



Friends of the Earth

**Development Consent Order by Luton Council
to expand from 18 to 32 million passengers
during an accelerating Climate and Nature Emergency**

Luton Friends of the Earth's registration to object + background 20 Jun 2023

Grounds for objection (background slightly revised) 22 Aug 2023

emailed to LutonAirport@planninginspectorate.gov.uk Reg no 20040317

Your video says “the purpose of the NSIP process is to weigh local impacts against national need for such infrastructure, in a fair, open and impartial manner.” It is our strong view, informed by science, that approving this application would have devastating adverse local impacts, and airport expansion is against national (and international) need.

It is incomprehensible to us that, following the inquiry in autumn 2022, this DCO has been accepted for yet further debate, when catastrophic impacts of expanding aviation (the fastest growing source of climate emissions) both locally and nationally have already been clearly demonstrated. The Govt Climate Change Committee, on IPCC scientific advice and amid many warnings from the UN, says there should be no expansion in UK aviation. We have no intention of “suggesting ways to shape the scheme, or to reduce impacts of extra traffic”. There must be no scheme, and there must be no extra air or road traffic.

Background

We attended the East Midlands & Milton Keynes Sub-Regional Strategy Inquiry in 2004. Any accountant would advise a balanced portfolio. The Panel of inspectors strongly advised Luton Council “not to put all its eggs in the airport basket”. This advice was not heeded, leading to considerable debt. The council then chose to spend £600,000 on a public inquiry investigating whether they should be given permission to go ahead with a development which contravenes national policy.

By contrast, the Local Government Association has said that if Luton follows good practice elsewhere, it could have 1600 green (carbon neutral or positive) jobs by 2030. We have yet to see any signs of efforts to develop partnerships that might achieve this.

In 2022 government loaned Luton Council £80m due to Covid income losses, on condition that it reduce reliance on the airport. This was more than advice – however, not only was it ignored, but the council borrowed over £500m and loaned it to its own company to promote airport expansion. At least £60m has been spent on consultants and marketing.

Luton FoE objected in 2014 when Luton Council voted to double passenger numbers from 9 to 18 million. A quarter of Luton's GPs signed our petition against this, concerned that it

would affect patients' health, but the council voted for the increase. By 2019 the 18m had been achieved, in 5 years instead of 15, with no mitigation, against promises, the Local Plan and the National Planning Framework, making Luton the most polluted town and fastest growing source of climate emissions in UK. That is totally unsustainable and unacceptable, and cannot be repeated. The obvious conclusion is that demand must be managed to reduce, not expand, the number of flights from Luton. Covid was supposed to be a once-in-a-lifetime wake-up call to change our dangerous habits. But worryingly, flight numbers are climbing rapidly toward pre-Covid levels, and climate effects are accelerating.

We founded residents' group Friends of Wigmore Park in 2017 when a threat from Luton Council was announced, and Stop Luton Airport Expansion In 2018 when the council admitted that the main threat to the park was not a business park or a dual carriageway through it, but major airport expansion, a second terminal and extensive car parks. Luton Council had been planning this secretly since 2015.

We were one of many groups and individuals objecting to the council's approval of the operator's application to expand from 18 to 19m, the subject of an Inquiry conducted by 3 inspectors in autumn 2022, which has yet to report.

It is not clear, or fair on objectors, why the identical principles of expansion, while on a different scale, are overlapping. They are both overseen by the Planning Inspectorate. Many think the Inspectors should have rejected expansion above 18 or 19 million. It would have been helpful to view and digest the conclusions of the previous inquiry. Based on national policy and the number of objections, this should have given grounds for refusal of further expansion, pre-empting the need for a DCO process.

We now find ourselves registering to fight the council's Development Consent Order to government to expand from pre-Covid 18 million to 32 million passengers.

At this first stage, we are asked for a summary of the main issues. We have not yet read, and may not had time to read, the many jargon-filled documents, which are likely to deter people from commenting. It was not even easy to find the registration form.

We are mainly concerned not with details of the plans, but **fundamentally oppose the key principle and impacts of expansion**. The national (and international) need is not for airport expansion, but for considerably less flying.

The UN and many IPCC scientists have warned repeatedly, since a key report in 2018, that the Climate Emergency is the biggest threat to humanity, and we must do all we can to change behaviours radically in as short a time as possible. 7 years has been cited as all the time we have to act comprehensively to prevent irreversible climate damage.
https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/transport-emissions/reducing-emissions-aviation_en
Aviation and road transport are the fastest growing source of climate emissions. Not to fly is the biggest single thing individuals and businesses can do to cut their carbon footprint.

'Overarching components'

achievement of sustainable development ***Virtually impossible***

effects of proposed development ***Devastating, locally, nationally & internationally***

effects of linkages/ overlap between issues ***Everything is linked***

effects of the Proposed Development in relation to human rights and equality duties

Human rights form an element in most of our grounds for objection

(achievement of good design is a given in any major project)

'Principle issues'

1 Air quality and odour (from planes and traffic) ***See 4,5,6,7 - most of our points are linked***

2 Biodiversity - Effects on existing ecological receptors including designated sites ***See 2***

3 Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions ***See 1, but most points linked***

6 'Green Controlled Growth' ***See 5,12***

7 Noise ***See 1,2,6,7,8***

8 Physical effects of development and operation – Heritage assets / landscape & visual impacts / loss of trees & hedgerows / effect on water resources, water quality, drainage ***See 2,3,10***

9 Social, economic and land-use considerations – communities/equalities/health/Wigmore Valley Park/ Safety/land use & planning ***See all points***

10 Traffic/transport – effects of construction/operation on strategic & local road networks/surface access/parking ***See 5,6,7***

We think it unreasonable for the Panel of Inspectors' report from the 2022 Inquiry, which ended Nov 2022, to be held up awaiting govt comments until 22 Aug, the date for submissions to the DCO. The first could set helpful precedents for the second. We are pleased that it was clearly stated that written representations will be given as much weight as oral evidence.

We need Luton Council's (Luton Rising's) application to be refused, sending a strong message, with an instruction backing up the government's requirement, when it loaned the council £80m, that Luton reduce reliance on the airport.

Grounds for objection

1 Climate Emergency

2 Fatal Destruction of Nature, especially one of Luton's best wildlife habitats

3 Wigmore Valley Park – a major amenity for recreation

4 Pollution: More planes means millions more road vehicles

5 Luton is the wrong place for a major airport

6 New roads against local plan (2017)

7 Car spaces and travel would increase by over 50%

8 Noise and dust would increase, cause stress and could have severe health effects

9 Effect on the Economy (Local and National) of airport-induced impacts

10 Luton's largest Landfill Site to be dug up 'at high risk' – consultants

11 DART link from Luton Parkway station will not reduce road traffic

12 Luton Rising website claims about mitigation are unproven greenwash

13 Conflict of interests - Airport income not mainly for benefit of residents

14 Jobs claims unlikely, poorly paid, and green jobs needed

15 Covid lessons not learned

1 Climate Emergency

Aviation caused 7% of the UK's emissions in 2018, and **8%** in 2019 (domestic and international flights). <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8826/> “*The only way to avoid aviation emissions is not to fly*”- Aviation Environment Federation. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/22/uk-aviations-carbon-plan-allows-rising-emissions-from-planes>

Worldwide CO₂ emissions from commercial flights are rising up to 70% faster than predicted by the UN, according to an analysis. Carbon dioxide emitted by airlines increased by 32% from 2013 to 2018, according to a study by the International Council on Clean Transportation (19 Sep 2019).

Since Apr 2021 all planning must include aviation impacts from planes in the sky, not just airport ground activities, and impacts of all transport to airports. A consultant (Ricardo) appointed by Luton said they must begin their Environmental Statement / Impact assessment again - in effect it was just a 'wish list', written by another consultant (Wood). Luton's Airport Masterplan was now out of date, making approval on 1 Dec 2021 of expansion from 18 to 19m passengers invalid. Luton Council has ignored this in its DCO application, focusing on airport ground activities. It has done nothing to persuade the operator to cut 'ghost flights' when planes travel either empty or at far from full capacity. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/22/airlines-ghost-flights-net-zero-uk-aviation-climate-crisis>

The 2019 Antithesis report commissioned by Luton Council said that Luton should aim to cut emissions by 80% by 2030. The Tyndall Centre said this figure should be 90%. This process has scarcely begun, and airport expansion would make it impossible.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires climate emissions and noise to be reduced, not increased. We suggest Luton has failed to comply with Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations because it has not assessed the greenhouse gas impacts of burning fossil fuels on the UK's Net Zero target; and failed to follow the NPPF by not assessing greenhouse gas emissions from flights and traffic.

For 'Decarbonising Transport' (Ref 7.23) re *'govt commitment & actions to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK'*, Luton Rising refers to vehicle fleet emissions. Yet 99% of the airport's climate impact is from planes in the sky (51%) and transport to the airport (48%), mostly from outside the borough. Luton Airport's impacts are not only local, but worldwide, yet the council acts as if it were exempt.

LLP6: iv. *Proposals for development will . . . fully assess the impacts of any increase in Air Transport Movements on surrounding occupiers and/or local environment (in terms of noise, disturbance, air quality and climate change impacts), and identify appropriate forms of mitigation in the event significant adverse effects are identified.'*

'Mitigation' in the form of carbon credits has been discredited.

https://traveltomorrow.com/major-airline-ceo-denounces-carbon-offsetting-schemes-as-fraud/?fbclid=IwAR05dXUed4TxZOTxuQzZiLa_08uMz1twZCZCToc1XUrMFcm9l9_LcaFA1J0

'Mitigation' for noise and disturbance are woefully inadequate, say multiple witnesses.

Members of Friends of the Earth attended a number of Consultation events, first by London Luton Airport Ltd and later by Luton Rising. Several consultants from Arup and others admitted it was not possible to mitigate against the levels of climate and pollution emissions proposed.

The Government's Climate Change Committee, on IPCC scientific advice, says that there should be no further expansion at any UK airport. Bristol was allowed slightly more passengers, but Luton BC's intention for a major expansion to an airport sitting above a big town is on a different scale.

The UK has international commitments – the UN's Antonio Guterres said on 15 Jun that the world is sleepwalking to disaster, and must make radical emissions cuts in the next 7 years.

It's not only CO2 that fuels the climate crisis – jets emit hydrocarbon pollutants; jet trails turn into clouds, and water vapour in Earth's thin, vulnerable upper atmosphere cause 2-4 times the climate damage from CO2. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/mar/18/aviation-chiefs-rejected-measures-to-curb-climate-impact-of-jet-vapours>

The authors of a major study say “To maintain liveable conditions on Earth and enable stable societies, we must do everything possible to prevent crossing tipping points.” [World on brink of five 'disastrous' climate tipping points, study finds | Climate crisis | The Guardian](#)

Unlike the UK, European countries have banned internal flights. Schipol is limiting flights because of pollution, noise and climate. France and Austria only permit internal flights if you cannot do the journey by train in 3 hours. The UK is the most expensive country by far to travel by rail, and in Europe it is not much cheaper to book in advance.

Promoting airport expansion is a strong disincentive for individuals and businesses to change patterns of behaviour and try to cut their carbon footprint. Flying is a symbol, seen in the sky, of burning fossil fuels. Anyone promoting an increase in flying is on the wrong side of history.

NO action can be allowed that makes climate problems worse. All actions should be climate positive. Every flight burns fossil fuels, and will for many years. We must radically reduce this impact, and the only way is to fly less.

The DCO application runs counter to all these warnings. The time for “Improving connectivity and growth in air travel” has passed. We now have the impacts of Brexit, Covid, the Russian war in Ukraine, food banks, and acute poverty due to the ‘eat or heat’ energy crisis. Emissions must come down dramatically to prevent a succession of tipping points and runaway climate change, and we need to drive less, not more.

There is no funding for expansion, and most of the plans would be unlikely to begin in that period. The Climate Crisis will only get worse – so why spend over £60m on a DCO when this could be used to support struggling residents and to create green jobs for the future?

An Inquiry was held in autumn 2022 as to whether Luton Airport could expand from

18-19m passengers. One of the 3 inspectors had a specific remit on Climate Change.

Luton Council followed the government in declaring a Climate Emergency. It set an ambitious target of Net Zero by 2040, 10 years earlier than government. But all the good work in Luton's Net Zero Strategy, done already or recommended for the future, would be wiped out by the impact and scale of the same council's proposed airport expansion. A permanent local Climate Assembly is needed, as elsewhere, to involve local people.

In a Climate Emergency it is simply impossible to justify airport expansion. No one is calling for the airport to be closed, but the doubling of flights between 2013 and 2019 was unjustified and hugely damaging. The responsible thing to do is to put in place measures to REDUCE flights and promote holidays in UK, and train journeys to Europe.

Half the population never fly, and subsidise those who do, who don't care about the damage they cause. When every plane burns fossil fuels, adding to climate change and pollution, we don't have a right to fly. It will be decades before planes don't emit carbon & pollutants, and most people have electric vehicles. We should not be 'meeting demand', most of it generated by the aviation industry, but strictly enforcing 'demand management.'

We cannot rely on serious, destructive fires across southern Europe acting as a deterrent. Our future depends on aviation not growing but shrinking. Flying within Europe must be seen as for emergencies only. We would like to see councils telling residents that to stop flying is the biggest single thing people can do to cut their carbon footprint. Also to give advice on taking holidays in UK, seeing Europe by train, or experiencing other cultures, towns, villages and countryside en route.

<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/7/25/8881364/greta-thunberg-climate-change-flying-airline>

2 Fatal Destruction of Nature, especially one of Luton's best wildlife habitats

We are a part of and cannot survive without nature. Extinctions have increased. Biodiversity is in rapid decline. Scientists have warned of a possible collapse of nature's network that provides trees, plants, fresh air and the food we eat. Our rivers and seas are in crisis. Many people learnt during Covid how important it is for wellbeing to connect with nature.

Expansion of Luton airport would destroy a vital County Wildlife Site – described as SSSI equivalent, an unusual mosaic of habitat bordered by a strip of ancient woodland, providing an important wildlife corridor – to build a second terminal and more roads and car parks. Wigmore Park was created and landscaped by Luton Council in the 1980s over the largest landfill site in the town, as the need for recreation for people in the new Wigmore estate was considered essential. Thousands of trees were planted, when only 2 million passengers a year flew from Luton.

Mature trees are vital to absorb carbon, and each tree is a habitat for thousands of creatures. Yet 2 hectares of trees in Wigmore Park would be cut down to build Terminal 2 and car parks. There is also a plan to destroy thousands of trees either side of Airport

Way, bringing noise and pollution to hundreds of front doors. No one should have their daily quality of life made worse.

Today, with 18m in 2019, the park is a vital buffer for residents of Wigmore and beyond, reducing noise and pollution from the airport and making life bearable. When the wind is in the wrong direction, even in the park, the noise and fumes from burning aviation fuel is most unpleasant.

Luton Friends of Parks & Green Spaces (an umbrella group for Friends of Parks groups across Luton, which I chair) is signed up to the National Federation of Parks Charter. This includes *“Embed effective protection from inappropriate development or use, or loss of any part of our parks.”*

Pollution, noise and light from planes disrupts wildlife, reducing ability to feed, communicate and breed. To double these effects would accelerate the decline in wildlife. 4.1.5: *‘Assessment of impacts at ecological sites has been carried out in this ES’.*

Such studies are usually a short-term snapshot, and not regularly (eg monthly from Feb to Oct) to take account of impacts on species throughout the year. Wildlife lives and dies, metamorphoses, and moves around, through the air or using green corridors including gardens. In the early 1990s the Wildlife Trust carried out studies across the town to record wildlife. This is what is actually required to assess whether increased traffic and pollution were having adverse effects. Given the health problems for humans, the result of major expansion and loss of mature trees would be to accelerate decline in wildlife ecosystems.

The National Planning Policy Framework refers to *‘how the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution’* (Paragraph 174). The Environmental Statement by Luton Rising claims (Section 7.8) *‘to provide the mitigation that **looks to** reduce the impacts to the natural and local environment.’* This is greenwash.

3 Wigmore Valley Park – a major amenity for recreation

Wigmore is a District Park, Luton’s second biggest and most biodiverse, twice awarded by charity Fields in Trust as one of the best parks in the East of England. Luton Friends of Parks and Green Spaces, a voluntary umbrella group for Friends of Parks groups across Luton, supported by parks & countryside officers, is signed up to the National Charter for Parks. One of its principles is to protect and enhance all parks. It is the council’s responsibility to protect Wigmore Park, so there should be no development whatsoever on this park. Yet, for this expansion proposal, two-thirds of it including the valuable County Wildlife Site would be destroyed.

The park is visited by many, both local and from outside the town. People bring their visitors to this park, an Asset of Community Value recognised by nearby villages Offley and Breachwood Green.

A 'replacement park' is proposed, with different soils, that would take decades to evolve into as diverse a park as flourishes now at Wigmore. It would be much further from people's homes – indeed in the next county, Herts – and a long way to walk to. North Herts does not approve of this. The Council would be unable to replace Wigmore Park with a new park fully within Luton. Many, particularly older people who have grown up with the park, would be unable to access it, and their nearest part would have a noisy view of the airport. Most people live too far from the replacement Wigmore Park so wouldn't use it. Wigmore Valley Park must be given priority for its wildlife, size and amenity value for residents.

Luton Council has discussed with Fields in Trust a deed of dedication, aiming to protect all Luton's parks and green open spaces from development, one park each year, a ludicrous idea which would take a century. Luton is overdeveloped, so needs all its parks, and they should all be protected. Green space, beneficial to health, is unevenly distributed. 5 wards have less than the recommended levels.

*"Evidence shows that living in a greener environment can promote and protect good health, aid recovery from illness and help with managing poor health ... It is vital that the Local Plan and greenspace/green infrastructure strategy are informed by local health data, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and take a wider view of the multifaceted benefits of greenspace. **Policy:** Consider local green (and blue) space to be critical assets for maintaining and supporting health and wellbeing in local communities."*

from 'Improving access to greenspace' – Public Health England review, 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

4 Pollution: More planes mean millions more road vehicles and poorer health

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) paints a bleak picture of health in Luton. Expansion would add to already unacceptably high levels of people suffering respiratory problems in the town. Pollution ruins the lives of people with asthma, and can lead to heart attacks and strokes. To protect the health of the most vulnerable in our community, we cannot afford to return to pre-Covid levels of flying and driving. Clean air zones are hard to implement and monitor, and often not set up correctly or fairly. To improve air quality through low emission zones is a huge challenge, evidenced here.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001pt8x>

Luton is a Health authority, yet appears to prioritise airport expansion with its adverse health effects over improving public health. There have been 2 changes in Director of Public Health since Covid. Much pollution is caused by workers and tourists travelling to and from the airport, Luton's biggest employer.

The DEFRA NO2 monitoring station on the E-W A505 near junction 11 has for many years shown pollution in morning peak hours reaching 3 or 4 times the legal levels – highly dangerous for health, and close to several schools. Pollution can stunt the growth of youthful lungs and cause lifelong problems. (Also see 9)

The worst place for one's health is sitting in a vehicle in a polluted traffic corridor. Luton has a high level of drivers.

These headlines are from 2018-19, the period when Luton reached 18 million passengers, having doubled in 5 years:

Air pollution kills 40,000 a year in UK from Lung and Heart disease
Air Pollution causes 15,000 new Diabetes cases a year
Air pollution Dementia threat
Air pollution causes huge loss of Intelligence
Air pollution particles in mothers' placentas harms unborn babies
Air pollution: Greenspace nr home in childhood linked to fewer adult respiratory problems
Air pollution Children breathe toxic air at school & on school run
Air pollution – how it harms your heart
Air pollution in Luton hits illegal levels
Cleaner air from tackling climate change
Air pollution – UK govt given final warning in High Court
Air Pollution: Govt's Chief Medical Officer calls for tougher standards
UK parents 'worryingly unaware' of damage from air pollution
Air pollution linked to Alzheimer's disease
Air pollution nanoparticles linked to Brain Cancer for first time
Cutting air pollution 'can prevent deaths within weeks'

Four reports found Luton to be the most polluted town:

British Heart Foundation 5 Dec 2019 - Luton residents breathe some of the most polluted air in the East of England

Universities of Birmingham and Lancaster 20 Dec 2019 - Luton has worst air pollution in UK

Centre for Cities annual study 28 Jan 2020 - Luton has the highest number of deaths from air pollution in the East of England

British Lung Foundation (BLF) and Asthma UK 11 Feb 2021 - Dangerously high levels of toxic air in Luton putting elderly at risk

5 Luton is the wrong place for a major airport

The airport sits above a densely populated town, most people living in a valley where pollution gathers on windless days. This may have been fairly harmless when passenger numbers were 2-3m a year. Now it is the town's major health hazard. Many in South Luton and Slip End have reported greasy dust coating surfaces in their homes and gardens.

Luton saw the fastest airport expansion in UK, doubling from 9 to 18m passengers in 5 years between 2014 and 2019, instead of 15 years as promised

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-63080979> bringing the fastest growing amount of traffic accessing it. As aviation was the fastest growing source of climate emissions, this made Luton the fastest growing source of emissions in the UK.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-54090352>

As almost nothing was done by the council to mitigate these effects, it is our strong view that 'green controlled growth' referred to in documents and on Luton Rising's website **see 12** is greenwash. Permission to expand would bring Luton back to worst polluted town and fastest growing source of climate emissions.

That Luton is the wrong place for a major airport is demonstrated by the on-street parking, causing a nuisance to residents, which could not take place at Stansted or Gatwick.

6 New roads against local plan (2017)

Luton's DCO proposal contravenes government and Luton Local Plan requirements (eg on rat-runs, leisure space, noise, destruction of parks and green space and fly-parking). A new junction would take airport traffic from outside the local area through Wigmore Park into Eaton Green road, **against the Local Plan**, and through residential areas, creating a new major route to the airport, causing rat-runs past 3 schools. This includes around 10 new traffic lights which would increase pollution and danger, and would adversely affect quality of life. Lessons about air quality and health from 2018-19 have not been learned.

The council has failed to increase cycling – the town was traditionally the home of Vauxhall, and cycling is not part of the culture of many ethnic groups living here. Against a clear need for sub-regional East-West rail to reduce vehicle journeys, the council pushed through a local Luton-Dunstable busway, which means that nearly all east-west journeys are by road.

Friends of the Earth placed 9 diffusion tubes for a month at various junctions near the airport. Lab results (rounded down to allow for any error) revealed NO2 levels near or exceeding legal levels, including a major school walking route for pupils. (Also see 6)

The NPPF refers to how sustainable transport should be focused on to help reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality (Paragraph 105). Luton BC has done almost nothing towards this while doubling airport passengers between 1913 and 1919, which vastly increased road traffic and gave Luton the title of 'worst polluted town'. The council has lost public trust, so anything claimed by its company run by councillors, Luton Rising, is not credible.

7 Car spaces and travel would increase by over 50%

To reduce climate emissions, pollution, noise congestion, inconvenience, and to improve health and quality of life, we must cut car travel, not increase it. These car spaces would be filled by a massive jump in vehicles from outside the borough, and their impacts would be far greater than those of the 18m passengers which made Luton the most polluted town.

We have heard from many residents about people who are inconvenienced by those who park cars in residential roads to avoid parking charges at the airport.

8 Noise and dust would increase, cause stress and health effects

For three years running, from 2017 to 2019, those living below flightpaths endured more noise than is permitted. In Luton, the main people affected are those in South ward, but this had adverse effects on those within a 15 mile radius. Constant aircraft noise both day and night is relentless for those in South Luton or in nearby boroughs under flight paths. Sleep deprivation can have serious health effects and badly affects quality of life and health. This must not be made worse! Not nearly enough time is allowed for sleep – Luton airport's night schedule, including cargo flights, is worse than Heathrow.

Since Covid, more people work from home. This is hard when your thoughts, and online conversations, must compete with frequent plane noise. 'Compensation' for all this in the form of double glazing is inadequate in amount, and useless in warm months. If air conditioning is used this adds to climate impacts. A Cutenhoe Rd resident says: "Take-off noise drowns out the human voice, TV & radio programmes. On landing, the amount of soot & dust created covers my greenhouse and any washing hung out to dry."

9 Economy - local and national

Local Economy - Effect of airport-induced congestion

Morning airport traffic queues back up already on to the slip-road and on to the M1 at junction 10, and cause congestion around Junction 11, near 4 schools. Congestion affects local people and others travelling through, trying to reach their workplaces but trapped in congestion. Every minute in a queue is a minute lost from working hours, as well as from personal time. Pollution affects health, and increases time off work.

There are many scientific studies showing that a health society needs a healthy balance between economy, environment, and health & social wellbeing. It is clear that Luton Council prioritises income above all else.

On 8 Oct 2018, at a public meeting, I said to the council leader:

Today the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has produced the most serious and apocalyptic report I've ever seen. The United Nations says we have 12 years to radically change the behaviour of individuals, companies, govt and councils.

Business as usual is not an option.

Because it is the fastest growing UK airport, causing many millions more flights and car journeys, Luton is the fastest growing source of climate change in the UK.

This is already killing people around the world, and also killing local people with air pollution. We are now 4th most congested UK town.

Luton council just lent £300m to London Luton Airport Ltd, putting increased income before residents' health, environment & social wellbeing.

A Green New Deal would prioritise positive projects that cut fossil fuel use.

Will the council leader commit tonight to STOP irresponsibly expanding the airport?

The council leader replied: “**No – economic growth won’t stop.**”

So the council’s plan is to carry on towards the cliff edge.

National economy - Airport growth hinders UK growth and productivity

There is a huge disparity between what is spent by visitors to UK and UK residents’ spending abroad – this costs the UK economy billions every year.

Example: Overseas residents spent £3.0 billion in the UK in Aug 2022, and £3.1 billion in the UK in Jul 2022. UK residents spent £8.1 billion while overseas in Aug 2022, and £6.2 billion on visits overseas in Jul 2022.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/bulletins/overseastravelandtourism/julyandaugust2022provisionalresults>

<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/17/airport-expansion-no-boost-productivity-growth-report?fbclid=IwAR2ZXDXWcZINqDbwZ5KxekWYzLjDet6oENenDIM9WJPwePPwru6nBCa0uCo>

10 Luton’s largest Landfill Site to be dug up ‘at high risk’ – consultants

This huge landfill contains decades of unregulated waste including WWII weaponry.

To develop buildings and roads on such sites has been shown at other landfills to cause big problems. In reports commissioned by LBC it was described by consultants including Arup as ‘high risk’. It can lead to subsidence, needing repair to roads and buildings; to a build-up of methane and other toxic air in buildings which can lead to sickness, fire and explosion; and deep piling can disturb toxins below which could leach, in this case, to a very wide catchment and pollute drinking water and rivers including the Lea and the Mimram.

To remove huge amounts of material would mean a great many HGV journeys close to homes over many months. The decision to take it elsewhere is questionable – which council is likely to welcome it? Having destroyed the biodiverse habitat which has evolved above the water-retaining clay cap, this would lower ground level considerably - where would all the material come from to replace it? This is not ‘sustainable development’.

11 DART link from Luton Parkway station will not reduce road traffic

While the M1 is affected by airport traffic, much also comes from east or west. Luton Council’s hopes to achieve Gatwick levels of public transport use are futile. Even if a slight modal shift were achieved (adding to already overcrowded trains), any environmental benefit would be quickly overwhelmed by the extra number of passengers, causing worse problems than in 2019. It was commissioned, and building began, with the intention of reaching a Terminal 2 before the public knew about the plan. This goes totally against the principle of local democracy.

12 Luton Rising website claims about mitigation are unproven greenwash

‘Green controlled growth’ (GCG) is the term used to claim pioneering initiatives.

This website is bursting with hypocrisy. Luton Council and its airport company run by councillors has a poor track record on delivering green successes – it has focused for the last decade and more on the airport, and is way behind many other councils.

Against government policy, the council ignores the impact of planes in the sky and the traffic airport expansion brings into the town. One is prompted to ask who had the nerve - or stupidity - to write on the LR website "One airport, one community, one planet."

GCG is not a legal term, with legal boundaries. All activities listed relate to airport activities on the ground, not in the sky, where most climate emissions are generated; and little is likely to be done about private vehicles or contractors travelling to the airport. If development were permitted, control of GCG would pass to the operator, a private consortium of companies operating for profit, who would not be answerable to law. The council itself has shown it prioritises money from airport growth over the needs of residents and people under flightpaths, so there could be no guarantee that meaningful mitigation would be provided. (Also see 2 above)

See <https://stay-grounded.org/greenwashing/> + <https://stay-grounded.org/green-flying-report/>

13 Conflict of interests - Airport income not mainly for benefit of residents

There has been concern for some years (Bim Afolami MP has complained about this on behalf of his constituents) that Luton's ownership of the airport and its company Luton Rising (previously London Luton Airport Ltd) causes a conflict of interests. The directors are councillors. Airport ownership is a privilege other councils do not have. It might be acceptable if Luton was seen to be impartial, but airport policy has largely been made in private, with no internal opposition, allowing opportunities for commercial benefit of LBC and the operator to the detriment of residents.

Money spent on the airport is money not spent (except for a few community groups) for the benefit of all local residents – the main role of a local authority. Airport income has become a temptation for those running the council to act like a corporate. This affects residents' health, quality of life, convenience (time stuck in traffic cuts both employment and personal time; a pollution corridor is the worst place to be to breathe in killer fumes).

Many unwaged or low-waged people would suffer from the multiple effects of an expanded airport. See 4.

There is an irrational conflict between the council owning and promoting the airport and its expansion, and carrying out a Net Zero Roadmap, encouraging behaviour change to reduce impact on the Climate Emergency, eg people to burn less fossil fuels, travel less, buy local, buy less (especially from the far side of the world), eat less meat, reduce waste and plastics. Flying (the biggest annual carbon footprint for many) must be cut sharply.

The Local Government Association states "It isn't a consultation unless it's impartial". But two consultations, by London Luton Airport Ltd, then Luton Rising (a PR exercise name change) featured questionnaires full of leading questions designed to get answers the council wanted, and gave no option to say 'No expansion'.

The Local Government Association: *"Consultation involves listening to and learning*

from local people **before decisions are made or priorities are set.**” But the recent ‘consultation’ was a sham, so **did not fulfil the statutory requirement as part of its application for a Development Consent Order** for Luton Council to consult on its plan to expand the airport to 32m passengers. The council leader emailed all council staff, copying a promotional letter from the CEO of its own airport company Luton Rising, urging them to talk to people and promote expansion.

You will have seen the resignation letter (sent in by Chris Haden) from councillor and barrister Anne Donelan describing infighting and bad practice within Luton Council.

Further evidence of lack of democracy is in the attached document submitted by FoE in April 2019, ***Material Considerations***. This submission lists National and Local Plan policies that have been ignored, and a ***Balance of Harm***, demonstrating that the undesirable factors of expansion massively outweigh any desirable factors.

In every decision, Luton should be asking:

- 1) *Are we looking after nature?*
- 2) *Are we adding to the climate crisis?*
- 3) *Are we helping or hurting the health & wellbeing of local citizens and people elsewhere?*

14 Jobs claims unlikely, poorly paid, and green jobs needed

Jobs and economic benefits have been consistently overstated. Jobs are mainly low-paid, zero-hours contracts requiring unsocial hours. When giving itself permission in 2014 to expand from 9 to 18m passengers – which was reached by 2019 instead of 2028 as promised – LBC said that for every million more passengers there would be 1000 more jobs. When they reached 18m passengers, many jobs had come and gone, but there had been almost **NO** overall jobs despite doubling passenger levels. There were also many complaints from passengers that the airport was not pleasant to use, as it had been when smaller. The promise of 11,000 new jobs is therefore highly speculative, if not laughable.

15 Covid lessons not learned

The pandemic was a wake-up call – a once in a generation chance to learn lessons in changing behaviour, including our need for contact with nature. Now vested interests with thoughts only on money are in a race to go back to as destructive habits as possible. Luton Council aims for Zero Poverty by 2040. Covid has killed 800 in Luton – each one is to have a tree planted in their memory – and left many with health after-effects. Increased pollution from planes and traffic, coupled with current financial pressures, will add to the high level of health problems in the borough, leaving more people in poverty, not fewer.

