

Important climate & pollution facts relevant to Luton Airport expansion Inquiry

25 April 2024

Dear Inspectors

The Inquiry has closed, but is not due to report until 10 May.

These national and international issues have been reported since the Inquiry closed, but you may consider that they have bearing on the outcome of the Inquiry, and I ask that you discuss them before your final recommendations.

1) 9 April 2024 An important international legal decision was made in Switzerland on Climate, Pollution and Human Rights, brought by 2000 older women whose health and wellbeing was affected by excessive heat. This judgement is valid across Europe: 2000 lawsuits are being brought across Europe. The UK govt is being taken to court – see 3.

2) 9 April 2024 World temperature records were broken for 10 consecutive months, shocking scientists, whose calls to restrain aviation to reduce climate impacts have become increasingly urgent. A local effect: in 2022 a long drought caused the River Lea through Luton for the first time to dry up for 3 months, killing nearly all wildlife relying on it. Our river is vital for the town, and one of only 200 or so chalk streams, rare in the world.

3) 20 April 2024 BBC2 9am Chris Sharpe, government Climate Committee chair, criticised Rishi Sunak for setting back the UK which had been a climate leader – the committee was set up to advise govt on science, but has been ignored. Net Zero and Friends of the Earth with Client Earth are taking UK govt to court, accusing Sunak of acting illegally by watering down Net Zero policies.

4) 28 Feb 2024 London was the city most affected by air pollution from aviation. Its 6 airports (including Luton) generated the same amount of air pollution as 3.23 million cars, producing 27 million tonnes of CO₂, 8,900 tonnes of nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and 83 tonnes of fine particulate pollution (PM_{2.5}). Globally, air pollution is the 4th largest risk factor for human health, killing 6.7 million people in 2019. In 2018, air pollution had associated economic costs of £166 billion (€193 billion) for the European economy. (*Euronews*) Luton has poor health, and evidence is that a major airport should not be on a hill above a town in a valley trapping pollution.

5) 7 complaints have been made to the Advertising Standards Authority about recent and current Luton Rising advertisements.

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Friends of the Earth submitted robust evidence to the Inquiry about climate and pollution damage from flying. Meanwhile Luton Council is promoting a petition to support expansion. Petitions to Parliament include one to ban private jets, and one for flying to be disallowed if a journey can be made by train in 4 ½ hours.

As more people fly from UK than any other country, and more stringent laws are being introduced across Europe, it follows that every effort should be made to cut flying and take more holidays in UK, supporting local economies – an easy win for climate and pollution, to reduce catastrophic future effects on our children.

Yours sincerely

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