



**Daisy Cooper MP**

Member of Parliament for St Albans

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
[daisy.cooper.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:daisy.cooper.mp@parliament.uk)

Robert Courts MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

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**Case Ref:** DC16377

Dear Minister,

**Expansion of Luton Airport**

We write to thank you for your reply as the responsible Minister, to our concerns at the recent Westminster Hall debate on Luton Airport expansion on 24 March 2021. Whilst we are grateful for your time and consideration, there were a number of questions raised during the debate that we do not feel received satisfactory answers. In a time-limited debate such as this, we appreciate that it can be difficult to respond with appropriate detail to the many complex issues surrounding the ongoing uncontrolled expansion of the Airport, so we have taken the opportunity to present these to you in writing for further consideration.

**What steps will the Minister take to ensure that Luton Airport abides by its promises and obligations on real and meaningful noise mitigation?**

Although we were interested to hear details of how the Civil Aviation Authority are responsible for airspace, the first question from the Member of Parliament for St Albans remains unanswered. Could you please outline what steps the Government can take to ensure these promises to our residents are met by Luton Airport.

**What can the Minister do to speed up much needed improvements to the already congested airspace to reduce the noise impacts to residents?**

Can you clarify whether the Government is able to help expedite improvements to air space that would considerably improve the lives of our constituents? Or are we to understand that the Department for Transport can do nothing at all to move this long-running issue forwards?

**How can the Minister tally further expansion of operations at Luton with the recommendations from the Committee for Climate Change that “demand cannot continue to grow unfettered”?**

We look forward to the ambitious plans being set out by the Department for Transport in the run up to COP26 with regard to aviation emissions from Luton Airport. We do remain concerned that the Government’s starting position is that it is emissions and not aviation or aircraft that contribute to climate change. We are yet to see any credible plans to reduce the

emissions from aircraft, to the extent that any such reduction is capable of off-setting any increase in the number of flights, let alone a plan that would result in a net reduction.

It is an undeniable fact that emissions result from aviation, and that increased numbers of aircraft result in increased emissions. We would welcome an explanation as to how Luton Airport expansion is in line with the Committee for Climate Change advice. We are also keen to see the government's specific plan and timeline within which the government plans to simultaneously achieve an increase in airport capacity whilst reducing emissions.

**Will the Minister call in the current planning application to increase passenger numbers to 19 million, in light of the perceived conflict of interest between Luton Council as both the owners of the airport, and the planning authority?**

We regret that the issue of conflict of interest, that we both spoke to at some length and in some detail, was not directly addressed by your reply during the debate. We welcome in general terms the aspiration by Government that any management strategies and necessary mitigation are developed and decided on locally, wherever possible. However, given the grave concerns about conflict of interest, it appears that in this case it is not possible for such decisions to be taken locally. Certainly not while retaining the trust and confidence of the general public.

As Luton Council's financial position worsens, their perceived inclination to approve expansion plans that might contribute to increased revenue streams becomes more stark. We note with ever-growing concern the recent intervention by the Secretary of State that would allow capitalisation of up to £35 million to ease pressure on the authority's revenue shortfalls. To ensure our constituents have confidence in the impartiality and transparency of such applications, we would urge Government to call in the current, and any future, planning applications that would seek to expand operations at Luton Airport.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Daisy Cooper MP**

Member of Parliament for St Albans

**Richard Fuller MP**

Member of Parliament for North East  
Bedfordshire