David Oakley-Hill

Co-ordinator, Luton Friends of the Earth

(also Chair, Luton Friends of Parks and Green Spaces, although this submission does not claim to represent their views)

Attachments

- **FoE response to government call-in** of application to expand from 18 to 19 million passengers

- **Material Considerations** This document shows the process Luton BC has pursued leading up to the DCO to be flawed in many ways. It shows where Luton has not followed national guidance or its own local Plan, and where it has withheld information or misled the people of Luton, betraying public trust. It also shows the *Balance of Harm* – how undesirable factors considerably outweigh desirable ones

FoE – David Oakley-Hill speech at Wigmore public meeting 11 Apr 2023

FoE – The Good Council's Charter + Airport revised 27 Jan 2023

FoE – response to Luton Rising consultation 4 Apr 2022

FoE – David Oakley-Hill speech to Council 30 Nov 2021

FoE – letter to Luton News 7 Jun 2020

FoE – press release 27 Feb 2020

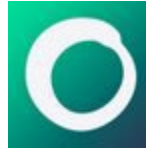
Friends of Wigmore Park press release 19 Sep 2019

FoE – David Oakley-Hill speech to Development Control 27 Mar 2019

FoE – Century & Wigmore Park response part 2 23 Aug 2018

FoE – Century & Wigmore Park response part 1 28 Feb 2018

FoE response to government call-in



Friends of the Earth

To [REDACTED]@planninginspectorate.gov.uk PINS REF: APP/B0230/V/22/3296455

**FoE Response to Government Call-in of Planning Application 21/00031/VARCON
by London Luton Airport Operations Ltd (LLAOL) to expand from 18 to 19m passengers**
23 May 2022

Please **reject** the application to increase passenger capacity to 19 million and to increase noise contour limits.

Attached documents are all part of FoE evidence:

30 Nov 2021 FoE verbal evidence – 8 reasons (in 4 mins) why we must not expand the airport
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRwnTEdegI8> 2hrs 51 mins in *(also many good points made by others)*
17 Feb 2021 FoE objection to application 21/00031/VARCON
2 July 2021 Objection to Variation of conditions to Planning Permission 15/00950/VARCON (13 Oct 2017) to accommodate 19 million passengers per annum and amend day/night noise contours

4 Apr 2022 FoE response to 'Luton Rising' consultation on expansion from 18-32m passengers
17 Feb 2022 FoE article in Luton News <https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/environment/luton-friends-of-the-earth-warn-climate-action-plan-positives-will-be-wiped-out-by-airport-expansion-3573012?fbclid=IwAR3Qaal8FbVMQBu1Eo0EHmHvMPyBmrCPjOXyj3NzsbDii2umbnHx17NIYWM>
14 Feb 2022 Joint letter to local press from Luton and N Herts FoE
10 Feb 2022 FoE press release: 'It isn't a consultation unless it's impartial' (quotes LGA on consultations)
4 Feb 2022 Letter from Hazel Simmons, LBC leader, to all employees enclosing letter from Graham Olver, CEO, Luton Rising *(FoE comments in red)*
5 Jan 2022 LFPGS objection to lease Wigmore Park to Luton Rising *note policy objections*
4 Jan 2022 FoE objection to leasing of Wigmore Park to Luton Rising
Dec 2019 FoE response to consultation on expansion from 18-32m passengers
9 Apr 2019 FoE response to application 17/02300/EIA Road through airport & Wigmore *Material considerations*
27 Mar 2019 D Oakley-Hill speech to Development Control – Road through airport, Climate & Pollution
11 Oct 2018 FoE response (part 2) to 17/02300/EIA
23 Aug 2018 FoE response to revised application 17/02300/EIA – Climate and Pollution
Mar 2018 FoE comments on LBC internal advice note from case officer. (It was later claimed these issues had been 'dealt with'. They have not. If 19m is permitted, many or all of the serious omissions listed are likely to be carried forward in the plan to move towards 32m passengers.)
28 Feb 2018 FoE response (part 1) to 17/02300/EIA
Jan 2018 FoE letter to Michael Gove on air pollution and airport expansion

The Call-in was for **Environmental** and **Procedural** grounds.

FoE strongly objects on both these grounds, as outlined below and supported by previous objections attached and listed above.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS

Climate emergency

Rapid climate change is the biggest threat the world faces – the most important issue in the world.

Approval of airport expansion ignores the urgent need to act on climate change, as required by :

– Government

COP26 – UK must follow through, achieve annual targets and set examples to other countries.

Climate Change Committee said there should be no airport expansion; and that the UK should take a leading role in cutting emissions from the sector. Slightly more efficient planes are not the answer – commercial and freight flights will be burning fossil fuels for many years. Neither are ‘offsets’.

Government loaned Luton Borough Council (LBC) £35m, after an initial Covid bail-out of 45m, on condition that Luton reduce reliance on the airport. This is incompatible with expansion.

Yet Luton airport passenger levels in April 2022 have already returned to 2019 levels.

The government can help. Far more is spent abroad by people from Britain flying abroad than by visitors to the UK, so this has a £multi-billion adverse effect on the British economy, with inflation currently around 9%. Tourism in Britain needs all the help it can get.

See *Planning Policy and Solutions* below.

– Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The 2022 IPCC report says half the global population faces serious flooding, “deadly heat” and an “unlivable” environment, and is likely to migrate. There will be global food and water shortages. Over 1 billion people will flee coastal cities.

Everyone is urged to act to cut fossil fuel use to reduce the impacts of climate change for our children.

IPCC’s worst case scenario - we are now on course to reach 1.5 degrees of warming by 2030: heatwaves, wildfires, drought and flooding, causing deforestation, multiple tipping points, food shortages and conflicts, threatening human civilisation and ecosystems worldwide.

The IPCC says that to reverse this requires major behavioural change, degrowth and rapid phase-out of fossil fuels, with massive investments in onshore renewable energy. People must travel less, and use the most efficient methods, helped by demand management, eg frequent flyer tax to switch people to trains, and rapid introduction of affordable EV as in Norway.

– UN

Antonio Guterres has made frequent statements with increasing urgency about the worldwide threats from climate change that are already apparent. We have a very small window in which to move rapidly to reduce these threats by cutting fossil fuel use and stopping extraction completely of coal, oil and gas before the damage caused is irrecoverable and condemns out children to a very hard future.

Aviation industry

The aviation industry has missed all but one of its climate targets since 2000.

Aviation accounted for about 7% of the UK’s total greenhouse gas emissions in 2017.

Instead of focusing on providing a good service, the industry strongly promotes more air travel.

1% of English residents take one-fifth of overseas flights (DoT survey 2019). The 10% most frequent flyers in England took over half of all international flights in 2018. Yet 48% of the population did not fly abroad, many for reasons of conscience, but were in effect subsidising the frequent flyers, who pay nothing towards the environmental damage they cause.

Airlines cannot be left to regulate their own carbon emissions. There will be no fossil-free flights for at least 15 years. Meanwhile every flight adds to climate change.

Tyndall Centre: *“Reducing CO₂ intensity in the aviation sector would be insufficient without some form of demand management, including behavioural changes (Graham et al, 2014), showing the importance of level 4 for the 1.5°C goal. Alternative energy sources, including low-carbon electricity, are not readily available for typical civilian aircraft, given the crucial role of safety in aircraft design, practicalities associated with low fleet turnover rates and propulsive power requirements for large aircraft. Therefore, a modal shift away from air transport, for example to trains, is the main option to deliver further large reductions in CO₂ emissions (Bows-Larkin, 2015).”*

Planning policy

The Planning Inspectorate should respond to urgent calls from the IPCC, UN and Tyndall, and ask for government to ensure its climate strategy is effective, by including in law a frequent flyer tax to deter people who fuel climate change, allowing each citizen one tax-free flight, say, every 2 years. But they would pay progressively higher taxes on each extra flight.

At the same time, rail fares must be sharply cut to encourage train travel, to levels seen across Europe. This fair and progressive policy is now **very urgent**, as flights from Luton in April 2022 have returned to 2019 levels. Also, to meet the crisis described by the IPCC, far fewer flights and lower maximum passenger numbers should be brought in at all airports.

This climate-friendly policy is the reverse of what Luton BC approved on 1 December 2021.

Solutions

Every single commercial flight over the next 15 years will burn fossil fuels and create jet trails which turn to cloud, trapping heat and adding to the climate emergency. This must be curtailed urgently, and before flying creeps back to pre-Covid levels.

The ADEPT priorities are: (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport)

1. **Invest in low carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure including public transport, renewable energy and EV charging.**
2. **Support reskilling, retraining and research to accelerate the move to a net zero economy.**
3. **Upgrade our homes to ensure they are fit for the future.**
4. **Make it easy for people to walk, cycle and work remotely.**
5. **Accelerate tree planting, peatland restoration, green spaces and other green infrastructure.**

Simple measures might include:

- a far lower, not higher cap at Luton airport and elsewhere
- a Frequent Flyer Levy to deter rich people who like to fly often, fuelling the climate crisis despite the consequences for their children's generation. This could allow each citizen one tax-free flight, say, once every 3 years. But they would pay increasingly higher taxes on each extra flight. (Sweden and Germany already tax flights.)
- tax tickets that are below cost price and do not account for environmental damage
- prevent or tax flights that have more than 10% seats empty
- tax jet fuel
- rail fares should be sharply cut to encourage train travel, to levels seen across Europe.
- switching to Electric Vehicles is urgent (see Norway model).
- behavioural change and reducing demand for high carbon activities including supply chains
- encouragement should be given for planning carbon-neutral projects, and partnerships with businesses that offer a green recovery from the pandemic.

Pollution, congestion and health grounds

The application risks the health of people in Luton. The Government and local councils have obligations to cut pollution and protect health.

LBC's own 2017 report stated that the death of 86 residents a year were attributed to air pollution. Two separate reports in 2019 found Luton to be the most polluted town in UK. In 2021 Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation stated that every Luton care home exceeds the WHO safe levels of pollution.* This was due to the fastest growing airport in the UK, and the fastest growing amount of traffic accessing it. Passenger numbers had doubled from 9 to 18m in 5yrs. (18m was not supposed to be reached until 2028.)

A plateau above the densely populated town of Luton (5 wards have less than the recommended levels of green space) is simply the wrong place for a major airport – it is on a hill above valley, trapping pollution. This may have been acceptable before passenger numbers rose above 3 million in the late 1990s, but not when they have grown to 18 million.

A DEFRA monitoring station shows that pollution levels in early morning peak hours on the A505 near the M1 (the time people are driving or taking taxis to the airport) often reached THREE or FOUR TIMES the legal limit over several years as airport passenger numbers grew from 9 to 18 million. This is hardly surprising, as for every extra million passengers, the majority were travelling to the airport by road. A pollution corridor is the worst place to be for health. Local people get caught up in airport traffic. This is bad for the local economy, as time in queues affects both hours at work and people's free time.

Luton has for some years had worrying respiratory health problems (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). It has a predominantly poor and diverse population who cannot afford private treatment.

Poor health increases hardship and poverty, and the NHS crisis must not be added to.

It is vital that Health is not made worse by increasing pollution.

Noise

For three years running, from 2017 to 2019, those living below flightpaths endured more noise than is permitted. In Luton, the main people affected are those in South ward, but this had adverse effects on those within a 15 mile radius. The night window with no flights is far too short to allow people a proper 8-hour sleep, and sleep deprivation can have serious health effects. Compensation for double glazing does not help for half the year when windows are open and people want to enjoy their gardens.

Wigmore Valley Park

We must protect, not destroy nature.

If expansion were permitted, airport car parks and other developments would follow which would destroy a vital County Wildlife Site, described by the Wildlife Trust as equivalent to SSSI status.

Over 2 hectares of mature trees planted by the council in the 1980s, and area loved by local people, would be felled.

Supporting a surprising amount of bioversity including thousands of orchids, Wigmore is Luton's second largest park, a District Park, Area of Local Landscape Value and Asset of Community Value, registered with LBC for their inhabitants by Kings Walden and Offley parish councils. In 2019 it was voted best park in Bedfordshire and among the best 13 in East Anglia, receiving a Fields in Trust award.

It was created in the 1980s over the town's biggest landfill site in recognition of the need for a large recreation area for the inhabitants of the newly built Wigmore estate, paid for by the developers, and thoughtfully landscaped with thousands of trees planted, becoming greatly valued and connecting families with nature. As the airport expanded in the 1990s, it became important as a noise and pollution barrier between homes and the airport, and developed into an unusual mosaic of wildlife habitat.

This is the correct way to deal with old landfills. A parallel application (17/02300) has been approved for a business park on the same site as the Development Consent Order (on which over £50 million has already been spent), proposed for a second airport terminal and expansion from 18 to 32m passengers. LBC has outlined a 2 or 3-stage plan to expand beyond 19m to 21.5m or more, perhaps bypassing the DCO, which would expand beyond the airport boundary by building car parks on the CWS. Further incremental development would disturb the toxic landfill.

If the government and Planning Inspectorate were to allow the 19m currently applied for, this would give the green light for further expansion, avoiding a DCO, despite major environmental threats.

It has approved, but cannot afford, a major road through the airport, too big just for the business park, but which would enable the Terminal 2 development. *(see attachments)*

In a climate emergency, with inadequate plans even to reduce emissions elsewhere in the town, this is astonishing.

To develop buildings and roads on such sites has been shown on other landfill sites to cause major problems. In reports commissioned by LBC it was described by consultants including Arup as 'high risk'. It can lead to subsidence, needing repair to roads and buildings; to a build-up of methane and other toxic air in buildings which can lead to sickness, fire and explosion; and deep piling can disturb toxins below which could leach, in this case, to a very wide catchment and pollute drinking water and rivers including the Lea and the Mimram.

Development proposed of a second terminal or business park on the park would bring noise & pollution closer to homes, considerably reduce the local recreation area and destroy the CWS. A 'replacement park' has been proposed which would be further from homes, a long way to walk to, and which would take decades, if ever, to develop equivalent biodiversity. It would be over the border in Herts, which may not give permission.

PROCEDURAL GROUNDS

Conflict of interests

There has been concern for some years (Bim Afolami MP has complained about this on behalf of his constituents) that Luton's ownership of the airport and its company Luton Rising (previously London Luton Airport Ltd) causes a conflict of interests. The directors are councillors. Airport ownership is a privilege other councils do not have. It might be acceptable if Luton was seen to be impartial, but airport policy has largely been made in private, with no internal opposition, allowing opportunities for commercial benefit of LBC and the operator to the detriment of residents.

This has led in recent years to rapid and unsustainable expansion, making Luton the UK's fastest growing source of climate emissions and a town with the highest levels of pollution, with serious effects on health and traffic congestion including unwanted parking, and on the local economy, and threatens

Wigmore Valley Park, the town's second biggest park and an important County Wildlife Site bordering the urban area.

Luton Friends of the Earth was a founder member of Friends of Wigmore Park in 2017 when the threat to the park became apparent, and sits on its committee. The conflict of commercial and political arrangements are outlined in the response from Friends of Wigmore Park.

Local and national planning policies contravened

This application is directly linked to two other applications which go against the National Planning Policy Framework in several respects, including the requirement for climate emissions and noise to be reduced, not increased. Its related applications also contravene government and Luton Local Plan requirements (eg on rat-runs, leisure space, noise, destruction of parks and green space and fly-parking).

See [**Material Considerations**](#) attached

We suggest **Luton has failed to comply with Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations** because it has not assessed the greenhouse gas impacts of burning fossil fuels on the UK's Net Zero target; and **failed to follow the NPPF** by not assessing greenhouse gas emissions from flights and traffic.

Finance policy

Luton is in financial trouble and in considerable debt, because it chose to ignore the strong advice from the planning panel overseeing the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy inquiry in 2004 that they should not "put all their eggs in the airport basket". Any accountant would advise that this was poor business planning, and they should work to achieve a balanced portfolio.

Attempting to further expand the airport would add to this.

By contrast, the Local Government Association has said that if Luton follows good practice elsewhere, it could have 1600 green (carbon neutral or positive) jobs by 2030. We have yet to see any signs of efforts to develop partnerships that might achieve this.

Luton Council, severely in debt, now plans to spend over £600,000 on a public inquiry investigating whether they should be given permission to go ahead with a development which contravenes national policy, and which could lead to permission to contravene several NPPF and Local Plan policies in pursuit of profit. This is a further diversion of taxpayers' money.

Invalid Masterplan

Since the government announcement in May 2021 that aviation and shipping must be included in all planning decisions, Luton's Airport Masterplan has been out of date, making approval on 1 Dec invalid. Plans are either inadequate or non-existent to tackle the **99%** of climate emissions due to the airport (**51%** from planes in the air and **48%** from surface transport). The website for Luton Rising, LBC's airport company, is largely a wish list based on unachievable aspirations, not targeted or effective action plans with dates and figures showing how emissions would be cut year on year. That is because it cannot be done. Consultants including Arup said at consultation events in 2018 that it was impossible to mitigate against the levels of climate change and pollution this level of expansion would cause.

In every decision, Luton should be asking:

- 1) *Are we looking after nature?*
- 2) *Are we adding to the climate crisis?*
- 3) *Are we helping or hurting the health & wellbeing of both local citizens and people elsewhere?*

But clearly the council has not been asking these questions, or trying to move to a balanced and greener economy, instead focusing on airport income. It is remarkable that even Covid has not diverted them from this cul-d-sac, and they proposed spending £600,000 that they do not possess on fighting this case.

The few questions raised at the Town Hall by councillors on 31 Nov 2021 were simply pathetic, compared to the impressive array of informed objectors who had spent much personal time preparing statements due to genuine concern. Councillors were simply going through the motions, as they had already decided the outcome.

Jobs

Jobs and economic benefits have been consistently overstated. Jobs are mainly low-paid, zero-hours contracts requiring unsocial hours. When giving itself permission in 2014 to expand from 9 to 18m passengers – which was reached by 2019 instead of 2028 as promised – LBC said that for every million more passengers there would be 1000 more jobs. When they reached 18m passengers, many jobs had come and gone, but there had been **NO** overall jobs despite doubling passenger levels. There were also many complaints from passengers that the airport was not pleasant to use as it had been when smaller.

The DART

A costly 'rapid transit' from Luton Parkway station to the airport is being built to replace the existing airport bus service. However, the 'Dart effect' way has been overestimated – the tiny percentage increase in passengers going by train to the airport would be overwhelmed by the increase in passenger numbers if airlines are not required to stop fuelling demand. It was clearly designed to be extended to a future second terminal, pre-empting the DCO application.

Related applications on the same site

LBC made simultaneous applications which they claimed were unrelated – for a major road through the airport and to build a business park on Wigmore Valley Park, now a vital CWS but over a former landfill. The road would have an exit through the park to Wigmore, against the Local Plan. This road was clearly a major project, too large and costly for the business park. LBC did not admit to the public for 18 months (Jan 2017 – summer 2018) that the road would give access to a second terminal.

* 4 reports on air pollution in Luton -

LBC

<https://democracy.luton.gov.uk/cm5public/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=hxY08tBWtxpLsz4ruBp4K2WuleZuuOZ9ZLsywTJcyML89d54v0mlhQ%3D%3D&rUzwRPf%2BZ3zd4E7Ikn8Lyw%3D%3D=pwRE6AGJFLDNIh225F5QMaQWCTPHwdhUfCZ%2FLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3D%3D&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9IXnlg%3D%3D=hFfIUdN3100%3D&kCx1AnS9%2FpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3D%3D=hFfIUdN3100%3D&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2BAJvYtyA%3D%3D=ctNJff55vVA%3D&FgPIIEJYlotS%2BYGoBi5oIA%3D%3D=NHdURQburHA%3D&d9Qji0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJff55vVA%3D&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJff55vVA%3D&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCPMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJff55vVA%3D>

British Heart Foundation

<https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2019-12-05/luton-residents-breathe-some-of-the-most-polluted-air-in-the-east-of-england-study-shows>

British Lung Foundation

<https://inews.co.uk/news/environment/luton-named-as-having-worst-air-pollution-in-uk-city-layout-377151>

Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation

[Dangerously high levels of toxic air in Luton putting elderly at risk - Bedfordshire Live](#)

Material considerations



Planning application 17/02300/EIA

Dual carriageway through Luton Airport & New Century Park (part of Luton Enterprise Zone)

Material considerations

9 April 2019

On Mar 26 2019, Luton BC CEO Hazel Simmons wrote: *“as can be seen in the Agenda, the recommendation in Clause C (page 29) is to resolve to grant permission subject to referral to the Secretary of State following the expiry of the further consultation period. As such, further comments can be made until the April closing date and these will be reviewed prior to referral of the application.”*

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

This application is NOT in accordance with Local Plan, so should NOT have been recommended for approval or passed by councillors. If Material Considerations were considered a reason for approval, it is our contention that these are outweighed by further Material Considerations.

Attachments which form part of this response:

- 1 FoE response to Century & Wigmore Park application Pt 1
- 2 FoE response to Century & Wigmore Park application Pt 2
- 3 FoE spoken response on 27 Mar 2019 transcript
- 4 Carolyn Cottier spoken response on 27 Mar 2019 transcript
- 5 Lawrence Patterson spoken response on 27 Mar 2019 transcript
- 6 LLAL Scoping Report Vol 1 28 Mar 2019 7 LLAL Scoping Report Vol 2 28 Mar 2019
<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/expansion-of-london-luton-airport/?ipcsection=docs>
- 8 David Gurtler internal briefing Mar 2018 – summary with FoE comments
Link to Dev Control agenda 27 Mar 2019 including David Gurtler report (C Park pp26-342) <http://tinyurl.com/yxj6nb3j>
- Link to 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report <https://tinyurl.com/yxdqlouv>
- 9 Defra charts from 2015 and 2018 showing high air pollution
- 10 Carolyn Cottier comments to N Herts on Air Pollution in Luton
- 11 Air pollution in Luton hits illegal levels *published in Luton Herald 21 June 2018*

It is FoE’s contention that points 1-11 below are Material Considerations.

The application should not be passed for the following reasons:

- 1) It should not be an EIA application, but a DCO (Development Consent Order).**
- 2) NPPF (Feb 2019): Law on ‘Determining applications’ is contravened**
- 3) The balance of harm has been ignored.**

- 4) Ten ways Luton Council hid information from or misled the people it represents, throughout the period of this application, betraying public trust.
- 5) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on considering development proposals *Also see Section 12 below*
- 6) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on conserving and enhancing biodiversity and the natural environment
- 7) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on promoting healthy and safe communities
- 8) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on making effective use of land
- 9) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on air pollution, and in view of recent knowledge, to act, on serious health grounds
- 10) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on climate change, and national momentum on need to act on climate
- 11) LLAL's publication (28 March 2019) ***Future Luton: making best use of our runway - statements and intentions must be taken into account*** (attachments 6 and 7)
- 12) The application fails, judged on criteria of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal
- 13) Comments made by FoE to the Inclusive Growth Commission

It is our contention that Friends of the Earth's objections alone are enough to refuse the application on many grounds. Little has changed since Mr Gurtler's damning internal advice In Mar 2018, except that a second airport terminal has been proposed for the same site.

We strongly believe that the unprecedented number of concerns expressed, often with great passion, in letters from over 400 objectors are not given sufficient weight.

In the Development Control agenda, (pp137-342) **over 200 pages are devoted to summaries in 6pt type of people's heartfelt objections. This tells the council that what it's planning has an unprecedented degree of unpopularity and would NOT be representing the town's residents.**

Dev Control agenda p204: "This is a wonderful public space and it would be a tragedy to lose it."

"I have used this park all my life, to take the dogs for a walk and meet up with friends after school and during half terms. The park has encouraged children to become individuals and to learn so much about nature and the environment in their local surroundings and for everyone to meet new people."

1) It should not be an EIA application, but a DCO (Development Consent Order).

New Century Park, and the dual carriageway through the airport to access it, is part of LTN Enterprise Zone, designated in 2015. It meets all the criteria for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) in PPG rules and under The Planning Act 2008 Section 14 as quoted in the attached evidence by Carolyn Cottier.

The application is for a 1.6 mile dual carriageway through the airport to Wigmore Park and Century Park fields, occupying the same footprint as the plan being proposed by the same applicant for major airport expansion (attachments 6 & 7). It should therefore be a DCO and must be looked at in great detail by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Replying to Carolyn Cottier on 26 Mar 2019, LBC CEO Hazel Simmons said:

"In terms of the application being considered as part of the DCO process, the application was submitted in January 2018 and the DCO process has not formally commenced. As such, there is no planning reason not to determine the application in current form at this time, indeed failure to do so could result in legal action being taken by the applicants or appealing against non-determination of the application."

The applicant is LLAL, an offshoot of Luton Borough Council which the council set up, with the same CEO and staffed by councillors. LBC has loaned LLAL £500m. The application was submitted by LLAL to LBC. The likelihood of legal action being taken by the applicants is zero.

LLAL's 2-volume publication 'Future Luton' demonstrates that the DCO process is well under way, and Luton has done a lot of work on it. The Century / Wigmore Park application is on the same land, and national planning guidance Mrs Cottier quoted at the Development Control meeting on 27 Mar 2019 (attached) shows that its size and scale fully qualifies it as a DCO (Development Consent Order) application, rather than an EIA application, which receives less scrutiny.

The development is 94.70 hectares – (see application completed by David Gurtler at https://planning.luton.gov.uk/online-applications/files/BF4D91F5C5DB7E2D057C233C81606BFD/pdf/17_02300_EIA-Application_Form-688399.pdf)

See attached transcript of evidence given on 27 Mar by Carolyn Cottier.

Under the Planning Act 2008 Section 14, the PA17/02300/EIA application is highway-related development as defined in sub-section 1 of this Act and in Section 22, sub-sections 1 and 5, and it is of the size that categorises it by description and size as a highway-related NSIP.

PA17/02300/EIA is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NISIP). It must be submitted and dealt with as a Development Consent Order (DCO), or withdrawn.

If this is an EIA or DCO application, it contravenes Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32014L0052>

(1) which has harmonised the principles for the Environmental Impact Assessment of projects by introducing minimum requirements, with regard to the type of projects subject to assessment, the main obligations of developers, the content of the assessment and the participation of the competent authorities and the public, and it contributes to a high level of protection of the environment and human health.

(7) Over the last decade, environmental issues, such as resource efficiency and sustainability, biodiversity protection, climate change, and risks of accidents and disasters, have become more important in policy making. They should therefore also constitute important elements in assessment and decision-making processes.

(10) The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity ('the Convention'), to which the Union is party pursuant to Council Decision 93/626/EEC, requires assessment, as far as possible and as appropriate, of the significant adverse effects of projects on biological diversity, which is defined in

Article 2 of the Convention, with a view to avoiding or minimising such effects. Such prior assessment of those effects should contribute to attaining the Union headline target adopted by the European Council in its conclusions of 25-26 March 2010 of halting biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020 and restoring them where feasible.

(11) The measures taken to avoid, prevent, reduce and, if possible, offset significant adverse effects on the environment, in particular on species and habitats protected under Council Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, should contribute to avoiding deterioration in the quality of the environment and any net biodiversity loss.

(13) Climate change will continue to cause damage to the environment and compromise economic development. In this regard, it is appropriate to assess the impact of projects on climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions) and their vulnerability to climate change.

(14) Following the Commission Communication of 23 February 2009 entitled 'A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters', the Council, in its conclusions of 30 November 2009, invited the Commission to ensure that the implementation, review and further development of Union initiatives, take into consideration disaster risk prevention and management concerns as well as the United Nations Hyogo Framework for Action Programme (2005-2015) adopted on 22 January 2005, which stresses the need to put in place procedures for assessment of the disaster risk implications of major infrastructure projects.

(15) In order to ensure a high level of protection of the environment, precautionary actions need to be taken for certain projects which, because of their vulnerability to major accidents, and/or natural disasters (such as flooding, sea level rise, or earthquakes) are likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment. For such projects, it is important to consider their vulnerability (exposure and resilience) to major accidents and/or disasters, the risk of those accidents and/or disasters occurring and the implications for the likelihood of significant adverse effects on the environment. In order to avoid duplications, it should be possible to use any relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments carried out pursuant to Union legislation, such as Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and the Council and Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom, or through relevant assessments carried out pursuant to national legislation provided that the requirements of this Directive are met.

(16) For the protection and promotion of cultural heritage comprising urban historical sites and landscapes, which are an integral part of the cultural diversity that the Union is committed to respecting and promoting in accordance with Article 167(4) TFEU, the definitions and principles developed in relevant Council of Europe Conventions, in particular the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of 6 May 1969, the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe of 3 October 1985, the European Landscape Convention of 20 October 2000, the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society of 27 October 2005 can be useful. In order to better preserve historical and cultural heritage and the landscape, it is important to address the visual impact of projects, namely the change in the appearance or view of the built or natural landscape and urban areas, in environmental impact assessments.

(22) In order to ensure a high level of protection of the environment and human health, screening procedures and environmental impact assessments should take account of the impact of the whole project in question, including, where relevant, its subsurface and underground, during the construction, operational and, where relevant, demolition phases.

(28) The selection criteria laid down in Annex III to Directive 2011/92/EU, which are to be taken into account by the Member States in order to determine which projects are to be subject to environmental impact assessment on the basis of their significant effects on the environment, should be adapted and clarified. For instance, experience has shown that projects using or affecting valuable

resources, projects proposed for environmentally sensitive locations, or projects with potentially hazardous or irreversible effects are often likely to have significant effects on the environment.

(31) The environmental impact assessment report to be provided by the developer for a project should include a description of reasonable alternatives studied by the developer which are relevant to that project, including, as appropriate, an outline of the likely evolution of the current state of the environment without implementation of the project (baseline scenario), as a means of improving the quality of the environmental impact assessment process and of allowing environmental considerations to be integrated at an early stage in the project's design.

(35) Member States should ensure that mitigation and compensation measures are implemented, and that appropriate procedures are determined regarding the monitoring of significant adverse effects on the environment resulting from the construction and operation of a project, inter alia, to identify unforeseen significant adverse effects, in order to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. Such monitoring should not duplicate or add to monitoring required pursuant to Union legislation other than this Directive and to national legislation.

(36) In order to stimulate more efficient decision-making and increase legal certainty, Member States should ensure that the various steps of the environmental impact assessment of projects are carried out within a reasonable period of time, depending on the nature, complexity, location and size of the project. Such time-frames should, under no circumstances, compromise the achievement of high standards for the protection of the environment, particularly those resulting from Union legislation on the environment other than this Directive, and effective public participation and access to justice.

East of Luton area needs a Strategic Environmental Assessment, not only an Environmental Impact Assessment which is something less, and does not go into the required detail of the SEA Directive. Part of the SEA (a principle in public law for large projects) is “the precautionary principle”, which recognises a social responsibility to protect the public from exposure to harm, when scientific investigation has found a plausible risk.

These protections can be relaxed only if further scientific findings emerge that provide sound evidence that no harm will result. An SEA would be done if the applications for a dual carriageway through the airport and New Century Park, part of a wider Enterprise Zone, were treated as a DCO application as they MUST be. (Carolyn Cottier evidence). It is clear that LBC/LLAL are trying to avoid such scrutiny.

An EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) application must ensure that environmental, social and health impacts are included in decision-making. At 94 hectares, It's a Nationally Significant infrastructure Project (NSIP) so must go to govt.

EIA is supposed to make the decision-making process transparent and promote public involvement. It should list all aspects of the environment that may be affected, like [fauna](#), flora, air, soil, water, humans, and landscape, and screen out environmentally-unsound projects. The effects on all these should have stopped this idea long before it got to a planning application.

An EIA looks for suitable mitigation. The Local Plan says *“Mitigation will be required against any additional load on the local transport network arising from airport growth.”*

The council's own consultants told us there is no mitigation to counter the huge impact on congestion, air pollution and climate of the level of airport expansion the council wants.

And, we would add, the destruction of a unique County Wildlife Site, rich with biodiversity.

2) NPPF (Feb 2019): Law on 'Determining applications' is contravened

47. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless **material considerations** indicate otherwise.

The application was advertised as a departure from the Local Plan. It breaches both National Planning Policy Framework, and statements and intentions in Luton's recent Local Plan, in many respects that demonstrate the application to be unsound.

3) The balance of harm has been ignored.

To say the scheme is "potentially" deliverable focuses on 'market opportunity'. This is not the function of local government. Its primary function should be as public servant to protect and provide for residents. It cannot ignore the wide array of adverse impacts that the scheme would cause.

Balance of harm

Airports National Policy Statement – June 2018

4.2.4 Para 4.4: "in considering any proposed development, in particular when weighing its adverse impacts against its benefits, the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State will take into account:

- Its potential benefits, including the facilitation of economic development (including job creation) and environmental improvement, and any long term or wider benefits; and
- Its potential adverse impacts (including any longer term and cumulative adverse impacts) as well as any measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for any adverse impacts."

