

PRIVATE OFFICE

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Angela Smith MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department of the Environment
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast BT2 8GB

31st January 2005

Dear Minister,

We understand that Belfast City Airport has applied to expand its operations by increasing the number of 'seats it offers for sale'. We object to this application and ask that you reject it without further consideration.

We are concerned that the Airport is already in breach of the rules under which it operates (as set out in the extant Planning Agreement). There are a large number of late flights (after the 9.30pm curfew) and no satisfactory noise monitoring is carried out. Removal of the 'seats for sale' restriction is likely to increase this by 25%.

Belfast City Airport's plan to increase the number of seats for sale amounts to a significant intensification of its operations and should properly be the subject of a new planning application and a full public inquiry. The Airport's own projections show a fivefold increase in the use of the more intrusive airbus aircraft.

In any case the current rules were set by a public inquiry and there should be no changes to those rules without a further public inquiry.

In the event that you are not prepared to reject the application without further consideration I ask you to - at the very least - please establish a new public inquiry into the operations of Belfast City Airport. This inquiry should focus on the number of seats offered for sale; the number of air traffic movements; the noise monitoring regime; the problem of late flights; and the wisdom in developing a City Airport given the safety and environmental risks associated with air transport.

Yours sincerely

Jane McClure
Secretary Holywood Conservation Group
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