

August 2023

London Luton Airport Expansion

Planning Inspectorate Scheme Ref: TR020001

Volume 8 Additional Submissions (Examination)
**8.24 Commentary on the Overarching Aviation Noise
Policy Statement**

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application Document Ref: TR020001/APP/8.24

The Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

**London Luton Airport Expansion Development Consent
Order 202x**

**8.24 Commentary on the Overarching Aviation Noise Policy
Statement**

Deadline:	Deadline 1
Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference:	TR020001
Document Reference:	TR020001/APP/8.24
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Version	Date	Status of Version
Issue 1	August 2023	Additional Submission - Deadline 1

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1 PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

- 1.1.1 As requested by the Examining Authority's (ExA) Rule 6 letter of 13 July 2023 (page F8), this paper sets out the implications of the Overarching Aviation Noise Policy Statement (OANPS) for the Proposed Development.

2 OVERARCHING AVIATION NOISE POLICY

- 2.1.1 The original noise policy objective was set out in the Aviation Policy Framework of 2013 (Ref 1, paragraph 3.12) as:

"The Government's overall policy on aviation noise is to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise, as part of a policy of sharing benefits of noise reduction with industry."

- 2.1.2 The objective was clarified by the 2017 Consultation Response on UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace (Ref 2, paragraph 2.69):

"The government's overall policy on aviation noise is to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise as part of a policy of sharing benefits of noise reduction with industry in support of sustainable development."

"Consistent with the Noise Policy Statement for England, our objectives in implementing this policy are to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by the adverse impacts from aircraft noise."

- 2.1.3 This clarification became the effective aviation noise policy because the Executive Summary to the 2017 Consultation Response states (paragraph 9):

"The Government's current aviation policy is set out in the Aviation Policy Framework (APF). The policies set out within this document provide an update to some of the policies on aviation noise contained within the APF, and should be viewed as the current government policy."

- 2.1.4 Guidance on the implementation of the clarified aviation noise policy is provided by the Government in the 2017 Air Navigation Guidance (Ref 3), particularly paragraphs 3.4 to 3.12. While this guidance is specific to airspace change, it is guidance that has also been consistently adopted for airport expansion applications and decisions (e.g.; Bristol Airport expansion), and is in line with the Government's 2017 clarification of aviation noise policy (as described above), which is not limited to airspace change.

- 2.1.5 The noise assessment of the proposals for the Proposed Development has been undertaken fully in accordance with the Government guidance (see **Chapter 16 Noise and Vibration [AS-080]** of the Environmental Statement).

- 2.1.6 In the Green Paper Aviation 2050 (Ref 4), published in December 2018, the Government proposed to revise this objective (paragraph 3.115):

“to limit, and where possible, reduce total adverse effects on health and quality of life from aviation noise.”

2.1.7 Whilst in Flightpath to the Future published in May 2022 (Ref 5), the Government stated its intention to publish an overall aviation noise policy paper, this is now expected later this year. Nonetheless, on 27 March 2023, it set out a revised ‘Overarching Aviation Noise Policy Statement’ (Ref 6). The purpose of this document was to provide a context for ongoing consultation regarding its night-time noise policy objectives for the designated airports¹ and to assist stakeholders in preparing the next 5 yearly cycle of Noise Action Plans².

2.1.8 The revised overarching aviation noise policy statement states that:

“The Government’s overall policy on aviation noise is to balance the economic and consumer benefits of aviation against their social and health implications in line with the International Civil Aviation Organisation’s Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management. This should take into account the local and national context of both passenger and freight operations, and recognise the additional health impacts of night flights.

The impact of aviation noise must be mitigated as much as practicable and realistic to do so, limiting, and where possible reducing, the total adverse impacts on health and quality of life from aviation noise.”