In the view of over 400 objectors, and according to Local Plan and national policy, benefits of New Century Park, or airport expansion on the same site, are vastly outweighed by the environmental damage this application would cause.

Desirable factors

More jobs in future *but 70% not local (stakeholder workshop Feb2017) & record high employment.*

Note Lawrence Patterson (final para): there is no business case for offices at New Century Park

More future income for the council

New café, toilets, play area *but too near a major new road bringing noise, pollution and bad health*

Undesirable factors

Lack of democracy and trust in democratic leadership

Lack of sustainability and environmental thinking

Bad for UK economy – health of people in cars is affected more by air pollution than pedestrians and cyclists, costing billions in health care

Bad for UK economy – people flying abroad spend £billions more than UK visitors

Bad for UK economy – UK has great coasts & landscape but holiday destinations suffer

Bad for UK economy – false claim that for every million passengers, £118m to UK GDP

Need for this project not demonstrated – 'demand' is not need but 'market opportunity'

Loss of some jobs & inconvenience to existing companies – 15 office blocks demolished

No plans for how to deliver 'sustainable public transport' to new offices

No plans to show how it relates to 2 major related projects – airport expansion & housing in Herts

Unwise investment – new offices may be unoccupied as LLAL wants terminal 2 on same site

Unwise investment – urban Luton unsuitable for further expansion

Unwise investment – climate crisis makes Govt Aviation strategy / air expansion out of date

Unwise in 4th most congested town to create more traffic gridlock

Eaton Green Rd & other junctions would be over capacity, without including other nearby proposals

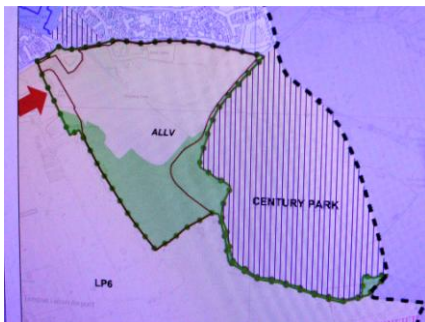
Congestion bad for economy, inconvenient, cuts leisure time, causes pollution, stress and ill-health

Increases instead of vital need to reduce polluting vehicles (eg diesels)
 Airport expansion and road-building make all these things worse
 Proposals to signalise roundabouts increase air pollution
 Noise impacts affect tranquility and health
 Vital need to protect, not destroy, all natural habitats and biodiversity especially CWS
 Loss of over 2 hectares of mature trees and hedgerows
 No mitigation possible for destruction of mature wildlife habitat and 2 hectares of trees
 Parks, green space and trees vital for exercise, health & wellbeing (Luton overdeveloped)
 Reversal of previous council work to provide nearby park for residents of nearby housing
 Most of 'replacement park' would be much further from homes
 Surface level parking a poor use of land and poor substitute for loss of rich CWS & DWS wildlife areas
 Loss of sports pitches
 Air quality from increased planes and vehicles has serious effects on health
 Air quality levels illegal at airport affecting workers
 Carbon emissions – wide range of measures needed to reduce these. Nothing yet
 Landfill – high risk of methane and other gases causing danger to people in any buildings
 Landfill – high risk of contamination of surface and groundwater
 Flood and drought risk (extreme weather is increasing)
 Archaeology – likely damage to historical artefacts and cultural heritage
 Parking in local roads – impact on residents
 Landscape and visual impact on Wigmore Area of Local Landscape Value for nearby residents
 Landscape and visual impact on surrounding area of Chilterns AONB countryside
 Climate change impact from planes on take-off / landing and on the upper atmosphere
 Climate change impact from vehicles
 Climate change impact on civilisation worldwide
 Mitigation is simply not possible against proposed levels of airport expansion

Luton Borough Council has ruined its reputation – it and LLAL have been profiting from ruining our children's future. It knows it can't be trusted, and must end its unpleasant culture of corporate greed, and work hard to become once more a transparent, responsible public servant which can be relied upon, not feared.

4) Ten ways Luton Council hid information from or misled the people it represents, throughout the period of this application, betraying public trust

1) Misrepresentation and Secret plans to destroy Wigmore Valley Park: The new Local Plan shows an arrow indicating a possible road across Wigmore Park. The fields beyond it, 'Century Park', had planning permission since 1997 for potential business use, but no access had previously been available.



Local Plan arrow indicates possible road, County Wildlife Site (green) and ALLV

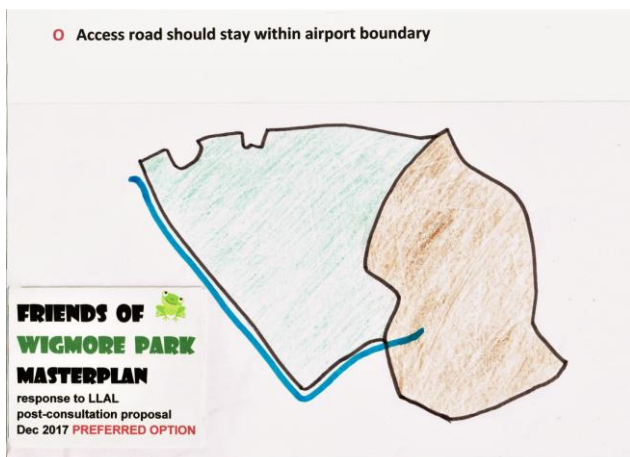
An article in the council newsletter *Lutononline*, 25 Sep 2016, referred to "a new road to serve Century Park, a key (potential) employment site on the eastern edge of the town." "LLAL is working up

proposals to replace any land required for the road by expanding and improving Wigmore Valley Park.”

The invitation to 2 stakeholder workshops on 20/21 Feb 2017 said: “LLAL, working in partnership with its shareholder Luton Borough Council, has announced it is to submit a planning application in the summer for 70 acres of commercial development, facilitated by a new 1.6 mile access road.”

This all appeared to be in line with the Local Plan. But people were shocked to hear at the workshops that Wigmore Valley Park, a similar size to the Century Park fields, had now been lumped together with the fields and rebranded ‘New Century Park’. **This is a total departure from Local Plan policy, which only indicated a possible road across the park. It is a very serious betrayal of public trust.**

2) Secret ‘sell-off’: It was only later the public discovered that Wigmore Park had been ‘licensed’ secretly in 2015 (18 months earlier) by LBC to LLAL to ‘work up proposals’ to develop on the park. Freedom of Information request from Luton FoE to LBC: *What date did a LBC committee decide that Wigmore Valley Park was to be ‘licensed’ to LLAL, to plan a big development?* brought the response: *We do not hold this information. The licence to LLAL was granted under the Service Director for Property & Construction Services’ delegated powers.* This is part of Luton BC, so it **does** hold the information. To have done this under ‘delegated powers’, usually used for an officer to deal with a house extension, is an insult to democracy. We were also told that ‘*The licence started in April 2017*’. But the decision is recorded as having taken place 2 years earlier. No records of a meeting when this transaction took place are ‘available’. LBC claims there was no legal requirement to inform the public, but this does not stand up to scrutiny. This park is owned by the public and managed on its behalf by the council, so **this action represents a very serious betrayal of public trust.** The council itself created and landscaped the park, planting thousands of trees, over landfill in the 1980s next to the Wigmore estate due to ‘the need for recreation and exercise’. FoE suggests that it is quite feasible to use the ‘public transport corridor’ access shown in 2008 going around the airport perimeter to Century Park fields, which have planning permission for offices. We do not believe such development is needed, but it would avoid any intrusion on or damage to Wigmore Valley Park.



3) Eaton Green Road link u-turn: **The Local Plan contains a specific policy stating there would be no access from the airport or Century Park on to Eaton Green Road.** This is to protect residents from airport traffic. Luton council/LLAL went against this Plan Policy in autumn 2017, announcing a new road joining the dual carriageway through the airport to Eaton Green Road. It would destroy an attractive bank of trees forming a noise and pollution barrier between residents and the airport. **This action represents a very serious betrayal of public trust.**

4) The reason for ‘New Century Park’: Original plans showed more offices in Wigmore Park than in Century Park fields, and a dual carriageway emerging from the airport, continuing across the top of

Wigmore Park to Century Park fields. It was broken by 2 large roundabouts and spur roads led to several offices. Only a few offices were actually in Century Park fields, which had permission for them. We were told that these were some way off into the future, so clearly they were speculative.

The size of this road was obviously disproportionate to the offices it would serve.

There were two possible reasons for this, although members of the public could only see one when the application was presented. It was that 2100 new homes were planned across the border in Hertfordshire. This was a 'reserve' site in addition to the rest of Herts' housing allocation, so should have been a last resort. It would also go against planning guidance, coalescing the attractive villages of Cockernhoe and Mangrove Green, which some people visited to escape the overdevelopment of Luton. The proposed development by Bloor and Crown Estates was Luton-facing: there were no suitable roads between this housing and Hitchin, and only one access road into Luton, but Luton is the nearest place that could provide essential services.



Luton 'M25' proposed in 2008

Luton council had long wanted an 'M25' circular road around Luton, so some of the public guessed this road was the first part, to continue to the A505 near Lilley if Herts CC approved. A planning application has been submitted by Central Beds for an M1 - A6 link, which would gridlock the A6. However, **Luton would not admit their big road on the New Century Park diagram was anything to do with this housing or a continuation of the road into Hertfordshire.** **Another betrayal of public trust.**

5) New children's playground and café next to major road and big roundabout

The application proposed an 'improved' children's playground and café where children and adults would be playing or sitting next to a major road and **a big, noisy roundabout against the Local Plan.** Neither LLAL staff or their consultants seemed to realise this would not be a place of peace. It would subject people who can at present escape to a tranquil place to unacceptable levels of air pollution, which can stunt children's lung growth and seriously affect the health and wellbeing of older people. This is supposed to be an improvement on what is there already. **Another betrayal of public trust.**

6) Plan to double passenger numbers at the airport

It was in 2018, following the Govt's Aviation Strategy, that the public learned that Luton, having fast expanded the airport from 9 to 16 million passengers in 5 years, wanted to more than double this again, to 38m, despite the airport sitting over the town in a valley where pollution gathers. They had planned this since 2013 (see Gurtler), and now used the excuse of one line in the Govt strategy: "making the best use of existing runways". Their eyes glistened at the thought of all the money that could bring. It clouded their vision as to anything else that came under their role as public servant. **Another betrayal of public trust.**

7) London Luton Airport Ltd application for a road through the airport to New Century Park: “Airport plans not connected – a different application”

The immediate outcry of people in Luton and those in a 15-mile radius who were already seriously affected by noise was ignored. In summer 2018 a ‘non-statutory consultation’ was held. It showed 4 options for a second airport terminal, 3 of which completely destroyed the people’s Wigmore Valley Park with its County Wildlife Site.

The questionnaire was blatantly biased, designed to get positive answers. There was no option for ‘NO expansion’ or ‘No expansion on to Wigmore Valley Park’; or for expanding modestly within the airport complex. No acknowledgement that their push for rapid expansion had made Luton the most unpopular airport, 4th most congested town and the fastest growing cause of climate change in the UK. No plan to reduce traffic – as this would be impossible – but no list of ways the environmental damage and inconvenience could even be mitigated. No acknowledgement that more flights means more pollution - every million passengers brings a million more vehicles on to the roads. We were told in Feb 2017 that only 19% of airport passengers come by train, and the Local Plan inspector warned the council not to assume the Dart link would substantially increase this. In any case further expansion would overwhelm any benefits.

The map for the Terminal 2 ‘preferred option’ can be overlaid on to the New Century Park proposals. The two proposals are both hugely damaging, and in conflict with each other. Both cannot be built.

If an outside body were to propose such a major application, LBC would make many planning gain demands through section 106. But it may not be so demanding of itself. Being an outline application, LBC/LLAL could totally change the plans after approval.

Wigmore Park would be covered in long-stay airport car parks. A diagram for the longer-term intention shows Century Park fields also covered in airport car parks. The business park is for airport-related businesses.

An obvious reason for the separate application is to avoid the proper scrutiny of a Development Control Order (DCO) rather than an EIA. **Another betrayal of public trust.**

8) Air pollution cover-up at airport part of New Century Park application *(see main section 9 below)*

All children and adults have a right to breathe clean air. But there is a public health emergency across the UK caused by illegally polluted air. It is dangerously over the legal limit in many parts of Luton, as recorded by Defra (attachment) and Luton FoE (Section 9 below). Luton BC has measured NO₂ at some sites, but not the bigger killer, diesel particulates. It has not told the public, and not acted to reduce emissions. Luton’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015 shows high rates of respiratory problems, especially in the young.

Luton’s 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report <https://tinyurl.com/yxdqlouv> uses figures from 2016 or earlier but shows some monitoring sites recording consistently illegal air quality. Many busy sites in the borough are not monitored. LBC has failed in its legal duty to take appropriate measures, declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS) around dangerous sites such as the airport, and introduce measures to reduce pollution.

NO₂ readings from on & around airport terminal *(from a LLAL report forming part of this application):*

At least six busy airport sites record consistently illegal air quality.

LA01d, LA02d (Airport approach road), LA05 (runway apron), LA06 (President Way junction), LA14D (Stand 61), LA16D (Setdown area) – all readings consistently illegal.

LN23 Eaton Green Rd – close to legal maximum (this accords with Luton FoE measurements, Section 9 below)

LLAL took an average of readings from 20 or more NO₂ monitoring points in and around the airport, of which 6 at the busiest places are consistently above legal limits, and claimed there is no legal breach. This is unacceptable. Any point that is illegal remains illegal. **People are not exposed to less air pollution at the 6 busiest places on the airport because pollution is also monitored at 14 less busy places.** NO₂ is a toxic gas which inflames the lining of the lungs, and can lead to lifelong problems. The legal annual limit for NO₂ is 40 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m³). Defra / WHO: There are **no safe levels** of exposure to air pollution. *

We attach comments by Carolyn Cottier to N Herts Inquiry, concerning air pollution at Luton airport and the east of Luton. While we cannot vouch for all her claims, her evidence appears to show serious transgressions of legal responsibility for public health by Luton Council.

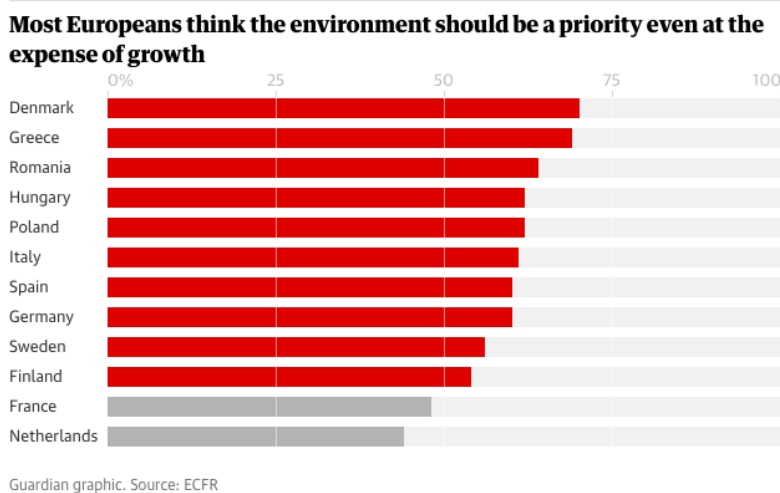
This shows that for LBC and LLAL, business as usual in pursuit of money overrides the need to take action to protect the health of workers who contribute to airport income, and the health of nearby residents. Under the Environment Act 1995, local authorities must review air quality. If they find that air quality objectives in a particular area are not expected to be met, they must designate it as an **Air Quality Management Area**, and develop an **Air Quality Action Plan**. The airport and residential roads around it qualify immediately to be made an AQMA, at which measures must be taken to reduce pollution. The council is trying to avoid this. **Another betrayal of public trust.**

* DEFRA Air Quality Briefing for Public Health Directors Mar 2017: "International Agency for Research on Cancer listed diesel exhaust pollution as a Class 1 carcinogen. In 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a review of 2,200 studies concluding that: • Annual PM2.5 concentrations are associated with all-cause mortality to a high level of confidence • **"There is no evidence of a safe level of exposure to PM or a threshold below which no adverse health effects occur"**. Negative health impacts have been found well below current EU & UK limits. Also: Air pollution Deaths – Watford & Luton worst in East of England 2013 – 6.5 per 1000 Air Pollution. Government estimates air pollution to reduce life expectancy of everyone in the UK by an average of 7-8 months. This is worse in highly polluted areas with regular exposure. Each car in London costs NHS & Society £8000 due to pollution.

LUTON AIRPORT IS

London Luton Airport is publicly owned by you, the people of Luton, and managed by your Labour Council. It has seen record passenger growth since 2011, which means more money is going back into the Luton economy.

Passenger numbers have grown from 9.5 million a year in 2011 to almost 16 million in 2017. The airport is now the fastest growing airport in the country. This growth means that in the last 5 years



UK way behind Europe in recognising we can't keep 'growing' (eg airport expansion) on a finite planet

9) The public owns Luton airport. This has been stated on Labour leaflets, and by the Council Leader in public on 8 Oct 2018. It has grown rapidly, unsustainably, decades faster than predicted, without environmental controls. **People don't want congestion, noise, pollution or bad health, which an airport with double the passengers would bring them, and they need their park.** No one asked Luton Council, or gave permission, for LBC to give away the people's park to LLAL to develop. There should have been a major consultation before any such decision was taken. **Another betrayal of public trust.**

10) Misleading questionnaires

At a presentation in Wigmore, LBC/LLAL lied about high support for airport expansion: In consultations for both the dual carriageway/New Century Park and major airport expansion ('Future Luton' – implying impact on the whole town) questionnaires were used in which the questions were blatantly biased, designed to give positive answers. (More detail can be supplied.)

This is not in accordance with required procedures, including the “**Gunning Principles**” (a consultation must be carried out properly and with an open mind with due consideration to the responses).

The Council has a moral & legal Duty of Care to act on behalf of and protect residents. Its proposed development on a valuable Community Asset does not comply with key relevant Local Plan policies. It has acted undemocratically and in bad faith, and should be obliged to withdraw its application, or have it overturned.

5) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on considering development proposals *Also see Section 12 below*

NPPF (Feb 2019): Considering development proposals

109. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The underlined section is an exact description of the result of building a dual carriageway through the airport and the New Century Park development on Wigmore Park, the new road funnelling traffic on to Eaton Green Road and residential roads, against Local Plan policy.

Air pollution: Children breathe toxic air at school & on school run

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/18/school-run-air-pollution-children-black-carbon>

Further, the capacity of the recently expanded M1 Junction 10 and 10A is already a problem – traffic to the airport now backs up the motorway in the early morning, and any further development such as the proposed major dual carriageway through the airport, large offices, more airport car parks and a hotel on Wigmore Valley Park would make this situation worse. This is not only bad for the strategy of Highways England, but for the health of local residents caught in jams and a pollution corridor.

Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (2018-2031) May 2018

Draft Policy 11 – Airports, states: *“The county council, working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and airport operators, will seek improvements to surface access to Luton and Stansted Airports, and promote and where possible facilitate a modal shift of both airport passengers and employees towards sustainable modes of transport.*

The county council is opposed to new runway development at Luton and Stansted Airports.”

In its document **Future Luton**, (28 Mar 2019) the applicant LLAL states:

3.4.39 *Local and strategic traffic models are currently under development and traffic modelling, based on passenger forecasts is underway.*

Traffic modelling of the impact of the proposed dual carriageway through the airport and a new road

feeding traffic on to Eaton Green Road, against Local Plan policy, on local roads and the wider network, should have been complete before submitting the EIA application for New Century Park, especially as the dual carriageway is likely to lead to new housing in Hertfordshire.

The inadequacy of traffic assessment was severely criticised by Senior Planning officer David Gurtler in an internal report in May 2018 (*attachment*).

Also see comments below on **Local Plan Policy LLP6**.

Under 'The Principle of Development' in Gurtler's agenda summary, para 193, he concludes:

"The issue of traffic and the link road was addressed in the officer's report in a number of areas (and in the planning application with a Transport Assessment, a Supplementary Transport Assessment and in the Environmental Statement) and was considered by both the Highway Authority and Highways England – both of whom ultimately agreed that subject to conditions the development was acceptable. You will see from the Committee report that the conditions requested by Highways England and the Highway Authority place certain timing restrictions on the delivery of the link to Eaton Green Road and also the provision of the New Century Park access road."

This is surprising, as he could not have been more critical in the attached internal document about the inadequacy of the Transport Assessment, which did NOT take into account the effect of this development on either local roads or the wider network. A vital omission is that other major developments are proposed, including housing in Herts, and Terminal 2, allowing further airport expansion, but the assessments have deliberately been confined to New Century Park.

Timing is irrelevant: as soon as traffic is released on to Eaton Green Road, it is at capacity and would cause rat runs and widespread congestion greater than has already been caused by rapid airport expansion. It seems that Luton BC care nothing for the inconvenience, health and welfare of constituents, only for their major road to 'unlock' further development at any cost. Highways England is more concerned about impact on major roads, and we have heard concerns from them about peak hour tailbacks to the M1.

Table 3-1: *Potential Indicative Off-site Highway Interventions in the Proposed Development* lists a series of proposed alterations to junctions. No strategy is offered for reducing traffic levels to reduce congestion, pollution, or climate emissions. Indeed, signalling some junctions is likely to increase pollution and the effects on health of both local residents, including pupils walking daily to school, and those driving in pollution corridors.

The Transport Assessment is completely inadequate and does not provide a plan for East of Luton as requested 4 times by David Wynn, who gave evidence on 27 March.

p101 295 of the Dev Control Agenda assumes all traffic growth everything can be mitigated. It CAN'T. p113 356 is grossly complacent, and NOT what Gurtler said in his internal report.

pp116-131 This is nowhere near the detail needed for a full application. There is no evidence that it could meet all these policy objectives. It is somewhat farcical, as office development is not the aim, but Terminal 2. **Road impacts would be disastrous.**

p117 The list of developments does not justify the expense of a dual carriageway through the airport, putting people out of business, or costly high-risk work to try to make the landfill safe to people in new offices, to prevent irreversible contamination of groundwater over a 15-mile area, or offices or future terminal where methane builds up and explodes or makes people ill.

p119 Air quality – see sections 4 and 12

The council should build offices on brownfield sites first – there are several sites in the borough.

6) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on conserving and enhancing biodiversity and the natural environment

NPPF (Feb 2019): 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

20. **Strategic policies** should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision¹² for:

- b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation / adaptation.

170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land.

Habitats and biodiversity

174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

175. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists

177. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Hedgerows

17.2.6 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997³²¹ are designed to protect 'Important' countryside hedgerows from removal. To qualify as 'Important', a hedgerow must be at least 30 years old and

meet certain qualifying criteria, which identify hedgerows of particular archaeological, historical, wildlife and landscape value.

17.2.7 *It is an offence to remove an 'Important' hedgerow without planning consent or a hedgerow removal notice.*

The bridleway that runs along the east side of Wigmore Valley Park and past the airport fire practice area passes along a strip of ancient woodland and an ancient hedgerow of great character.

Badgers

17.2.8 *Badgers (*Meles meles*) are afforded protection through the provisions of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which is based primarily on the need to protect badgers from baiting and deliberate harm or injury. As such, without a licence from Natural England, it is an offence to:*

- *wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger;*
- *damage or interfere with a sett; or*
- *disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a sett.*

There is currently more than one sett on Wigmore/Century Park.

Reptiles and amphibians

17.2.17 *Slow worms, frogs and newts are present on the site, and subject to protection through the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the CROW Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal to intentionally kill or injure an amphibian or reptile.*

Other species recently recorded at Wigmore Park

462 species have been recorded at Wigmore Park in recent years, 380 on the County Wildlife Site. These include: Sanicle (England Red List plant, local rarity, IUCN, 2016); 5 species of orchid (CITES - thousands of individuals (an attractive booklet has been produced: *The Wild Orchids of Wigmore Park* by Richard & Geraldine Hogg); Bluebells in a fragment of ancient woodland; Grizzled skipper (2017) and Chalkhill Blue (2010) butterflies; at least 74 bird species include Linnet, Grey wagtail, yellowhammer (Beds Red List & Birds of Conservation Concern), and skylark (2017, NERC, Species of Principal Importance). The Wildlife Trust replied robustly on 3 Apr 2017 to the Scoping Request, which *"gives the impression that there will be no impact on biodiversity, and does not mention that the CWS would be destroyed"*: *This site has been recognised for its neutral and calcareous grassland and hedgerows, all of which are habitats of 'principal importance' under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 and have local Biodiversity Action Plans. The importance of the CWS is recognised in Policy LP28: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation of the Pre-Submission Luton Local Plan 2011-2031.* They requested: *Clear assessment of the impact of the development on biodiversity and any mitigation measures necessary; and Clear assessment of the net gain for biodiversity and enhancement of ecological networks provided by the development in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.*

We are certain that this request has not been fully complied with and no net gain would be achieved.

Trees

Please note FoE's objections to the proposed removal of over 2 hectares of mature trees from Wigmore Park, planted by a previous generation of conscientious council officers.

Also comments from Lawrence Patterson (*attachment*).

Local Plan policies

Point 10.9 *"Mature Trees provide valuable eco-system services & environmental benefits including carbon reduction, filtering noise, cooling, wildlife corridors and havens which harbour many diverse plant and animal species that need protection."*

"Strategic Objective 5: *To improve the built and natural environment, taking into account the landscape, setting and character of the town and neighbourhoods within its national AONB and local landscape settings."* Offices, hotel, extensive car parks or a new terminal would seriously affect the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

“Strategic Objective 10: Improve, protect and enhance biodiversity of natural areas within the town, including the quality, accessibility, health and recreational value of green space, Areas of Local Landscape Value (ALLV) and their connectivity.”

Key issue: “Population growth will increase demand placed on Luton’s deficient supply of green space and wildlife habitats, and on valued landscapes. Development will need to protect or increase the limited supply of recreational green space and green infrastructure networks within the borough.”
NOT IN HERTFORDSHIRE, where you propose to move the park.

Central Bedfordshire Council South Bedfordshire Local Plan 2004-2011 borders the site and has policies NE3 *Control of Development in the Areas of Great Landscape Value*, NE6 *Protection of Features of Nature Conservation Value*, and BE1 *Control of Development affecting Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Areas of Archaeological Importance*.

7) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on promoting healthy and safe communities

NPPF (Feb 2019): 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

91. *Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities*

92. *To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs.*

Many of the above needs are provided by Wigmore Valley Park, nearby to homes but providing natural surroundings. The New Century Park application would destroy the park, removing these.

Open space and recreation

96. *Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.*

97. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.*

98. *Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.*

The application is against Green Space Policy – it proposes loss of essential public park near homes.

The current licence to LLAL requires the land to be used as **Public Open Space**. “Any replacement park must be an improvement on the present park.” This must be not only in terms of size but quality including the value of a County Wildlife Site, which has taken 35 years to evolve. It can’t be compared with a children’s play area and farmer’s fields, which are **not** an improvement as the new park is much further from homes. ‘Improving’ a green space site elsewhere in the borough is irrelevant. To propose a vast increase in surface level airport car parking on a public park/CWS is unacceptable.

Greenspace near home in childhood is linked to fewer adult respiratory problems

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180918180504.htm>

Air pollution: Children breathe toxic air at school & on school run

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/18/school-run-air-pollution-children-black-carbon>

Luton is highly over-developed and painfully short of green space, so Wigmore Valley Park, an important District Park, is NOT surplus to requirements. The ‘replacement park’ for Wigmore Valley Park would be worse in every respect: the quality would be poorer in that WVP is large, semi-wild, unusual in being close to a built-up area. It is an Area of Local Landscape Value, with attractive views across a valley. Thanks to a very interesting mosaic of habitat, the designated County Wildlife Site provides and protects a rich diversity of wildlife including thousands of orchids, over 60 species of birds, a strip of ancient woodland with bluebells, which connects adults and children with nature. It was landscaped and planted with thousands of trees by a previous council, who recognised the need for fresh air and exercise, and for a large proportion of the Wigmore estate, it is on the doorstep.

The proposed replacement park is much further away and less convenient for people with busy lives or who are unable to walk that far. It provides a vital buffer against air pollution and noise from the airport. ‘Quantity’ is irrelevant – a slightly larger park, further away, on farmers’ fields with no wildlife, is NOT an equivalent or better provision. The buffer would be lost if the New Century Park development were to go ahead, as 2 hectares of mature trees planted by the council would be destroyed, and it would bring a major road, large offices, a 5-storey hotel and airport car parks close to homes. Luton Council should be seeking to improve quality of life for residents.

Along the strip of ancient woodland on the east side of Wigmore Valley Park is an attractive bridleway that forms part of an existing rights of way network.

Building a major road near a children’s play area and café & felling 2 hectares of trees which absorb pollution is a serious health risk, going against providing a healthy, safe community.

If the airport expansion proposal was taken forward, the play area and café would be close to the major approach road to Terminal 2 and airport parking areas.

Yet **Local Plan Policy LLP6** says:

Wigmore Valley Park E. *Wigmore Valley Park is integral to the London Luton Airport Strategic Allocation. In delivering development and access under clause D (i.e. Century Park) above, including any reconfiguration of the land uses that may be necessary, the following criteria will need to be satisfied:*

- *provision will be made to ensure that the scale and quality of open space and landscaping in the area is maintained, and if feasible, ensure that there is a net increase in open space provision;*
 - *bio-diversity will be enhanced and improved within the Borough;*
 - *that new open space to replace Wigmore Valley Park offers facilities of at least equal quality and is available and accessible before any development takes place on the existing Wigmore Valley Park.*
- The major problem is that is not just ‘Open Space’, it includes a vital habitat, a County Wildlife Site; the ‘new open space’ has no trees, would not be biodiverse for 30 years; is a long way from homes.

8) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on making effective use of land

NPPF (Feb 2019): 11. Making effective use of land

117. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

The whole of Wigmore Park is green land, and most of it, including the whole County Wildlife Site, would be lost with this development.

c) support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

This has already been achieved. The best option for a landfill site was chosen 35-40 years ago by Luton Council, who created Wigmore Valley Park above it. Driving deep pilings into the landfill for development brings a high risk, as advised by consultants, of releasing methane and other toxic gases into buildings above it, and contaminating the groundwater below over a wide catchment.

Robin Porter, LLAL CEO, on 3C Radio 7 Jan 2019 said: *"The new park would give better access, as the current site becomes a bog in Winter"*. This is why its an important wildlife site. So how can you build on such a soggy site? This was the largest landfill in Luton and contains many toxins. It is highly unlikely you could drain it safely. If you put hundreds of pilings into landfill, water will leak in, carrying contamination from the landfill irreversibly into groundwater. There is a huge catchment area - where would the water end up? The Environment Agency may regret that they said this could go ahead with a number of constraints to manage pollution.

Further comments on landfill - See FoE responses

Local Plan Policy LLP6 – London Luton Airport Strategic Allocation

This is a key policy which is contrary to the New Century Park application:

*Details of the proposed access, which shall be via the extension of New Airport Way (which connects the airport to M1 J10A) and shall link Percival Way through to Century Park (as shown by the arrow on the Policies Map), such access shall be designed so as to ensure that **no use is made of Eaton Green Road to provide access to Century Park or the Airport**, except for public transport, cyclists, pedestrians and in case of emergency.*

Airport Expansion B. *Proposals for expansion of the airport and its operation, together with any associated surface access improvements, will be assessed against the Local Plan policies as a whole taking account of the wider sub-regional impact of the airport...*

Airport-related Car Parking C. *Proposals for airport related car parking should be located within the Airport Strategic Allocation, as shown on the proposals plan (excluding Century Park and Wigmore Valley Park) and will need to demonstrate that the proposals: meet an objectively assessed need; do not adversely affect the adjoining highway network; and will not lead to detriment to the amenity of the area and neighbouring occupiers...*

This seems to suggest that there should be NO airport car parking on Wigmore Valley Park or Century Park (fields). If so, the application, which includes long-stay surface airport car parking on Wigmore

Park, is **against Local Plan policy in a further way.**

It is the view of most of the 400 or more people who sent in written objections that the adjoining highway network would be adversely affected, and would lead to detriment to the amenity of the area in terms of greater congestion, danger and pollution, affecting health.

Century Park D. *Luton-based businesses, new business start-ups as well as significant inward investments will be allowed provided that it does not generate bad neighbour issues.*

As these 4-storey offices, a major roundabout and new road into Eaton Green Road bringing related traffic, noise and pollution in some cases 200m from homes, and much closer to a café and children's playground, it is very hard to see how this would not 'generate bad neighbour issues'.

