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THE EXPANSION OF LUTON AIRPORT:  
THE INVOLVEMENT OF ORGANISATIONS IN A PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING  
PROCESS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PLACE OF REGIONAL  
PLANNING AGENCIES.

J. E. KITCHEN.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D..  
University of Glasgow,  
September 1972.

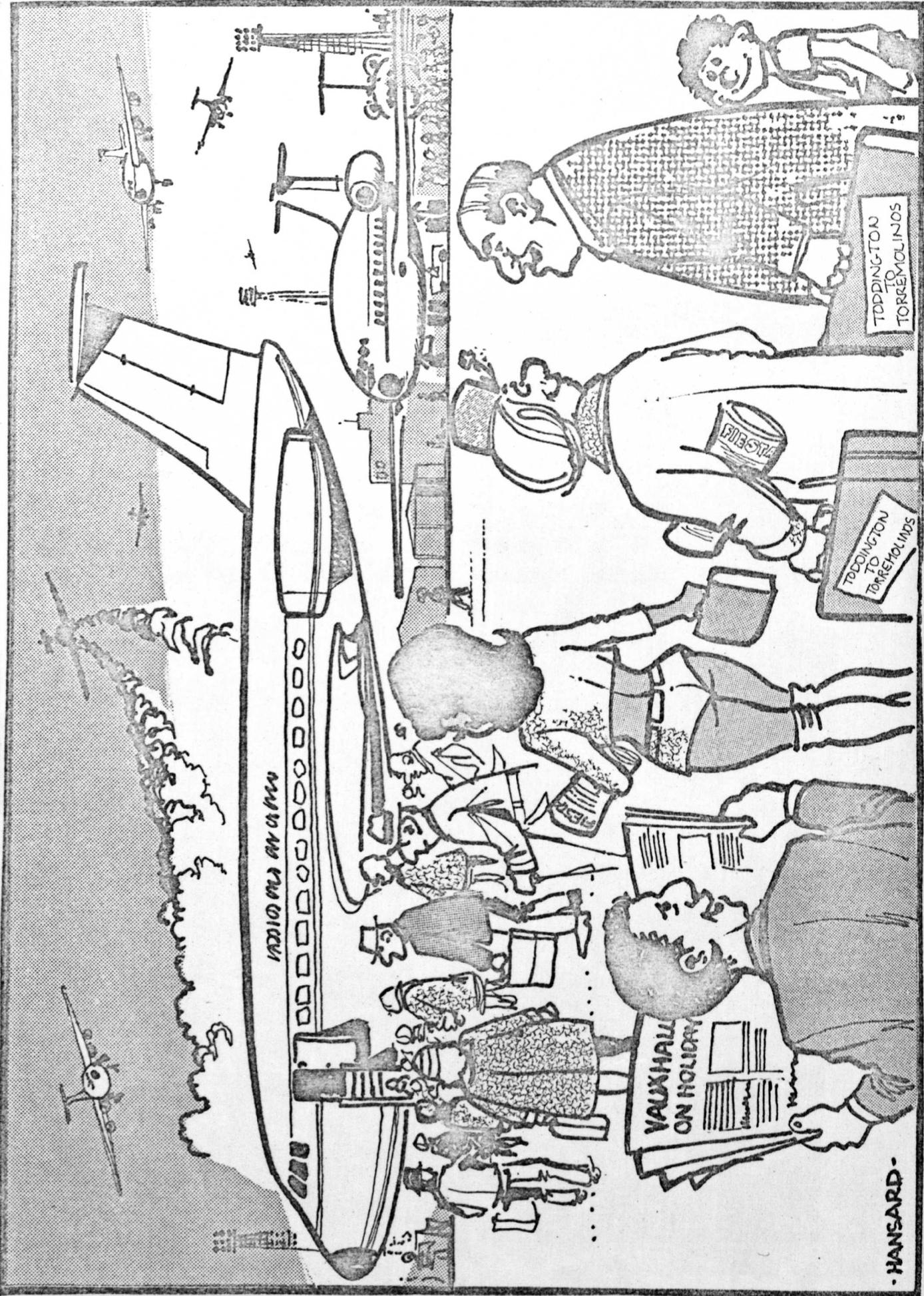
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'I wonder whether we're going via Cutenhoe Road or Stevenage'.

Noises off.

Airport maniacs sing this song,

Doodah, doodah!

Airport runway ten miles long,

Doodah, doodahday!

We'll come down here and fill you in,

Doodah, doodah!

With concrete, plastic, glass and tin,

Doodah, doodahday!

Whine and roar all night,

Grind and bang all day!

I'll bet my money on a jumbo jet,

Lunacy's here to stay.

Anonymous.

Sunday Telegraph, 28th. June 1970.

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Of all the other people who have contributed in some manner, Ann McCourt for her help with Appendix 11 and Mrs. Murchie for her efforts with her typewriter deserve special mention.

Synopsis.

Very little research work has as yet been undertaken in Britain into the nature of planning operations; that is to say, into the arena within which planning activities take place rather than upon the inputs of professional expertise into problem-solving. Nevertheless, British planners appear to work with an operational model derived from the norms of their profession, termed the model of "planning as technical rationality". This model has remained largely untested despite the fact that planners appear to regard it as having normative significance but a brief perusal of the critical literature indicates several doubts about its operational validity. The purpose of this study is to describe this model and then to test it in terms of its applicability to the operational dimensions of a planning policy-making process. This test and the consequent presentation in detail of a case study which concentrates upon the operational dimensions of planning are both designed to contribute towards the search for operational models of the planning process in Britain.

