

[Summary of consultation responses: text for DfT website]

Consultation on London Luton Airport's request to become Co-ordinated for the purposes of airport slot allocation, under Article 3 of Regulation (EEC) 95/93 on common rules for the allocation of slots at Community airports

Summary of consultation responses

- In May 2012 the Department for Transport sought views from stakeholders in response to London Luton Airport's request to the Secretary of State to be designated as Co-ordinated for the purposes of airport slot allocation, and if so, whether to approve Airport Co-ordination Ltd (ACL) as the co-ordinator for the airport.
- In accordance with the Regulation, the targeted consultation with 29 relevant aviation and other organisations ran from 28 May to 25 July 2012. Stakeholders were asked :
 - Whether they felt that London Luton Airport's capacity analysis met the criteria for Co-ordination as stated in the EC Regulation;
 - Whether they agreed with the airport capacity analysis's conclusions on the aspects of capacity considered and its overall conclusions on the capacity position at London Luton Airport;
 - Whether, on the basis of the capacity analysis, they felt that London Luton Airport should be designated as Co-ordinated for the purposes of slot allocation;
 - If not, whether London Luton Airport should a) remain designated as schedules facilitated, or b) be undesignated;
 - Whether they believed that designation would give rise to the benefits mentioned in the capacity analysis, and whether there were further advantages that should be considered;
 - What disadvantages, including hidden cost increases or other potentially adverse effects that also needed to be taken into account;
 - Whether, were London Luton Airport to be designated as Co-ordinated, the Secretary of State for Transport should approve the appointment by the airport operator of ACL as the slot co-ordinator.
- Responses were received from 14 stakeholders as follows :
 - 7 commercial airlines
 - 2 business aviation and general aviation operators,
 - 3 business / general aviation industry representative bodies
 - 2 local authority stakeholders
- Six of the 14 responses supported Co-ordination, citing the benefits of better management of the runway and taxiway, terminal, security, and stand allocation, which would reduce congestion and delays for passengers. Four of these responses were from airlines operating commercial services from the airport, although with the caveats that Luton Airport would need to fall in line with other "Co-ordinated" airports and operate under the UK Slot Sanction scheme; and further analysis might be needed on the effects of preferential stand allocation (ie: limiting stands to a single operator), to answer airlines' concerns that this can limit efficient operation.

- Two further airlines opposed Co-ordination, citing their view that the airport had no significant congestion / lack of slot availability throughout the day, and that the current Schedules Facilitated arrangements work well.
- Seven further responses – from business aviation operators, and organisations representing business aviation – voiced strong objections to Co-ordination, on the basis that it would restrict the availability of slots for Business and General Aviation operators compared to commercial airlines, thereby limiting their flexibility and ultimately their ability to operate from the airport.
- One further aviation industry respondent reserved judgment, opining that there was not enough evidence in Luton Airport's Capacity Analysis and the consultation document either to support or object to the proposals.