In its document **Future Luton**, (28 Mar 2019) the applicant LLAL states:

3.4.25 There are two areas south west of LTN, along New Airport Way near Luton Airport Parkway railway station, currently under consideration for use as mid stay and/or employee parking, and car hire and return. If developed as part of this project, these facilities are likely to be multi-storey.

If these sites are viable for further parking, there is no need, as we have argued consistently, to build any surface level airport car parks on Wigmore Valley Park for the New Century Park application. A large part, or all of the park, can therefore be saved.

9) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on Air pollution, and in view of recent knowledge, to act, on serious health grounds (see also section 4, part 8)

The extra pollution caused by this development would breach the EU Air Quality regulations. Air Quality rules are already being breached **by emissions from aircraft.**

No account is being taken of Ultra Fine Particles. (A Defra report refers to 3 studies.)

See objection 245, p215-16 on Significant traffic growth and premature Luton deaths from pollution.

Knowledge of the causes and effects of air pollution has increased exponentially during the period leading up to this application being decided. This has not been taken into account and makes the application unsafe.

At the meeting on 27 Mar when this application was provisionally passed, with 2 weeks of the consultation period left, councillors showed ignorance of, or disdain for, the likely impact on the NHS, which has a growing inability to provide care, and is at risk of not being able to look after future generations.

NO₂ is a toxic gas which inflames the lining of the lungs, and can lead to lifelong problems. The legal annual limit for NO₂ is 40 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m³) but the WHO states that there are no safe levels of exposure to air pollution.

LLAL figures supplied with the application show that at least 6 monitoring sites at the busiest places on or around the airport terminal show NO₂ readings consistently breaching legal limits. This requires an immediate declaration of an Air Quality Management Area at and around the airport. Instead, LutonBC/LLAL averaged out figures across 20 or more monitoring sites, claiming there is no problem.

This demonstrates that for LBC and LLAL, to continue business as usual in pursuit of money overrides the need to take action to protect the health of the workers who contribute to airport income, and to protect the health of nearby residents.

Luton FoE took readings mainly in east Luton, to measure the concentration of NO₂ in the air, using diffusion tubes, which were each positioned for 1 month at several junctions in east Luton. Defra advice was followed, the tubes being placed out of reach, about 3 metres high. This is a scientifically valid process co-ordinated by Friends of the Earth nationally and verified by the Gradko laboratory to which they were sent. Figures are projected to the annual legal limit, and rounded down to 0.89 to allow for bias.

The period was Mar-Apr 2018, during which there was less traffic due to school holidays, and less pollution due to a week of rain, so air pollution would have been higher for much of the year. As a control, we took a reading in Bramingham Wood, which was 8.23 µg/m³. The legal mean annual limit for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is 40µg/m³. After rounding down, results at junctions were:

ILLEGAL LEVELS

44.6 µg/m³ Junction of flyover and Church Street at Crawley Green Rd roundabout

44.28 µg/m³ Junction of Vauxhall Way / Crawley Green Rd roundabout

DANGEROUSLY HIGH

37.57 µg/m³ (42.21 before rounding down) Junction of Eaton Green Rd / Frank Lester Way

34.1 µg/m³ Asda roundabout / Wigmore Lane junction

31.73 µg/m³ Eaton Green Rd / Lalleford Rd junction

31.62 µg/m³ Stopsley Way / Hitchin Rd (Jansel House roundabout)

30.49 µg/m³ Ashcroft Rd / Crawley Green Rd junction (nr Ashcroft School)

A Defra site on the A505 near M1 J11 constant monitors NO₂. Figures are taken over 24 hrs, and averaged, which enables figures to be under the legal limit. This includes times when most people are at home and in bed. The true figures should reflect when people are most exposed to pollution during the working day. This monitoring station frequently shows levels **two, three or even four times the legal maximum**, particularly in early morning peak hours (*sample readings attached*).

Luton Council has responsibility for Health, and cannot continue to ignore the serious impacts of increased traffic it is causing through airport expansion, pollution from planes, and development. A505 Defra monitoring includes pollution from people coming to the airport from Dunstable and the west, from A5 north and south, M1 J11, and added traffic from the new 2.8 mile dual carriageway A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass).

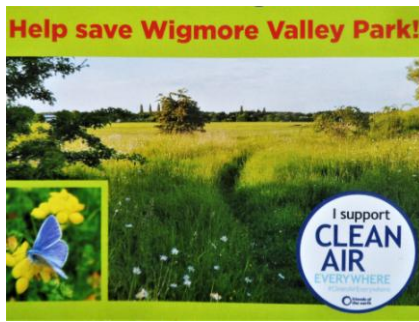
There is a threat of a future continuation east of the M1 to the A6, which would bring more traffic, noise and pollution, and gridlock the already busy A6. This is the subject of a current application by Central Beds, and **must not be allowed**.

Local Plan Policy LLP6 London Luton Airport Strategic Allocation states that proposals for development will only be supported where the following criteria are met: *"iv. they fully assess the impacts of any increase in Air Transport Movements on surrounding occupiers and/or local environment (in terms of noise, disturbance, air quality and climate change impacts), and identify appropriate forms of mitigation in the event significant adverse effects are identified."*

LBC/LLAL have already proved themselves entirely unable to meet this task. Car use and traffic in Luton is far above the national average. The airport has expanded far faster than they expected, and Luton is 4th most congested town. All the above impacts apply. None of these have been mitigated.

Findings about the effects of air pollution on health (*all published 2018-19*)

Air Quality analysis: Harm being done has been deliberately concealed. Health concerns: Queen Mary's Hospital confirms that Ultra Fine Particles penetrate deep into the respiratory system with potential translocation to the bloodstream. Inhaled pollution particles move to the placenta.



Public Health England guidance on health matters: air pollution (14 Nov 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution>

From miscarriage to teenage psychosis: air pollution health effects much worse than previously believed - causes at least 40,000 early deaths in UK from lung & heart disease, & linked to many health impacts

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/mar/27/air-pollution-linked-to-psychotic-experiences-in-young-people>

Air Pollution causes 15,000 new diabetes cases a year in UK

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/revealed-air-pollution-is-a-major-cause-of-diabetes-in-the-uk/>

Air pollution dementia threat

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/18/air-pollution-causes-jump-in-dementia-risk-study-suggests>

Air pollution causes huge loss of intelligence <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/aug/27/air-pollution-causes-huge-reduction-in-intelligence-study-reveals>

Air pollution particles in mothers' placentas harms unborn babies

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/16/air-pollution-particles-found-in-mothers-placentas>

Air pollution: Greenspace nr home in childhood linked to fewer adult respiratory problems

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/09/180918180504.htm>

Air pollution: Children breathe toxic air at school & on school run

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/18/school-run-air-pollution-children-black-carbon>

Air pollution linked to changes in heart structure

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/aug/03/air-pollution-linked-to-changes-in-heart-structure>

Tiny air pollutants inflame airways and harm heart

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/tiny-air-pollutants-inflame-airways-and-harm-heart>

Cleaner air from tackling climate change 'would save millions of lives'

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/22/clean-air-climate-change-lives>

Air Pollution: Govt's Chief Medical Officer calls for tougher standards

<https://airqualitynews.com/2018/03/02/chief-medical-officer-calls-tougher-air-pollution-standards/>

10% of London hospital treatment for children was linked with Air pollution

- 1,000 asthmatic children need hospital treatment thanks to London's toxic air

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/1000-asthmatic-children-need-hospital-treatment-thanks-to-london-s-toxic-air-a4110161.html>

Air pollution in Luton hits illegal levels *published in Luton Herald 21 June 2018 (attached)*

On Luton air pollution <https://michaelstonnell.com/2018/10/29/on-luton-air-pollution/>

10) The plan fails to take into account advice in both its own plan and national guidance on Climate change, and national momentum on need to act on climate

The fastest growing cause of climate change is FLYING.

Luton is the fastest growing UK airport.

Luton is the fastest growing UK cause of Climate Change.

This application is a major step toward expanding the airport.

Knowledge of the causes and effects of air pollution has increased exponentially during the period leading up to this application being decided. This has not been taken into account and makes the application unsafe.

Luton Borough Council Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan Is woefully inadequate. It is full of information tables, but no action. It is astonishing that as Luton airport is the fastest growing source of climate emissions, the plan does nothing to **reduce** climate emissions.

No explanation provided as to how climate change emissions (not only CO₂) would be taken into account. Paris Agreement should be in Sustainability Appraisal.

NPPF: 14. Planning for climate change (Guidance Feb 2019)

149. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.

The East of England is the driest region in the UK. Large developments like New Century Park and associated airport expansion would place great stress on the ability of water companies to cope with supply. A designated Biodiversity area and green corridor would be destroyed, and landscapes adversely affected, against the wishes of bodies such as The Chiltern Conservation Board and CPRE.

Since the IPCC report in Oct 2018, based on 6000 scientific studies, there has been a step change in the realisation of our predicament, demonstrated by climate strikes across the world.

We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe.

Local, national and international responsibilities cannot be separated.

"The planet would reach the crucial 1.5C warming as early as 2030 under current greenhouse gas emission levels: risking wildfires, extreme droughts, floods, and serious famine" - UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 8 Oct 2018

"We only have the slimmest of opportunities remaining to avoid unthinkable damage to the climate system that supports life as we know it." - IPCC board member Amjad Abdulla

"We must get serious about decarbonising and meeting our climate change targets" - John McDonnell, Deputy Labour leader, talking about IPCC report and Heathrow expansion

Greta Thunberg (Nobel prize nominee): “When I’m 75 in 2078 perhaps my children will ask why you didn’t do anything when there was still time. What we do or don’t do now will affect my entire life and the lives of my children and grandchildren.”

David Attenborough says we must work very hard & fast to keep below 1.5C warming to prevent catastrophic climate change and the collapse of human civilisation. Government Report 2018: “Without significant emission reductions we may reach 5°C by the end of the century, beyond the point of extreme danger. Beyond 2°C climate change becomes irreversible and catastrophic. Food prices, large scale migration, human rights, state failure, grave threats to international security.”

This renders the Government’s Aviation strategy, and Luton’s plans for airport expansion and related activities, hopelessly out of date.

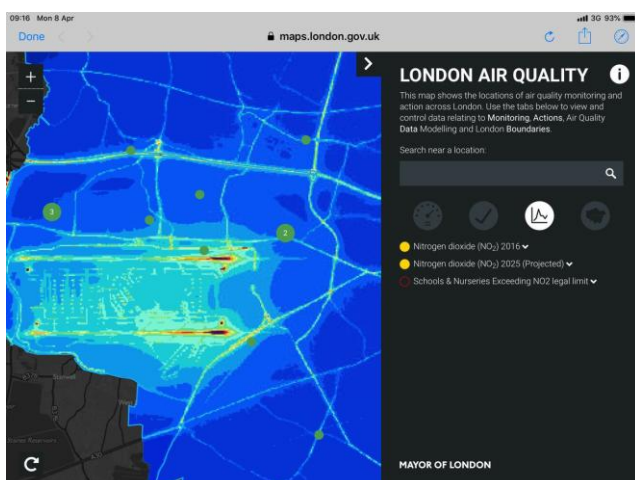
This is a pivotal point in human history. We cannot pretend we were asleep and this was a bad dream. Business as usual must stop. There is no choice. Economic activity must refocus. The IPCC has announced something much worse than the bankers’ crash.

Fresh Water from the Arctic is pouring into the Atlantic, slowing the Gulf Stream.

Long hot periods, like those of summer 2018, will become more severe and common, increasing heat-related deaths and causing more forest fires

The greatest change will be to nature, which we rely on to survive. Insects, vital for pollination of crops & plants, will lose half their habitat. We must **SAVE WIGMORE VALLEY PARK**.

We have a deadline. Luton is very lucky to have substantial airport income – it doesn’t need to be greedy. Luton BC’s primary job is not property development, but to look after the health and well-being not only its residents but those beyond its borders, who travel to the town or feel the impacts of the council’s activities. Ten years ago LBC employed 5 officers in a climate dept, whose responsibilities included educating people on how to change behaviour to reduce their carbon footprint, the council examining its own footprint to set an example. Now there are no climate officers. Have the dangers of climate change gone away? No, they have got worse.



It is not cars driving up the Heathrow runways that are causing this pollution

All decisions about airport income must be based on CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY, or they must be abandoned. Otherwise in 12 years today’s children like those who marched to Luton Town Hall on 15 March will ask: “What did you do to reduce the great warming?” We hope they won’t have to say:

“Why did you go ahead with this, knowing its fatal consequences?” We hope you won’t have to say: “We prioritised economic growth over people’s health and wellbeing.”

People in the UK fly more than any other country.

Luton Airport’s rapid growth has made it the UK’s fastest growing source of climate change.

A lot of public money has been spent on consultants. But they said “You cannot mitigate for the degree of air pollution & warming from this level of expansion and the millions of journeys it produces.” They also said that almost every aspect of digging up or building on the landfill site beneath Wigmore Park is high risk and costly. We must not throw good money after bad.

No new major roads can be built. They spark millions of vehicle journeys, and are a major contributor to climate change and air pollution. **This includes the one through the airport.**

Any public money spent on infrastructure for airport expansion would be wasted.

- 1) No one would occupy offices on a site where Terminal 2 is due to be developed.
- 2) Pressure will increase to meet air pollution, fossil fuel reduction and climate targets, and the project will have to be halted.
- 3) The world situation is such that airports will quickly stop expanding.
- 4) Without expansion, airport-related businesses can be accommodated on existing airport land.
- 5) At the end of the 2004 Milton Keynes & S Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy Public Inquiry, the three-person panel wisely told Luton “not to put all its eggs into the airport basket.”

One transatlantic flight uses up one person’s annual share of carbon emissions, and major changes must take place urgently to cut climate gases.

The fastest growing source of these, flying, which is doing great damage in our thin upper atmosphere, cannot continue to grow – indeed, short-haul flights must stop as there are far more benign alternatives (Holland is already banning short-haul flights, eg from Amsterdam to London). Flying must from now on be treated mainly as for essential journeys or occasional visits to families abroad, and ‘frequent flyer’ taxes are needed to act as a deterrent – it has at last been realised that everyone else should not be subsidising frequent flyers, and Caroline Lucas MP on Any Questions received a huge round of applause when she said that.

Damage to the earth, causing noise, pollution and suffering to people is **a breach of human rights**.

The New Century Park application cannot be separated from airport expansion plans. It includes a dual carriageway through the airport, extensive airport car parks, and is on the same land. And it involves Luton Council giving itself permission to go ahead. Locally this is out of control and must be decided by planning experts at a higher level.

11) LLAL’s publication (28 March 2019) *Future Luton: making best use of our runway - statements and intentions must be taken into account* (attachments 6 and 7)

Note: publication is one day after councillors ‘passed’ the New Century Park application for development on the same land, despite it being 2 years since the development was introduced to the public, and 2 weeks remaining of public consultation.

This approval is provisional – powers were delegated to a senior planning officer to receive until the expiry date of 10 April and ‘process’ any further submissions which raised Material Considerations.

Most of the measurements and findings in this document apply also to the New Century Park project, and the two proposed developments occupy the same area of land. So New Century Park cannot be just an EIA application, but a Development Consent Order application. (*see Planning rules in the objection by Carolyn Cottier*). The major road, a 1.6 mile dual carriageway through the airport, marks the first stage of proposed major airport expansion, so the application must be thoroughly scrutinised as a NISP by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of government.

‘Both of these documents have been driven by forecasts of rising demand in air travel, the need for an integrated approach to the sector, and the impending departure of the UK from the European Union.’
(p24) Demand is something that is created by marketing, not a requirement you have to meet.

Capacity permission at Luton is 18 million passengers, which was supposed to be many years away, but has been reached much too fast, making Luton the fastest growing source of climate change in the UK. This capacity must not be exceeded. To ‘make the best use of existing runways’ is **not** instructing operators to increase capacity to unsustainable levels.

The full statement, quoted on LLAL’s p23, is: *“The government is supportive of airports beyond Heathrow making best use of their existing runways. However, we recognise that the development of airports can have negative as well as positive local impacts, including on noise levels. We therefore consider that any proposals should be judged by the relevant planning authority, taking careful account of all relevant considerations, particularly economic and environmental impacts and proposed mitigations.”* (para 1.29)

‘Making best use of their existing runways’ must now be interpreted as making airports, and vehicles accessing them, far more energy-efficient and less polluting, to cut fuel-wasting stacking in the sky, and to radically reduce the fossil emissions produced. Higher charges should be introduced for diesel vehicles, and car sharing/pooling and public transport strongly incentivised. Economic growth must be quickly switched to renewable energy and far more local production of food and goods. All this applies whether or not the UK leaves the EU.

Luton has severe constraints which render it impossible to expand further: the airport is on a hill above the town which sits in a valley that traps pollution. Too-rapid expansion has made Luton 4th most congested town, in which people cannot get to work without sitting in pollution corridors, breathing in NO2 and PM2.5, affecting their long-term health.

Environment Act 1995 (p78 of LLAL report)

6.2.4 *Part IV of the Environment Act 1995⁴² places a duty on the Secretary of State to develop, implement and maintain an air quality strategy with the aim of reducing atmospheric emissions and improving air quality. The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland⁴³ provides the framework for ensuring compliance with air quality limit values based on a combination of international, national and local measures to reduce emissions and improve air quality. This includes the statutory duty, also under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, for local authorities to undergo a process of local air quality management and declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where necessary.*

Air quality (NO₂) at 6 of the busiest parts of the airport is consistently at illegal levels, shown in LLAL documents for the New Century Park application, but this has been deliberately concealed by taking an average over 25 monitoring points, many in quieter places. The Airport and surrounding area should immediately be made an Air Quality Management Area, and actions taken to cut pollution.

Jams are very costly to the economy, and shorten people's time with their families and leisure time, having adverse impacts on society. New Century Park, and any more airport expansion would increase pollution-related health problems, and the proposed dual carriageway to New Century Park - unnecessary, speculative offices and a hotel (costly and risky to build on landfill) – would join a new access road to Eaton Green Road, causing new rat-runs through residential areas. No aspect of the Transport Assessment addresses this simple but major transport conundrum.

6.2.24 (p80 of LLAL report) LBC is currently in the process of compiling an AQAP52 for AQMA No. 3 (Stuart Street and Dunstable Road areas). The plan was approved by Council Executive in June 2018 and was due to be published in 2018. The area of this town centre site is already inadequate and should be extended: Luton Friends of the Earth tested for NO₂ and found illegal levels outside it. If there are 2 AQMAs in Hitchin (p87 of LLAL report), it is clear that before any new major development, Luton, far bigger and UK's 4th most congested town, needs more AQMAs.

3.3.5 A 'No Development' or 'Do Nothing' option was discounted from LLAL's sifting process on the basis that it does not deliver the strategic economic objectives.

As part of continuing assessment, a 'Do Nothing' scenario will be explored to establish a future baseline for LTN without the Proposed Development. This will be described in full within the ES along with a final description of the alternatives.

No one is suggesting 'Do Nothing', but economic and environmental sustainability must be considered together and an urgent shift in emphasis is needed away from the level of airport expansion proposed. There is therefore **no need to build surface level airport car parks on Wigmore Park**, as the New Century Park application proposes.

*3.3.9/10 Sift 1 was undertaken in autumn 2017 and appraised 7 options against a set of qualitative criteria based on LTN's Vision and key strategic objectives for the project. Each option was appraised by the technical specialist team against the strategic objectives of Strategic Fit, Economic, Social, Sustainability and Environment, Surface Access, Deliverability, Operational Viability and Cost. Environmental **subcriteria** included: noise impact, air quality, natural habitats and biodiversity, carbon emissions, flood risk, archaeology and cultural heritage, landscape and visual impact, climate change resilience, surface and groundwater, and landfill.*

The Environment should NOT be represented as '**sub-criteria**'. Taken together with social, sustainability and transportation/road congestion/pollution ('surface **access**' is only about getting to the airport, not the wider effect on communities), the **disbenefits** totally outweigh benefits (See list below). It is inexplicable why LBC/LLAL chose to interpret 'Making best use of our runway' as to jump immediately to the maximum runway capacity, in the face of all the environmental disbenefits, and not to plan for either a modest expansion within the existing complex, a road within the airport boundary to Century Park fields which already has planning permission for offices or car parks, or no expansion because of unacceptable impacts on local and wider community and their environment. This is **more** shameful because **the people of Luton own the airport**, but were not offered these options. It is **not acceptable** for there to be a small, higher tier of unaccountable people who make major decisions before any consultation with residents about what might be in their best interests. Further, the consultation (which had no options for modest or **no** expansion) contained heavily biased questions to get the 'required' answers.

The Chilterns Conservation Board *Statutory Management Plan 2014-2019 'A Framework for Action'*, is

a **material planning consideration** and contains a vision that states '*tranquillity is conserved and where noise is a problem, peace and quiet is restored, in particular by reducing noise generated by road traffic, overflying aircraft and trains*'.

One of the Board's statutory purposes under section 87 of the CROW Act is '*to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB*', which is close to the site of this application.

It is hard to see how both these purposes would not be adversely affected by the application.

2.4.15 It remains a puzzle why the New Century Park application should be submitted when the proposed airport expansion and second terminal occupies the same footprint.

3.3.26 *Key considerations: the protection of ancient woodland.* The 'preferred option' shows total destruction of the strip of ancient woodland along the east side of Wigmore Park, due to a new terminal and extensive surface level car parks.

3.4.25 There are two areas south west of LTN, along New Airport Way near Luton Airport Parkway railway station, currently under consideration for use as mid stay and/or employee parking, and car hire and return. If developed as part of this project, these facilities are likely to be multi-storey. If these sites are viable for further parking, there is no need, as we have argued consistently, for any surface level airport car parks on Wigmore Valley Park for the New Century Park application. A large part, or all of the park, can therefore be saved.

3.4.11 *Part of the Proposed Development will be on an area of the former landfill. It will be necessary to excavate approximately 500,000m3 of landfill material to allow for construction. This material will be processed under an appropriate environmental permit and the majority will be reused on-site. Foundations will be piled through the landfill to support the new buildings and infrastructure. These will be designed and constructed to protect the underlying groundwater and in close liaison with the Environment Agency.*

It is a truly shocking, very high-risk, costly, over-ambitious and reckless plan to excavate the whole of the largest landfill site in Luton, in pursuit of a project that would double the present number of flights, dramatically increase climate emissions and have a severe effect on residents of Luton and elsewhere. It is also totally at odds with the New Century Park plan.

Airport owners and operators cannot place themselves above the law, and above the common sense required to protect the environment for the children of today – especially if they are a local council.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – February 2019 (p80 of LLAL report)

6.2.9 The NPPF was updated in February 2019 with the purpose of planning to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 181 of the NPPF on air quality states that:

"Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas.

Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the planmaking stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan." See Section 9 above on Air Pollution.

Climate Guidance from Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government updated 15/3/2019:

*“Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These include the requirements for local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008, and co-operate to deliver strategic priorities which include climate change. There is a **statutory duty** on local planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plan designed to tackle climate change and its impacts. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that **responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.**”*

“The Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels. To drive progress and set the UK on a pathway towards this target, the Act introduced a system of carbon budgets including a target that the annual equivalent of the carbon budget for the period including 2020 is at least 34% lower than 1990.”

Airport Expansion would breach our climate change obligations. No explanation is given on how the policy would take account of or act on climate change. See Section 10 above on Climate.

On all this, LBC/LLAL has failed to plan ahead, and failed the public. Signalising several roundabouts was suggested for the first time on 26 Feb 2019, when the project had first been put to the public in 2017. This measure would slow down through traffic and add to pollution and rat runs through residential areas. On one of these roundabouts, on Airport Way, a key route for school pupils, Friends of the Earth already tested for NO₂ and found illegal levels.

6.2.10 Para 170 states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

“e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality.”

In view of this, it is hard to see how Luton BC/LLAL could even have considered, or the Environment Agency could have given a provisional go-ahead to, the construction of 4-storey offices and a 5-storey hotel, roads and car parks on the biggest landfill site in Luton.

12) The application fails, judged on criteria of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan, 2016: key principles at the heart of the Sustainable Development Strategy used to assess the Local Plan:

Using sound science responsibly
Achieving a sustainable economy
Living within environmental limits

In **2015**, the council had already passed Wigmore Park to LLAL to experiment on.

Insect and animal species are crashing due to human activity. A huge amount of work by Wildlife Trusts and local people goes into managing sites and recording species. But Luton Council does not respect biodiversity or environmental limits, preferring income to biodiversity without a financial value. We are appalled when we see orangutan habitat being destroyed. But our council thinks it OK to devastate local wildlife ecosystems for profit, offering financial bribes to ‘mitigate’ by ‘improving’ other sites. Such mitigation is a lie. When you destroy an ecosystem, it’s gone.



The council's own consultants admit you cannot mitigate against loss of green space & wildlife habitat, or the huge increase in air pollution & climate change the council is planning, because we know this is the first step towards Terminal 2 and double the flights. The ONLY thing that mitigates against pollution and noise is Wigmore Park – and the council wants to destroy it.

Scientific evidence? Precautionary principle? These are just words on a page. Surrounding roads are already at capacity, and much too fast expansion has made us 4th most congested town. LBC plans another 16 million vehicles on our roads, and has the answer to mitigation – add traffic signals to a few roundabouts. It may temporarily allow traffic flow, but it will increase pollution. Do they really think it will compensate for another 16 million vehicles on our already congested, pollute roads?

Another key principle: The polluter pays. "We own the airport." We're our own bad neighbour. Except that the council run it, not us. 16 million more people driving here to fly cheaply from Luton airport. Do they pay? No – WE do. In taxes, loss of green space & wildlife, poorer health, and climate emissions from every extra flight. Is our public servant protecting us? No, they're CAUSING it.

The Local Plan's sustainability appraisal says:

- ❑ *The airport site has significant ecological value; parts support a local green network*
- ❑ *Airport development may impact on a landscape conservation area + area of great landscape value*
- ❑ *Airport activities seen to be significant sources of PM10 and nitrogen dioxide*
- ❑ *Improved access to the airport will smooth traffic flows from the M1* Has that worked?
- ❑ *Annual number of aircraft movements estimated to rise from 110,500 in 2013 to 147,500 by 2028*

Already 136,500 in 2018 ! Passengers from 9 to 16m in 5 years!

UK's fastest growing airport & fastest growing source of climate change.

- ❑ *Reducing carbon emissions - No specific issues identified*

Last year's consultation on expanding to 38m passengers stated: *The UK has made legally binding commitments to reduce carbon emissions through the Climate Change Act (2008). We understand the aviation sector has a key role to play if these are to be achieved.* It's all just words, something to think about in future. This is not good enough.

The IPCC says we must make major changes to the way we do things. Within 12 years rich countries must get to a Zero emissions, fossil fuel free economy. Luton's got worse, not better, and we must not plan to get worse still..

13 Comments made by FoE to the Inclusive Growth Commission *Mar 2019*

"established to ensure residents across Luton are the ones that benefit from the town's growing economy"

A disproportionate amount of growth is from the airport. Instead of investing the large profits in its citizens and environment, the council is throwing money back at the airport, a high-risk growth model damaging residents' health with air pollution and noise, and rapidly adding to climate change to ruin our children's lives.

The key aims of the Commission, under the banner of 'Growing Luton Together', will be on improving skills and productivity, raising aspirations, attracting more quality jobs, supporting communities to remain healthy (but air pollution would get worse), ensuring equality as well as encouraging people to remain and spend their money in the town.

Stop them flying away! This hurts the national economy + adds to pollution, poor health and climate emissions. This assumes growth rather than sustainability. The Economic Growth model is broken, leading to gross inequalities and catastrophic environmental degradation.

A healthy society MUST focus more on social and environmental matters than economy. Rich people getting obscenely richer because too much power is in the private sector and some councils have forgotten that they are public servants.

David Oakley-Hill
Co-ordinator, Luton Friends of the Earth

FoE – David Oakley-Hill speech at Wigmore public meeting

My talk to Chris Haden's DCO public meeting, Wigmore Church 11 April 2023

Hello – I'm David Oakley-Hill, from Friends of the Earth.
I'll focus on Climate, Pollution and Wigmore Park.

First, **the CLIMATE CRISIS** *SLIDE 1 – You can't self-isolate*

You all care about your children's future. This is the biggest emergency they face. On Mar 20th, the United Nations, speaking for thousands of scientists from 195 countries, gave a final warning that we have a very short time to make BIG changes – “The world has the tools to rapidly tackle the climate crisis, but must do everything, everywhere all at once”. The UN ‘Survival Guide for Humanity’, is to help policymakers worldwide make big carbon cuts over the next 7 years. Yet burning coal, oil and gas is still being subsidised.

SLIDE 2 Polar ice is melting at an alarming rate. The closed weather system around the poles has opened. The jet and gulf streams are slowing down, changing our weather. You've seen extremes everywhere – hurricanes, floods, wildfires, drought and famine, destroying communities and natural habitats.

The River Lea is one of only 200 chalk streams. Right through Luton, it dried up for 3 months last year, killing all wildlife. This takes 2 or 3 years to recover from. I hadn't seen a water vole for ten years, and found a dead one in my garden. *SLIDE 3*

The UN Survival Guide doesn't include expanding airports – it urges us to fly and drive LESS. *SLIDE 4* Future tech can't solve the problem. Last month, at the DART launch, behind our council leader, a banner read “Becoming a Carbon Neutral Town”. No airport can be Carbon Neutral.

The UN says “All countries should bring forward their Net Zero Plans by a Decade.” In the face of this, **flying is unwise except in an emergency**. Luton Council declared a Climate Emergency 3 years ago. Its airport growth plans would wipe out all the good work in their Net Zero Strategy across the town, and cost £3.5 billion. This could be spent on green jobs like growing food, insulation, solar panels. The council are a bit like smokers, who promote smoking and invest our council tax in tobacco companies. They're on the wrong side of history.

The govt announced in 2021 that aviation must be included in planning decisions. Government loaned Luton £80m last year on condition it reduce reliance on the airport. That means cutting the number of flights and limiting demand. 99% of our Airport's climate impacts are from planes in the air and traffic to the airport. Every flight burns fossil fuels. So what has Luton Council just done? Submitted a

plan to expand from 18 to 32 million passengers, called a Development Consent Order, or DCO.

SLIDE 5 What can we all do? **First, everyone here should respond to the DCO.**

You could put in an objection, on the grounds of:

conflict with National Policy, or

an inadequate Environmental Impact Assessment, or

failure to consider reasonable alternatives.

You could comment on written questions, or attend a hearing.

Second, The biggest single thing we can all do is Fly less! Please cut down or stop flying for holidays or visiting family. This is the responsible thing to do, with so many less damaging choices available. There's a great website Flight Free UK.

Europe leads the way – the Dutch govt has forced Amsterdam's airport to cut flights, stop night flights, and ban private jets and noisy planes. France and Austria don't allow domestic flights if you can get there by train in 3 hours. Train fares are cheaper in Europe. We should stop all new major roads and invest in affordable public transport. The govt's Climate Committee says there should be no expansion of any UK airport.

WIGMORE PARK

SLIDE 6 – This was taken by Friends of Wigmore's Chair, Scott, who died recently

SLIDE 7 – Here's Scott among the orchids pause

Luton's plan for terminal 2 and more big car parks would destroy Wigmore Park. We must save the park – it's a vital noise and pollution barrier between the airport and homes. **SLIDE 8 - aerial view** Double the planes means double the fumes.

In the 1980s the Council did the right thing – they said that recreation was vital for people in the new Wigmore estate. So they put a clay cap on the biggest waste tip in Luton, planted thousands of trees and turned it into Wigmore Valley Park. We've twice won awards for being one of the best parks in the east of England. **SLIDE 9**

A second terminal means digging up the hazardous tip under the park.

SLIDE 10 – Corporate vandalism: testing Luton's consultants said this is high risk. Methane would escape. Explosions and fires could happen in buildings over it.

SLIDE 11 Mimram Disturbing toxic substances in the tip could pollute the Rivers Lea and Mimram, which flows through Whitwell.

SLIDE 12 – wet patch The clay cap holds water, so it's soggy in winter – brilliant for wild plants like orchids, and for insects and birds. It has become a County Wildlife Site. There are bats, foxes, stoats, barn owls – over 60 bird species.