The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport satisfies the various criteria selected to guide the choice of case study, and the bulk of the dissertation is concerned with the context within which the Airport policy-making process has evolved, the events which have occurred over a forty-year period and in particular with the organisations participating in the process. The participant organisations have been treated as forming five sub-systems -- Local Government, general interest groups, special interest groups, regional planning agencies and Central Government -- each of which tends to exhibit certain common behavioural features. The major participants are shown to be Luton County Borough Council as owner and operator of the Airport, Hertfordshire County Council as the local authority responsible for the area over which most of the aircraft noise nuisance is experienced, LADACAN (the local anti-noise interest group), the airline and inclusive tour operators who have worked with Luton Council to develop the Airport, and Central Government with several policy-making sanctions over the process as a whole. These organisations come from four of the five defined sub-systems, but the regional planning agencies (the fifth sub-system) are notable by their absence from any position of real influence, although the input that such agencies might have been expected to provide has been conspicuously lacking from the process.

Certain of the features of the model of planning as technical rationality appear to reflect fully or at least in part certain of the features of the Luton Airport policy-making process, but in no sense can the former be regarded as an homomorphic model of the latter. Rather, to attain an acceptable level of general

validity it needs to be supplemented by alternative models developed from more studies of policy-making situations in planning, and the major recommendation for further research is that such studies should be undertaken. The present study has been consciously designed to provide a methodological starting point for further research work of this nature.

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

This study is concerned with the nature of the planning process and not, other than incidentally, with planning techniques. Immediately, this segregates it from the majority of planning research which is carried out in Britain at present, where the improvement of technique is the usual objective. In terms of the present study, one of the limitations which has been experienced in undertaking it derives from the current state of planning research, since there are very few complementary studies upon which to draw for comparative and developmental purposes. Consequently, it has been necessary to view the present study as an early attempt to explore an area of British planning which remains, as yet, largely uncharted.

The major reason for focussing upon the planning process rather than upon planning techniques is the belief that the two are essentially complementary. In other words, in any planning situation technique alone will be insufficient as a basis for making policy, although this is not to deny that the battery of techniques available to planners is of great (and, one would hope of increasing) value in performing such a task. At the same time, however, it is necessary to appreciate in detail the situation within which the planner finds himself, since this situation spawns a whole variety of constraints upon policy-making. For example, the formal decision-making processes which have to be followed, the nature of local party politics, the aspirations of interest groups affected by particular issues, the interplay of personalities in a situation and the informativeness of the local press can all have a substantial impact upon the resolution of planning problems. All of these factors relate to the arena within which planning activities take place rather than to the inputs of professional expertise into problem-solving, and this is the basis for the distinction between the "operational" and the "technical" dimensions of planning policy-making.

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1. In practice, this is a difficult distinction to make, as Chapter 1 acknowledges. Its value is primarily analytical, as a coarse sieve in sorting and classifying the variables under examination. The only similar attempt in relation to planning is contained in two articles by P.H. Levin, where he attempts to distinguish between "technical", "administrative" and "political" dimensions. He concedes that a great deal of overlap exists between the three concepts, and that great problems of precise definition are presented, without being able to overcome these particular difficulties. The greatest degree of overlap appears to exist between the administrative and the political dimensions, which are often virtually indistinguishable, whereas the technical dimension stands a little apart from the other two. For this reason, the distinction between the operational and the technical dimensions appears to be more comfortable than those attempted by Levin. P.H. Levin "Commitment and Specificity in Urban Planning". Town Planning Review, Volume 43, number 2, April 1972. Pages 93-115. P.H. Levin "On Decisions and Decision Making". Public Administration. Volume 50. Spring 1972. Pages 19-44.

Knowledge in both dimensions needs to advance simultaneously if planners are to be provided with the range of expertise required to perform their tasks, and at present efforts appear to be concentrated disproportionately upon technical factors<sup>2</sup>. This study attempts to begin to redress the balance somewhat by concentrating upon the operational dimensions of planning.

There are, of course, limits as to how much one study is capable of achieving. In fields which are fairly well-developed this does not usually present a large problem, since studies usually build upon each other as research material accrues. Thus, the advance of knowledge in such fields tends to be incremental. The operational dimensions of planning is not such a field, however, at any rate in relation to the British situation. Consequently, the validity of an incrementalist approach to research in this area is somewhat limited. The optimum balance between this realisation and the above assertion as to the achievement bounds of any individual study appears to be to attempt to undertake a systematic case study of an actual planning situation, and to attempt to generate and to present as explicitly as possible a model methodology capable of adaptation and refinement by other research workers interested in opening up the field. The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport has been taken as the case study, and the need to develop a methodology robust enough to contribute to the extension of the field has been an important feature of the research process.

The study is divided into **five** parts, each of which is linked to the others by means of a short connective summary. The first part is concerned to establish the conceptual framework which has been touched upon in the above paragraphs, to outline the basis for the choice of the particular case study and to discuss the research methods which were adopted. The second part examines major features of the environment within which the Luton Airport policy-making process is set. The third and fourth parts, which constitute the core of the case study, examine it from two complementary angles -- respectively, the historical and the organisational -- and establish the major features of the system. The fifth part draws together the principal findings both in terms of the system under examination and in terms of the wider objectives of the study.

A great deal of use has been made of confidential material in the preparation

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2. M. M. Webber. "Planning in an Environment of Change. Part II: Permissive Planning." Town Planning Review. Volume 39, number 4. January, 1969. Pages 277-295.

of the case study. In particular, the opinions of several participants in the process have been quoted on the understanding that they were necessary for the completeness of the study but would remain confidential to it. An undertaking of this nature is probably inevitable in relation to case study work utilising delicate issues of public policy, and it was considered to be preferable to work on this basis than to present an incomplete study or to attempt to veil the issues and participants in the kinds of pseudonyms which lend an air of unreality to so many case study exercises. At the same time, this places a burden upon the potential reader which is somewhat unusual, in that he or she is asked to respect the circumstances under which the case study has been presented and is requested not to quote the views of participants as presented herein. It is hoped that readers will be able as the study unfolds to appreciate the necessity of this limitation upon its direct use.

Part 1. The Scope of the Study.Connective Summary.

