

30914 to all LCC councillors re amends

Dear Leeds City Councillors,

I write to you on behalf of the Group for Action on Leeds Bradford Airport (GALBA) concerning planning applications submitted by Leeds Bradford Airport (LBA) on 6 September. They are: 23/05440/CLE, 23/05441/CLE, 23/05442/CLE, 23/05443/CLE and 23/05444/CLE. These applications propose amendments to the planning conditions that govern LBA's night flight operations. They are significant. They represent material changes that would permit noisier and more frequent flights between 11pm and 7am.

Information on the planning portal says that the public cannot comment on the applications because of the process being used. It also says that the decision will be 'delegated', which implies that the City Plans Panel will have no say on the applications. This seems quite wrong. It is well known that there is great public interest in all matters relating to the operation and potential expansion of LBA. Excluding the citizens of Leeds and their elected representatives from the decision-making process cannot be right. Furthermore, the applications on the planning portal are devoid of any dates.

These applications come, of course, within a context. You will be aware that earlier this year LCC found LBA in breach of these same planning conditions – conditions that restrict night time movements in order to protect public health. LCC found that LBA had exceeded the number of permitted night time movements by 25% (747 flights) during the 2022 summer season. A breach of condition notice was served by LCC, which LBA accepted. GALBA confidently forecasts that LBA will breach the permitted night time flight movements again in 2023. We will issue a formal complaint when this occurs.

The intention of LBA's new applications is to allow noisier aircraft to fly at night and remove certain flights from counting towards the cap on night time flying, thus increasing the number of night flights. The applications clearly represent an attempt to legitimise LBA's breaches of night flight rules last year and this summer. GALBA is dismayed that due to the procedures being used, the public do not have a right to make any comment on the proposals. Finally, as these applications appear to seek material variations to the existing planning conditions, which is contrary to Planning Guidance, GALBA is seeking legal opinion on the matter with a view to mounting a legal challenge against both the applications and the decision-making process.

Yours Sincerely
Ian Coatman
Secretary GALBA