Here are some of the things we need to save:

Wildlife Slides 13 - 16 – the next 4 were taken by Scott 13-16

17 – 26 Orchids, insects, frog, birds

After Kite:

Other things seen in the park – Slides 27-29:

unsung hero Jan, who's worked so hard behind the scenes

Same with Chris & Jeff; big protest

POLLUTION, CONGESTION, HEALTH

Luton has a high rate of people with serious breathing problems which are disabling and can lead to heart attacks and strokes, shortening lives.

Air pollution does this: it kills 40,000 people a year in UK; causes 15,000 diabetes cases; causes huge loss of intelligence and increases dementia; harms unborn babies; harms children's development if they breathe toxic air on the school run. Green space near home in childhood is linked to fewer adult health problems.

Slide 30 Most of Wigmore's beautiful trees would be cut down for expansion.

We should protect all trees – each one's a habitat and helping prevent the climate crisis. **Slide 31**

In 2014 Luton Friends of the Earth went to all Luton's surgeries. ¼ of our doctors signed our petition to govt NOT to expand from 9 to 18 million passengers because it would affect their patients' health. This was ignored.

In 2017 we put up tubes at 10 road junctions in Wigmore and Stopsley to measure Nitrogen Dioxide pollution – 2 places were over the legal limit, and 2 or 3 others were dangerously high. One was on a main school walking route.

Slide 32 – Leisure gardens The council put a pollution monitor in Wigmore Park here – the opposite end from the airport.

In 2019, Luton Airport's rapid expansion made it the fastest growing source of climate emissions in the UK. 2 reports said it was the worst polluted town. Why? Because OUR council had doubled flights from 9 to 18 million passengers a year in only 5 years, instead of 15 as promised. They say it's OUR airport, but they don't listen to residents. **Slide 33 Consultation** Questions in their consultations are not impartial, as legally required – they're pro-expansion. They have never given an option to say 'NO, I don't want the airport to expand.'

Slide 34 – dream holiday, waking nightmare People in South Luton and Herts are tired of the noise of so many planes low overhead, some at night. You have to stop talking every 3 minutes. Our council wants to double this. Paying for double glazing doesn't help for 8 months when you need windows open. Lack of sleep and stress can make you ill and stop you earning a living. Our council aims for Zero Poverty by 2040, but they're making it worse.

In the nineties there were 3 million passengers. Experts say it's the wrong place for a large airport, on a hill above a big town in a valley, which traps pollution.

De-icing chemicals run downhill and kill wildlife in Luton Hoo lakes.

Planes pump out pollution taking off and landing.

Slide 35 (Banners outside this building) The more planes, the more traffic, which causes many health problems, for people in jams or living on busy routes. When stuck in traffic you're not earning money, or at home enjoying your free time. Sitting in a pollution corridor inhaling fumes is a dangerous place. More traffic lights and rat-runs through residential roads make it worse, especially if you double the traffic. The council sees Wigmore as an access route for the airport, against the Local Plan.

Bim Afolami, MP for Hitchin & Harpenden said: "Expanding Luton Airport would increase noise and pollution for surrounding communities in Hitchin, Harpenden and the villages. It would place an excessive strain on local transport networks, putting our roads and train system under real pressure. I will be presenting the Secretary of State with our community's petition.

Finally, something else seen outside this building Slide 36 (Banners & Olver)

Slide 37 For advice on how to object go to Ladacan.org and Stoplae.org

FoE – The Good Council's Charter + Airport

The Good Council's Charter

ACTIONS FOR A RESPONSIBLE, PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE COUNCIL IPCC: "Rapid & far-reaching transitions"

National Planning Policy Framework: "Help to shape places to radically reduce greenhouse emissions"

Climate Emergency! Key principles to act on urgently *Should have been done 10 yrs ago!*

Public declaration of Climate & Wildlife Emergency (look at actions/plans by other councils)

Urgent audit of all council actions and **immediate action** to reduce CO₂ and cut high emissions

Publish **Action Plan for Climate / Pollution / Biodiversity** priorities across all sectors & interim targets

Political commitment: aim for Net Zero GHG emissions by 2030 or ASAP, + annual review

Change internal culture top to bottom so climate measures are top priority. Be honest with public

Ensure employees understand the seriousness of the problem and act on it (No tokenism!)

Appoint executive level Climate Champion + team, + champion for each dept – weekly meetings

Introduce **Climate & Air Pollution Action Desk**, and have a **Carbon Calculator** available

Start **Citizens Assembly** to generate/help prioritise ideas/enable - community ptnrship (cross-border)

Issue households with **Climate Emergency Guide** to reducing climate emissions (+ info sources)

Divest council from fossil fuel investments; **invest in renewables**; form non-profit green energy co.

Introduce **ethical procurement** framework so suppliers are in step, cutting CO₂ footprint

Call on govt to provide policy changes and funding. **Produce biogas** from non-recyclable waste

Protect nature & do more to **connect people with nature** (especially **schools**); green roofs/balconies

Protect parks & improve for nature; work with communities on new pocket parks/green corridors

Protect all trees – they all absorb CO₂. Luton has 'lost' & not replaced thousands

Plant thousands of trees each year to fix carbon, on council, business, school land, in gardens

Turn down heating in all council buildings and private offices. **Greener heating** inc solar panels

Reduce air pollution– big health & quality of life benefits! Pollution kills people, animals, insects

Separate vehicles & children – no parking/idling areas at every school; walk to school schemes

Urge people to have no more than **2 children**: a child will use a vast amount of CO₂ in its lifetime.

Expand/new Air Quality **Management** Areas, Clean Air Zones/ULEZ (not just monitoring)

Stop roadbuilding – new roads = more journeys, and transport is biggest emitter & polluter

Reduce road traffic by at least 20% especially diesel vehicles & SUVs, even with fast EV uptake

Reduce need to travel (car/taxi sharing; park & ride NSEW; display realtime pollution danger)

Provide & promote **better public transport** where most needed (funded by workplace parking levy)

Reduce pollution from council vehicles (more electric/hybrid; pooling, walking & cycling rewards)

Reduce pollution from buses/coaches (partnerships, electric buses, more services, free travel)

Provide more cycle lanes in quiet roads or off-road; **all schools to run cycle training**

Bring all housing closer to net zero carbon (insulation, draught reduction, heat pumps, solar panels)

Work with businesses to cut CO₂, pollution, waste/plastic, energy use from data; home working;

workplace parking levy; car share/pool/clubs/EV fleet; training in green actions; SEMLEP energy fund

Reduce pollution from lighting (LED; turn off many streetlights at night as Hitchin). Buy green energy

Promote eating less meat / going flexitarian/vegetarian/vegan / buy local food (farmers market)

Encourage people to **reduce consumerism**, use charity shops, buy secondhand & ethical clothing

Localism: **Partner farmers** to grow local food; **help people grow fruit & veg**; promote allotments;

Create Local Energy Partnerships with local business/landowners to focus on green jobs: projects like insulation; making/installing solar panels; building solar farms; air/ground source heat pumps

Airport OWNED BY LUTON RESIDENTS, WHO MUST BE INCLUDED IN DECISION-MAKING

Flying is the fastest growing source of climate change, causing between 4 and 9 % of emissions. Although CO₂ stays in the atmosphere for decades, jet trails (which also release NO_x, Sulphate & Soot) act like clouds, form ice crystals, reflect sunlight from above, hold heat below, trigger chemical reactions, and are 2 to 4 times more damaging than CO₂. European air passenger numbers have gone from 360 million in 1993 to 1106 million in 2018. More people fly from UK than anywhere else. This is catastrophic for the climate and must stop to save humanity.

Luton is the fastest growing airport, generating tens of millions of vehicle journeys a year, bringing Luton to 4th most congested town. Air pollution has a significant effect on residents' health. Flying is also the method of freight transport that produces the most emissions. Luton Council wants to expand further, but in a climate emergency it is no longer viable for airports to expand.

Only 50% of people fly. Those who don't subsidise those doing the most damage. We need an aviation fuel tax and a frequent flyer tax. A return flight to New York generates the same emissions as an average person heating their home for a year.

The most important thing a person can do to cut their CO₂ is to stop or reduce flying.

"We only have the slimmest of opportunities remaining to avoid unthinkable damage to the climate system that supports life as we know it." *IPCC board member Amjad Abdulla*

- 1 Stop expansion plans and protect Wigmore Valley Park** (absorbs airport pollution & noise, CWS)
- 2 Reduce flights, do not allow flights with empty seats** (limit airport advertising)
- 3 Reduce pollution from planes and plane movements** (+ promote train / Dart)
- 4 Reduce pollution from cars & vans visiting the airport** (inc diesel, SUV & workplace parking charges, car pooling/sharing/clubs, improve public transport/walking /cycling for airport workers)
- 5 Reduce pollution from diesel taxis/hire cars** (require phase-in of electric or hybrid taxis by 2025)
- 6 Reduce pollution from buses and coaches** (company partnerships, electric buses, free travel)
- 7 Reduce pollution from delivery vehicles visiting the airport** (partnership with companies)
- 8 Reduce pollution on site** (buildings inc heating, equipment and processes; install solar panels)
*Stop planes, diesel bus, coach & taxi drivers sitting with engines idling **immediately** (+outside heaters)*
- 9 Public transport use to airport must increase while flights and empty seats are reduced**
- 10 Divest Luton Council and all companies at the airport from fossil fuel investments**
- 10 Stop roadbuilding** : widening Vauxhall Way would destroy thousands of trees protecting residents from pollution & noise; traffic lights instead of roundabouts would **increase** pollution)
- 11 Promote holidays to UK and Europe by train** (international tourist travel 2% rail, 4% water, 37% road, 57% air)
- 12 Declare Wigmore Air Quality Management Area** (not just monitoring – **managing** a Clean Air Zone; and commit to doing the same on the airport complex)

Also see (part of Airport Air Quality Scrutiny agenda 3 Dec 2019): Public Health England Report; Greater Manchester Air Quality Action Plan 2016-2021. Also other air pollution reports on Luton.

The Good Citizen's Charter *(just a start)* Reduce CO₂, pollution, waste

Climate Emergency Key principles to act on urgently

Transport: Go car free or choose a very energy efficient car (at least 80mpg) hybrid or electric. Avoid diesel. Drive less, share car/van, don't leave vehicle idling, if replacing vehicle buy electric or hybrid, use public transport, walk or cycle, don't fly (every jet trail is a day stolen from a child's life)

Holidays: Take holidays in UK or see Europe by train (bus or hire car at destination). Enjoy nature!

Energy: insulation, draught reduction, fit solar panels, reduce woodburners & gas, don't heat unused rooms, turn heating off or down, don't waste water, cook economically – one hob not 3
Switch to a renewable energy provider eg Good Energy, Ecotricity.

Family: Please have no more than **2 children**: a child will use a vast amount of CO₂ in its lifetime

Finance: Switch to a friendly, ethical finance provider like Triodos, Co-op, Naturesave Insurance

Food: Buy fresh fruit & veg (organic if possible), buy less processed foods, avoid palm oil, eat less meat (especially cows & sheep), buy local / from farms, go flexitarian, vegetarian or vegan
Too much farmland is used to grow crops to feed to animals. You can feed **10 people** on the land it takes to support 1 meat-eater. Vegetarians are spoilt for choice of tasty food. Grow fruit & veg!

Garden: Install a waterbutt, start a compost heap or compost bin, no bonfires. Plant fruit trees. Start a pond. Create a wildlife garden. Keep front garden with bee-friendly flowers, not driveway

Reduce waste: Try to avoid or reduce plastic packaging. Recycle properly. Reuse whatever you can. Always take bags with you. Use council recycling centres for electric goods, batteries, wood, oil etc
Clothes/shoes– use charity/vintage shops, freegle, ebay, swap clothes with friends or SWISH events
Buy Less. Make things last. Factories pollute, use oil, water & many materials often from slave labour, produce waste & greenhouse gases in manufacturing & transport across the world

Recycle old phones, devices, TVs, PCs, printers to charities. Don't buy a new one unless essential.
Wood – repair & don't replace furniture or doors unless you must. Don't buy/burn toxic vinyl flooring
Furniture, white goods, household items – pass on to charity shops, car boot sales.

Pollution: Never pour oil, fat, paint, spirit, solvents, bleach, sanitary towels, wipes down drain, toilet, sink, bath. Use all these sparingly. Avoid wipes – they're plastic that clogs sewers or ends in the sea

Technology: Turn everything **off** when not in use. Standby mode gobbles energy

Work: Join with others in making your work environment a green place. Tell family & friends!

Compiled by Luton Friends of the Earth Dec 2019

Good ideas at

<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/33-actions-local-authorities-can-take-climate-change>

<https://www.treehugger.com/energy-policy/ipcc-says-we-have-12-years-cut-carbon-45-what-does-look.html>

<https://www.greenpeace.org/archive-international/en/publications/reports/how-to-save-the-climate-pers/>

Climate Actions in the Office – handout from a talk to 60 businesses in 2010 by David Oakley-Hill, Luton FoE

Best Foot Forward climate report commissioned by Luton Council in 2008 recommended some of the above actions, both within council and across the community. Most were not acted upon.

Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury Recommendations

Question they were tasked to address: "What should Leeds do about the emergency of climate change?"

TRANSPORT

Extensive action to ensure that private car use is the last resort for transportation.

As a priority, bus provision should be taken back under public control.

Safe cycle lanes and cycle storage

Park & Ride

Increased and improved pedestrian areas

United public transport fare system (eg Oystercard)

Framework to help car sharing, including taxis

Congestion charge

HOUSING

All existing housing must be made energy-efficient – housing must be retrofitted.

We recommend the council enables residents to come together to insulate their homes and transition to greener energy sources via locally organised social enterprises.

This would encourage sharing skills and teaching people to be more green.

All new housing must be as future-proofed as possible (A or B energy rating) & include: green spaces; shared facilities & communal areas; new technology eg smart homes.

COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION

A large scale community drive through social media, face-to-face events, community groups, company advertising, screens in the city and other methods.

Education in schools is central to this.

Clear, positive, practical messages emphasising the need for individuals, community and organisational action at all levels.

FUNDING & FINANCE

An **Investment Fund** that investors (anybody) buy shares in. It invests in projects which make money. This goes back into new projects and pays investors a return on their investment.

A **Local Government Green Bond** Council identifies projects, batches them together, asks investors to buy a bond. Investors' money funds the projects. Council pays interest to bond-holders.

A **Carbon Budget** for every individual so you can choose lower carbon products with smart labelling. You can change your behaviour by avoiding high-carbon activities eg flying

Pension Funds – encourage pension fund managers to invest in green bonds & green investment fund and cleaner greener companies.

Crowdfunding – a website of accredited schemes for would-be investors

Business case support to help communities identify and develop proposals that could be invested in by the investment fund or a part of a green bond or for crowdfunding.

DECISION-MAKING

There should be more locally devolved power to ensure & enable action on climate change.

Political groups should work together to get more decision-making power locally.

GREEN SPACES

Create more green spaces (parks, trees, community gardens etc) and reclaim abandoned spaces.

GREEN NEW DEAL

A set of social & economic policies to stimulate development of low-carbon solutions, create new jobs, boosting the economy and improve people's lives.

this could include a citywide housing retrofit programme creating jobs and reducing energy bills.

Also invest in green public transport, improving air quality.

This would attract 'green' businesses and buy/promote green energy.

AIRPORT

We recommend stopping Leeds Bradford airport expansion – it is not compatible with zero carbon targets. To make this happen :

Leeds should not approve new road building or selling land to develop.

Residents should block expansion and be educated about the impact on the carbon footprint

18 of 21 citizens jury members (86%) think expanding the airport is the wrong decision (2 abstained)

We also believe flying must be discouraged by, for example -

- a frequent-flyer tax (based on income and number of flights & location – ie domestic)

- advertising holidays in UK rather than abroad.

COMPANIES

Ask companies and organisations to pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030.

A Leeds First scheme (kitemark/badge, a bit like Fairtrade) for businesses actively investing in / supporting climate action.

RECYCLING

More extensive recycling opportunities available/accessible to all (eg disabled people, non-drivers).

We recommend that no one in the town accepts single-use plastic, and no local business offers it.

All food and drink outlets provide refundable deposit cups in place of disposables.

PROGRESS REPORT

Progress report from **Leeds Climate Commission**, Leeds city Council and any other stakeholders.

Update report on all recommendations with details on why/why not taken on.

progress report on any ongoing projects from our recommendations at 3/6/9/12 months from launch date.

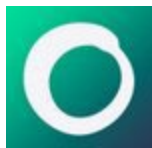
Review of rejected recommendations to see if now relevant.

Investigate idea of a repeat process with this group and maybe some new 'recruits'.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVmm5XxpSw&feature=emb_logo&fbclid=IwAR2k5ALi_UgH2K5KwCycD9Y5yBMZA_gcg_09POjdhSoPqDFkCjPQnakMzM3o See Oversight Panel at end – include University

<https://leedsclimate.org.uk/leeds-climate-change-citizens-jury>

FoE – response to Luton Rising consultation



Luton Friends of the Earth

World Climate Emergency – REDUCE FLIGHTS!

Response to Luton Rising ‘consultation’ 4 April 2022

To 2022consultation@lutonrising.org.uk

Q1 David Oakley-Hill, [REDACTED] @wastebook.org

Q2 Yes, happy to be contacted with updates

Q3 No, I don't own any land covered by the proposal

Q4 I'm responding as Co-ordinator of Luton Friends of the Earth

Q5 – Q14 responses follow our introductory comments

List of attachments – these form part of our response

Letter from Council leader Hazel Simmons copying one from Luton Rising CEO Graham Olver – consultation NOT impartial as required by Local Government Association

Press release – It isn't a Consultation unless it's impartial

Objection to Lease of Wigmore Park to Luton Rising

Objection to expansion from 18 to 19 m passengers

Press release – Heathrow refused, Luton cannot expand

Response to consultation on airport expansion Dec 2019

Previous responses including Material considerations why decision to expand the airport is flawed Apr 2019

Introductory comments

If Luton continues with its proposal to submit a Development Consent Order for expansion of Luton airport from 18 million passengers (currently 5m), whether to 21m on the existing airport complex, or to 32m by destroying Wigmore Valley Park and its important County Wildlife Site, **the government must refuse it.**

The 1987 Brundtland definition of sustainable development:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The world, the government and Luton Council have declared a Climate Emergency. Humans can still fix this, but the opportunity won't last long. We have to work very fast to avoid a cataclysmic future.

IPCC scientists gave the world a **red** warning in Oct 2018.

With their latest reports in February and on 4 April 2022, the **red** warning light is now **flashing**.

The projected 3.2 degrees by the end of this century would be catastrophic for our children.

UN Secretary-General: "We all need our world to remain habitable, but are on a fast track to climate disaster."

The 4 April report says that we must cut global emissions by 45% THIS DECADE.

The UK government's 6th Carbon Budget requires emission cuts of 78% by 2035.

Govt said in April 2021 that Aviation and shipping must be included in all proposals and council climate plans. Its Climate Committee said in 2021 "No airport growth anywhere".

At COP26 in November, government urged all countries to cut emissions as fast as possible.

National Planning Policy Framework requires big cuts to emissions from flights and traffic to protect society and the environment. NPPF para 148 requires action to drive radical reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. Given all the above policy statements, emissions **cannot rise above present levels.**

But 99% of the damage caused by the airport is from planes in the sky and airport traffic.

Very little indeed can be done about this quickly. Meanwhile, every flight adds to the climate crisis.

We need to cut emissions NOW, year on year. Therefore, flying must be sharply reduced.

Until planes are fossil-fuel free, and most people are driving electric vehicles, the Climate, Energy

and Biodiversity Emergency requires a No-Fly decade, where only vital journeys are made.

DEGROWTH must be the new normal, embracing ALL decision making.

Yet far too many in positions of power are stuck in the mindset of 'growth'.

The climate doesn't care about economics. Returning to pre-Covid levels of flying would be suicidal.

Norway is the model to follow, where every financial decision must consider and reduce climate impact.

Habits must change radically, or our children will face very difficult lives and struggle to survive this century.

The Earth – our only home – is at many dangerous tipping points.

We have seen unprecedented wildfires, droughts, floods, hurricanes and reports of extinctions due to human stupidity, and life support breaking down. Young people across the world are rightly angry and frightened.

Antarctica March 2022 temperatures were 70 degrees above normal, and the Conger Ice Shelf collapsed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/25/satellite-data-shows-entire-conger-ice-shelf-has-collapsed-in-antarctica>

NO action can be allowed that makes climate problems worse. All actions should be climate positive.

We must radically reduce the burning of fossil fuels.

All citizens, councils, businesses and organisations must act urgently to cut their carbon footprint.

Promoting airport expansion is a strong disincentive for individuals and businesses to change patterns of behaviour and try to cut their carbon footprint. Flying is a symbol of burning fossil fuels, seen in the sky.

Anyone promoting an increase in flying is on the wrong side of history.

Luton reached 18m passengers in 2019 – not 2028 as promised. As the fastest growing UK airport, it was the fastest growing source of carbon emissions in the UK – the opposite of what is urgently needed. It must improve and adapt, but **NOT** expand. The world needs a genuinely fossil-free recovery. It is overdue for Luton to follow best practice, and begin partnerships investing in non-destructive alternatives. Vehicles and large commercial planes will be burning fossil fuels for at least 20 years. EVERY FLIGHT adds to the climate crisis.

Luton, soon after government, declared a climate emergency. It set an earlier target of Net Zero by 2040.

If Luton airport were to expand, climate emissions from planes and vehicles would be enormous. All actions by the council and by the town's businesses, organisations, residents and visitors to cut carbon would be completely overwhelmed and rendered meaningless. This would not only be immensely discouraging to all those trying to make a difference, but highly dangerous for life on this planet, and cannot be permitted. Yet in Nov 2021, against Local Plan policy LLP6B(iii), Luton councillors approved an increase from 18 to 19m passengers with an out-of-date airport masterplan and NO carbon reduction strategy.

'Green Growth' has been based mainly on controlling the 1% of climate emissions and pollution produced by buildings at passenger terminals. The other 99%, produced by aircraft and vehicle movements to and from the airport, is far more important, somewhat outside LBC/LR control, and much harder to address, as planes and vehicles will be burning fossil fuels for at least the next 20 years, every journey adding to the climate crisis.

The time for "Improving connectivity and growth in air travel" has passed. We now have the impacts of Brexit, Climate Change, Covid, the Russian war in Ukraine, food banks, and acute poverty due to the 'eat or heat' energy crisis. The airport is NOT the direction in which to throw money.

A better way forward – see GREEN JOBS AND TRAINING

How can Luton council behave as if nothing has changed from last century? It has lost touch with reality, and has no plan B. Many residents have family in poorer countries, who are more affected by extreme weather.

One flight generates as much greenhouse gas emissions as all other actions (eg food, heating and travelling) which an individual takes in a year. UK residents fly more than any other country, and think they have the right to do so, without considering the damage done by flying. This must change urgently.

No airport expansion' at any airport (as advised by the government Climate Change Committee) is not nearly enough to address the IPCC's concerns – the world's climate scientists are extremely worried that governments are not acting fast enough. This might be expected of dictatorships, but to counter their inaction, the rich countries of the democratic western world must do far more.

Flights should be reduced, not expanded, from the present 5 million passengers using Luton airport.

To go to Europe, people should do so by train – a more enjoyable, educational experience.

Germany and Sweden tax flights already. In France, Spain and Austria, internal flights are banned if a train journey, which is cheaper, can be done in 3 hours. The UK chancellor encourages internal flights.

To get transport, buildings, waste and food to carbon neutral in a big town is a huge task we must take seriously. Emissions from flying conflict with that, wiping out the effect of good actions.

Our climate plan should encourage residents to cut carbon. ALL schools should teach climate solutions. Not flying is the biggest single choice people can make.

Food imports by plane and ship, producing pollution and climate emissions, must be reduced. Ukraine, until Feb 2022, was 90% self-sufficient in food. The UK is only 50% self-sufficient. We must work to change this urgently. Outsourcing creates emissions elsewhere. Non-essential imports and exports of food and goods from Asia, Australia and the Americas must be reduced. All supply chains should be reviewed. Working together, Citizens' Assemblies can help to plan and educate to develop local food supplies, and encourage people to grow some of their own food.

Airport shops are full of unsustainably sourced, unsustainably packaged food and other produce. Airport management has not woken up to, or shown that it cares about, the climate emergency.

The Energy Crisis must be addressed by investing in local solar and windfarms, and encourage uptake of cheap, flexible solar panels. Ground source heat pumps to every building with a garden, or those beside a park or green space, with encouragement, as this work is done, to value and restore nature, rewild parts of gardens, reclaim driveways and plant bee-friendly flowers. More flexible working from home should reduce car use.

Luton must employ and work in partnership with people who understand the seriousness of the problems we face, and are willing to ACT upon them. Each department needs a Climate Champion who ensures that climate issues are at the heart of every decision. Policy should be based on the advice of IPCC scientists and best practice innovators around the world.

The 'consultation'

1 CONFLICT OF INTERESTS *see attachment (Simmons / Oliver letter)*

This was not a genuine consultation, but a very costly and blatant promotion of airport expansion, which goes against government climate commitments established at COP26, to the detriment of the entire young generation of Luton and elsewhere. An array of highly paid consultants were present, none of whom live in Luton, but some of whom have been working for the council for 5 years.

Consultations should be impartial. The Local Government Association: *"Consultation involves listening to and learning from local people **before decisions are made or priorities are set.**"*

But this 'consultation' was a sham, so **did not fulfil the statutory requirement as part of its application for a Development Consent Order** for Luton's Council to consult on its plan to expand the airport to 32m passengers. The council leader emailed all council staff, copying a promotional letter from the CEO of its own airport company Luton Rising, urging them to talk to people and promote expansion.

The council has lost the trust of residents, due to arrogance, lies and denials, displayed in the 2018/19 objections. Now the promotions from the council's company, Luton Rising, read as greenwash from a corporate seeking profit at any cost, not as the policy of a local council whose residents own the airport and care about their children's future. Councillors are out of their depth, led by a £multi-billion Spanish/Australian operator and an array of consultants used to producing briefs for corporations.

It is infuriating how often the council uses the term "community", while the real community has no say in these plans by a council pretending to be democratic, and the plight of those who live in the town or beneath the flight paths, and of children whose future expansion policy would endanger, is ignored.

2 LUTON'S MISUSE OF PUBLIC MONEY

Before the COP climate conference, government gave Luton Council £80m in taxpayer-funded support, on condition that **Luton reduce reliance on the airport**. Instead, Luton Council borrowed over £500m and loaned it to its own company London Luton Airport Ltd, now rebranded as Luton Rising, to promote the airport. At least £60m has been spent on consultants and marketing. Many trees have been cut down for reports no one will read, all in the pursuit of defending the indefensible. Are any promises on LR's website believable?

3 THE UK ECONOMY

Luton claims *'the airport delivers £1.8bn economic activity for UK GDP'*. But there is a £multi-billion deficit between what is spent by visitors to Britain and what is spent by UK tourists abroad, so flying tourists to Europe is loss-making for UK GDP. How do councils without an airport manage?

Luton refuses to consider the devastating climate impacts outlined **today** by the IPCC and UN. Rapid, uncontrolled growth – the opposite of the Luton Rising mantra of ‘Green Controlled Growth’ – made Luton the fastest-growing source of climate emissions in the UK. Even in 1997, with only 3m passengers, the airport was responsible for 25% of the energy use of the whole of Bedfordshire.

Yet the council (the ruling group divided into several unhappy, warring factions) wants not only to return from the current 5m back to 18m, but to expand to 32m.

It seems unaware that post-Covid and with the most serious energy crisis since WW2, we are in a ‘new normal’. It is in denial about the impact of its climate emissions. It was confirmed to FoE in 2018 by Arup and other consultants at previous ‘consultations’ that it is simply impossible to mitigate against climate and pollution impacts of expansion on this scale. The whole proposal is unacceptable and inexcusable.

To expand any airport would be on the wrong side of history. It is not worth throwing any more money at this project. All work to cut the carbon footprint of airport operations on the ground must take place on the existing airport footprint. This should take place anyway. But –

99% of climate emissions and pollution are from planes in the sky and vehicles going to the airport.

The main two factors making the whole project IMPOSSIBLE are -

1) the climate and pollution impact of planes in the sky, which have highly dangerous impacts both from jet trails forming clouds which trap heat, and from water vapour and pollutants high in our thin, vulnerable upper atmosphere. Every single flight makes this worse. Airlines and the airport operator do not pay for the environmental damage they cause. This means that all carbon-cutting actions in Luton have to be faster and more efficient than elsewhere. Is this realistic?

2) vehicles travelling to the airport, which include a high percentage of diesels, including vans, lorries, buses and taxis, causing both climate emissions and pollution, affecting the health of airport workers.

Both 1) and 2) will be burning fossil fuels, adding to dangerous climate change, for the next 20 years. The highest possible risk strategy would be to rely on science for something that cannot yet be achieved, such as net zero aircraft. *“Measures to manage air quality will include finding alternative solutions and switching to less polluting aircraft and vehicles.”* Until these solutions are found, no expansion can be allowed.

The only solution is to rein in flying to an absolute minimum. A greener airport is a smaller airport. Luton airport was popular and more efficient when smaller. Passenger numbers cannot be allowed to reach more than half pre-Covid levels.

Other councils manage without an airport. Many have moved ahead of Luton in thinking and acting sustainably.

Britain faces the worst living standards crisis in generations and millions of families are at breaking point. Luton has a policy of zero poverty by 2040. Luton has the advantage of airport income, but must not be greedy. If, against the terms of a loan from gov't, Luton, spends any more money on airport expansion, instead of a wider programme of creating sustainable green jobs, **poverty would be made worse** due to ill-health, pollution, the energy crisis, climate impacts and diversion of funds away from where they are most needed. Luton is a Labour council, and this is totally incompatible with Labour party policy. ONE per cent of the world's population cause HALF the emissions from flying. To achieve zero poverty, your policies should not increase inequalities between rich and poor.

Council Climate Action Plans <https://www.climateemergency.uk/>

We don't know how these scorecards for progress by different councils were assessed, but are aware that considerable work has gone into them. If you enter “Luton Borough Council” into the search function, you will see the uninspiring score of 19% across the nine criteria.

Apparently, this poor result is NOT due to the impacts of Luton airport and the contribution of pollution and climate emissions from aircraft and vehicles travelling to the airport. The airport was excluded from the Luton's Climate Action Plan, because it was doing its own reduction scheme. If airport impacts were included, would it even register double figures?

Luton Rising's website is all optimistically aspirational rather than deliverable. It can accurately be described as 'greenwash'. It promotes 'Green controlled growth'. This is a wishlist, not a strategy.

It relies on technology that does not exist yet, and could not mitigate against climate and pollution caused, as stated by its own consultants.

It ignores NPPF and Environmental Impact Assessment regulations to assess greenhouse gas emissions from increasing flights and traffic, to drive radical CO2 reductions to protect society and the environment, and fails to consider the UK's 2050 Net Zero target, and its own for 2040.

You are asked to resolve that it's possible to avoid, reduce and remedy a host of bad environmental impacts of expansion. It is **not possible**.

No credible methods, times or targets are given for tackling emissions from planes and traffic as it would be **impossible** to do so.

It is hard to find, on the website or in thousands of pages of documents, a valid reason to expand.

Green growth, applied to an airport, is an oxymoron.

How does **Green** apply to :

- fossil fuels burnt by every one of the 9,650 aeroplanes each year taking off and landing at the airport
- fossil fuels burnt by the majority of vehicles going to the airport for at least the next 20 years
- pollution caused by planes & cars for the next 20 years, which in 2019 made Luton 'Most polluted UK town'
- thousands of people with poor health and shorter lives due to this pollution (many reports confirm this)
- congestion caused by airport traffic, which robs people of their free time and is a huge cost to the economy
- destroying a County Wildlife Site with a mosaic of habitat supporting diverse species that merits SSSI status, according to local Wildlife Trust experts – SSSIs are sacrosanct from development. As an area of Local Landscape Value, it has attractive views. But to well-paid consultants doing desktop exercises, these are just green spaces on a virtual map. They know nothing of the inspiration residents derive from the trees, flowers, birds and insects.- digging up a highly toxic landfill site, which had been mitigated in the best way by creating a park over it
- the "many high risks" (*consultants' documents*) and hazards of building on a toxic landfill, which could release explosive methane and release toxins which could pollute groundwater and the chalk streams River Mimram and River Lea
- deliberately encouraging people to use the most polluting form of transport, when EU countries offer far cheaper rail fares and ban internal flights to destinations you can reach by rail within 3 hours
- use 'loss leader' fares, which do not pay for the damage the flights cause, to lure people away from taking holidays in the UK, where small businesses desperately need our support
- misleading claims about benefiting the UK economy, when the deficit between what is spent by visitors to UK and what UK tourists spend abroad is £several billion
- total lack of commitment to a circular local economy, vital to cut radically the 50% of produce imported to UK

"Extension to terminal on existing airport footprint giving capacity rising to 21.5 million passengers by 2028."

