

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Robert Sinclair**

CEO, London City Airport

By email

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**Date:** 23 August 2019

CC: [ourfutureskies@londoncityairport.com](mailto:ourfutureskies@londoncityairport.com)

Dear Robert,

I write in response to London City Airport's limited engagement on its 'Our Future Skies – Design Principles' document. This response does not prejudice any comments that the Mayor or Transport for London (TfL) may make on London City Airport's draft master plan which is currently subject to separate consultation.

I acknowledge the Airspace Change process is governed by the CAA, while the draft master plan follows a non-statutory pathway. However, it is confusing for communities to appreciate why these should be dealt with separately and doing so erodes community trust which is already low. Londoners are interested in the impacts they will face as a result of changes at London City Airport, less so in the process through which they are effectively endorsed.

As you know, the airport's noise impacts remain a concern for thousands of Londoners. The airspace change implemented by City Airport in 2016 resulted in severe noise impacts and City Airport's unwillingness to acknowledge this, nor seek to remedy it quickly, remains a significant concern for local communities across large areas of east London. As emphasised through correspondence and meetings on numerous occasions, the timeframe over which City Airport proposes to address these issues remains unacceptable. It is notable that the process this time around is significantly more protracted than the process which led to the 2016 changes being introduced.

From this low starting point, 'Our Future Skies' now presents draft design principles against which future airspace design options will be developed and evaluated. However, the high level nature of these principles make it very difficult to give meaningful feedback. Without seeing actual flightpath options which will drive the impacts to which residents are exposed, the exercise is arguably meaningless.

However, I can say that the general principle of prioritising increased capacity over noise and air pollution emissions is unacceptable. Any gains of new technology must be shared with communities and not banked by the airport. I am particularly concerned about the division of design principles into Tier 1 (Must) and Tier 2 (Should). Tier 2 principles effectively become optional, allowing them to be cast aside in the more detailed future stages of flight path design. It is concerning that 'providing sufficient capacity to support future demand' is considered a Tier 1 principle, whilst 'limiting and where possible reducing aircraft noise', 'minimising the amount of fuel used and CO2 emitted' and 'minimising air pollution in the local area' are considered Tier 2 (optional). Any principles should be

considered as 'must' and should not be optional. Further, noise mitigation actions B and F appear to entrench the issues introduced by the 2016 changes, namely concentrating flightpaths over fewer people, but increasing the impact on those communities exponentially. This is not acceptable. Finally, options for future flight paths should not be considered in isolation and should take into account the operations of other airports, in particular Heathrow, which can and do exacerbate issues experienced in areas impacted by City Airport.

I remain committed to defending the interests of local communities and remain opposed to proposals which will threaten the quality of life and health of Londoners. We need to move beyond discussion of principles to broad-based, meaningful engagement on detailed flight path options so that affected communities can fully understand the impacts of what is proposed. I urge City Airport to work to rebuild trust and work with communities as it moves forward with airspace change.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Alexander".

**Heidi Alexander**

Deputy Mayor for Transport