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Letter to:

The Planning Inspectorate; Luton Airport expansion

Thinking of the various selfish reasons for our objection to this airport expansion; the many flights that already come right over us, throughout the day and far into the night, sometimes past 3:am, very invasive, it's not surprising that we don't wish these to almost double in frequency. These planes are very loud. When they fly over when you are in the garden you have to suspend conversation until they have passed. Every time.

If the LLA expansion goes ahead it will blight our lives but it will also damage the value of properties under the flight path and within a range of the flight path that feels the disruption caused by the vast increase in numbers and frequencies of flights. No one will wish to buy these properties. Their value will plummet.

The increased flow of volumes of traffic leading to bigger traffic jams through small villages that already notice increases in blocked roads will be a further major nuisance.

"The Government has currently set night-time operating restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stanstead as these airports are designated for the purposes of noise regulation under the Civil Aviation Act 1982. These restrictions place an operational ban on QC4 rated aircraft (for example a Boeing 747-400) movements between 23:30 and 06:00.

Apparently, there is no such restriction imposed on Luton Airport. "London Luton Airport (LTN) is a 24-hour operation, meaning that it is open and operating at all hours of the day and night". Whilst it is possible to restrict the operating hours of an airport/aerodrome through the planning process, there are no such time restrictions in place for the use of UK airspace; effectively, it can be used legitimately, 24 hours a day.

However, "London Luton Airport announced the night slot ban to go into effect from 1st June to

20 September between the hours of 10 PM and 5:59 AM GMT. The night slot ban was made due to the current airline schedules, which forecast that the night movements will be at maximum capacity.” Universal Weather Aviation, Inc, Sean Rafferty, May 22, 2023.

This is great news except that, in reality, many planes still come in to land throughout the night whether there is a ‘night-slot ban’ or not.

LLA proudly announced; “The Luton Airport “Noise Insulation Scheme » was set up as part of Planning Conditions for our (LLA’s) redevelopment. We donate into a fund for properties in the local area to insulate their properties. We put in secondary glazing, high performance double glazing and ventilation units to the cost of three thousand pounds per property. We will get in contact with the properties that have been selected each year, put in the noise insulation that means they can get a bit of a break inside their homes and also the ventilation units mean they don’t have to open their windows to get fresh air into the house. The areas that we are targeting at the moment are those closest to the airport in both Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.” From the LLA video “Noise Insulation Scheme”. “LLA has recently increased the annual budget for the “noise insulation scheme” to £3,000 per property.”

Very little effective sound insulation can be achieved with three thousand pounds (per property) which in most cases will lead to an incomplete solution resulting in poor sound insulation. The problem will therefore persist.

The Noise Contour map attached with the LLA Noise Insulation Scheme has a very limited range, not even taking into consideration many affected villages and urban properties who are badly impacted by the aviation noise. The paperwork for the scheme states “Together with an independent Noise analyst and our London Luton Airport Consultative Committee (LLACC) Noise Insulation Sub-Committee, we will be offering eligible properties each year”. The current contour map is so very restricted and close to the airport, it would suggest that LLA has only just initiated the scheme. Please may LLA clarify how long the scheme has been running, how large a budget is committed to it annually, how many properties have already received any aid for effective sound insulation?

We are living in this community and are in constant communication with the same community and residents of Herts who are affected by this proposal of the airport expansion and they have confirmed they are not and have not been in the LLA scheme of provision of insulation costs.

If the LLA extension is allowed to proceed it will inevitably negatively impact not just the quality of life of thousands of families but will also drastically impact the value of thousands of properties that lie beneath and near the flight path with nearly double the volume of traffic flying over.

We hope that the Planning Inspectorate will encourage the LLA to abandon their expansion proposal and to create, instead, thousands of new green jobs in retrofitting the existing social housing stock of Luton and surroundings.

Regards

Maha Thomson (Mrs)