When Luton gave itself permission to double from 9 to 18m (the airport operator only wanted to go to 16m), the council said 2028 would be the date for that. But they reached 18m in 2019.

"The extension will provide 8,600 jobs to Luton and surrounding counties."

Before doubling from 9 to 18m, Luton council said 1000 jobs would be created for each million more passengers. That's 9000 new jobs. Some jobs came, some went. **NO new jobs were created.**

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Q5 Expansion plans

STRONGLY OPPOSE because Luton council (LutonRising) intends –

- to increase the percentage of passengers by up to 70% in 20 years, and to increase aircraft by 50%.

It declared a Climate Emergency 2 years ago, and is fully aware that every flight contributes to climate change and pollution. This would be a large contributor to national emissions, countering the urgent message from scientists that net zero by 2050 is nowhere near fast enough

- to continue its gross and costly over-reliance on the airport despite long-standing advice from government and planning officers, even despite government loans of £80m in 2021 on condition that Luton reduce reliance on the airport
- to ignore vital environmental concerns, or accept that after Brexit, with high petrol and gas prices and continuing Covid, we are in a 'new normal' in which companies have reduced business travel and use online meetings. Others have gone, leaving towns with many empty offices
- to ignore the strong objections that people took the time and trouble to make about noise, wellbeing and environmental impacts in previous consultations, and continued to expand rapidly
- to continue to act in conflict with all national guidance and legislation listed above
- to apply to govt for a Development Consent Order, at great cost to taxpayers. If approved, Luton would grant itself planning permission for many aspects of airport expansion, to the detriment of residents and others affected further away. It has a long history of ignoring its own plan and objections from the public
- to use the term 'green controlled growth' as a cover for expansion of the worst possible practice. It knows that vehicles throughout Luton, including the millions more journeys it intends to generate to the airport, and also large commercial planes, will be burning fossil fuels for at least 20 years. It focuses on cuts in emissions at the airport, ignoring the 99% which are caused by planes and vehicles
- irreplaceable loss of Wigmore Valley Park, an important County Wildlife Site and nationally high priority habitat, equivalent to SSSI standard, at a time when biodiversity is threatened and needs strong support
- major disturbance to a closed landfill, with high risk (LBC consultants' advice) of release of toxic gases and contamination of groundwater and two chalk streams
- to build a new terminal on Wigmore Park, bringing airport traffic much closer to homes, removing the protective noise & pollution barrier between local houses and the airport, against Local Plan policies
- to breach Local Plan policies in several serious ways, which has become a habit
- to channel airport traffic through residential streets in Wigmore and Stopsley from A505 and A1M
- to increase traffic and pollution past 5 local schools and routes to school for many others further away, despite having a very poor health record and knowing that pollution can stunt children's lung growth
- to increase east-west traffic, although there is no east-west rail link. This is already heavy, with airport mixing with other morning Lutonbound traffic, causing congestion. Until 2019, dangerous levels of pollution were recorded by government on A505 nr J11, often 3 or 4 times the legal limit for NO2.
- to continue to breach noise limits for those beneath flight paths in South Luton, Herts and others. Noise and disturbance would increase across a wide area, with many more night flights causing loss of sleep and associated damage to health, and people's enjoyment of their gardens affected
- to cause far more congestion on local road and rail services, due to tens of thousands more passengers travelling each day to and from the airport, as well as trucks and lorries delivering supplies. This would have a negative effect on the local economy, cut people's family time and reduce quality of life. Being stuck regularly in pollution corridors can cause people serious health problems
- that *"Luton Rising will set its own GCG (green growth) limits that will be generous and that will be higher than existing limits so is unlikely to be broken."* While no surprise, this is an admission that 'green growth' is not green, as climate emissions and pollution would continue. *"These cover aircraft noise, air quality, greenhouse gases emissions and surface access, all of which will increase."*
- to source fuel, energy and construction materials. An international energy and supply crisis is likely to be with us for some time, and we must make as rapid a transition as we can to a renewable energy future. Making concrete is not climate-friendly, and switching to better construction methods must be taken into account, for which costs are unknown.

Possibly the most absurd statement in the whole consultation is "If the 2043 noise contours with or expansion proposals are compared against the 2043 noise contours without expansion taking place, the difference in noise would be between 1 and 3 dB higher when compared to the scenario without expansion."

Q6 Why grow? Comments on Draft Need Case document setting out reasons to expand the airport

STRONGLY OPPOSE GROWTH because no airports can be allowed to expand.

Demand was largely created by airlines. Future real demand is unpredictable.

Far too much dependence upon the airport is not how a council should be run – the temptation is too great to act like a privatised corporation. This has badly skewed priorities for the last decade or longer. Any accountant would advise a balanced portfolio. Luton FoE were present at the 2004 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy Planning Inquiry. At the end, the panel of inspectors wisely gave this strong message to Luton: "Don't put all your eggs in the airport basket". The council's auditors have repeated this warning.

Due to Covid, Climate and pollution, and the energy/poverty crisis, fewer people will fly. Occasional flights to

see friends and family are necessary, but the airport's role in the local economy, tourism and connectivity became too big. It was allowed to exert an undue influence on everything else in the town, and must now be reduced. Greater diversity is needed. See Q5.

Q7 Benefits of expansion - maximising jobs, skills and training Comments or suggestions for how we might maximise employment skills, community and social benefits and training opportunities to help benefit neighbouring communities?

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. See Green Jobs and training below.

"Expansion to 32 million passengers will generate up to 6,600 additional jobs". **No it won't.** When Luton council gave itself permission in 2014 to double from 9 to 18m passengers, it said 1000 jobs would be created for each million more passengers. That's 9000 new jobs. Some jobs came, some went. By 2019 when 18m was reached, 10 years ahead of schedule, **NO new jobs were created.**

For decades Luton airport has brought disbenefits to neighbouring communities. The council now asks, when applying to further expand, how it can benefit them.

LOW PAID JOBS

Most jobs are in the terminal, retail, food outlets, cleaners, security guards, plus apron and car park. Start times can be 4am, ending as late as 2am, on rolling 7 day shift patterns. Companies struggle to fill vacancies for this hard, low-paid work. Worse, encouraged by operator and airlines, many jobs are insecure, part time and zero hour contracts with poor prospects of wage increases or promotion.

NEW CENTURY PARK (rebranded Green Horizons) on or beyond Wigmore Park

5 million people have Covid. With far more working from home, many meetings virtual, large corporations radically cutting the number of offices, people choosing between eating and heating, and business parks with many empty units, who would build a new one? For years the council has been backing the wrong horse.

GREEN JOBS AND TRAINING

Luton council and Luton Rising are obsessed with airport related employment, ignoring green employment opportunities elsewhere. However, a more diverse local economy would be healthier for all.

The Local Government Association says thousands of green jobs could be created in Luton by 2030. We can start with the 5 ADEPT priorities.

We must work together to change attitudes and promote green jobs. That is what all money allocated to the airport must now be used for – switching investment to working with partners to create genuinely useful green jobs, partnerships to start green jobs that are as close as possible to carbon-neutral – NOW, not in or by 2040.

We can develop and install renewable and other sustainable, locally generated energy sources such as solar and windfarms, solar panels on buildings and over car parks, heat pumps and home insulation, which is already cheaper than other forms of energy. We can work on EV infrastructure, improve battery technology. Any business can be a force for good in how it respects employees, people it deals with, natural resources, and society. We can grow local food, repair for reuse, and seize other opportunities for investing in and training local people, for a greener, more resilient economy.

Q8 Proposed design for the airport

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2.

This is about the terminal(s), not flights or vehicle journeys.

The vast majority of pollution and climate emissions will come from traffic and aircraft.

Actions at the existing airport complex, let alone expansion to a second terminal, would not offset this.

To increase flights and traffic would be deliberately to increase noise, pollution, and climate impacts.

All green measures which cut climate emissions, waste and pollutants and which contribute to a circular economy at the airport complex, on planes, and by employees and visitors, are welcome and must happen without expansion.

- a. Sustainability design Terminal 2 net zero building and rainwater harvesting

- b. Approach to Wigmore Valley Park preserving more trees, biodiversity and Heritage assets
 - c. Reduction in airfield platform and earthworks
 - d. Reconfigured taxiways, position of new stands, and size of hard standing with run up bay and new access to Fire Training Ground
 - e. Enhancements to Terminal 1
- If expansion went ahead, 100% of the valuable County Wildlife Site, with a mosaic of habitats, would be lost along with a loss of 2 hectares of mature trees. (b) is therefore entirely misleading. Wigmore Valley park must NOT be destroyed. 'Replacement' green space, as previous agricultural land, would not have the biodiversity which thrives at the County Wildlife Site, and would take 40 years to approach similar diversity. Serious Net loss, not net gain.
 - Landfill disturbance of toxic materials and gases by moving soil or piling is described in consultants' reports as 'high risk'. Occupants of any buildings on this site, local residents and visitors could be vulnerable to poisonous gases or methane, which can build up in confined spaces and explode. Pollutants could leach into groundwater, into the pure River Mimram, and the River Lea, which runs for 50 miles to the Thames.
 - To move the equivalent of 2 Wembley Stadiums of earth to level a site on a hill above a large town, that is inappropriate for expansion, is absurd. This is being called a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' but as it is based on last century thinking, any return on investment is unlikely, and it is unknown how loans could be repaid.
 - Hundreds of piles should not be driven into a landfill site that contains toxic waste which can release gas emissions and could result in health impacts.

Q9 Getting to the airport "Emerging transport strategy" *means we haven't worked out how to do this yet.*

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2.

Increasing Transport = Increasing Pollution and Climate emissions

"We are required to provide mitigation so that traffic congestion will not be significantly worse than the levels of congestion which would occur without any expansion of the airport."

This is clearly IMPOSSIBLE. No amount of modelling can change that.

50% of people going to the airport by public transport at 18m passenger journeys is about 9m journeys.

At 32m it would be 16m journeys. For the next 20 years most of these vehicles would be burning fossil fuels.

Why many new ground level car parks, instead of a multi-storey? Why waste land and destroy an irreplaceable County Wildlife Site, when the 'plan' is to increase public transport to the airport? Because it is blindingly obvious that the increase in passengers would overwhelm the likely take-up in public transport.

The plan includes a costly road through the airport and Wigmore Park to direct airport traffic through residential streets in Wigmore and Stopsley. Seven sets of lights would cause more pollution from idling vehicles. There are 5 schools in the area.

The link road via Eaton Green Road near Asda is prohibited in the Local Plan, to protect Wigmore from uncontrolled traffic. So it would be a deliberate breach of the plan.

Congestion

Expansion to 18m brought major jams to Luton. This was very frustrating for commuters and parents taking children to school. It wasted many hours of their lives and had a big cost to the local economy.

Luton airport has poor east-west connections, except for the local busway. The Lower Luton Road is already over-capacity at peak hours. The emerging transport strategy does not say how this might be solved. The M1, A1081 and A505 became very congested by 2019, following significant growth of airport capacity, and the pandemic has caused even more of the passengers to use cars. No evidence is provided to show why they would switch to using public transport or how this would be achieved for the catchment areas not served by the Bedford to St Pancras line. The strategy makes a lot of aspirational statements but contains little by way of credible targets.

The Dart

The Dart can only serve those coming from North and South, except a few local people on the busway.

The 45% target, if achieved, of people going to the airport by public transport including the costly DART, would be overwhelmed by the increase in road traffic due to far more passengers. This would add considerably to

pollution, congestion and climate emissions against national climate commitments.

This fact is clearly understood, as plans include over 20,000 more car parking spaces. But multi-storey car parks could use land more efficiently, avoid Wigmore Park and be sited elsewhere, eg on the airport complex, much of which is derelict, or at the corner of Airport Way and Eaton Green Road.

POLLUTION

Air pollution is the biggest killer on the planet. The worst place for your health is to be sitting in a vehicle in a corridor of pollution, or to live on a major road, like the Luton-Dunstable road. A government monitoring station showed that until Mar 2020, early morning peak period pollution from west-east traffic on the A505 near the Challney schools was often 3 or 4 times the legal limit. This coincided with rapid airport expansion. There is no east-west railway, so many people drive to Luton from west of Dunstable.

Friends of the Earth placed diffusion tubes to monitor NO₂ pollution from traffic at 10 key road junctions near the airport for a month. Results were rounded down by the laboratory, but despite this, 2 were over the legal limit and 4 were fairly close, which still indicates dangerous levels. This was before 18m passengers was reached.

Luton sits in a valley trapping pollution below the airport. In 2019, passengers had doubled from 9m in 2014 to 18m, bringing many millions more vehicles to our roads, travelling to the airport not just from the M1 but east-west through residential roads. One third were diesel, which produce lethal, tiny particles that go straight into your lungs, making people ill and reducing lifespan. Two reports found Luton to be 'most polluted town in UK'. People's health here was already a serious concern, being among the 20 most deprived districts in England, with lower life expectancy, impaired lung and brain function, and higher respiratory illness. The 18m figure had been reached not in 2028 as promised, but 2019, the council having done little to mitigate the impact of people travelling to the airport. Making health worse would blow apart Luton's aim of zero poverty.

People in South Luton and Herts below flightpaths are being deprived of essential sleep. The airport has already breached rules on nightflights. Increasing plane noise at night would further affect health and wellbeing.

Against its own Local Plan, to support airport expansion, the council approved a road through the airport and Wigmore Park to join Eaton Green Road, that would bring rat runs through Wigmore and Stopsley, causing far more traffic and pollution, and affect pupils in at least 5 schools. This road is not yet built and must be stopped.

Luton has said since the 1990s in the Local Plan that it would act with partners to run a green travel plan for the town and airport. In this it has totally failed. It has arrived, through greed, at something totally unsustainable.

Q10 **Building our airport** Phase 1 and 2 - Comments on phased approach

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2.

It's there already & doesn't need building. Airport activities must remain on the existing site.

Passenger numbers and airline fleets are not controlled by the council (Luton Rising).

What is certain that climate constraints have reached a tipping point and we cannot go backwards

Plans suggest a road through a semi-derelict car park on Wigmore Park near the TidyTip, against Local Plan policy. This would cause rat-runs, congestion, pollution, health effects and inconvenience for residents of Wigmore and Stopsley.

Landfill disturbance could cause major problems such as build up of methane in buildings or interference with the deep water aquifer.

Q11 **Draft code of construction practice**

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2.

Construction would create noise, vibration, dust and emissions. Excavating the landfill is described by consultants as 'high risk'. No code of practice can accommodate unknown risks.

Cement production is known to be a major source of greenhouse gases. It is unclear how this would be kept to a minimum or mitigated by use of different materials. All new buildings should be to BREEAM excellent standard. Layout should maximise energy efficiency and keep access roads as short as possible.

Q12 Environmental effects and mitigations of expanding the airport

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2.

If 'Green Controlled Growth' is the guiding principle, shouldn't this be Question 1 ?

- It is impossible to mitigate 100% loss of the County Wildlife Site and most of the best features of Wigmore Park, landscaped in the 1980s by conscientious council officers. The County Wildlife Site is of SSSI status, with valuable ecology such as ancient hedgerows with English bluebells and wild orchids.. The only reason this designation has not been proposed by the council is the intention to build on it.
- Most trees (2 hectares) and shrubs that are trapping carbon, providing habitat and green corridors, giving protection and well-being to residents, would be destroyed. Local people would be exposed to more pollution from airport and vehicles nearer their homes. The park provides an essential barrier between airport and homes from noise and pollution.
- Any replacement trees would take up to 40 years to mature to the stage the current trees have reached – a major negative effect that could not be mitigated. Three generations of local people have watched this park develop, created as 'essential for recreation' in the 1980s, into a wildlife haven with many different habitats offering points of interest, and it would be completely removed by this appalling plan.
- The park is designated an Area of Local Landscape Value. This proposal would replace an attractive view of the landscape from across the 70 hectare park with its dips, rises, ridges of trees, diverse flora and birdsong, and houses among woods on the horizon with an unwanted, ugly terminal building, other buildings, roads, vehicles, and airport car parks. The permanent presence of vehicles would be particularly ironic, as visitors to this beautiful park are currently only allowed a 3-hour stay.
- Offley and Kings Walden registered the park with Luton Council as an Asset of Community Value. In 2019 it was voted one of the Best Parks in the East of England in a competition run by Fields in Trust.
- Luton council approved sale of Wigmore Park to Luton Rising to 'develop' this District Park, our second biggest park, vital to local people and wildlife. LBC also approved a business complex, roads and airport car parks across the park, against the Local Plan they had written, approved by an Inspector.
- There is a **global climate emergency**. The Climate Change Commission has stated there should be no further expansion of UK airports. **See opening remarks.**
- The proposals would cause harm to people, the environment, quality of life and well-being. This is not justified by the Draft Need Case and not offset by proposed mitigations.
- It is not guaranteed that aircraft would achieve lower emissions, relying on airlines being able to afford to change their fleet. Claims about new technology, eg hydrogen-powered planes and zero emissions flights, are unproven. 'Lower emissions' are not nearly good enough to achieve a zero carbon future.
- 'Sustainable Aviation Fuel' is costly, may come from deforestation and competes with other biomass users. It still creates carbon emissions.
- Luton Rising states that Terminal 2 will be zero rated, but aircraft taking off, flying and landing will burn fossil fuels, causing pollution and climate emissions, as will most vehicles, for at least 20 years.
- If the number of commercial flights increases by about 60%, with departures and arrivals through the night, 30,000 more people could suffer plane noise, lack of sleep and likely health effects. At least 25 villages would be affected, as well as nearby towns such as Hitchin and Stevenage.

Q13 Green Controlled Growth framework - limits for air quality, noise, surface access, greenhouse gases.

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2.

If 'Green Controlled Growth' is the guiding principle, shouldn't this be Question 1 ?

We suggest this demonstrates Luton Rising's priorities.

"These environmental limits are not airy aspirations but would be legally binding."

This statement is laughable from a totally untrustworthy council which is already ignoring both its own Local Plan and a range of national rules listed in our introduction.

"An independent body would assess whether limits were being breached."

And Luton council would ignore that, just as they ignore other rules.

Green growth at an airport is an oxymoron. Airport growth must be a thing of the past, with the emphasis on efficiency and a good experience for those who do fly, less often.

- Previous commitments to limits that were agreed have been overridden many times, such as noise and passenger numbers. 'The people own the airport' but Scrutiny is sparse and not carried out in public.
- Breaches may not be dealt with as Luton Council / Luton Rising is both poacher and gamekeeper. It is in the financial interests of both airport operator and owner to achieve growth.
- More frequent flights, even if quieter, would increase overall background noise.

- With no definite levels set, these remain vague, and Luton Rising could set them high to allow for the growth it wants to reach, so breaches would be rare.

Q14 **Open space** Landscaping and ecological improvements for the replacement Wigmore Park.

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION. NO TERMINAL 2. See comments under Q12

We don't see use of the word 'green' much here! To use the term 'ecological improvements' is crass when discussing the complete destruction of a valuable, designated ecological habitat at Wigmore Valley Park.

- Documents are **WRONG** to state that the 'replacement park' would be closer to people's homes. It would be further away, so many local people, especially those with mobility problems, would have to travel to the park by car or not at all. This land is in neighbouring Hertfordshire.
- Without the trees, shrubs and large open space providing a buffer it would be noisier, with an increase in pollution affecting local residents. Replacement trees elsewhere would not provide this protection, and would take 40 years to match the diverse habitat in Wigmore Park.
- The quality of the 'replacement park', just a green shape on a map to consultants, would be far inferior. This is farmland, treated with fertilisers that would take decades to disperse. The soil is too rich for native flora, which would not therefore support diverse fauna. And where would the fauna from Wigmore Park go? It would die or diminish, having to compete with other fauna for habitat.

Q15 **Compensation proposals**

- As merely a proposal and Draft Compensation Policies these are not set in stone. If decibel threshold of 54dB (national policy 60dB) would trigger double glazing work on people's homes, that would be welcome, but is little use in summer when people need windows open at night and to enjoy their gardens. The 'bad neighbour' should not BE a bad neighbour in the first place.
- Residents in Wigmore ward are not eligible for any compensation. However, they feel deprived of services having lost their library, sports and football grounds, and community centre while huge sums have been borrowed, to be spent on the Council's airport. Nothing is proposed for the local community except a new café with toilets and a play area close to a major new road through Wigmore Park, most of which would be ruined, with new buildings and airport car parks over the County Wildlife Site so much enjoyed by walkers.
- Even the café comes with no commitment to keep it open for a specified length of time, and we are not told the opening hours. This, the toilets, playground and new skate park should be funded through grants by the council, who make grants available to other parts of the town without needing government approval of a Development Consent Order for airport expansion as a condition. The compensation proposals do not make up for the considerable harm caused.

Q16 **Community First Funding**

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION

Actually putting the community first would have meant being sympathetic to the overwhelming opposition to expansion at the previous consultation. The Community First scheme can continue to support charitable bodies in Luton without airport expansion.

Luton Rising is keen to talk about the millions given pre-Covid to support the community, and uses well chosen words to justify their spending, but they are between **£500 to £900 million in debt**. Supporting the community is about far more than money. The council should be assessing and deciding greatest need, not throwing airport money randomly at charities. The energy crisis is leading to poverty and deprivation. The poorest in Luton should not be supported by encouraging the richest to fly, making the climate crisis worse for all. The council's aim of Zero poverty by 2040 is unachievable.

Q17 **Any other comments?**

STRONGLY OPPOSE EXPANSION

We like this summary from Ladacan:

The consultation exhibitions and brochures paint a very one-sided picture in favour of the expansion proposals, and the true impacts are hidden in thousands of pages of technical material. The environmental impacts are played down in favour of claimed jobs and economic benefits which themselves are over-stated and poorly evidenced. The whole project will add to UK carbon emissions and make it harder to achieve net zero, which is against government policy. There is no certainty about the noise impacts because limits and controls have not been provided. There is also no certainty about who will pay for the developments proposed or whether they represent good value for money.

Personal responsibility

Luton council is placing the pursuit of financial gain ahead of the climate crisis and health of its residents.

When your child or grandchild asks: "What did you do in the great warming?", will you tell them "I helped expand the airport"? Or will you be able to say "I helped to keep flying down, inspired residents and businesses to work together to tackle the climate threat, and kickstarted training and partnerships for a wide range of low-carbon, green jobs to protect your future?"

FoE – David Oakley-Hill speech to Council

David Oakley-Hill speech for **Luton FoE** 30 Nov 2021

(Interested groups allowed **4 minutes**)

recorded at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRwnTEdegl8> 2hrs 51 mins in

FoE Response to Government Call-in of Planning Application 21/00031/VARCON
by London Luton Airport Operations Ltd (LLAOL) to expand from 18 to 19m passengers

Why we must not expand the airport - 8 reasons to refuse the application

1 Climate emergency – drought, fires, floods and hurricanes. Life-support breaking down. Fossil fuel addiction taking us to 3 degrees. Young people are frightened and angry. The UN, David Attenborough, the Queen & Greta urge us to listen to the scientists. We can't put things off or make the wrong choices. The next 10 years are crucial. In that time there will be no large commercial planes that don't rely on fossil fuels that wreck our thin atmosphere.

2 The Govt's 6th Carbon Budget requires emission cuts by 78% by 2035. Its Climate Committee said 'no airport growth anywhere'. (para 94 of report)

As climate effects worsen, rules will strengthen. This report is in denial that we all have to play our part in urgently tackling the climate crisis. Going back to pre-Covid levels and more expansion is suicidal.

3 Govt loaned Luton Council £35m this year on condition that it reduce reliance on the airport

Over-reliance on the airport has been a big problem. The Local Govt Association says Thousands of green jobs could be created in Luton by 2030. We can start with the 5 ADEPT priorities.

4 Govt said in Apr 2021 that Aviation & Shipping impacts must be included in all proposals and council climate plans. (para 94) Climate doesn't care about economics. We need to follow Norway. Every financial decision must consider & reduce carbon impact. To get transport, buildings, waste & food to carbon neutral in a big town is a huge task we must take seriously. Airport expansion conflicts with all that, wiping out good actions. Sending freight by plane causes the most emissions.

We must do nothing to make climate impacts worse, especially in poor countries, where many in Luton have relatives.

5 You're asked to approve expansion with an Out of date Masterplan and No Carbon Reduction strategy. "Local plan policy LLP6 B(iii) says airport expansion will only be supported with an up to date Airport Master Plan. (para 141 iii) Neither the masterplan, or 'Carbon Reduction Plan' give actions & targets for tackling emissions from planes & traffic. We're told there'll be a Carbon Reduction Strategy in 12 months. You're asked to vote that it's possible to avoid, reduce & remedy bad environmental impacts of expansion. It is NOT POSSIBLE. You're asked to misinterpret National Planning Policy Framework and exclude an

assessment of Greenhouse emissions from flights and traffic to protect society and the environment. National Policy NPPF paragraph 148 requires action to drive 'radical reductions' in carbon dioxide emissions.

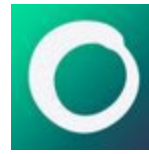
You're asked to approve expansion with no Carbon Reduction Strategy. You can't kick the can down the road. Government says expansion of any airport must meet climate change obligations to be able to proceed" – but this can't be done with current plane technology! Last week, councillors approved an out of date masterplan. Without an up to date masterplan, you can't approve expansion. Luton should be a good neighbour & listen to the many councils who say the application is premature.

6 Luton Rising says: 'green growth only' – Promises are easy. Emissions must not rise from present levels. But 51% of the damage caused by the Airport is from planes in the sky. 48% is from airport traffic – passengers, employees, taxis, diesel service vehicles, buses & coaches. This 99% of emissions the Wood report lists as 'Scope 3'. (para 106) It's hard to do much about this. Plans will all fail with expansion. We need to cut emissions NOW Until planes are fossil-fuel free and most people are driving electric vehicles, we need a **No-Fly decade**, where only vital journeys are made. Our climate plan should encourage residents to cut carbon, and teach climate solutions at ALL our schools. Not flying is the single biggest choice people can make. France is cutting domestic flights and encouraging trains - Germany & Sweden tax flights already.

7 Air pollution – biggest killer on the planet. Before Covid, Luton was UK's worst polluted town, with a big health problem. Where pollution's higher, risk from Covid is 75% greater. Govt monitoring showed morning rush hour pollution from traffic near the Challney Schools was often 3 or 4 times over the legal limit. Some of this traffic is due to doubling of passengers. Deliberately making health worse will blow apart Luton council's aim of zero poverty.

8 Personal responsibility – When your child or grandchild asks what you did in the great warming, will you tell them "I helped expand the airport' ? Or will you say "I helped to keep flying down, inspired residents to come together to tackle the climate threat, and kickstarted training & partnerships for low-carbon, green jobs to protect your future?"

FoE – letter to Luton News



Letter to Luton News 7 Jun 2020 Covid, Climate and our future

My father wrote in May 1945 to my brother, then 13, who'd just lost his mother due to illness: "One thing is certain – no one must think of returning to the old ways – we must try to build a new world and remove the undesirable features of the old one."

Scientists say we should have been on a 'war footing' for 20 years to reduce climate change, which, like Covid and the war, has affected people worldwide. Odd how a war footing can be quickly adopted for an immediate threat to life, but those in power seem unwilling to peer over the horizon to protect the next generation.

The far greater danger of a 4-6 degree temperature rise could wipe out humanity and most other life on Earth this century. The climate crisis is already killing and displacing millions, with melting ice, floods, frightening and polluting wildfires across the planet, and sea level rise threatening coastal towns. But lockdown has only cut UK emissions by 7%, and we need to do more.

Friends of the Earth and other objectors stopped Heathrow expansion in court by pointing out that despite declaring a climate emergency last May, government plans had not included the Paris agreement it had signed. Our government has 3 times been told by the High Court that it must act on air pollution.

While sad for many, lockdown has removed congestion, brought fewer planes, clean air, less noise and more contact with nature. People working from home have realised they don't need to travel as much. The collapse in demand for flying & driving will reduce carbon emissions. Yet Luton Council plans to waste another £20m of our money applying to government in 2021 to expand the airport.

There is no business case for this. Officers and councillors should be focusing on the needs of vulnerable people. It would bring back pollution levels that would stunt children's growing lungs, affecting the rest of their lives, and hurt people with existing health problems, preventing many from working, at a cost to the NHS. Expansion would wipe out all the good being done in other sectors across the town. The council's highly-paid consultants say you cannot 'mitigate' against pollution or climate change while expanding. Organisations across the spectrum are saying we cannot return to how things were. Why has our council learnt no lessons from the lockdown?

Many describe how Wigmore Park has been a life-saver for exercise, fresh air and the joy of seeing wildlife. Instead of felling thousands of trees to build airport car parks and a new terminal on Wigmore Park and Century Park fields beyond, Luton must stop roadbuilding, plant thousands of trees, and grow a greener and kinder economy, supporting retraining for those who lose airport jobs.

A good start would be a partnership with local farmers to grow more crops for local consumption. The council, local businesses and university must shed all investments in fossil fuels, organise car sharing, and create safe walking and cycling routes. Century Park fields could host a community-run solar farm to provide 15MW of free energy from the sun to 5000 local homes, and bring back a large wildflower meadow - 98% of meadows have been lost since the war.

David Oakley-Hill
Luton Friends of the Earth

FoE – press release



**Friends of
the Earth**

greenactivities@outlook.com

P R E S S R E L E A S E 27 Feb 2020

Heathrow expansion ruled illegal – Luton expansion cannot go ahead either as we must prevent climate breakdown

In one of the most important environmental law cases in a generation, the Court of Appeal has ruled the government plans for Heathrow illegal on climate change grounds. This is a groundbreaking victory for climate justice and our children's future. 'Business as usual' is dead. No business will gain from destroying conditions for life on Earth.

It shows the huge importance of the legal system to check abuses of government power. Shockingly, the case revealed that the government received legal advice that it should not consider the Paris Agreement when approving a third runway. The court has said that ignoring Paris was illegal. The government said it will not challenge the ruling. One of the three judges said "Governments can't keep claiming commitment to the Paris Agreement while taking actions that blatantly contradict it." With an international climate conference in the UK later this year, this is the jolt the government needs to start putting the climate emergency first in transport policies. Heathrow is one of the biggest single UK sources of greenhouse gases.

Communities in UK and across the world are suffering the effects of climate breakdown. Airport expansion at Heathrow, Luton or anywhere else simply cannot go ahead if we're to prevent further climate disaster. Stansted and Bristol have already voted not to expand.

The decision has the implication of keeping climate change at the heart of all planning decisions. Three reports have shown Luton to be one of the most congested and worst polluted towns in the UK, with serious health effects caused by plane exhausts and the millions of vehicle journeys the airport generates. Developers and public authorities must be held to account for the climate and health impacts of their damaging projects.

Friends of the Earth and other groups have been fighting airport expansion for years, and our legal team has worked hard to ensure the next generation has an environment that's getting better. This is a vindication of the support received across the country by donations, petitions, regional and national campaigners.

Caption to attached photo:

This photo shows jet trails in Luton. Every jet trail acts like a cloud, contributing to climate change and pollution

*David Oakley-Hill
Co-ordinator, Luton FoE*

Friends of Wigmore Park press release

19 Sep 2019

Wigmore Valley Park voted best park in Bedfordshire, and one of the 12 most-loved parks in the East of England

Fields in Trust Best Park 2019 competition.

Wigmore Park, Luton, was nominated as one of the UK's best parks. Park users were asked to vote between 5 July and 19 August.

The amazing wildlife in our 70-acre park, a County Wildlife Site, includes thousands of orchids (including bee orchids), bees, butterflies & over 60 bird species.

Highest votes went to Lake Meadows, Billericay. Wigmore was most voted for park in Luton and Bedfordshire, and in the top 3 for surrounding counties, a milestone achievement and testimony to how well appreciated it is by people who use it. We will receive a certificate recognising this support.

David Oakley-Hill, Co-Chair of Luton Friends of Parks & Green Spaces, said: "It's a delight for one of our Friends groups to receive an award for this wildlife-rich park on the edge of our densely populated town, so children & adults can connect with nature and get exercise near their homes. If people would like to form a Friends group for their local park, please contact Parks Dept."

