

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LUTON AIRPORT EXPANSION AIMS “A HUGE THREAT TO RURAL COMMUNITIES” SAY CAMPAIGNERS

As aspirations for further massive expansion to 36 million passengers and 240,000 flights are announced by the owners of Luton Airport, campaign groups angrily denounce the impacts on communities all around the airport.

Noise from flights to and from Luton already badly affects towns and villages in Hertfordshire as well Bedfordshire, and complaints about aircraft noise have increased ten-fold in some areas.

Surface transport on road and rail in the area is already near capacity, and the expansion permission given in 2013 to grow capacity to 18 million passengers over 15-years has reached 15 million already – 5 years earlier than projected – and has added 66% more flights on some routes.

Expansion was geared to promises about noise reduction, including introduction of quieter aircraft. In fact, just two new-engined planes use Luton, and many smaller quieter planes have been replaced by larger noisier ones. Noise control is in the hands of Luton Borough Council, which owns the airport and has not acted to constrain its rate of growth.

Promises of respite routes do not reduce the burden – they just add new impacts onto a wider set of communities.

Speaking for campaign group LADACAN, Andrew Lambourne said “A moral contract was established in 2013 to balance significant growth in noise impact with effective noise mitigations. Since then the aviation industry has taken everything it wants and given nothing. The Communities and Local Government Secretary of State Javid has refused to intervene at any stage, Luton Borough Council will not do anything to constrain the operations, therefore this airport is effectively unregulated. Further expansion at Luton is entirely out of keeping with its location in a rural area – and the noise issues from the last 4 years have not been resolved. We call for the creation of an independent noise regulator with the power to constrain growth until the aviation industry delivers noise reduction.”

On the question of sustainability he said “Ever-increasing carbon emissions from aircraft is simply not sustainable. Government must recognise that aviation is the fastest-growing source of greenhouse gases – and get it under control. It’s ludicrous to ignore emissions from aircraft once the wheels leave the ground.”

Speaking for campaign group STAQS, Sharon Hollingsworth said “Local residents have had enough of Luton Airport’s expansion. The increase in flights and the introduction of RNAV have resulted in a significant increase in levels of noise. There is also the real problem about how passengers will travel to the airport and the increase in cars on the roads as a result.”

ENDS

LADACAN (Luton And District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise) and STAQS (St Albans Quieter Skies) are residents’ groups committed to seeking to control noise pollution from Luton Airport which affects local communities all around the airfield.