

To Arup 28 June 2019

Copy to Luton Borough Council, Planning Inspectorate and Secretary of State

from David Oakley-Hill

Co-ordinator, Luton Friends of the Earth

Co-Chair, Luton Friends of Parks & Green Spaces

Why I will not be at the 'Future Luton' airport workshop

Thank you for the invitation. As Co-ordinator of Luton Friends of the Earth and Co-Chair of Luton Friends of Parks & Green Spaces, I will not be present.

A future Luton with continued airport expansion has no part in a sustainable future.

The problems associated with this proposal are enormous, costly and an environmental disaster.

A National Climate and Biodiversity Emergency has been declared following the IPCC report in Oct 2018, demonstrating the unanimous concern of scientists worldwide, and millions demonstrating on the streets in UK and across the world. I am replying on the hottest day (45.9C) ever recorded in France, while Spain is fighting huge wildfires. Actions have consequences. Airport expansion is not compatible with reaching our emissions reduction targets. Acting on the crisis means we must stop building fossil fuel mega-projects, such as a second terminal at Luton. The entire economy must focus on reaching zero carbon.

Aviation is the fastest growing cause of climate change, and Luton is the fastest growing airport, therefore the fastest growing cause of climate change in the UK. The recently set UK carbon reduction targets cannot be met if air travel continues to expand.

Planes and associated vehicle use, especially diesels, are also a major source of air pollution, ruining lives.

Rapid, uncontrolled, unsustainable expansion (and over-development) is the reason why Luton has become the 4th most congested town, has a high rate of respiratory diseases and early deaths, and why the chaos at the airport and on approach roads, and exorbitant taxi fares, has seen it voted the worst UK airport – only a few years after it was popular because it was small and convenient.

There is also a crisis in the decline of insects and wildlife. Wigmore Park is one of Luton's 3 biggest parks: it contains an important County Wildlife Site with a mosaic of habitats bursting with species diversity - plants, insects and birds, particularly noticeable at this time of year. The park is also an Area of Local Landscape Value. It is unthinkable that we could lose most of the park including over 2 hectares of trees, which are not only beautiful but absorb pollution – it is a fantastic asset. (It has already been declared a Community Asset.)

The town is under-provided with parks and green spaces, which are essential for physical and mental health. This large park provides a vital pollution and noise barrier between the airport and people's homes.

400 people responded to the planning application for the airport road to Wigmore Park and proposed airport-related development, but these often passionate letters, and effects on health and community, have been completely ignored. The huge amount of council money that has been spent on the airport and consultants has obviously reduced the amount which should have been spent on essential services.

In October 2018, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published new guidelines for environmental noise, including tough new lower thresholds for aviation noise, reflecting the growing body of evidence about the harmful effects of noise on health. It has substantial effects on cardiovascular disease including hypertension, ischemic heart disease, heart failure and stroke. Yet Luton has just proposed a relaxation of noise standards!

Luton airport affects people within a 15km radius. If Luton Council does not care about the future health and wellbeing of its citizens and neighbours, it is up to people affected and local organisations to take a stand.

I therefore support Friends of Wigmore Park, a group of residents who care very much about their park, and have put in a laudable amount of their voluntary time trying to make the best of their park and save it from development. They have boycotted the 'Future Luton' airport workshop, as they do not want to be part of a tickbox exercise to show the government and planning inspectorate that LBC/LLAL has 'consulted' in any democratic way about building on their park. It is the aim of Luton Friends of Parks & Green Spaces, and of the National Charter for Parks, which we have signed, to protect and improve all green spaces in our borough. Wigmore Park was created for residents over landfill and consultants have pronounced it high risk to dig it up. As far as I am concerned, the people of Luton own Wigmore Park and it cannot be spoilt by development.

The way LBC has treated its residents over this plan is totally undemocratic and unacceptable. We have been lied to repeatedly and gone through sham consultations with biased questionnaires. The conflict between LBC and LLAL (with a common CEO) is a major problem. (See 'Material Considerations' submitted by Luton Friends of the Earth following Luton BC's premature approval 2 weeks before the end of the consultation period, by only 5 Labour councillors and 1 Tory, of the major plan to build a 1.6km road through the airport to enable development on Wigmore Park and future expansion of the airport.)

I refer you to the following articles, all from June 2019:

Aircraft leave a trail of Climate Destruction *Jun 28*

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/aircraft-leave-a-trail-of-climate-destruction-cggv33n3d>

Planes are even worse for the climate than we thought *Jun 27*

https://www.newscientist.com/article/2207886-it-turns-out-planes-are-even-worse-for-the-climate-than-we-thought/?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=SOC&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1561642772

UK accused of ignoring obligations on aviation emissions *Jun 27*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/27/uk-accused-of-ignoring-obligations-on-aviation-emissions>

Airplane contrails' climate impact to triple by 2050 *Jun 27*

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27062019/climate-change-contrails-airplane-jet-pollution-clouds-global-warming>

Guardian view on Heathrow expansion: Stop it to save the planet *Jun 23*

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/23/the-guardian-view-on-heathrow-expansion-stop-it-to-save-the-planet>

The harms to health caused by aviation noise require urgent action *Jun 18*

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2019/06/18/the-harms-to-health-caused-by-aviation-noise-require-urgent-action/>

Greta Thunberg speech at Brilliant Minds conference in Stockholm *Jun 13*

<https://twitter.com/pmagn/status/1143157859321933829>