The park was created in the 1980s when Wigmore estate was built. Council officers landscaped the closed landfill with raised paths, and planted hundreds of trees by a strip of ancient woodland. Over 35 years diverse wildlife has blossomed, thanks partly to water which in winter sits over a clay layer.

Friends of Wigmore Park are concerned that some in today's council don't recognise the vital role this public asset plays – it's a rare oasis for plants, insects and birds which are in sharp decline.

The council plans to flatten the park and thousands of trees with bulldozers for offices, airport car parking and even a second terminal. But the national climate and wildlife emergency, and many scientific reports on health damage from air pollution, demand not expansion, but reduction of airport traffic, which has grown too fast, bringing congestion, health and environmental problems.

The council wants a climate target of 2030 to be carbon neutral, driven by residents, and we expect to be involved. The park's woodland is a vital barrier between the airport and homes, cutting pollution and noise reaching residents. A 'replacement park' would have no trees or wildlife.

Friends of Wigmore Park (facebook)

<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/best-park/east/wigmore-valley-park>

Contact: @gmail.com Photos by Scott Stalham and David Oakley-Hill

FoE - David Oakley-Hill speech to Development Control

I am representing Friends of the Earth and Friends of Parks and Green Spaces, and will also try to speak for Bedfordshire Climate Change Forum, who are unable to attend.

Wigmore Park was created by council officers over a landfill site, close to homes, providing fresh air and exercise. It's not just a square of grass. The clay layer has made this a fantastic wildlife site, with ancient woodland, thousands of orchids - a beautiful place people escape to. It is an Asset of Community Value.

Local Plan policy LLP28 says "*the benefits of the proposal must clearly outweigh nature conservation, and mitigation to minimise any harm. All existing habitats & ecological networks will be afforded a level of protection from harm.*" Harm? This important **County Wildlife Site** would be completely destroyed! It's taken decades to develop – you can't just start one somewhere else. We're in the middle of a rapid mass extinction. Let's do all we can to protect wildlife.

Over 400 objectors. This is almost unprecedented. Some statements are very moving - by families who have used this park for 3 generations and know it's vital for children to connect with nature. The proposed offices & car parks DO NOT outweigh nature conservation and need for nearby greenspace. Is this committee going to ignore all these heartfelt comments?

The Committee is being asked to approve an application that is against the new Local Plan. It has no measures to stop Wigmore Lane and Ashcroft Rd becoming major access roads to the airport, and having knock-on effects across the network. As soon as the big road is open, traffic will pour in and out of residential roads and they'll become rat runs.

Mature Trees, we've heard about, are very important, and it says so in the Local Plan, and gives all their assets. This proposal would destroy 2 hectares of mature trees, so I endorse what Lawrence has just said.

Given our shortage of green land, it is wasteful to build car parks that are not multi-storey. You can't do multi-storey on toxic landfill liable to subside, and cause buildings to collapse. For that reason – and exploding methane - offices should not be built there either – nor 5-storey hotels.

Our natural environment forms the basis for protection and health both of humans and wildlife. This application would fatally compromise Local Plan policies on sustainability, protecting greenspace, biodiversity, health, social services & pollution control. Quality of human life will rapidly cascade downhill.

The council manages parks on behalf of residents. But it didn't ask people if they were happy to lose their park. In 2015 Wigmore Park was secretly licensed to London Luton Airport Ltd, run by the same CEO as Luton Council.

This application is for a BIG road to nowhere, and we've been constantly lied to about what it was for – the only reason for such a big road is not for a few offices, but to reach new housing in Herts via an M25 around Luton via Lilley, or

a new airport terminal, or both.

To decide this application would be premature and illegal until Luton puts before the public its plan to change the license on Wigmore Park to a lease, on which it must consult. It's OUR park.

Insect and animal species are crashing due to human activity. A huge amount of work by Wildlife Trusts and others goes into managing sites and recording species – and someone at the top of Luton Council plans to trash it all.

The council's own consultants admit you cannot mitigate against loss of green space & wildlife habitat, or the huge increase in air pollution & climate change the council is planning, because we know this is the first step towards Terminal 2 and double the flights. The ONLY thing in that area that mitigates against pollution and noise is Wigmore Park – and the council wants to destroy it.

Surrounding roads are already at capacity, and expanding much too fast has made us 4th most congested town. LBC plans another 16 million vehicles on our roads, and has the answer to mitigation – add traffic signals to 2 roundabouts.

Air Pollution Breathing clean, fresh air is a human right - our own council is gradually taking it away. The only mitigation near the airport, is Wigmore Park. Pollution has been made worse by rapid airport expansion from 9 to 16m passengers in 5 years. This has an impact on the whole town. People sit in their homes & gardens in a polluted valley, or in their cars in a pollution corridor.

Vehicle exhausts and planes are the biggest source of dangerous pollution.

Major new roads cause major traffic increases.

We urgently need to protect children who live close to the airport or beneath flight paths over nearby towns and villages, where noise is intolerable. Where's the Luton Director of Public Health speaking up for preventative actions ? 86 deaths a year in Luton are attributed by Public Health England to particulate air pollution, mainly from diesels.

Why is the council pushing for more polluting activities?

Monitors at the Airport show constant breaching of air pollution limits over several years. 8000 airport workers travel mostly by car, and breathe in high levels of pollution at the airport, where it can be choking.

Tests by Luton FoE showed NO₂ levels over or close to legal limits in several places. It's NOT safe or OK to be close to these limits. This would rise to illegal levels in many areas near schools if the Eaton Green Access Road opened.

Mr Gurtler was scathing last year about many aspects of this application including the Transport Assessment, which ignored the effect on the wider network, the new rat-runs it would cause, new Luton-facing developments at Cockernhoe and Wandon End, more journeys from Butterfield Green and other developments. He's now using a different tone, and recommending approval.

But almost nothing's changed ! Except that we now know about the plan for Terminal 2 on the same land as this application.

One of the best things to do for air pollution/climate/health is to protect all our mature trees and plant thousands more. £35,000 for new trees – thanks. This application would cut down 2 hectares of mature trees which are absorbing airport pollution & reducing climate gases.

I'm co-chair of Friends of Parks & Green Spaces, the umbrella body for Friends of Parks groups across Luton. We signed the National Parks Charter, supporting protection of parks and their trees and flowers for health, education, biodiversity and to reduce pollution.

If you can afford to loan £500 million to London Luton Airport Ltd, you can afford one million to plant thousands of trees in the borough to absorb some of the pollution your policies are creating. I'll help Parks manage where they go.

I want to see councillors show the political will to take responsibility for looking after residents by providing green space, clean air, cutting congestion & climate emissions, protecting the important wildlife in Wigmore Park, NOT building this damaging major road and NOT expanding the airport.

Climate Beds Climate Change Forum have asked me to say that they support whatever I say on Climate.

David Attenborough says climate change is humanity's greatest threat in thousands of years. After the IPCC report last October, we need to move fast to Zero Carbon Britain.

Kelvin Hopkins MP has just signed a motion to parliament on the climate emergency.

10 years ago this council had 5 climate officers. The airport's rapid, unsustainable expansion has made Luton the fastest growing source of climate change in UK. In this report, Climate is only mentioned **once**.

How does this application comply with the Climate Change Act and the Paris agreement?

On 15 March I joined children from 2 Luton schools who marched to the Town Hall on climate strike, worried about their future. That day over 1.5 MILLION students went on strike and waved thoughtful banners because they're frightened that decision makers are screwing up their future. It's the Town Hall who should be leading, guiding, educating. Please take responsibility.

Listen to Greta Thunberg's Ted Talk. She asks: "if burning fossil fuels threatens our very existence, how can we just continue like before? Emissions must stop." What's your answer? Hazel Simmons answered "Economic growth is not going to stop." Do you think that answer is good enough? I suggest that economic growth has to take a radical turn.

If Luton is the fastest growing source of climate change, we must change what we're doing. Radically. We must stop Luton airport expansion. It's a great

income. We're lucky. Don't be greedy. You're ruining your children's lives.

Many towns have already declared a **Climate Emergency**. Yesterday a bill was tabled in parliament for a Green New Deal which will provide Green jobs, not damaging ones, in every part of the UK, and prevent climate breakdown.

If you don't refuse this application, in 10 years children in Luton will remember this council as people who ruined their future by voting to wear blindfolds and continue burning fossil fuels with evidence all around them that this was suicidal.

FoE – Century & Wigmore Park response part 2



**Friends of
the Earth**

Contact David Oakley-Hill localgreenactivity@gmail.com

Revised application 17/02300/EIA 23 Aug 2018

FoE response part 2 11 Oct 2018 *PDF inc photos*

FoE response part 1 28 Feb 2018 *PDF inc photos emailed to D Gurtler (reattached)*

Information sheet on air pollution / climate change 8 Oct 2018

FoE's 28 Feb response was misfiled on LBC's website. It should be reproduced with photos in the document section. We attach it again.

This response is to be read and displayed alongside the previous one, and the single sheet on Climate Change and Air Pollution, which was given to the council leader, LBC/LLAL CEO, and chair of LLAL board.



*The only clouds in the sky are jet trails. Every trail represents a day stolen from the lives of our children
Photo in Luton 27 Sep 2018 David Oakley-Hill*

FoE response part 2

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Introduction

The public owns Luton airport. This has been stated on Labour leaflets, and by the Council Leader on 8 Oct 2018. **People don't want congestion, noise, pollution, bad health, and they need their park.** No one asked Luton Council, or gave permission, for LBC to give away the people's park to LLAL to develop. There should have been a major consultation before any such decision was taken.

A Freedom of Information request from Luton FoE to LBC: *What date did a LBC committee decide that Wigmore Valley Park was to be 'licensed' to LLAL, to plan a big development?*

brought the response: *We do not hold this information. The licence to LLAL was granted under the Service Director for Property & Construction Services' delegated powers.*

This is part of Luton BC, so it **does** hold the information. To have done this under 'delegated powers', usually used for an officer to deal with a house extension, is an insult to democracy. We were also told that *The licence started in April 2017.*

But the decision is recorded as having taken place 2 years earlier.

LBC claims there was no legal requirement to inform the public, but this does not stand up to scrutiny.

The Council has a moral & legal Duty of Care to act on behalf of and protect residents. It has acted undemocratically and must withdraw its application.

This EIA application, with a major dual carriageway through the airport, is the first key stage to facilitate a far bigger expansion plan which would rely on this road. It cannot be separated, as LBC wishes, from the recent consultation showing a second terminal on Wigmore Valley Park. Both must be determined by government.

The 8 Oct IPCC statement, based on 6000 scientific studies, should alarm and motivate everyone to action – individuals, organisations, businesses, central & local government. Twelve years of hard work to prevent **Catastrophic Climate Change** cannot include any projects which make the situation worse.

Making the best use of Luton's runway (Govt aviation strategy) refers to efficiency.

It does not mean increasing to as many flights as possible. Lutonians should receive millions of pounds a year from the airport, but (apart from selected charities) instead of rapid expansion bringing more money for the health service or protecting the environment of its impoverished citizens, the council has pumped money into endlessly rearranging airport infrastructure.

Ignoring 400 letters of objection, 2 petitions and a damning internal report which amounts to a recommendation for refusal, you revised the application in Aug 2018, adding hundreds more documents, making it impossible for ordinary people to engage and comment.

It is of concern that any public money spent on infrastructure for airport expansion will be wasted, because there will be increasing pressure to meet air pollution, fossil fuel reduction and climate targets, and the project will have to be halted. Widespread uptake of electric vehicles will not be with us for some time; hybrids are a more likely way forward while diesels are rapidly phased out and measures are taken to cut fossil fuel emissions.

The application should be refused, as it proposes an inappropriate development on a valuable Community Asset and does not comply with key relevant Local Plan policies.

1 **CLIMATE CHANGE – URGENT ACTION NEEDED**

8 Oct 2018: IPCC's Climate Report was published, based on 6000 scientific reports.

"The planet would reach the crucial 1.5C warming as early as 2030 under current greenhouse gas emission levels: risking wildfires, extreme droughts, floods, and serious famine" -
UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 8 Oct 2018

"We only have the slimmest of opportunities remaining to avoid unthinkable damage to the climate system that supports life as we know it." - *IPCC board member Amjad Abdulla*

"We must get serious about decarbonising and meeting our climate change targets"
- *John McDonnell, Deputy Labour leader, talking about IPCC report and Heathrow expansion*

Every new report shows that Climate Change is more rapid than we thought it was. Allowing temperatures to rise by 2C would have devastating consequences.

Climate messages are toned down

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/sep/23/scientists-changing-global-warming-report-please-polluters>

Half a Degree of Warming Could be the Difference Between Survival and Extinction for Many Species - Adam Markham, Deputy Director, Union of Concerned Scientists 9 Oct 2018
<https://blog.ucsusa.org/adam-markham/half-a-degree-of-warming-could-mean-species-extinction>

“I’m with George Monbiot that economic growth is the core problem.”

Giles Fraser, BBC Moral Maze 10 Oct 2018 on Climate Change

Aviation industry is beyond the law: expects privileges but accepts none of the responsibility. Communities are seen as an obstacle. Self-regulation is not fit for purpose.

“Regulated” by CAA & DfT - Charles Lloyd RAS - 5 suggestions (video, 11mins in)

The 2003 Aviation White Paper said that the industry should pay the external costs its activities impose on society – in other words “the price of air travel should reflect its environmental and social impacts”. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0E-9QeuSgo> video + transcript

This is a wake-up call for Luton to get serious and democratic about health (noise, congestion, climate) impacts.

https://library.wmo.int/doc_num.php?explnum_id=5188

IPCC scientists around the world are working hard to report on climate change.

They assessed more than 30,000 scientific publications, and make recommendations.

Emissions need to reach net zero, and we’re a long way off. It is hard. We need to limit warming to 1.5°C – or 2°C, which is seen as dangerous. The lower the warming, the lower the risks to human and natural systems.

The longer CO₂ is emitted at today’s rate, the faster decarbonisation will need to be. The larger the temperature overshoot and the longer it persists, the harder it will be to return to the original temperature target. The more melting freshwater Arctic ice pours into the Atlantic, the more UK’s weather will be affected.

Our children are entering very worrying times.

We can’t reverse the effects, but we must do our utmost to dampen them if we want to save our children.

This is a pivotal point in human history.

We cannot pretend we were asleep and this was a bad dream.

We have 12 years in which to work very hard and positively to change behaviour to prevent catastrophic climate change. Business as usual must stop. There is no choice.

Change has happened faster than politicians realised, and they must rapidly alter their mindset of the type of economic growth they have been used to.

When Luton Council’s Labour leader was asked to commit to Stop Airport Expansion, she

replied “Economic growth won’t stop.” This is like the bankers who caused the crash.

But the IPCC has announced the crash, giving us a deadline. Public bodies must take the lead. For the pressing reasons above, unsustainable growth based on GDP must be rapidly refocused into benign and useful forms of transport and energy generation, producing good and food locally to cut carbon and fossil fuels, and protecting biodiversity. There are a great many positive actions we can take, and we have sent some of these to Michael Gove.

Luton is very lucky that it has substantial airport income – it doesn’t need to be greedy. All decisions about airport income must be based on CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY.

This must start with major projects.

No airports can be expanded. Every jet trail represents a day stolen from the lives of our children.

No new major roads can be built. They spark millions of vehicle journeys, and are a major contributor to climate change and air pollution.

Yes, a lot of money has been spent on consultants. But they have said “You cannot mitigate for the degree of air pollution and warming from this level of expansion and the millions of journeys it produces.” We must not throw good money after bad.

The application for a dual carriageway through the airport and development on Century Park would have been a first step toward major expansion of Luton Airport, as we have seen with plans for a second terminal and figures of 38m passengers.

THIS CAN NO LONGER HAPPEN, AND MUST BE REFUSED.

All future projects must be CLIMATE SUSTAINABLE, or will have to be abandoned.

Otherwise in 12 years today’s children will be ask:

What did you do to reduce the great warming?

We hope they won’t have to say: “Why did you go ahead with this, knowing its fatal consequences?”

We hope you won’t have to say: “We prioritised economic growth over people’s health and wellbeing.”

Scientists are fighting a war against the dangers of climate change – new studies and climate-related disasters around the world are reported weekly. Luton BC has chosen to forget that a council’s primary job is to look after the health and well-being not only its residents but those beyond its borders, who travel to the town or feel the impacts of the council’s activities. Ten years ago LBC employed 5 officers in a climate dept, whose

responsibilities included educating people on how to change behaviour to reduce their carbon footprint, and the council examining its own footprint to set an example.

Now there are no climate officers.

Have the dangers of climate change gone away? No, they have got worse.

LBC's leaders, like bankers before the crash, have chosen not only to ignore it but to fuel the problem. Those who wish to travel to Europe should be encouraged to go by train/bus/coach, transport their car, or hire a car at their destination, leaving a far smaller carbon footprint. They can also experience some of the cultures and landscape they pass through.

Trains v Planes – cost of carbon emissions

<https://www.dw.com/en/trains-vs-planes-whats-the-real-cost-of-travel/a-45209552?maca=en-Twitter-sharing>

Many scientists say climate change is the biggest threat to humanity, and have set out actions to reduce it. **Aviation is the fastest growing cause of climate change.** As Luton is the fastest growing airport, **Luton is the fastest growing source of UK climate emissions.** This is not something to be proud of.

Luton airport is a huge energy consumer and major polluter, acting as a bad neighbour unfairly affecting people's lives and future when compared with other towns.

The airport was responsible for 22% of Bedfordshire's energy use in 1997, with far fewer flights. In 2017 almost no energy used by the airport is from renewables.

The idea of fuel-efficient planes is a marketing exercise. Planes do disproportionate damage to the Earth's thin upper atmosphere. A return transatlantic flight produces 1.2 tonnes of CO₂, what the average car uses in a year - one person's full annual carbon footprint allowance. Planes also emit other gases and particles – a warming effect 2.7 times the carbon dioxide alone. Jet trails trap heat – particularly at night – but CO₂ stays in the atmosphere longer. (*Intergovernment Panel on Climate Change*). Frequent flyers use many times their quota, and are subsidised for the environmental damage they cause by the 50% who never fly, yet LBC/LLAL intends to continue fuelling demand. An Aviation Fuel Tax is needed to help counter the many negative effects of flying – and a halt to expansion.

2 AIR POLLUTION – URGENT ACTION NEEDED see 12 below

Government has been given a final warning after 3 High Court hearings that it must act decisively on **Air Pollution**. Luton Council is breaking the law on air pollution levels, and has tried to conceal this. Now it must act swiftly to monitor particulates (PM2.5) and to introduce a wide range of measures to reduce the pollution that its rapid expansion of the

airport has created.

The health effects of Air Pollution are extremely serious.

All headlines in the **attached leaflet** are searchable.

DEFRA Air Quality Briefing for Public Health Directors Mar 2017

International Agency for Research on Cancer listed diesel exhaust pollution as a Class 1 carcinogen

In 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a review of 2,200 studies concluding that:

- Annual PM2.5 concentrations are associated with all-cause mortality to a high level of confidence, and with much greater certainty than in 2005
- “There is no evidence of a safe level of exposure to PM or a threshold below which no adverse health effects occur”. Negative health impacts have been found well below current EU & UK limits

Also:

Air pollution - Deaths – Watford & Luton worst in East of England 2013 – 6.5 per 1000

Air Pollution - Each car in London costs NHS & Society £8000 due to pollution

New UK air pollution figures a national embarrassment 26 Sep 2018

<https://www.clientearth.org/new-uk-air-pollution-figures-a-national-embarrassment/>

Luton doesn't appear, presumably because it is not measuring or reporting the figures.

Yet govt agency Defra measures figures on the A505 near the M1, and morning peak hour figures are often **3 or 4 times the legal limit**. Some of this traffic is heading for the airport, the biggest local employer; and people flying do not only approach from junction 10.

See Defra figures for Luton A505; town centre AQMA figures; FoE figures for Luton

3 PLANNING VIOLATIONS; CONFLICT OF INTERESTS; LACK OF DEMOCRACY

Environmental Principles

Precautionary Principle: where there's a chance something might harm the environment, we should do something without waiting until we find out for sure

Prevention Principle: we should anticipate environmental damage before it happens, and take steps to stop it

Rectification at source: environmental damage should be stopped at its source by targeting the original cause

People should be able to look up to and rely on their local council for support.

Luton Council's 'New Century Park' plans are dishonest and deceitful, and have deliberately

misguided the public. Luton Council / LLAL has the same CEO, who, instructed by councillors, has promoted airport expansion through the media, but LBC pretends it is a separate entity. This deceit runs through all the points below.

Each point represents a reason why the application should be refused.

1) The public owns the park

LBC passed a large public park to the council's own 'airport development wing', LLAL, without telling the public who own it (this is stated in a Labour leaflet).

It is inconceivable that any other council would do this, particularly in a town which has lost so much green space. Local people are set to lose their essential park enjoyed by 3 generations, wildlife, clean air, countryside, health, and their future.

LBC / LLAL's response is 'there is no requirement to inform the public'.

This is morally reprehensible and irresponsible, and not behaviour to be expected from a council, whose main responsibilities are to protect the residents who elect it. It is a fundamental right for the public to be able to participate in environmental decision-making.

2) Against Green Space Policy – loss of essential public park near homes

LBC has a green space policy, stating that Luton has insufficient open green space, and it is a priority to retain it.

The need for a park for the health & wellbeing of residents of the new Wigmore estate was recognised by the council in the 1980s, and time and money was spent by officers who reclaimed and landscaped a landfill site. They planted trees and created what has become an Area of Local Landscape Value and a unique County Wildlife Site. It is almost the only semi-wild Luton park where people can see nature thriving, in vital woodland and grassland habitat which cannot be transplanted, supporting a biodiverse ecosystem that has crashed elsewhere, but here supporting many hundreds of orchids and 80 bird species. The Wildlife Trust which has Biodiversity records has expressed its strongest concern. Approval would mean destruction of this habitat, and loss of 70% of the park and its attractive landscape. Green space near home in childhood is linked to fewer adult respiratory problems.

On these grounds alone the application must be refused.

3) Misrepresentation of the site

LBC / LLAL misrepresents the area of the application site. It calls Wigmore Valley Park part of the 'New Century Park' development area, when Century Park fields is a large adjacent area used for agriculture but with permission for development since 1997. Building on the park is against the new Local Plan, which shows only an arrow indicating a possible road leading through the park to the fields, but no development on the park. The current licence

to LLAL requires the land to be used as Public Open Space.

“Any replacement park must be an improvement on the present park.” This must be not only in terms of size but quality including the value of a County Wildlife Site, which cannot be compared with a children’s play area and farmer’s fields.

The current proposals and LLAL activities blight the lives of residents.

4) Dual carriageway purpose misrepresented

This EIA application forms the first stage of major airport expansion.

LBC / LLAL plans to build a dual carriageway (CPAR) through the airport – a full, not outline application. It claims that this major, costly and disruptive project is merely to access new offices on the park (these offices were proved to be speculative when they were reduced from 20 to 10 in autumn 2017), and an unnecessary hotel. This claim is ludicrous. The original plan showed this large road continuing across Wigmore Park to the north of Century Park fields, very close to where new housing is planned in North Herts. This was withdrawn in autumn 2017, but could easily be reinstated. The other main reason for the road is given at 8 below. All major new roads become full as soon as they’re built. This one, as others, would create millions of new polluting journeys, congestion and rat runs, and fuel climate change. The Dept of Transport has little idea or concern about the climate effect of roadbuilding. Provisional sources of funding (SEMLEP, DfT) will have to be refused.

5) Replacing a public park with car parks

LBC / LLAL plans a vast increase in airport car parking, spilling from airport land on to a public park, destroying a County Wildlife Site for no reason. This is simply vandalism. In a town so short of green space (*figures*) any new car parks should be multi-storey to reduce landtake.

6) Benign route option and permission ‘ignored’

LBC / LLAL rules out access to Century Park fields (which has had permission for offices since 1997), from a road using the public transport route from a roundabout, all within the airport boundary, shown on a 2008 map. This could easily join the route of the previously planned access road south of the park (near the fire training area) which would have emerged from a tunnel. Offices initially proposed on the fields were withdrawn in autumn 2017, but massive car parks appeared to replace them – see 8.

The only reason given to destroy this park is so offices and car parks could be adjacent to current car parks and offices – or that a second terminal could be built. Both proposals would bring roads, commerce, noise and pollution closer to homes, destroying residents’ much-loved park with its views and wildlife, and giving them barren green space much further away, which cannot be an improvement on the current park as claimed.

7) Transport 'Assessment' seriously flawed - ignores congestion and pollution

LBC / LLAL proposes, against the new Local Plan, a large roundabout inside the park which would meet the new dual carriageway from the airport and feed most traffic out of the park via a new access road to Eaton Green Rd, destroying an attractive tree bank which acts as a pollution barrer.

Airport Way is supposed to keep traffic and pollution away from residential areas, but queuing is already caused by the airport in nearby roads, some of which are full of the parked cars of people on holiday. This would turn residential roads into rat runs to and from the A505 at Jansel House roundabout, bringing further congestion and pushing air pollution, already high at some junctions, above the legal limit. (see FoE figures)

A smaller amount of traffic would use the new roundabout to access new offices built on the park, and to overspill airport car parks. It also proposes to close Frank Lester Way as an access to airport offices, to which the airport operator LLAOL objects.

8) Airport expansion unsustainable with severe impacts

LBC / LLAL mounted a consultation in spring 2018 demonstrating its true intentions, to expand airport passenger numbers from 16 to 36-38 million. It fails to understand or care about sustainability, and does not know when to stop.

Its preferred option is to build a second airport terminal on the park. This would replace the above proposals, cover both Wigmore Park and the 'replacement green space' offered in the current application, as well as much of Century Park fields with car parks, and provide a 'replacement' park beyond the new terminal in Hertfordshire, a long way from where people live. This despite a claim that a new park would be an improvement on the existing one. That we are still asked to comment on the first application after this deception feels like a confidence trick.

LBC acknowledges that this proposal would have to be determined by govt.
This level of expansion near a populous over-developed town is unacceptable.

A small amount of expansion over a long period could be achieved within current airport land, a brownfield site, which could accommodate the ten new offices proposed, as 17 are scheduled for demolition. This would not affect green space or residential roads.

9) Hypocrisy in presenting two conflicting and damaging proposals

LBC insists that these are two separate exercises, and that LBC can determine its own (LLAL) application for New Century Park. If an outside body were to propose such a major

application, LBC would make many planning gain demands through section 106. But it is unlikely to be so demanding of itself.

Being an outline application, LBC/LLAL could totally change the plans after approval. This is a significant EIA application and a major first step in expanding the airport. **It must therefore be called in by government.**

10) Landfill – best choice already made; cost and danger unnecessary

It has been shown at Nottingham and elsewhere that building a road across landfill can cause subsidence, which requires costly and frequent maintenance that other roads do not. Occupants of any buildings on landfill are not safe from subsidence or toxic gases. Luton's B&Q was built on a toxic lagoon: the building split and had to be closed and rebuilt at considerable cost.

Building 4 or 5 storey offices – or an airport terminal – on unstable landfill, even with rafts, involves sinking hundreds of pilings, and a network of drainage channels are proposed. A serious concern for the Environment Agency and those it serves is that groundwater could be irreversibly contaminated over a very wide catchment by pollution. Landfills already seep toxic leachate, and this is likely to become much worse due to disturbances such as piling and extra weight on the surface, which causes cracks on the surface and within the landfill.

Creating a park over a closed landfill site is the best option. This is the largest landfill in Luton, and every kind of waste was dumped here. To try to build on it presents many dangers and far more expensive than building elsewhere. Because of the surface clay layer, the site is waterlogged in winter months, which has helped to create rich diversity on the wildlife site. Money that should have gone to the community has been paid by LBC to consultants to sink boreholes and produce research, most desk-based, and hundreds of design documents that would not have been needed on another site.

LBC has not learnt its lesson from the serious Guildford Street petrol station spill which nearly contaminated the town's groundwater, or the B&Q store at Dallow Rd which was built over a contaminated lagoon, later split in two, and had to be rebuilt. At Nottingham the collapse of parts of a road built on landfill turned it into a switchback, and elsewhere residents of housing built on landfill were seriously affected by fumes from below. These health dangers could be replicated in offices on Wigmore Park.

Methane and related landfill gases are flammable and explosive. This could affect the health and safety of occupants of buildings on landfill, as it has before. It is uncertain if large quantities of hazardous waste might be removed. There are very few sites which still receive hazardous waste. Why should we dump it in someone else's backyard? The idea that an airport terminal could be built on this site is astonishing.

LBC/LLAL's own documents show that to build here is high risk, as well as costly, yet LBC/LLAL keeps claiming that it's OK because it's been done elsewhere.

11) Conflict of interests and misuse of public finance

LBC loaned around £500m to itself (LLAL). It is spending huge sums of money received from the airport which it owns, which should have been used for public services, on consultants to draw up hundreds of plans and to test the landfill, which received all grades of waste, for (obvious) dangers of contamination and toxic gases, and unstable ground – a much more expensive process than building on fields. Consultants have also been preparing various options for airport expansion, which should not now go ahead. But better stop now than continue wasting public finances and adding to climate and pollution for others to try to deal with when it is too late. (see IPCC)

12) Plans mislead on health effects of dangerous air pollution levels

Government estimates that air pollution reduces the life expectancy of every person in the UK by an average of 7-8 months. This will be worse in highly polluted areas with regular exposure.

Under the Environment Act 1995, local authorities must review air quality. If they find that the air quality objectives in a particular area are not expected to be met, they must designate that area as an **air quality management area**. Monitoring is only the first step. Each local authority must develop an **air quality action plan** setting out measures to improve air quality and meet the air quality objectives in any air quality management area.

Airports are supposed to have wide-ranging air quality monitoring programmes, designed and implemented in partnership with local authorities. Results of these monitoring exercises are supposed to be shared with stakeholders. People might expect a council to be better at sharing these with the public. Not in Luton.

LBC / LLAL not only deliberately avoid climate responsibilities, but the damage to health from their policies in ignoring the dangers of air pollution. There is a public health emergency across the UK caused by illegally polluted air. It is already dangerously over the legal limit in many parts of Luton, as recorded by Defra and Luton FoE. * But the council has only measured NO₂ in a few areas, not measured the bigger killer, diesel particulates, not told the public, and not acted to reduce emissions.

This is criminal. Luton has been a Health Authority since 2013. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015 shows above average rates of respiratory problems, particularly in the young. Luton Airport is on a hill above a valley which traps pollution. Recent reports show pollution affects intelligence, causes diabetes, affects the heart, and children's lung growth.

* The maximum legal level of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) is 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air. **Luton Friends of the Earth** measured NO₂ levels at Crawley Green Rd/ Church Rd roundabout, and Crawley Green Rd/ Vauxhall Way both at over 44 µg/m³. These results were after adjusting down using a bias correction to ensure validity. Other results at junctions north of the airport and near Ashcroft High School showed levels close to the maximum, which would easily be pushed to illegal levels by extra airport traffic from Frank Lester Way or a roundabout at Eaton Green Tidy Tip. This was in Mar-Apr 2018, when there was a week of

rain and 2 weeks were school holidays. Results are likely to have been higher during the very hot dry summer. It is not OK if results are just under illegal levels, as health is still threatened.

In January 2014, a Dept of Health study showed that air pollution, mainly from traffic and planes, kills 6.4 people in every 100 deaths in Luton, highest in the eastern region. Luton was about to become a very bad neighbour, doubling airport passenger capacity from 9 to 18 million. A petition was sent from 10 of Luton's 40 GPs, objecting to the increase in ill-health that 7 million more traffic journeys would cause in patients, and to a plan to double noisy nightflights. These fly later at night and earlier in the morning, putting people on anti-depressants due to lack of sleep, and cause stress-related illnesses, compounded by planes dumping fuel on people under flight paths. The GPs called on the Secretaries of State for Health, and Communities & Local Govt, to take action to improve health, not make it worse. Nothing was done, so LBC/LLAL intends to ignore environmental, social and health impacts, and like a gambler, double flights again. The government has been given a final warning and ordered in High Court to tackle pollution, so LBC would lose.

The airport operator wanted to limit expansion to 16m passengers, not 18m.

Due to LBC policy, passenger numbers at the airport increased from 9 to 16 million in the last 5 years, the highest increase in the UK, creating 1 million vehicle journeys for each million passengers. This has brought Luton to be 4th most congested town.

Only 25% of passengers use public transport to reach the airport. A higher than average proportion of vehicles there are diesels, including lorries, vans, taxis, buses and cars, producing particulates (PM2.5) that enter lungs and shorten lives.

