



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Sent via email

17 December 2024

Dear Heidi,

Development Consent Order – Luton Airport

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Secretary of State for Transport. I look forward to supporting you in delivering a modern, sustainable transport network.

I am writing to express my concern about the delay in the development consent order (DCO) on the expansion of Luton Airport.

Today's announcement is the third time a decision on the DCO has been delayed, with the original deadline having been set for 10 August 2024. I understand that MPs should not lobby government ministers on planning issues. I do not want to influence the DCO decision. Instead, I wish to highlight the importance of a decision being made and the process completed for Luton's economy.

The aviation sector is critical to our local economy by creating jobs, supporting incomes, and generating investment. The additional uncertainty created by another delay undermines confidence in the sector. Future strategic plans to invest and grow are on hold until a decision has been made. Furthermore, Luton Council's ownership of Luton Airport ensures that the benefits derived from air travel are shared by all our local community, as revenue funds Luton charities, services, and community projects.

The impact of the delay must be considered in the context of escalating pressure on Luton's economy over the past month. The recently proposed closure of Luton's Vauxhall van plant threatens 1,600 direct jobs and thousands in the supply chain, as well as up to £310 million in local economic output. Our town's future cannot afford further delays.

I request that you and your department consider announcing the outcome of the DCO as early as possible once Parliament has returned in 2025. An early decision in 2025 would address the growing uncertainty and boost confidence for future investment.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards,



Rachel Hopkins MP
Member of Parliament for Luton South and South Bedfordshire