The Introduction to the study has already indicated that its purpose is to contribute towards model-building in an area of planning literature which is at present significantly under-developed, namely that part of it which is concerned with the nature of planning operations rather than with the techniques which are applied in particular planning situations. Currently, planning literature is burgeoning with material on improved techniques, but very little work is being done on the nature of the real-world situations that planners face and the constraints that these impose upon their activities. The aim of the study is to help to redress this balance a little, by concentrating upon the nature of the arena within which an actual policy-making process involving a substantial planning component was played out over many years. The purpose of Part 1 is to introduce the major concepts which have been used to this end and to describe the research methods adopted.

Chapter 1 develops the conceptual framework used in the study. It is argued that, for a variety of reasons, the operational dimensions of planning have been neglected in favour of its technical dimensions and that very little useful work has been done on the former in Britain. At the same time, planners appear to attempt to work with a structure of assumptions and ethics derived from the received wisdom of planning which, to all intents and purposes, is regarded as forming a normative operational model, and many authors have recognised several of its features in the behaviour of planners. Several criticisms can be levelled at this model in terms of its descriptive validity, however, and its function appears to be rather that of a yardstick than of a tool for day to day use. More immediately applicable models also need to be developed, and the purpose of undertaking a detailed case study is to attempt to make a systematic contribution in this direction and to provide a vehicle whereby the descriptive relevance of the received model of planning as technical rationality to a particular situation can be evaluated.

Chapter 2 deals with the research methods that have been adopted. The choice of the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport as the vehicle for the study was based partly upon conceptual criteria outlined in Chapter 1, and partly upon practical criteria of researchability, and the extent to which the issue satisfied all these tests is demonstrated. The remainder of the Chapter is concerned with a detailed rehearsal of the methods and processes involved in undertaking a participant-observation case study.

Thus, Part 1 provides the basis from which the environment of the case study

system can be discussed in Part 2, two perspectives of the case can be obtained in Parts 3 and 4 and conclusions and implications can be drawn in Part 5.

Chapter 1. Concepts: the Search for an Understanding of the Nature of  
Planning Operations.

Introduction.

The purpose of this study is to explore what might be described as the operational aspects of planning, as distinct from the technical aspects which are the more normal concern of planning literature. The basis of this distinction will be elaborated below, but in essence the term "operational" will be used to refer to the arena within which planning activities take place and to the constraints placed upon planners by the characteristics of this arena, and the term "technical" will be used to refer to the inputs of expertise claimed by planners as a result of their training and experience. This Chapter will argue that for a variety of reasons (one of the most important of which is a lack of understanding and agreement about the nature of planning itself), the operational dimensions of planning have been neglected in favour of its technical dimensions, such that very little of the groundwork which could lead to the construction of valid models of these operational dimensions has as yet been carried out in Britain. At the same time, planners appear to work with an implicit structure of assumptions and ethics which is treated as being to all intents and purposes a normative operational model and this is spelled out as the model of "planning as technical rationality". Many of the authors who have recognised features of this model as being typical of the behaviour of planners have been critical of such behaviour, and some of the major criticisms which have been advanced are described in outline. It is unnecessary to rehearse all such criticisms, however, since it is clear even from those selected for review that in sum they represent a substantial degree of dissent from the viewpoints that the model as it stands is tenable as a normative description of real-world behaviour.

In short, it appears that the starting point in the search for an understanding of the nature of planning operations is the recognition that, as yet, insufficient grasp has been obtained from detailed studies to enable model-building to proceed on the normal scholarly basis of accumulated literature. Instead, a model which is open to several apparently valid criticisms has become part of the conventional wisdom of planning without being exposed to any particularly rigorous tests. The purpose of the study therefore, is to advance the process of model-building by constructing a detailed model of the operational dimensions of a carefully-selected planning situation, and then to examine the extent to which the model of planning as technical rationality fits

this particular situation. The purpose of this Chapter is to elaborate the conceptual framework summarised above. In other words, its subject matter is the concepts used in the study; the details of research methodology are left until Chapter 2.

### The Nature of Planning.

At the most general level, it has been argued that planning is an activity common to all human beings in many situations; it is "...the act of deciding in advance what to do",<sup>1</sup> or, more precisely, "...the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future directed at achieving goals by optimal means"<sup>2</sup>. Within such a definition, many sub-divisions are possible; for example, Branch talks of functional, project and comprehensive planning,<sup>3</sup> and Chadwick talks of physical, social welfare, corporate and resource planning.<sup>4</sup> At this level of generality, however, it remains to be demonstrated that the various sub-divisions have sufficient in common for the generic definition to withstand widespread application without amendment. Consequently it is necessary to be more precise, and a useful initial sub-division is that between planning at the individual scale (the individual making decisions for himself and his intimates) and at the collective scale (the individual making decisions for and within some form of organisation set up to perform specific functions). At the collective level, a further narrowing can be achieved by distinguishing between the public and private sectors, the public sector being the area of governmental stewardship and control on behalf of the public at large and the private sector being the area that is not so regulated. For the kind of planning activities with which this study is concerned this is an important distinction, since the planning agencies of interest are located in the public sector, although some would argue that the kinds of planning activities which take place within agencies in the two sectors are not greatly different.<sup>5</sup>

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1. C.D. Loeks. "The New Comprehensiveness." Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 33, number 5. September, 1967. Page 350.
  2. Y. Dror. "The planning Process: a Facet Design." International Review of Administrative Sciences. Volume 29, number 1. 1963. Page 47. See also R.P. Mack. "Planning on Uncertainty." John Wiley & Sons, New York. 1971.
  3. M. C. Branch. "Planning: Aspects and Applications." John Wiley & Sons. New York. 1966. Pages 10 and 11.
  4. G.F. Chadwick. "The Alternative Futures of Alternative Futures." Planning Outlook. New series, volume 10. Spring 1971. Pages 9 -23.
  5. M.C. Branch and I.M. Robinson "Goals and Objectives in Civil Comprehensive Planning." Town Planning Review. Volume 38, number 4. January 1968. Pages 261-274.