LBC doesn't measure this, so Luton is not listed on the national pollution register.

It has done little to mitigate effects of more congestion, pollution and climate gases.

Another example of LBC's deceit is that, although the only pollutant it monitors on the large airport complex is NO₂, it does so at 20 places. 6 of these sites are very busy and close to traffic and/or planes, and consistently (dangerously for workers in these areas) over the maximum legal level of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. However, LLAL took an average of readings over all 20 sites, some fairly quiet.

To claim that the airport is safely below legal limits is seriously misleading the public.

People are not exposed to less air pollution at the 6 busiest places on the airport because pollution is also monitored at 14 less busy places. This is worthy of exposure on Radio 4's 'More or Less' programme, and reveals an irresponsible council which has lost its moral compass in obsessive pursuit of more income from the airport, a gravy train that other

councils don't have. One might suppose a Labour Council to have policies which reduce the rich-poor divide, but in contrast with the council which 30 years ago created the park, its highly paid leaders have been drawn into behaviour one might observe among the worst corporates.

The dual carriageway and big new roundabout would bring pollution and noise close to the new children's play area and skate park. While new toilets and a café would be most welcome, sitting outside it would not be a pleasant or healthy experience.

But with an obesity epidemic, fresh air, recreation and exercise near homes are vital.

The airport is in Wigmore ward, and the biggest source of Luton's income. Where are the benefits for residents in the east of Luton?

With or without development, we would like to see a Wildlife Visitor Centre as an educational resource to connect children with nature, in the spirit of the closed John Dony Field Centre. In either the existing or replacement park, there should be tree planting, habitat creation, footpaths, cycleway, picnic areas, benches & tables.

Diesel vehicles are a major source of illegal, dangerous levels of pollution, tiny particles which go straight into people's lungs. This affects people not only on busy streets, but also drivers themselves. Children and elderly people are affected most, but everyone's lung capacity is reduced. Diesel and other pollutants can trigger strokes, heart and asthma attacks. They cause more people to suffer or die.

Many common health complaints are breathing-related due to pollution.

All children and adults have a right to breathe clean air.

The very least that LBC could do to begin to compensate for its shabby behaviour is to make the whole airport complex and surrounding areas an Air Quality Management Area. This does not just mean widely monitoring pollutants such as particulates, but acting to reduce the causes. A law is needed for diesel car makers to pay to improve the UK's toxic air. Meanwhile, a start would be to charge for workplace parking and for access to any part of the airport by diesel vehicles; use this money to promote & subsidise walking, cycling, public transport; cleaner, hybrid, high-mpg and electric vehicles; car-sharing, company car pools.

And to stop increasing demand to fly.

One of the most important ways to reduce pollution is to have it absorbed by trees – to begin to counter the recent huge increase in flights, the council should have planted thousands of trees. Instead it has allocated no budget for any tree planting, and proposes

to destroy over 2 hectares of mature trees which form a pollution barrier between the airport and homes – an act of gross irresponsibility.

13) False claims that airport expansion is good for the economy

Deliberately adding destinations and creating more flights abroad is financially irresponsible. Three factors cause a huge loss to the UK economy:

- a)** There is a deficit of several billion pounds between what is spent by those travelling abroad from the UK and what is spent by people flying to the UK. Encouraging people to fly abroad has negative impacts on UK destinations.
- b)** Causing traffic gridlock inconveniences and worries those likely to miss flights. It also frustrates, and steals the free time of both local people and those travelling to Luton to work, who have to get up earlier. Being stuck in jams is a huge drain on the national economy, costing billions. As 4th most congested town it is particularly serious in Luton, and is avoidable, caused largely by airport growth.
- c)** The health of people in cars is affected more by air pollution than pedestrians and cyclists, and this costs billions in health care.

There is no excuse for deliberately creating more congestion in the 4th most congested UK town. As consultants at the recent airport expansion exhibitions admitted, there is no mitigation for destruction of mature wildlife habitat, or for worsening air pollution and climate change. Any small benefits, including the costly Dart link at Parkway, would soon be overtaken by the impacts of expansion.

The claim, in a time of low unemployment, that more jobs provided by airport expansion would benefit the town does not stand up when compared with the social, environmental, health damage and loss to the economy.

This application must be rejected by the council, or called in so government can do so.

Having made 300 employees redundant since 2008, many conscientious and with useful skills, Luton has cut vital services below people's minimum needs, and has begun to forget the meaning of democracy. Charitable donations from the airport are random and not even-handed or aligned with need.

Luton has an unusually high number of people in poverty, deprivation and ill-health, who depend on the council. They are entitled to the basic human rights of financial support, clean air and green spaces. Luton Borough Council must work hard to restore its ruined reputation, end its unpleasant culture of corporate greed, and become once more a

transparent, responsible public servant that can be relied upon, not feared.



“Living only 70 yards from the park for the last 34 years, I have watched it grow and be nurtured by the Parks department. It is a joy just to wander there sometimes with a camera or book, to enjoy the wind in the trees, or the setting sun and dusk against the lights of the airport car parks.” - Lawrence Patterson

FoE – Century & Wigmore Park response part 1

Wigmore Valley Park and Century Park fields

To Development Control Manager, Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ planningfeedback@luton.gov.uk

28 February 2018

Planning application **17/02300/EIA** Proposed business park

Outline Consent for a business park comprising office space (Class B1), warehouse and industrial space (Class B2 and B8), mixed employment space (Class B1/B2/B8), a hotel (Class C1), cafe space (Class A3); energy recovery centre (sui generis) and associated works; and Full application for the construction of a 2km Century Park Access Road incorporating a new junction on the A1081, alterations to the existing Airport Way roundabout, alterations to Frank Lester Way, a newly created access from Eaton Green Road, demolition of buildings, provision of replacement car parking (temporary and permanent), associated works; the creation of new public open space; extension and alterations to Wigmore pavilion to provide cafe (Class A3) and additional community space; construction of a new skate park and children's play area; and construction of a replacement airport technical services building and associated parking. Airport Way - Century Park Luton Bedfordshire.

PART 1 OBJECTION TO APPLICATION ON PLANNING GROUNDS

Why two parts to our objection?

Our concerns relate not only to the impact on local people and wildlife from the possible loss of most of Wigmore Valley Park, but it was quickly obvious that this development is part of a much bigger picture, and could be the start of a chain of events that could have a major impact on people across Luton, in Herts, and across the UK.

We attach our response to the consultations from 10 May last year, which forms part of our response now. A few features were changed by the applicant in late 2017, such as the road across the north of the park, buildings being removed from Century Park fields, the number of buildings halved, and an access point proposed at Eaton Green Road, but most of our concerns still apply.

We attach also some photos to indicate the importance of the park.

Members of Friends of the Earth have been deeply concerned about the proposal to build on Wigmore Park since the two stakeholder workshops in February 2017. Following the 3 consultations in Mar 2017, we were proactive in discussing the issue with local residents and helped to set up Friends of Wigmore Park, who we have supported continually since, including help with organising the Big Picnic in the Park in August 2017 which attracted nearly 200 people, and joining the FoWP committee at a Town Hall meeting with LLAL and LBC. Although we have not posted on it, we are delighted that the FoWP facebook site now has nearly 1400 members.

Wigmore residents have lost their library, seen increased airport parking in residential roads, great inconvenience from traffic congestion, and health problems from **pollution**. But they have seen no benefits from airport expansion, and now the proposal is for them to lose most of a vital park.



1 WIGMORE VALLEY PARK KNOWN TO BE ESSENTIAL IN 1980s

“The ‘urban-fringe’, the areas of the borough at which there is a link between the countryside and the urban area, is of particular importance.” - Borough of Luton Planning Handbook, 1989.

From Environmental Statement for Century Park 2009: Importance of Wigmore Park:

Wigmore Park

Wigmore Park lies between the application site and the Luton Airport Terminal. It is a well used amenity space containing sports pitches and other large open grass areas broken up with tree belts. To the south, the landscape is more informal with a network of paths running between scrub and woodland, to the north there are allotments. To the west and south of the park the airport runway and terminal buildings dominate the skyline. Views out to open countryside to the east are largely shielded by a mature tree belt. Landscape Character: medium.

The area is well maintained for amenity use by the surrounding population Landscape Quality: medium / high.

The Park provides an important recreational resource for the local community as do the adjacent allotments. The more informal area to the south of the site is designated as a County Wildlife Site. Landscape Value: high.

New Local Plan policies included nothing about development on Wigmore Park – the proposals map has an arrow indicating only a possible road across the park. Council documents show that a road to the Century Park development proposed for 20 years on the fields beyond need not touch the park (see 15).

Wigmore Valley Park should not be developed. It was planned and provided for the people of Wigmore when the estate was built, to be as close to homes as possible, based on recognised recreation need per 1000 population, by responsible council officers. They thoughtfully

landscaped the park with banks and ridges, and planted hundreds of trees. It is a vital Community Asset, highly valued and crucial to well-being. It has been enjoyed by parents, children, dog walkers and visitors to the town since the 1980s and must be left for future generations to enjoy.

2 LUTON IS OVERDEVELOPED

Luton is one of the most overdeveloped towns in the UK, and green space provision is well below people's needs, so many people come from other parts of the town to walk here and see wildlife, as it is the nearest area of semi-wilderness they can encounter. Some visit from outside Luton, and a great many who have left the town return to enjoy the park when visiting friends and relatives. With more people sitting down all day, **health and exercise are more important than ever**, and there is a need for health sector and parks to work more closely together to encourage this, so the park should not be taken away.



3 WHAT THE PARK PROVIDES: OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

Local Plan policy **LLP6E** on Wigmore Park says *“the quality of open space and landscaping will be maintained”*. **LLP29**: *“Development proposals will be supported where they protect, conserve or enhance the character, setting and natural beauty of national and local landscape areas.”* The secret sell-off of this public park shows a cynical intention to disregard and spoil the landscape, and NOT to maintain quality of open space and landscaping for the community. Offices, road and roundabout would totally change the area, and have **unacceptable impact on the ALLV landscape**.

4 WHAT THE PARK PROVIDES: DESIGNATED WILDLIFE & LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The whole of the southern area of Wigmore Valley Park, stretching diagonally to the north-west, is a **County Wildlife Site**, which links with an ancient woodland corridor to the east. The CWS has

developed into an important mosaic of habitat, with a surprising variety of wildflowers. This is exceptionally rich in orchids (*photos*), of which there are, unusually, 5 species. These flourish amongst an impressive diversity of other species, to a large extent due to the local conditions. This is likely to be because the clay layer over the landfill, which allows the ground to become waterlogged over winter months (see *photo of the seasonal pond*) is overlaid with chalky soil. Trying to reproduce such conditions elsewhere would be risky and unlikely to succeed.



Wigmore Valley Park is also an **Area of Local Landscape Value** (see Local Plan policies map).

Strategic Objective 10: the Local Plan aims to *“improve, protect and enhance biodiversity of natural areas within the town, including the quality, accessibility, health and recreational value of green space, the River Lea Corridor, the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and Areas of Local Landscape Value (ALLV) and their connectivity”*.

LLP29 A: *“Development proposals will be supported where they protect, conserve or enhance the character, setting and natural beauty of national and local landscape areas.”* This includes ALLVs. This planning application does not meet either of the above objectives. The large office buildings proposed would take away most of Wigmore Park, and ruin views currently enjoyed. It would not create a relaxing environment for park users. It would not protect, enhance or conserve the character of the area. It would change the area completely and would take away the ALLV. This cannot be permitted.

A board at the Raynham Way exhibition stated: *“The development has been designed to reduce potential ecological impacts and minimise loss of habitat.”* By building ground-level car parks (which LLAOL oppose) over a County Wildlife Site? The proposal is simply appalling, and unnecessary. The offices are speculative, shown by being reduced from 20 to 10 in late 2017. We view it as criminal not only to build on a park, but also to waste land with huge and pointless car parks, roads and roundabouts. Given the shortage of both green and commercial space in Luton, developments like this should go on brownfield sites, where car parks can be multi-storey. It appears to us that there is still plenty of space on the airport complex itself, and for offices, the Monarch, Halcyon and many other buildings are vacant.



5 WHAT THE PARK PROVIDES: ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF TREES

Over two hectares of trees would be lost in this scheme, part of those planted for us in the 1980s. The trees and CWS in the park provide an important wildlife habitat for many species and also act as **a barrier to air and noise pollution which must not be lost**. This would be against the LLAL Vision 2020-2050 which states: *“As part of any expansion proposals, we will develop landscape and ecology strategies which seek to conserve, and where possible, enhance the landscape and biodiversity within Luton Airport and on nearby sites.”*

The loss of mature trees would take place around the park where commercial development is planned, which is unnecessary as offices and roads could be sited to avoid this. It seems that most would be destroyed to create access for construction of a major new access road from Eaton Green Road. This is against the new Local Plan (see 7 below). The trees here are on a bank, forming an attractive sloping access point to the park which partially masks the road to the Tidy Tip. The loss of these trees would create a stark open area focused upon the new road, which would rapidly become congested as it would meet a big roundabout within the park, joining the proposed new major road through the airport. This would ruin the feeling of well-being as one enters the park which encourages people to go there, and is totally unacceptable.

There appears to be little addition of semi-mature trees to compensate for the loss planned. Parks Dept say: *“The loss of areas of County Wildlife Site is of concern and as the mosaic of habitats is unlikely to be replicated in the short term on the replacement area of open space proposed in the agricultural area - it would seem reasonable that some form of mitigation should be sought for loss of habitat.”*

FoE applauds this request for funding for tree planting elsewhere in the borough, which should not have been withdrawn. The *i-Tree* survey in Wardown, which may be replicated elsewhere in the town, showed that apart from all the well-known benefits of trees which bring wellbeing, trees have financial value in terms of absorbing pollutants and carbon, reducing climate impacts. With increasing traffic due largely to the airport, we should be planting a great many more trees across Luton, including street trees, and creating pocket parks whenever the opportunity arises.

But the mosaic of habitats at Wigmore Park **should not be lost**. The CWS and other areas of the park include thousands of trees **planted for the community and for wildlife by previous council officers**. These trees provide the vital function of absorbing noise and pollution from planes.

It is suggested by Parks Dept that because of the risk of bird strike, substitute planting should take place at other sites. The Blake Morgan document for LLAOL states:

“35 species of birds would suffer adverse effect due to removal of vegetation”.

So don't remove it. The CWS provides a diverse habitat for our beleaguered wildlife, with continued loss of habitat and crashing populations, and is important not only for birds.

Removing trees is flawed thinking, as modern methods have much reduced the risk of bird strike. Mitigation measures suggested to compensate for removing trees include creating open grassland – this could attract geese.

Bird strikes <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/travel-truths/how-dangerous-is-a-bird-strike/>

“Aircraft are designed and built to withstand bird strikes and pilots undergo rigorous training to enable them to deal with such eventualities,” said BALPA flight safety specialist, Stephen Landells (5 Sep 2017) Very few bird strikes cause damage to planes. Despite massive increase in flights, no accidents were

reported at Luton in the last 5 years due to bird strikes. There is no open water at Wigmore Park or near the airport. Canada geese need suitable grassland, do not roost in trees and are not present at Wigmore. Very few seagulls visit, and starlings are rarely seen there. Crows and pigeons would do no damage to a plane on takeoff or landing.

Heathrow monitors bird activity and keeps records. Scaring measures, such as playing distress calls, firing flares, and even controlled use of birds of prey have been successfully employed at various airports, says BALPA. Vehicles used by Heathrow are fitted with an electronic system called Digiscare. Two external loud speakers are fitted. It is pre-programmed with the distress calls for a variety of birds based on knowledge of how different species will react in different ways. **At Luton**, two vehicle mounted bio-acoustic Scarecrow B.I.R.D. Tabs™ are used daily as part of LTN's persistent wildlife management system to disperse birds from the airfield and surrounding areas. Described as 'faultless' by the bird controllers. Since using this system the airport has seen an 80% reduction in airfield bird sightings in the last year which has minimised the risk of bird strike. <https://www.scarecrow.eu/luton-airport/>

Given that the landscaping and planting was provided for the benefit of nearby residents and other users of Wigmore Valley Park this planning application is totally contrary to past agreements reached between Luton Council and local housing developers. The park's trees, planted by council officers for residents 30 or more years ago, form an important noise and pollution barrier, also absorbing carbon and reducing climate emissions. The park's trees must not be lost.



6 'REPLACEMENT PARK'

While Wigmore Valley Park is the nearest park for most people in the large Wigmore estate, and much-used, many already live further away than the national recommended standards. The 'replacement park' on agricultural fields would be still further away from their homes, and would in no way equate to what they have now. People have ever less free time to visit parks, and need

them more than ever for fresh air, tranquillity, recreation and connection with nature. These fields would be less convenient, have no trees to absorb pollution, and there is a question mark over whether new trees would be planted because of worries about bird strike. Offices, roads and a hotel on Wigmore Park would mean a net loss of green space within reach of people's homes, and their view of and from the park would be spoilt. There is no disguising the stark 4 or 5 storey blocks seen in brochures. The new far-away park would be less used because of the time factor and limited interest there. Described as *"intensively farmed arable fields with little habitat value and relatively low ecological importance"*, it would take many years to become as good a site for wildlife, which is in sharp decline and needs help now.

7 NO EATON GREEN ROAD ACCESS

The new 20-year Luton Local Plan is clear that there should be no access road to Wigmore Park from Eaton Green Road. **LLP6 p38** London Luton Airport Strategic Allocation inc Century Park: *"Details of the proposed access, which shall be via the extension of New Airport Way (which connects the airport to M1 J10A) and shall link Percival Way through to Century Park (as shown by the arrow on the Policies Map), such access shall be designed so as to ensure that no use is made of Eaton Green Road to provide access to Century Park or the Airport, except for public transport, cyclists, pedestrians and in case of emergency."*

This policy was created for very good reasons. With rapid airport expansion, roads in east Luton and across the town have become far more congested, already causing greater inconvenience.

A new access road from Eaton Green Road by the Tidy Tip, one of two proposed roads on to the park, should not be allowed. It would generate more traffic, increase noise and create danger. This access would mean vehicles would pour into Wigmore, seriously affecting already congested Eaton Green Road, Wigmore Lane, Ashcroft Road, Lalleford Road, and surrounding roads, creating new rat runs. Three nearby schools would see more danger and pollution on school routes.

The Raynham Way exhibition boards said that junctions on Eaton Green Road and Vauxhall Way are already over-capacity; and that it would not be appropriate to encourage significant levels of traffic on to the new dual carriageway via Eaton Green Rd/Wigmore Lane/Lalleford Rd, as it would be contrary to the Local Plan and LTP3 policies. That is exactly what the new access point and large roundabout would achieve!

The Blake Morgan document shows LLAOL are clearly concerned about people getting to their planes on time. It has the useful statement that *"after the development, many of the junctions will be operating over their capacity... The proposal will lead to increased journey time and increased traffic flow."* It is also concerned about closing Percival Way as a through route, which will *"cause major operational disruption."* And the lack of evidence that Dart would reduce traffic. It concludes: *"The proposal will have a serious impact on the surrounding infrastructure."*

We agree with LLAOL that Frank Lester Way should not be closed to cars: LLAOL says it would cause major disruption to the airport. LLAOL also says that moving the staff car park and part of the long-stay car park into Wigmore Park would cause major problems for the airport and staff; that splitting the car hire centre into 3 areas including Wigmore Park is ill-conceived; that the road modelling for access to the business park was useless; and there is no evidence that Dart would make a significant difference to car numbers. Travel plans have been mentioned in the

last 3 Local Plans but have achieved very little. In this case their aim is to reduce the car journeys to and from Wigmore Park. It would be best to ensure there are no journeys at all.

8 CONGESTION OUT OF CONTROL – URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Rapid airport expansion has made **Luton the 5th most congested UK town, with huge traffic problems**. No significant mitigation has been proposed, but expansion continues. One report lists all the junctions where congestion is already bad, and proposes much costly remedial work. A dual carriageway would make it worse and bring traffic gridlock. **This cannot be permitted.**

9 AIR POLLUTION – URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Air pollution is a serious and much neglected problem. It costs lives and billions of pounds, and like the government, Luton Council is seriously failing in its duties to act to reduce it, and this development would make the impacts worse.

People are encouraged to spend time in parks as part of a healthy lifestyle. However, due to a major road through the airport, vehicles going to new offices on the park, and increased flights, the proposed reshaped park, and the Eaton Green Road area, would receive higher levels of noise and air pollution.

People in East Luton, including Eaton Green Road and parts of Wigmore Lane, already suffer fairly high pollution levels, and extra traffic would be likely to bring these near illegal levels. It is not all right to be just below legal levels – that is far too high. The government has lost in the High Court for a third time on its lack of action on air pollution. With a plan for continued airport expansion, it is vital that the whole area around the airport, including access roads, be made an Air Quality Management Area, with a range of strategies to reduce pollution.

The rapid increase in flights at Luton has brought **5 million more vehicles** in 4 years, and greater pollution, which at several places in the airport is at illegal levels. A major road would bring far more traffic, increase toxins in the air, and have a significant negative impact on health.

Pollution from diesels and planes kills 40,000 people every year – more than obesity and alcohol – shortening lives and causing misery. Vehicles contribute about 80% of NO₂ pollution at the roadside (pushchair level). Diesel fumes are Grade 1 Carcinogens. They are the biggest killer: the tiny particles they emit are the most dangerous. They stunt children's lung growth, fuel asthma, lung cancer, strokes, dementia and heart attacks, and shorten lives. This is reflected in the terrible statistics for Luton, shown in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Pollution puts an extra burden on stretched health services and businesses.

The cost of illness and working days lost is estimated at £20bn a year. Children in polluted areas are 4 times as likely to have stunted lung growth. The UK has the highest asthma levels in the world: 1.1m children have asthma. Dramatic effects are seen in children who live or go to schools near busy roads. Particulates are a key reason for the decline of insects & mammals such as hedgehogs – numbers have crashed in proportion to the increase in diesel cars since the 1990s.

Luton has a special problem to deal with Luton sits in a valley, and on windless days, pollution is especially bad for its citizens' health. The airport has not only increased pollution from plane exhausts, but the increase in flights from 9 to 15.7m passengers in less than 5 years has increased

the number of cars on Luton's roads by **5 million** in the same period. Luton has far above average car use. People needed a sub-regional east-west rail service but they got a local busway, which did nothing to help half the people in Luton who leave the town to work, or half Luton's employees who come to Luton to work.

A housing development in Kent was refused in Nov because no mitigation for air pollution was provided. There is no mitigation here. NO₂ is a lung irritant, and a key symptom of other air pollution. **LBC/LLAL is behaving dishonestly and irresponsibly in averaging NO₂ levels measured across all monitoring points around the airport, when the 6 busiest points there, where most people pass through, are constantly at illegal levels. This poses special dangers for people who work at the airport.**

NO₂ levels are not far from reaching illegal levels on Eaton Green Road, which with rapid airport expansion has become far more congested. If a new access point to Wigmore Park, to join the dual carriageway through the airport, was created near the Tidy Tip, **Eaton Green Road would soon reach illegal levels too.**

It is good news that in February 2018 Client Earth has beaten the government in court for the third time, and there will have to be far more Air Quality Management Areas. These require serious preventative measures to cut pollution. One is certainly needed around Luton Airport and its approaches, as with such rapid expansion we've become 5th most congested town!

Ten Luton GPs in 2014 signed a petition to stop Luton Airport expansion, concerned about the health of their patients. Continued expansion to 18m passengers should now be seriously and transparently reviewed in the light of failure to provide legal air quality.

Plans to cut Pollution at the airport and across Luton

- Phase out diesels, with scrappage schemes
- Catalytic converters & clean diesel filters must be the only replacement for a car's first exhaust
- Higher charges for diesels to park
- When buying a vehicle, people should look for the highest (80+MPG), hybrid or electric
- Borough-wide measures to reduce traffic use, including car pool and car sharing schemes
- Public education programme, including the dangers of sitting in a vehicle with its engine idling
- Training on how to drive better, such as accelerating slowly, not leaping away at traffic lights
- Teach people that their health is more at risk in their car than on the pavement or a bike
- Assess Luton schools for pollution risks – at least 3 have found poor air quality. Action on this should be a priority, such as cutting car journeys to school, and walking bus schemes
- All mature trees in Luton should be protected: they have great value in absorbing pollution, fixing climate gases, providing shade and reducing the 'heat island' effect of a densely populated town. Many more trees should be planted, mainly native species
- Frequent flying should be discouraged, like the higher charge for using more gas or electricity
- Council to stop promoting unsustainable development using the excuse of 'more jobs' when it means more income for the council

The benefits of cleaner air would be shared by all – reduced congestion, more liveable towns, better health

10 GROUND LEVEL CAR PARKS SHOULD BE ELSEWHERE & MULTI-STOREY

Large ground level car parks should not be built on a County Wildlife Site and Area of Local Landscape Value. The CWS has become a diverse habitat with 5 species of orchid and over 60 bird species. The offices, road and roundabout would all have unacceptable, adverse impacts on this landscape. Car parks can go anywhere and should be multi-storey due to lack of space in Luton. Document GCC5 – PRA Landfill states (at the time the landfill was closed in Jan 1978): *“There will have to be a move towards provision of multi-storey airport parking.”*

11 DANGERS OF LANDFILL

We are extremely concerned about :

- possible irreversible contamination of groundwater, river quality and drinking supply over a wide catchment
- inflammable, explosive methane and threats from a combination of other gases from disturbing and building on a landfill site containing hazardous waste. With much testing still to do, it cannot be said with certainty that proposals are safe, so **outline permission should not be granted.**

Building offices and roads on a landfill site which is unstable below ground is more complex, costly, and a high risk strategy. It can lead to **subsidence, where buildings and roads can crack and sink**. This happened to B & Q at Dallow Road, which had to be closed for a year and rebuilt. Also sulphates and acids in the landfill may attack the concrete in the pilings.

The large amount of surface water is a concern – the whole site is soggy in winter. With heavy rain, pilings would open pathways for toxic contaminants in landfill to seep down to groundwater, leading to the pure River Mimram, where watercress has been grown for 200 years at Whitwell.

Arup’s Contamination Preliminary Risk Assessment gives a long list of likely dangerous contaminants from landfill – and many of these were found when testing. The risk assessment states:

Migration of ground gases from former landfill eg methane into future buildings and build-up of gases – **Risk very high**

Waste in former landfill – risk to users of future development / public / workers – **Risk high**

Driving of contaminants downward to the principal chalk aquifer – **Risk high**

Leachate in former landfill – downward migration to the principal chalk aquifer – **Risk high**

Driving of contaminants downward during piling to the principal chalk aquifer – **Risk high**

Inhalation of airborne contaminants and microorganisms by adjacent site users (eg residents and other buildings on the airport) – **Risk high**

Inhalation of vapours from contaminants in capping material by users of future development / public / workers – **Risk high**

Yet the plan shows 4-5 storey office blocks and a hotel on the high ridge – the most polluted, dangerous part of the site – near borehole LF-BH07, where methane readings are in 6 figures, and high across this area - see interactive gas map Fig 14 (doc GCC6).

Engineers who drilled at the former landfill site below Wigmore Valley Park have told us: “You would have to be mad to try to build there.” Methane gas escaping from landfill is highly likely to make people ill (Radio 4, June 21 2017). A 2006 study showed that groundwater in the bedrock was already being contaminated by the landfill.

The combination of these risks in our view makes the proposed development too dangerous, and the proposal to build offices, a hotel and roads on Wigmore Park should be withdrawn.

12 CLIMATE CHANGE – URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Aviation is the fastest growing source of climate change and Luton is the fastest growing UK airport. Therefore, **Luton is the fastest growing source of climate change in the UK**. The rapid fuelling of climate change will be disastrous for humanity's future, as we are often reminded by Attenborough and many scientists. The airport is a huge energy consumer and major polluter, unfairly affecting people's future when compared with other towns. The LLAL Vision 2020-2050 states *"Although climate change is beyond our direct control, we recognise that Luton Airport has a significant influence over factors that contribute to it, such as: emissions from aircraft; vehicle trips; and the activities of other companies operating at the airport. Ahead of any future expansion work, we will develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce where possible carbon emissions."*

The Wigmore application is for airport-related development, moving car parks on to a public park to make room for aprons and terminals, displacing businesses to build a major road to carry far more traffic. As planes and traffic are such a big source of climate emissions, the council should also have a robust policy to keep this to an absolute minimum. But **there is no strategy to reduce climate change**, contrary to the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change) so **this development should not be permitted**.

13 THE MAJOR ROAD (See Part 2)

The proposed dual carriageway through the airport, taking traffic into a public park, seems far bigger than is needed for the offices proposed. This appears to be for a bigger development, yet we are only asked to comment on what is shown. The reason for this road should be fully explained and justified in the application. **If not, permission should not be granted.**

This major road would have been close to the children's playground in Wigmore Park until many people objected. The road corridor remains. Because this is an outline application, a threat would be hanging over us that **the big road could be brought back at any time**.

14 NEW CAFÉ, TOILETS, PLAYGROUND & SKATEPARK WELCOME

Residents would be pleased to receive long-needed toilets, and the other facilities would attract more people to the park. We also welcome the ongoing funding commitment for maintenance of the whole park. However, we believe the council should make this commitment anyway, using funds from the airport whose activities have caused so much inconvenience for residents who live in the same ward.

15 NO DEVELOPMENT VERY STRONGLY PREFERRED– LAST RESORT CENTURY PARK

People don't want development in this area, but if any were to be allowed it should be on Century Park fields which have had planning permission for 20 years. It would be partly screened from Wigmore Valley Park by the strip of ancient woodland and trees along the eastern avenue. The fields could be reached via a road which also stays within the airport boundary across existing car parks to join the point where the tunnel was planned. A public transport route was planned along this corridor in 2008 to serve proposed development on Century Park fields.

This would be easier and cheaper to build. It would be safer for the public and occupants of new buildings than a high-risk complex, costly attempt to build a business park on a landfill site, subject to dangers of methane escape, subsidence and irreversible contamination of groundwater below

the landfill which via surface water and heavy rain could affect a wide catchment area (see 12). Ultimately the public might have to pay for problems caused out of airport money that could be more beneficially used elsewhere.

No development should take place on a public park which would **ruin a well loved, peaceful green area and subject people to danger, noise and air pollution.**

16 SUMMARY

We ask that, for all the reasons above, **the application be refused**, as the proposal is an inappropriate development on a valuable Community Asset which does not comply with key relevant Local Plan policies. We reserve the right to speak at any committee assigned to determine this application.

Yours sincerely

David Oakley-Hill and Julie Furnivall
Luton Friends of the Earth

PART 2 OBJECTION TO APPLICATION ON OTHER GROUNDS

This Part will follow when we have received a reply to our Freedom of Information request.

Postscript

REASONS FOR THE ROAD AND SECRET INTENTIONS

Ever since the stakeholder workshops, secrecy has been employed by Luton Council / LLAL, and the presentation of what is intended has been highly selective. This is not how a council should behave – it should perform the role of a caring public servant, and be open and transparent. Instead this project has been presented in a way you might expect from the worst, greedy corporate, out for itself.

Why Wigmore Valley Park?

Local Plan map **LLP14** shows no development on the park – only a possible road to Century Park fields. Nowhere in the application is the reason stated why Century Park Fields, with planning permission and a 20-year aspiration for building on, was dropped in 2014 (Arup aerial photo) or earlier in preference for Wigmore Valley Park. Yet a road could easily follow the proposed public transport route of 2008 north-south within the airport boundary to reach the point near the emergency training area where the previous tunnel under the airport would have emerged, to reach Century Park fields only a short distance away, obviating the need for costly remediation work to build on an ex-landfill, and the destruction of a public park and County Wildlife Site.

Further, the reason is not stated why a dual carriageway should be built through the airport at great expense to reach a few offices which were proved speculative when their number was halved from 20 to 10 post-consultation with Friends of Wigmore Park. The large road across the north of the site was removed at the same time. But as it is an outline application, there is a fear that the road could be brought back at any time. It is obvious that it points in the direction of new housing across the Herts border. Luton Council's aspiration for an east and north circular 'M25' is longstanding. Yet the public was told to treat this application as 'standalone', and that it was not

related to proposed airport expansion. This does not instil trust in our council, which is supposed to act as a public servant, not a land-grabbing corporate intent on getting as much income as possible from the airport and housebuilding, however unsustainable, and whatever loss of countryside or adverse health and environmental impacts this might cause.



Plaque on the community centre building at the entrance to Wigmore Park