead noise is a risk factor for deteriorating mental health.

The existing stress on the airspace capacity locally, already results in departing aircraft from the airport being held in low altitude paths for longer than is required, or efficient. If the application for expansion is permitted, this issue must be resolved first.

Quite aside from the impact of the noise that is felt most acutely by so many of my constituents, the increase in air traffic that would result from this proposal is not environmentally sustainable. I've seen no evidence that Luton Airport has required its airline clients to invest in lower emitting and lower noise polluting aircraft, despite promises to encourage them to do so. The carbon footprint of increased flights will be exacerbated by increased road traffic to and from the airport, to the detriment of air quality across the airport's catchment area.

Fundamentally, I oppose any further expansion of aviation capacity on the grounds that the Committee on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change both strongly recommend urgent measures to reduce demand for air travel. Emissions from aviation are growing at a faster rate than any other mode of transport. Any increase in air transport capacity at one airport must therefore be matched or exceeded by a corresponding reduction at other airports, in order to meet the UK's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

I welcome the decision by the Secretary of State to have this application determined independently of Luton Council, following my "call-in" request.

However as the ultimate owner of this airport, I remain concerned about the perceived conflict of interest arising from the local authority benefitting from the income generated by airport operations, whilst simultaneously being responsible for enforcement action to tackle the historical and ongoing breaches of passenger numbers and noise pollution, which this application seeks to regularise.

Please kindly acknowledge this submission for consideration at the upcoming hearing, and advise on what further avenues for consultation will be open to my constituents and I in the coming months. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Daisy Cooper MP
Member of Parliament for St Albans