It is at this level that the real definitional difficulties are faced, however. Certain adjectives have been appended to planning within institutions in the public sector which relate to skills (for example, physical planning, economic planning, social planning, electricity planning); other adjectives refer to scales (for example, town planning, metropolitan planning, regional planning); yet others appear to refer to activities (corporate planning is the best example) and different definitions have been adduced to refer to each of these.<sup>6</sup> Some of the confusion may arise from the differences in possible meanings of the noun "a plan", which can be either a drawing representing in some manner the relative positions of parts of an object or an area of land, or it can be a form of prior arrangement related to certain ends.<sup>7</sup> Much thought and writing about planning has become ensnared in semantics of this nature. For the purposes of this study, however, the important distinction is between the planning process and the plan-making activities of the organisations and individuals which participate in it. The distinction is put well by Dror:

"Planning is a process, i.e. a continuous activity taking place within a unit and requiring some input of resources and energy in order to be sustained. Planning as a process must be distinguished from a "plan". A "plan" can be defined as a "set of decisions for action in the future" and can be arrived at either through planning or through some other -- rational or irrational -- methods of decision-making."<sup>8</sup>

In this case, the "unit" will be regarded as comprising the set of organisations participating in an area of policy-making in the public sector, a feature of which is that the policies under consideration impinge upon the spatial planning powers of governmental agencies. The reason for this is that the study will seek to observe the behaviour of planning agencies under favourable conditions -- dealing with policy which originates in the same sector and relates to the same parent organisations as themselves and which is of central concern to their operation of a well-developed set of powers under the Town and Country Planning Acts.<sup>9</sup>

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7. Concise Oxford Dictionary. Some of the implications of this difference in meaning are examined in, C. Cockburn, "Opinion and Planning Education". Information Paper 21. Centre for Environmental Studies, London, 1970. Pages 17-57.

8. Y. Dror, op.cit. Page 47.

9. The concept of this as spatial planning has been developed by Chadwick. G. F. Chadwick, "A Systems View of Planning". Pergamon Press. Oxford 1971. Pages 24 and 251.

No more precise definition of planning is needed for the purposes of this study, since it is concerned not so much with the nature of planning itself as with the behaviour of organisations exercising what are widely regarded as being planning powers. At the same time, the concentration of effort upon the semantic difficulties reviewed above is one of the reasons why the operational dimensions of planning have been neglected in British literature. Further reasons will emerge from an extension of the previous discussion of the differences between the operational and the technical dimensions.

#### Operational and Technical Dimensions.

The concern of this study is with the operational dimensions of planning, and it is important to clarify the particular differences between this and the technical dimensions of planning which have been the more usual concern of writers on the subject. The concept of a "technical" dimension refers to inputs of expertise. It implies that there is a corpus of specialist knowledge within a definable subject area that is the possession of a group of individuals by virtue of their training and/or experience, and this group of people is often organised as a "professional" body which regulates standards of entry to the profession, acts to ensure the development of the profession and watches for its members' interests.<sup>10</sup> Within this subject area, it is implied that in detail a matter remains the prerogative of the expert, although in Government the task of setting the broad guidelines of public policy remains for the ultimate decision of the elected representative advised by the expert as to the effect of policy choices upon his particular area of concern.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the concept of an "operational" dimension refers to the arena within which specialist activities (and in this case, planning activities) take place. The expert does not exist in a vacuum, but in a real-world situation where rules, customs, individuals and institutions will condition his behaviour.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that the distinction between technical and operational dimensions is an analytical device rather than a representation of a real-world situation, since the behaviour of any participant in any situation is conditioned by his own knowledge and understanding and by his perception of that situation. Despite this, planning literature has

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10. The Royal Town planning Institute is an apposite British example.

11. A. A. Altshuler. "The City Planning Process: a Political Analysis". Cornell University Press. Ithaca. 1965. Page 334.

12. R. S. Bolan. "Community Decision Behaviour: the Culture of Planning". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 35, number 5. September 1969. Pages 301-310.

concentrated very heavily upon the technical dimensions of the subject area and very little upon its operational dimensions. The assumption appears to have been that planning can best be improved by increasing the technical expertise of practitioners, and that the circumstances within which that expertise will be applied constitute an independent factor. In terms of the distinction introduced above between the planning process and the plan-making activities of the organisations which participate in it, the concentration of effort upon technical expertise has reflected an interest in plan-making activities rather than in the planning process. This study begins from the viewpoint that a greater understanding of the planning process requires greater attention being granted to the operational dimensions of planning than they have received hitherto.

The standard texts on planning illustrate the extensive concern with its technical dimensions. Until very recently, they were concerned with imparting experience which had been garnered in the process of preparing plans, and often went as far as to recommend very detailed standards for the provision of facilities within the settlements or areas that were the concern of the plan.<sup>13</sup> More recently the inability of the "master plan" to deal with unanticipated change has been recognised, and the emphasis has swung towards guiding change within an evolving framework.<sup>14</sup> This change was anticipated by Foley when he distinguished between the "unitary" and the "adaptive" approaches to planning. The unitary approach views a metropolitan community as something with a spatial form that can be grasped and for which, as a consequence, future patterns can be set. The adaptive approach, on the other hand, sees a metropolitan community as a diverse set of functionally interdependent parts related dynamically to each other, which can only be understood imperfectly and where, as a result, planners should be concerned to assess the likely consequences of contemplated actions rather than to achieve set end-states.<sup>15</sup> Faludi makes essentially the same point when he distinguishes between the "blueprint" and the "process" approaches.<sup>16</sup> The adaptive or "process" approach tends to be derived from the understandings given by general systems theory of the guidance of change within systems,<sup>17</sup> and it has been claimed as a major shift by some<sup>18</sup> and described as a new way

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13. See L. Keeble. "Principles and Practice of Town and Country Planning". Estates Gazette. London. 1964. T. J. Kent. "The Urban General Plan". Chandler Publishing Company. San Francisco. 1964.

