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Delivered by email

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RE: Green Group Objection to Planning Application (22/03045/VAR): Expansion of London City Airport

Dear Mr McFadden

As the Green Group of councillors at the London Borough of Newham, we are writing to you to express our opposition to the application to increase the number of flights and to extend the hours of operation of London City Airport (22/03045/VAR). Please ensure all relevant officers and councillors making decisions on this application are provided with this letter.

The proposals would end the hard-won prohibition on flights between 12:30-19:00 on Saturdays and introduce additional early morning flights. This would see the airport service 9 million passengers a year, compared to today's levels of 6.5 million – an increase of nearly 40%.

We are clear that any airport expansion in the middle of a climate emergency is wrongheaded and dangerous. At a time when we ought to be urging people to shift away from air travel to other, more sustainable forms of travel, increased airport capacity will serve only to further induce demand for flights and will harm our efforts to reduce carbon emissions to net-zero in time to stop runaway climate change.

This applies to none more so than to London City Airport, which is situated in one of the worst boroughs in the country for air quality, and where over a hundred people every year die prematurely due to our toxic air. The airport is also located in the centre of a heavily residential area where people already suffer deeply due to the noise caused by the airport and flights arriving at or departing from it – **with many of the local communities predating the existence of the airport.** The existing flight paths also cause significant noise disruption to communities outside the consultation area for the application, including residents in Stratford Olympic Park.

While the planet burns around us, there can be no justification for London City Airport's expansion.

WE ARE NEWHAM.

Local residents are already unhappy about levels of noise pollution caused by the airport, which can cause significant disruption to sleep and create real mental and emotional distress. **The scale of the impact cannot be overstated** – hundreds of thousands of people fall within an area where planes fly under 4000 feet in altitude. The proposal will only add to their grievances, replacing much needed respite on Saturdays with further disturbance.

When the Civil Aviation Authority has revealed that a reduction of 3dB in noise is only ‘just noticeable’ to the human ear, and further investigations by HACAN East yielding the similar findings, the much-hailed delivery of a ‘new generation’ of quieter planes will in reality fall far short of what residents deserve. These new aircraft are incredibly unlikely to meet the promise of reducing disturbance forced on local communities.

The proposals will inevitably lead to greater levels of traffic congestion in East London, and undermine attempts to reduce air pollution. In 2016 the High Court ruled the Government should reduce people’s exposure to illegal levels of air pollution in the shortest time possible. The proposals are not compatible with this ruling and will cause Londoners to unnecessarily endure unsafe air pollution levels for longer than necessary.

It is difficult to stress strongly enough how an expansion to the number of flights is an affront to the UK’s attempts to combat the climate emergency. Aviation is already responsible for around 10% of the UK’s total CO2 emissions, and in May 2022 Possible published their report 'Missed Targets', highlighting how the Government has consistently failed at attempts to cut emissions from flights. The Aviation Environment Federation has shown that planned and recently approved airport expansions are already triple the rate required for the UK to have a chance of reaching net zero by 2050. **Newham’s own Climate Action Plan, which has the more stringent goal of a net zero borough by 2045, will be utterly undermined by these proposals.**

It is claimed that airport flight paths will be redesigned in the future. Changes may include flights at higher altitudes and alternate routes to reduce clashes with neighbouring airports. While in principle these ideas may alleviate noise pollution in the local vicinity, there is still uncertainty as to when and how they will be implemented. Residents are rightly sceptical of any promises of future relief. **At the very least, residents should be able to determine how successful these measures are, before additional flights are introduced.**

To allow these plans would be a rejection of democracy. The airport’s own consultations in 2020 demonstrated that local residents overwhelmingly reject the proposal, with almost 80% of respondents strongly opposed to the introduction of weekend flights. The area of consultation was also considerably smaller than that affected by the airport’s flight paths – with letters only being sent to residents in the nearby vicinity.

As well as being opposed by surrounding boroughs, in February **Newham Council unanimously voted against the proposal**, indicating the widespread dissatisfaction of people across the borough.

When considering planning applications, officers and councillors must be persuaded the application is consistent with planning guidance set out in the relevant local plans, and importantly human rights legislation. It is clear that airport expansion at a time of climate emergency undermines both of these requirements.

For the sake of the wellbeing of Newham residents and Londoners, and the UK's climate commitments, we implore you to reject permission for this project.



Councillor Danny Keeling

Leader of the Green Group

Councillor for Stratford Olympic Park



Councillor Nate Higgins

Green Group

Councillor Stratford Olympic Park