

# Pitstone Parish Council comments re: Luton Expansion Development Consent Order

The village of Pitstone sits close to Luton's easterly arrival path. It is impacted by most arrivals, whether straight in or via standard routes.

Pitstone Parish Council (PPC) has engaged with LLA over many years, including hosting public consultation events. Following a meeting in 2018, where an LLA representative responded to being asked for more detailed information regarding flights and routes by saying that the information was 'secret' and it would be illegal to share it, a parish councillor installed an ADS-B receiver which has been running ever since. The figures used in this document are derived from that data.

We also have some recent local noise information. This was obtained because one of LLA's mobile noise monitoring stations was in operation in the same location as the ADS-B receiver from mid-May to mid-July this year. This allowed calibrated noise levels to be obtained via Travis (<https://travisltn.topsonic.aero>).

The following information was captured via ADS-B and processed to include only flights with the following characteristics:

- Passed within 1000 Metres of the ADS-B receiver. This area covers most of the built-up area of the village, along with neighbouring Ivinghoe
- Below 3000 Metres in height. The majority of Luton landings are at around 1000M when they pass. The 3000m figure was used to capture take-offs. In recent times there seems to have been an increase in the number of easterly take offs that turn south initially and then switch north to pass over Pitstone or one of our neighbours.

It is recognised that flights other than Luton may fall into the above boundaries. Small aircraft, helicopters etc do pass by, but no attempt has been made to filter them for two reasons:

- 1) Compared to the Luton figures they will be insignificant
- 2) They are part of the noise and pollution burden borne by the village so should not be discounted.

The following table shows the total number of flights for each year, broken down by Day and Night (using LLA's hours of 23:00-07:00):

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Night	1034	2815	741	1068	2684	2311	10653
Day	6563	18697	4030	6384	11151	10850	57675
Total	7597	21512	4771	7452	13835	13161	68328
%age							
Night	13.61%	13.09%	15.53%	14.33%	19.40%	17.56%	15.59%

Note that the data for 2018 and 2023 is incomplete (collection started on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 and the data includes information up to August 20<sup>th</sup> 2023).

Of note are the percentage figures based on the proportion of flights.

The following table shows figures taken from LLA's annual reports:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Night	16333	17175	7664	6913	15959
Day	119937	124306	55929	54647	102101
Total	136270	141481	63593	61560	118060
%age Night	11.99%	12.14%	12.05%	11.23%	13.52%

Note that the percentage of night flights is lower in LLA's reports and the difference seems to be increasing over time. We attribute the difference to the fact that Easterlies are flown more often in the warmer summer months when there are also significantly more flights. It is impossible to confirm this because LLA's reports do not give full breakdowns based on easterly and westerly operations.

While it is impossible to be certain, we do feel that climate change could affect this and make easterly operations more prevalent in future.

Differences like this make it imperative that the reports produced by LLA are more transparent and give a clear understanding of the operations with appropriate breakdowns. It should not be necessary for third parties to have to collect their own information.

We are also concerned that a significant number of night flights may be late arrivals. Talking to LLA personnel at events indicated that this could be because return flights try to leave later in the local day to allow holidaymakers more time. It is not clear whether any such late arrivals would be counted as night flights, or whether the fact that the timing was not under LLAs control would mean that do not count in these figures. We feel that reporting by LLA should show explicitly which night flights were scheduled and which were the result of lateness. If lateness is significant, then flight scheduling should be changed to make these issue less likely.

With regard to noise, we feel that its impact is being underestimated. As mentioned, Pitstone sees far more flights in the warmer months, when people are likely to be trying to sleep with windows open.

Noise monitoring in the village showed that the baseline noise level was around 47dba. While being overflown by landings this rose to about 58-60dba (take offs would be higher). It is recognised that areas closer to the airport will see much higher levels, but 60dba is similar to the level of a conversation. Pitstone residents, and others in the flightpath, are being subjected to several 'conversations' a night while they are trying to sleep.

While we recognise that Pitstone will always be on the flight path, we are opposed to any changes to LLA's flight numbers and patterns that will increase noise and pollution issues.

In particular, LLA has indicated that much of the increase in passenger numbers will be accommodated by larger aircraft rather than more flights. Should the increase be allowed, it should be specifically tied to the use of larger aircraft. There must be no loophole that permits aircraft movements to grow proportionally with passenger numbers.

## Summary

- Given the extreme weather events seen in recent years, and which are expected to increase due to climate change, we feel is it very difficult to justify a large increase in air transportation
- It is not necessary for noise to be at a high level to cause an impact if it is occurring in an open environment at night
- Should the increase be allowed:
  - o Care should be taken to ensure that the number of new flights is minimised
  - o LLA reporting should be revised to allow local people to properly understand the impact on their communities and not allow LLA to hide any embarrassing details (or avoid fines)

- LLA should be made to expand their mitigation policies to include communities further from the airport