14. G. F. Chadwick. "A Systems View of Planning". op. cit. F.S. Chapin. "Urban Land Use Planning". University of Illinois Press. Urbana 1965. J.B. McLoughlin. "Urban and Regional Planning - a Systems Approach". Faber and Faber. London. 1969.

15. D. Foley in M. Webber (ed.) "Explorations into Urban Structure". University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia. 1964. Pages 21-78. See also C.D. Loeks. op. cit.

16. A.K. Faludi. "The Planning Environment and the Meaning of Planning". Regional Studies. Volume 4, number 1. May 1970. Pages 1-9. "Towards a Three-

of rationalising what planners have always done by others.<sup>19</sup> Without entering into the merits of this particular argument, the change of approach has involved much more explicit attempts to spell out the process steps in system guidance, on which a measure of agreement has been reached.<sup>20</sup> Improvements in techniques have resulted and are likely to continue to result from such greater specificity. The orientation remains towards the technical rather than towards the operational dimensions of planning, however, and as yet the systems approach has barely concerned itself with the latter other than in passing.

One of the reasons why the operational dimensions of planning have been neglected by planners has already been advanced -- namely, there has been an extensive and at times polarised debate about the nature of planning which has commanded a great deal of attention. There is nothing unreasonable about this in principle; indeed, such debate is necessary if any discipline is to avoid stagnation. At the same time, it is at any rate a plausible hypothesis that a greater understanding of the real-world constraints that planners have faced in the process of wielding a battery of legal powers would contribute towards the resolution of at least some of the debates about the nature of planning. In other words, far from detracting from this central debate, the expenditure of greater effort upon the operational dimensions of planning might have promoted it through the provision of different insights. This is part of the intellectual justification for undertaking this particular study.

Another reason why the operational dimensions of planning appear to have

Dimensional Model of Planning Behaviour". Environment and Planning. Volume 3. number 3. 1971. Pages 253-266.

17. See especially S. Beer. "Decision and Control". John Wiley and Sons, London. 1966. Pages 241-398. G. Chadwick. op. cit. Pages 36-82. J.B. McLoughlin. op. cit. Pages 38-57, 75-91.

18. Chadwick. *ibid.* McLoughlin, *ibid.*

19. B. Dimitriou, A. Faludi, G. McDougall and M. Silvester. "The Systems View of Planning". Oxford Working Papers in Planning Education and Research, number 9. Oxford Polytechnic. Oxford, 1972. Especially pages 19-34.

20. R.A. Bird. "The Relationship of Economic and Physical Planning". Report of the Town and Country Planning Summer School, 1968. Town Planning Institute, London. 1968. Pages 457-470. N. Lichfield. "Goals in Planning". Report of the Town and Country Planning School, 1968. Town Planning Institute, London. 1968. Pages 21-27. J.B. McLoughlin, op. cit. Pages 92-103. D.N. Rothblatt.

"Rational Planning Re-examined". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume, 37, number 1. January, 1971. Pages 26-37. M.M. Webber. "Planning in an Environment of Change. Part II. Permissive Planning". Town Planning Review Volume 39, number 4. January 1969. Pages 277-295. R.C. Young. "Goals and Goal Setting". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 32, number 3. March 1966. Pages 76-85.

been neglected by planners is the natural tendency of professions to look inwards at themselves and their skills rather than outwards at the arenas within their members operate. This is reinforced when a professional institution exists. For example, of the eight written papers, one main study and two supplementary studies which form the recently-approved final examination for corporate membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute, only one of the written papers can be considered to be concerned with the operational dimensions of planning and the balance (over 90% of the total) is concerned with its technical dimensions.<sup>21</sup> The professionalisation of planning in Britain has thus contributed to the extensive concern with its technical dimensions at the expense of its operational dimensions.

The extent to which this has occurred is illustrated by the fact that it is not possible to cite a standard text which attempts to build an operational model of the planning process. This is not to say, however, that such dimensions have remained completely unrecognised in planning literature. From time to time their importance has been recognised and calls have been made for work to be done on them.<sup>22</sup> Most of the work which has been done to date, however, has been undertaken largely by American political scientists as part of extensive attempts to understand the process of city government. As such, it is limited in terms of its application to the British situation both by its general orientation towards city government rather than towards a more particular understanding of the operational dimensions of planning, and by the difficulties inherent in attempting to transplant study conclusions from one cultural situation to another. The following section returns to these difficulties after a brief review of the relevant American and British literature.

#### Studies of the Operational Dimensions of Planning.

In quantitative terms, most of the studies which have examined aspects of the operational dimensions of planning have been undertaken by American political

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21. R. H. Kantorowich. "Education for Planning". Journal of the Town Planning Institute, Volume 53, number 5. May 1967. Pages 175-184.

22. See particularly, R.S. Bolan, op.cit. P. Davidoff and T.A. Reiner. "A Choice Theory of Planning". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 28, number 2, May 1962. Pages 103-115.

scientists as parts of studies of particular city governments. For the most part, they were not oriented towards the development of operational models of the planning process, however, and so their usefulness in this particular context has been somewhat limited.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, as such studies began to accumulate during the 1960s,<sup>24</sup> a small number of attempts were made to integrate the material and to begin to relate it to planning, but as yet these have not advanced the process of model-building very far.<sup>25</sup> Even if such a process had occurred, however, it is doubtful whether models developed in relation to the American situation would be directly applicable to that of Britain without extensive prior investigation of the <sup>degree of fit.</sup> This is because so many of the variables which constitute the operational circumstances of planning in the two cultural situations appear to differ significantly.<sup>26</sup>

