

Statement for the Luton Airport Planning Public Inquiry on behalf of Wheathampstead & District Preservation Society

APPLICATION BY LONDON LUTON AIRPORT OPERATIONS LTD (REF APP/B0230/V/22/3296455) VARIATION OF CONDITIONS RELATING TO EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE AIRPORT LONDON LUTON AIRPORT, AIRPORT WAY, LUTON

I am speaking on behalf of Wheathampstead and District Preservation Society – an organisation with more than 400 households as members, which is more than 15% of the village population.

I have lived in Wheathampstead for more than 25 years and have seen a massive increase in aircraft disturbance – increased noise, especially at night, increased traffic through our village to reach the airport and consequently increased pollution.

We hear from members and villagers in Wheathampstead several times a week about how badly they are affected by aircraft noise from Luton Airport – in what is a rural community with a relatively low ambient noise level. We know night flights are a specific concern.

The impact has increased enormously since the expansion to 18m passengers was allowed. Luton Borough Council granted permission for the increase in passenger numbers to 18mppa on condition that the expansion took place over 15 years to allow time for fleet modernisation which would in turn reduce noise levels. We are deeply disappointed that the number of flights has been allowed to increase at a rapid rate before noise reduction measures were proven to be effective. Seven years have passed, and it is evident that expansion has run faster than mitigation.

We find it very disturbing that Luton Borough Council have not held Luton Airport to account for their frequent breaches of their noise related planning conditions, despite numerous complaints. This leads us to question the role and integrity of Luton Borough Council. And the decision the Council took to allow further expansion and increase in noise limits confirmed all our suspicions. If this latest expansion is allowed to take place, these changes will blight the lives of future generations and make a mockery of what the UK vowed to do at the COP convention it hosted just last year.

We all know a review of airspace is underway. We know aircraft are often held low as they depart or fly over Wheathampstead due to congestion from other airports. So surely it is reasonable and appropriate to wait for the conclusion of the airspace review before granting further expansion or changes to noise planning conditions.

Car park expansion is on the agenda. We are concerned about the East / West traffic that comes through our village and along Lower Luton Road – it is a rural B-road not an airport transit route.

The residents of Wheathampstead and surrounding areas deserve to live in the peaceful rural community they chose when moving into the village. We do not accept that the quality of life of many thousands of people should be compromised because the airport cannot deliver the promises they made and comply with the planning conditions Luton Borough Council imposed. Compliance with existing planning conditions must be a pre-requisite before any further expansion can be considered.

This Public Planning Inquiry is most welcome, and we are sure you will review the evidence before you very carefully. And we thank you for this.

We respectfully urge you to reject this application.

Julie Bell