

By way of introduction, my name is Joseph Kelly and I am a local resident living approx. 2 miles from easterly runway in the hamlet of Bendish and I oppose the expansion plans.

Leaving aside the absurdity of expanding an already compact airport located on a hill and the wider global warming issues, I am raising the issue of noise and air pollution impact and the blighting of homes and villages at both ends of the runway and the fact that there are effectively no proposals for compensation for these residents. As a resident close to the flight path, and even with our windows closed, we are frequently woken at night and early morning with aircraft taking off and there is often an acrid smell of kerosene from these flights.

The airport's proposals for noise mitigation are the expansion of their noise insulation scheme which is entirely discretionary and currently up to £3k increasing to £20k. Our garden is within the noise contours for the current scheme but the house is deemed outside so does not qualify. Even if we did qualify for the scheme, the amounts are derisory and are offered purely at the discretion of the airport and the practical proposals don't work for listed buildings and don't mitigate the blight nor the air pollution. In addition, the airport has not fulfilled promises made as part of previous expansions to wider the noise contours and expand funding – neither has happened. There is a sole contractor engaged to instal the installation and he has confidentially admitted to a neighbour that it does not work in any event and of course does nothing to tackle air-pollution. The airport also incorrectly terms this scheme as “financial compensation” in both this and previous expansion proposals – this is clearly misleading and highlights the whole scheme is just a marketing and tick box project and unfortunately is another reason why the integrity of Luton Rising cannot be relied upon.

Clearly I prefer these plans not to proceed but if these plans do go ahead the airport has to award financial compensation for those residents directly impacted. The proposals though for compensation are drawn very tightly and basically you have to be very close to the runway to qualify and the airport has therefore effectively deemed that no compensation is payable. If the true impact on residents of this and previous expansions included adequate financial compensation, I am sure that these proposals would not be economically viable. I note also that substantial housing development is planned at Tea Green, a short distance from the airport and this will also be blighted. There is precedent of compensation being paid to residents impacted by other airport expansions and I don't see how the airport is effectively able to deem that none is necessary. I am currently investigating class actions in this regard but this should not be necessary if LR had fair compensation proposals. If successful these costs will be substantial to LR (which of course is why they are being ignored) and may change the viability of the proposed expansion.

The airport references sharing the benefits with local residents – it is interesting to hear from local charities in Luton, I am myself a Lutonian and I don't doubt the significant needs of those charities but I cannot say whether they are speaking at their own behest and/or in fear of that funding being withdrawn but I regret that I am not aware of any significant sharing of benefits for those in need outside of Luton, particularly in those villages directly impacted in Hertfordshire at Markyate, Flamsted, Breachwood Green, Bendish, Whitwell and Caddington. I also find it surprising that charities generally oppose global warming but due to their significant funding needs they have to take funding from the airport. It cannot be right that the Luton Major (who is also a director of Luton Airport) was seen briefing certain charities before the hearings, I cannot say if this was to encourage support in favour of LR but I can only conclude that some or all of these charities are not necessarily supporting the expansion of their own volition and would encourage the Inspectorate to ensure there is independence and objectivity here and to also consider whether benefits do accrue to the wider community outside of Luton (and where much of the detrimental impact arises). I am aware of only one grant to charities based in Hertfordshire was £1500 paid to fund noise monitoring at Kings Walden. The lack of independence from Luton Council is well documented of course. I also highlight that charitable donations by LR actually fell 11% in 2022 despite a substantial increase in turnover.

I would also like to highlight that most of the flights from Luton are either for leisure or private jets and by nature are probably a net exporter of wealth overseas and so I would question the wider economic benefit to the domestic economy. According to Paramount Business Jets some 30,000 of the 135,000 flights in and out of Luton were private jets. So to summarise as a resident outside Luton I can only foresee that living here will be intolerable and the villages and countryside will be permanently blighted and therefore oppose the expansion and without true financial compensation the full economic impact is not being assessed.