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23. See particularly, A.A. Altshuler, op.cit. H. Kaplan. "Urban Renewal Politics". Columbia University Press, New York, 1963. F.F. Rabinovitz. "City Politics and Planning". Atherton Press, New York, 1968. Of the large number of other studies, the most useful are probably those which relate to aspects of the planning process in the same city, and Boston, Chicago and New York have each been studied several times. For Boston see, H. J. Gans, "The Urban Villagers". Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1962. L.C. Keyes, "The Rehabilitation Planning Game". M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, (Mass.) 1969. S. Thernstrom. "Poverty, Planning and Politics in the New Boston: the Origins of A.B.C.D.". Basic Books, New York, 1969. For Chicago see, E.C. Banfield, "Political Influence". Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1961. M. Meyerson and E.C. Banfield. "Politics, Planning and the Public Interest". Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1964. P.H. Rossi and R.A. Dentler. "The Politics of Urban Renewal". Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1961. For New York, see, J.C. Davies. "Neighbourhood Groups and Urban Renewal". Columbia University Press, New York, 1966. S. J. Makieleski. "The Politics of Zoning". Columbia University Press, New York, 1966. W.S. Sayre and H. Kaufman. "Governing New York City". Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1964.

24. It is notable that of the twelve references cited in footnote 23, eleven (all except Meyerson and Banfield, op. cit., first published in 1955) were published during the 1960s. In other words, nearly all the literature in the field is very recent.

25. R.S. Bolan, op.cit. J.W. Dyckman, "Planning and Decision Theory". Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Volume 27, number 4. November 1961. Pages 335-345. F.F. Rabinovitz, op.cit. D.C. Ranney, "Planning and Politics in the Metropolis". Charles E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio, 1969.

26. This theme is developed in a forthcoming paper by J.D. McCallum and the author, entitled, "The Operational Circumstances of British and American Urban Planning: a Comparison", which seeks to identify the major points of similarity and of difference between the two situations. The political variables are reviewed by K. Newton, "City Politics in Britain and the United States". Political Studies, Volume 17, number 2. 1969. Pages 208-218. An over-simplified introduction to this area of concern is given by W. Bor, "The Making of Cities". Leonard Hill, London. 1972. Pages 53-66.

The number of valuable British studies which exist is small. Fyfe has presented several short sketches of the operations of a sample of local planning authorities in the mid-1950s, but attempts very little synthesis.<sup>27</sup> Pinnick has examined several planning issues in Dorset in the 1950s and early 1960s, but his study is largely a recital of events.<sup>28</sup> Willson<sup>29</sup> and Friend and Jessop<sup>30</sup> have examined the processes of management in planning in Coventry, and together their studies provide some useful insights into the processes of policy implementation (rather than formulation) within the Council. The processes of urban renewal have been examined in Glasgow<sup>31</sup> and in Liverpool<sup>32</sup> in two quite useful, small-scale studies, but both make little attempt to relate urban renewal activities to other aspects of planning. Gregory has presented five case studies of amenity issues involving nationalised fuel and energy industries but, again, little attempt is made to go beyond the mere presentation in detail of events.<sup>33</sup> The failure of the planning authorities in Sunderland and in Newcastle to take account of the circumstances of residents in the redevelopment and revitalisation of old parts of the cities has been documented by Dennis<sup>34</sup> and by Davies,<sup>35</sup> but both these studies are more an attack upon the planning system than an attempt to understand the intricacies of its operations. Finally, two local politicians, both of whom have made their names largely through dealing with planning matters, have written memoirs which present a different if somewhat sketchy view of the processes in operation.<sup>36</sup> In sum, these studies amount to relatively little. Their coverage is inconsistent, many of them being nothing more than a catalogue of events, and their degree of comparability with each other is small, such that as yet the accumulated body of literature is insufficient to act as a basis for model-building.

Thus, a review of the relevant literature has revealed very little work of a systematic nature which can be used to build models of the operational dimensions of planning in the British situation. At the same time, planners appear to work either implicitly or explicitly with a structure of assumptions and ethics which forms, in effect, a normative operational model. Many of the features of this model have not been identified by planners, but by other social scientists

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27. S. Fyfe, "The Place of Town and Country Planning in Local Government Administration in England and Wales". Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1958.

28. A.W. Pinnick, "Country Planners in Action". Lombarde Press, Sidcup, 1964.

29. F.M.G. Willson, "Administrators in Action - Volume I." George Allen and Unwin, London, 1961, Pages 25-131.

30. J.K. Friend and W.N. Jessop, "Local Government and Strategic Choice". Tavistock Publications. London, 1969.

31. T. Hart, "The Comprehensive Development Area". Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1968.

examining the behaviour of planners prior to criticising it. Nevertheless, there is a considerable amount of agreement as to the premise that the main features of the model have been incorporated in a normative manner into the behaviour of planners, such that the model can be regarded as constituting part of the received wisdom of planning. The following section presents the major features of this model, derived from literature about the American situation (since this contains many more attempts to be systematic in this area than does the British literature) and related to the **British situation via an** examination of the relevant British literature.

The Model of "Planning as Technical Rationality".

Maass has argued that planners have tended to substitute the values of their profession for public objectives, and have failed to recognise that often there may be a difference between the two.<sup>37</sup> The model that will be presented in this section appears to derive likewise from the ideology and values of the planning profession as it has developed, and as such it has become part of the received wisdom of planning. The model appears to have normative associations for planners, in that it appears to be regarded as an ideal set of assumptions and ethics which are capable either individually or collectively of being applied to real-world situations. Various features of the model have been recognised by several writers as being part of the intellectual equipment of the planners whose behaviour they have observed, and the model is developed out of this literature. Literature relating to the American situation is used to generate the model, which is then compared with what British literature is extant. This is necessary bearing in mind the above discussions as to the difficulties of transplanting models from one situation to the other without a careful test of the degree of fit. It is notable, however, that one of the dimensions along which there is a great deal of similarity between the two situations is that of the ideological development of the British and American planning professions.<sup>38</sup>

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32. D.M. Muchnick. "Urban Renewal in Liverpool". Occasional Papers on Social Administration, number 33, G. Bell and Sons, London, 1970.

