

Mayor Dave Hodgson  
Bedford Borough Council  
Borough Hall  
Cauldwell Street  
Bedford  
MK42 9AP

26 July 2018

Dear Mayor Hodgson

**Re: Central Bedfordshire Council Planning Application: CB/17/05862/OUT Land North of Cranfield Airport College Road. Application approved. Decision Notice Date: 19 June 2018**

**Increased flight movements at Cranfield Airport - noise, road traffic, air pollution and other environmental implications**

We are writing to you on behalf of our Town & Parish Council members in Bedford Borough because we and they, are very concerned indeed at the way in which Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) has considered and decided the above Planning Application without consulting the Town & Parish Councils in Bedford Borough or even, it would appear, Bedford Borough Council, all of which will be affected by the Application.

In short, the Planning Application has been called a "Hybrid" Application by CBC - by this they mean that the Application is for a 2 Phase development of Cranfield Airport and that Phase 1 is a Full Planning Application and Phase 2 is Outline - both were considered together.

The Application will see Cranfield Airport develop an Airpark (called London Cranfield) specifically for private jets some of which are quite large. The development will include a range of operational facilities, hangars, terminal buildings etc. and a 300 bed hotel.

The outcome is that the number of flight movements will double from the current 22,000 per year to 45,000 per year after Phase 2 is completed.

The number of visitors/passengers to the airport is also expected to increase substantially to 51,000 per year at the end of Phase 1 and 70,000 per year at the end of Phase 2.

The Applicant states that between 80% and 90% of visitors will use the car as their means of transport to and from the airport.

The principal issues which are of concern to CPRE Bedfordshire and our Town & Parish Council members in Bedford Borough are these:

- **Environmental Impact on Bedford Borough - Air Pollution**
- **Aircraft Noise - Impact on Bedford Borough**
- **Impact of Additional Vehicle Movements (Car and HGV) on the rural and primary road network in Bedford Borough due to the expansion of the airport**

As I'm sure you're aware, the flightpath to and from Cranfield Airport takes aircraft directly over the villages of North Bedfordshire so any increase in flight movements will directly impact them.

Some villages are already reporting an increase in flights, aircraft stacking ("holding areas") and associated noise levels.

These communities will also be subject to increasing levels of air pollution which currently is not effectively monitored in these areas. Air pollution is already a very serious issue in our Borough.

All communities in Bedford Borough will be impacted by the increased road traffic (car and HGV) generated by the airport expansion. Wootton will be particularly vulnerable as would many villages to the north and west of Bedford town.

We are therefore shocked and very surprised indeed that CBC has made the decision not to consult more widely on this important strategic Planning Application.

According to CBC's planning website, with the exception of near neighbours, just 27 consultees were consulted on the Application despite its strategic importance regionally.

Only a small number of the Central Bedfordshire villages immediately the surrounding airport were included on the consultation list. All of them objected to the Application!

To CPRE Bedfordshire, this implies that CBC did not wish to engage with the wider community in Bedford Borough that might be impacted by this controversial expansion for fear of the negative reaction to it that they might have received.

We will of course be writing to CBC separately on this issue, but our questions to you as the elected Mayor of Bedford Borough Council (BBC) are as follows:

1. Are you happy with the way in which CBC has conducted this Planning Application process and in particular the fact that Town & Parish Councils in Bedford Borough were excluded from the consultation process?
2. Was BBC advised in any way by CBC that the above Planning Application was being considered? Was BBC consulted with regard to the Application either formally or informally?
3. Were you or any member of your Council aware of the Planning Application or that consideration was being given to expand Cranfield Airport?

4. Had you or any member of your Council been advised at meetings of England's Economic Heartland or at meetings of SEMLEP or at meetings of the Oxford/Cambridge Corridor "Central Growth Board (SEMLEP & Bucks)", or at meetings with the DfT, that expansion plans for Cranfield Airport were being considered or that a Planning Application had been received?

5. CBC has a legal "Duty to Cooperate" with neighbouring LA's on planning matters, particularly those of strategic importance to the area that could impact on the neighbouring LA's and their communities.

Did you or any member of your Council have "Duty to Cooperate" discussions with CBC which related to or included the expansion of Cranfield Airport? If so please provide details?

6. Do you think that the way in which CBC has handled this Planning Application has been in the best interest of ensuring that effective local democracy operates in Bedfordshire?

We look forward to hearing from you and in particular what action you will take in order that effective local democracy is ensured as far as this Planning Application is concerned.

Yours sincerely

Gerry Sansom  
CPRE Bedfordshire