

From: Mr. John A. Smith, [REDACTED]

18th September 2022

London Luton Airport – Proposed Expansion

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Inquiry to be opened at the Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ, on Tuesday, 27th September, at 10.00 a.m.

I am a local resident, having lived for over 30 years in Harpenden, and I submit my objections to the proposed expansion of Luton Airport as a private citizen, unaligned to any commercial enterprise, and without access to any data or statistics.

My comments are below:

Introduction:

I am deeply concerned about the proposed expansion of Luton Airport. It is a self-serving and downright selfish scheme that has no consideration for the surrounding areas and the environment. It seems to me that the owners are happy to get the passengers away from the airport and dump them onto Thameslink or the M1 or local roads where they then become someone else's problem when things go wrong. It is hard to see any real benefits other than within the Luton area, whereas the detriment to other communities is manifest. Approval of this proposed expansion leaves those areas to suffer the consequences forever.

Transport:

There is no doubt that traffic on the M1 will be severely affected. It is busy enough now and not just at peak times. Junction 10 of the M1 produces major hold-ups and, with additional traffic, the situation will be chaotic. I am sceptical of "traffic surveys" that, for schemes such as this, always seem to massively underestimate the actual impact of the development proposed. As it stands, if there is an accident or other hold-up on the M1 today, the extra traffic through St Albans and Harpenden causes major problems. This would be much worse with increased volumes of traffic and, in any event, I would envisage that some vehicles will come through St Albans and Harpenden anyway and use it as a "rat-run" to avoid the M1 and potential delays, particularly traffic coming from the M25. With modern sat-nav technology, drivers will be warned of hold-ups and will come off the motorway and proceed through St Albans and Harpenden, as some already do now.

The road system into and around Luton will be severely affected - the road to and from the airport cannot cope now.

Thameslink trains are packed out now and this will get worse with the additional housing planned up the line in Harlington, Leagrave, Flitwick, Ampthill, and Bedford, plus additional housing in Redbourn, Wheathampstead, St Albans and Harpenden. I have commuted from Harpenden into London on Thameslink on a daily basis for almost 30 years and I foresee significant problems with severe overcrowding. The Government has ordered 14,608 new homes to be built in St Albans alone by 2036 and sets annual house-building targets to check the council's progress. The last thing that regular, daily commuters want, who pay a great deal of money for their season tickets, are carriages clogged up with Luton airport passengers and their luggage. There is limited space for luggage on these trains. The DART system will mean even more overcrowding on the

trains, it is not sustainable. Any delays or cancellations on Thameslink and there will be mayhem and it will be someone else's problem, not the airport's. The owners are relying far too much on Thameslink. We need convincing explanations of where the extra capacity required would come from.

Utilities:

We are regularly being told by our local water company to conserve water, which was exacerbated by the hot summer we have just had, and this proposed expansion will substantially increase usage, as will the additional houses being built. Global warming will worsen the problem.

Proposals on energy supply requirements have to be convincing, not least in the face of the huge uncertainties that have recently been introduced into UK supplies. Adding significantly to this is the threat of blackouts this winter and beyond.

Is there capacity to handle the increased volume of sewage, waste water, contaminated water, cleaning materials, and other chemicals, etc.?

Environment:

Communities such as mine believe that the proposal will add significantly to the air pollutants they already endure, not least in terms of prevailing wind directions on many days. There is a particular concern for the primary schools in the area, with some under the flight paths, and the impact on young lungs which will be impacted by the additional pollution. We need detailed understanding of the worst case possibilities for schools such as: The Linden Academy, Surrey Street, and Oakwood, if this were to proceed.

As a nation, we have a commitment to reduce global warming and reduce significantly pollutants in the atmosphere. A reduction in air traffic is necessary, so how does this expansion support that? The owners say that the project will "minimise the environmental impact", but what does this mean? What might appear "minimal" to them could be devastating for others. Will they guarantee the level of that minimal impact?

I, and others, are concerned about the effect on our ancient woodlands. As I have read, on the list of Bedfordshire's ancient woodland, of those woods of over 10 hectares (25 acres), all of which have SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), and cover a total of 628 hectares (1,550 acres). Of the eight woods on the list, five fall roughly on the line of heavily wooded sandstone that runs diagonally across the county south of Bedford, i.e. towards Luton airport. These include: King's Wood, Maulden Wood, Odell Great Wood, Potton Wood, and Swineshead Wood. In addition, Kidney Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland on the southern edge of Luton that has been identified as a County Wildlife Site. Such woodland is a national priority habitat and a priority habitat in the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan. I understand that the wood was purchased by Luton Borough Council as an area of public open space. There is also woodland at Luton Hoo.

There are a number of farms very close to the airport and under the flight paths that will be badly affected by the additional pollution, on their crops and on the grass that feeds their livestock, including horses, cattle and sheep.

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The proposed expansion would result in attracting passengers from a much wider base in the country, thus increasing vehicular traffic on the roads and increasing pollution on the roads as well as in the air.

Noise:

It is obvious that there will be additional noise generated with the additional flights, irrespective of what type of aircraft are used, and I would envisage more flights through the night.

Current Service at the Airport:

I had the pleasure (!) of travelling from and back to Luton airport twice this summer and it was not a pleasant experience. The owners do not seem to be able to cope now with current numbers of passenger journeys. Given their inability to meet their present customer service obligations, it calls into question any promises they make about the impact of the proposal.

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