33. R. Gregory, "The Price of Amenity". Macmillan. London. 1971.

34. N. Dennis. "People and Planning: the Sociology of Housing in Sunderland". Faber and Faber. London 1970.

35. J.G. Davies. "The Evangelistic Bureaucrat". Tavistock Publications, London, 1972.

36. G. Hodgkinson. "Sent to Coventry". Robert Maxwell and Co. Bletchley, 1970.  
T.D. Smith. "Dan Smith: An Autobiography". Oriel Press, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. 1970

37. A. Maass, in A. Maass, M.M. Hufschmidt, et.al. "Design of Water Resource Systems". Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 1962. Pages 565-604, especially pages 591-592.

38. Compare W. Ashworth. "The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning". Routledge

Consequently, a model derived from this particular dimension would be more likely to be capable of being transplanted from the one situation to the other without a great deal of modification than would one derived from several other dimensions. Thus, what is being suggested in this section is that planners do tend to work either implicitly or explicitly with an operational model, that this model has normative associations for them, and that this is the model of "planning as technical rationality".<sup>39</sup> The choice of the term "technical rationality" is intended to suggest that the model is firmly rooted in the professional ideologies of planners which, it has been argued above, are heavily oriented towards the technical rather than the operational dimensions of planning.

Altshuler concentrated upon four implicit operational features of planners' activities in Minneapolis and St. Paul; the notions that planning is comprehensive, that it is concerned with the public interest, that its subject matter is best dealt with through technical expertise and that it is rational.<sup>39</sup> The importance of the notion of comprehensiveness in planning thought has been underlined by Davidoff and Reiner,<sup>40</sup> Webber,<sup>41</sup> Keyes<sup>42</sup> and Bolan.<sup>43</sup> The concern with the notion of the public interest has been emphasised by Meyerson and Banfield,<sup>44</sup> Reiner, Reimer and Reiner<sup>45</sup> and Davidoff.<sup>46</sup> Particular attention has been paid to the notion of the importance of technical expertise by Seeley,<sup>47</sup> Gans,<sup>48</sup> and Rabinovitz.<sup>49</sup> The claim to rationality has been identified and examined by

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and Kegan Paul. London. 1954. Pages 167-237. M. Scott. "American City Planning Since 1890". University of California Press. Berkeley, 1968. The "heritage" of American planners is summarised by Ranney, op.cit. Pages 19-43.

39. A.A. Altshuler, op.cit. Pages 299-353. The term "technical rationality" is adapted from Altshuler, page 335. See also A.A. Altshuler, "The Goals of Comprehensive Planning". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 31, number 3. August 1965. Pages 186-195.

40. P. Davidoff and T.A. Reiner, op.cit. Pages 103-115.

41. M.M. Webber. "Comprehensive Planning and Social Responsibility". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 29. number 4. November 1963. Pages 232-241.

42. L.C. Keyes, op.cit. Pages 221-225.

43. R.S. Bolan, "The Social Relations of the Planner". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 37. number 6. November, 1971. Pages 386-396.

44. M. Meyerson and E.C. Banfield, op.cit. Pages 285-302.

45. J.S. Reiner, E. Reimer and T.A. Reiner. "Client Analysis and the Planning of Public Programmes". Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Volume 29. number 4, November 1963. Pages 270-282.

46. P. Davidoff. "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning". Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Volume 31, number 4. November 1965. Pages 331-338.

47. J.R. Seeley, "What is Planning? Definition and Strategy". Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Volume 28, number 2, May 1962. Pages 91-97.

48. H.J. Gans. "People and Plans". Basic Books. New York, 1968. Pages 4-52.

Seeley,<sup>50</sup> Rabinovitz<sup>51</sup> and Rothblatt.<sup>52</sup> Thus several authors have recognised the four characteristics identified by Altschuler as being important factors in the behaviour of planners.

Three other features which contribute to the model of planning as technical rationality have been identified by authors concerned with the American situation. The first is the concept of public participation in planning, which is examined by Arnstein<sup>53</sup> and by Broady, who concludes that participation of a sort is a sine qua non of American planning because it is taken for granted that citizens will wish to involve themselves in the day-to-day workings of Government.<sup>54</sup> The second is the social motivation of planners, who believe that the physical environment is a major determinant of society and culture; this concept has been examined in particular by Gans.<sup>55</sup> The third is the concept of the planner as the guardian of future possibilities, explored in particular by Seeley.<sup>56</sup> These seven concepts, which together make up the model of planning as technical rationality, have been identified by the several authors cited as features of the aspects of the behaviour of planners that they have studied. Restated, the model contains the following:-

- (1) planning is comprehensive;
- (2) planning is concerned with the public interest;
- (3) planning is best dealt with by technical expertise;
- (4) planning is rational;
- (5) planning involves public participation;
- (6) planning is socially motivated; and,
- (7) planning guards future possibilities.

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49. F.F. Rabinovitz. op.cit. Pages 80-90.

50. J.R. Seeley, op.cit.

51. F.F. Rabinovitz. op.cit. Pages 145-146.

52. D.W. Rothblatt, op.cit. Pages 26-37.

53. S.R. Arnstein. "A ladder of Citizen Participation in the U.S.A.". Journal of the Town Planning Institute. Volume 57. number 4. April 1971. Pages 176-182.

54. M. Broady, "Planning for People". Bedford Square Press, London 1968. Pages 110-114. See also W. Bor, op.cit. Pages 67-76.