3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1 The OANPS details that *“The impact of aviation noise must be mitigated as much as is practicable and realistic to do so, limiting, and where possible reducing, the total adverse impacts on health and quality of life from aviation noise.”*

3.1.2 The Policy Paper accompanying the statement highlights that the economic and consumer benefits may counterbalance any increase in the adverse effects of noise, stating that: *“an overall reduction in total adverse effects is desirable, but in the context of sustainable growth an increase in total adverse effects may be offset by an increase in economic and consumer benefits.”* This confirms the Government’s policy since the APF in 2013 (paragraph 1.91):

“Where a planning application is made that is likely to have an impact on an existing aerodrome’s operations, the economic benefit of the aerodrome and its value to the overall aerodrome network as well the economic benefits of the development will be considered as part of the application process. However, these benefits will be balanced against all other considerations.”

3.1.3 The OANPS also reflects the Government’s noise policy (Noise Policy Statement for England, (Ref 7) where the three aims of noise policy are set out in *“the context of Government policy on sustainable development.”* It is noted that the ExA, in its Rule 8 letter of 17 August 2023, stated that it has defined

¹ Heathrow Gatwick and Stansted are designated for the purpose of noise regulation under the Civil Aviation Act 1982.

² The requirement for Noise Action Plans is defined under the terms of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

sustainable development for the purposes of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAP) by “*having regard to the Airports National Policy Statement (NPS), the National Networks NPS and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These documents provide definition of the sustainable development framework that is required to be considered in the context of planning decision making*”.

- 3.1.4 The 2017 clarification of aviation noise policy directly links to the Noise Policy Statement for England (see paragraph 2.1.2 in this document) as does the Airports National Policy Statement (Ref 8, paragraph 5.67 and 5.68).
- 3.1.5 The revisions in the OANPS therefore make clear that, whilst an overall reduction in total adverse effects is desirable, in the context of sustainable growth, an increase in total adverse effects may be offset by increased economic and consumer benefits. In circumstances where there is an increase in total adverse effects, “*limit*” would mean to mitigate and minimise adverse effects, in line with the Noise Policy Statement for England.
- 3.1.6 As described in the **Planning Statement [AS-122]**, the compensatory mitigation measures for the Proposed Development (**Draft Compensation Policies Measures and Community First [AS-128]**) have been developed so that in combination with the embedded noise management measures as secured by the Noise Envelope within the **Green Controlled Growth Framework [APP-218]**, they meet the Noise Policy Statement for England, paragraph 185a of the National Planning Policy Framework (Ref 9), paragraph 3.12 of the Aviation Policy Framework, the 2017 clarification of policy on aviation noise, and paragraph 5.68 of the Airports National Policy Statement, where noise adverse impacts should be mitigated and reduced to a minimum. A detailed assessment of the Proposed Development’s effect on noise is set out in **Chapter 16 Noise and vibration of the Environmental Statement [AS-080]**.
- 3.1.7 In the light of the substantial increase in economic and consumer benefits delivered by the Proposed Development (see **Section 8 of the Need Case [AS-125]**), these would offset the increase in total adverse effects in the context of sustainable growth.
- 3.1.8 The Proposed Development and the controls in the Noise Envelope secured by the Green Controlled Growth Framework, combined with the noise insulation scheme secured by the compensation commitments, meet the overall policy on aviation noise in the OANPS by providing an appropriate balance between the economic and consumer benefits of the Proposed Development against its social and health implications in line with the ICAO Balanced Approach.

REFERENCES

Ref 1 Her Majesty's Stationery Office (2013), The Aviation Policy Framework.

Ref 2 Department for Transport (2017), Consultation Response on UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace

Ref 3 Department for Transport (2017), Air Navigation Guidance.

Ref 4 Department for Transport (2018), Aviation 2050 – the future of UK aviation

Ref 5 Department for Transport (2022), Flightpath to the future: a strategic framework for the aviation sector.

Ref 6 Department for Transport (2023), Policy Paper: Overarching Aviation Noise Policy

Ref 7 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (2010), Noise Policy Statement for England

Ref 8 Department for Transport (2018). Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England

Ref 9 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021), National Planning Policy Framework