55. H.J. Gans, op.cit. Pages 4-52.

56. J.R. Seeley, op.cit.

The only British attempt to examine the operational aspects of planners' behaviour (and it is by no means systematic<sup>57</sup>) is by Davies,<sup>58</sup> who saw Newcastle's planners as behaving in accordance with items (1), (2), (3) and (7) of the model. Several of the features of the model appear to follow from the seminal influence on British planning of the work of Patrick Geddes;<sup>59</sup> in particular, important in this context are the notions of comprehensiveness, a commitment to the public interest, public participation, social motivation and the guardianship of future possibilities. In addition, his dictum of survey-analysis-plan can be said to relate to the concepts of technical expertise and rationality, so that all the features of the model are implicit in his writing.<sup>60</sup> Further support for the applicability of the model is given by Burns (who stresses the importance of a comprehensive approach<sup>61</sup>), Wilson (who sees planning as becoming if anything more technical<sup>62</sup>), the Skeffington Committee (which advocated public participation as a formalised process within plan-making<sup>63</sup>), Broady and Simmie (who stress the social motivation of planning<sup>64</sup>) and Buchanan (who stresses the commitment to the safeguarding of future possibilities<sup>65</sup>). Finally, Chadwick has accepted the notions of comprehensiveness, the public interest, rationality and future orientation as factors which have underpinned planning thought for some time and as goals at which it is worthwhile for planners to aim.<sup>66</sup> Thus, whilst the British literature on the subject is neither as extensive nor as systematic as the American literature, it appears that the model of planning as technical rationality is seen as being applicable to the behaviour of British planners as well as those in America.

#### Criticisms of the Model of Planning as Technical Rationality.

Many of the authors already cited as having identified certain features of the model did so prior to attacking them. The basis of these attacks has been that, whilst the model might perform a useful function in spelling out certain features of behaviour to which planners might aspire in a perfect world, it is not an adequate description or prescription of behaviour patterns in the real-

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57. See the present author's review of the work in *Urban Studies* (forthcoming. Volume 9, number 3, October 1972).

58. J.G. Davies, *op.cit.* Pages 91-112.

59. See W. Ashworth, *op.cit.* Pages 174-176, 198-199.

60. P. Geddes. "Cities in Evolution". Ernest Benn. London. 1968.

61. W. Burns. "Newcastle: a Study in Replanning at Newcastle-upon-Tyne". Leonard Hill, London. 1967. Pages 87 and 88.

62. A.G. Wilson, in P. Cowan (ed). "Developing Patterns of Urbanisation". Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1970. Pages 69-89.

63. Committee on Public Participation in Planning "People and Planning". H.M.S.O. London. 1969.

world situations that planners actually face. For present purposes, it is not necessary to review all these criticisms in detail to demonstrate this particular point, and a few examples will suffice. Braybrooke and Lindblom have demonstrated that individual decision-makers do not tend to adopt comprehensive (synoptic) approaches but tend towards incrementalist approaches to problem-solving.<sup>67</sup> Altshuler has argued that the operational constraints upon planners are such that they are often forced to abandon the notion of comprehensiveness in favour of particularised goals and a project orientation ("middle-range planning"), and that this removes their claim to a specialised understanding of the public interest.<sup>68</sup> Several authors have found the concept of the public interest to be elusive,<sup>69</sup> although Blackham has argued that in Britain a substantial component of widely accepted common interest does exist and that this is a serviceable substitute for the notion of the public interest.<sup>70</sup> Simon finds the concept of rationality also to be elusive, and argues that administrative man falls short of objective rationality and instead tends to "satisfice" (to find a course of action which is "good enough").<sup>71</sup> The social motivation of planners is applauded by both Gans and Broady, but it is seen as having led to a form of "architectural" or "physical determinism" which has convinced planners that their actions are socially determinant and has led them away from a true understanding of the ways in which physical environmental factors can exert some influence over human behaviour and values.<sup>72</sup> Lomas<sup>73</sup> and

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64. M. Broady, op.cit. Pages 11-24. J.M. Simmie, "Physical Planning and Social Policy". Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Volume 57, number 10. December 1971. Pages 450-453.
65. C.D. Buchanan. "South Hampshire Study". H.M.S.O. London. 1966. Pages 8-10
66. G.F. Chadwick, "A Systems View of Planning", op.cit. Pages 83 and 84, 118 and 119, 123 and 124, 301, 313, 320-325.
67. D. Braybrooke and C.E. Lindblom. "A Strategy of Decision". Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1963. Pages 37-57, 81-110.
68. A.A. Altshuler. "The City Planning Process: a Political Analysis". op.cit. Pages 354-391.
69. Meyerson and Banfield, op.cit. Pages 322-329. G.S. Schubert. "The Public Interest". Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois. 1960.
70. H.J. Blackham. "Political Discipline in a Free Society". George Allen and Unwin. London. 1961. Pages 131-197.
71. H. Simon. "Administrative Behaviour". The Macmillan Company, New York. 1957. Pages XXV-XXVII, 61-109.
72. H.J. Gans, op.cit. Pages 4-125. M. Broady, op.cit. Pages 11-24.
73. G.M. Lomas. "The Contribution of the Skeffington Report to the Discussions on Citizen Participation in Planning". Report of the Town and Country Planning Summer School, 1970. Town Planning Institute, London. 1970. Pages 18-22.

Damer and Hague<sup>74</sup> have attacked the concept of public participation as it has been made operational so far for its mechanistic approaches, and for its attempts to underwrite the orthodoxy that planning is technical by concentrating only upon the task of plan-making and not upon the policy-making process within the public sector of which it forms a part. Amongst many others, Davidoff has argued that planning is inextricably concerned with human values, and as a result cannot be merely a technical process but must also be a political process.<sup>75</sup>

The point which has been made repeatedly in the preceding paragraph is that individual features of the model do not stand up as actual descriptions of the real-world behaviour of planners. At the same time, the only operational model which is given to planners as part of their training and with which they can attempt to work is this model of planning as technical rationality, and the review of the literature in this particular subject area has indicated that the necessary groundwork for the preparation of alternative and substitute models has not yet been undertaken. The implications of this finding for the nature of the present study are examined in the next section.

#### The Nature of the Study.

It has been established that the present study must inevitably take the form of an early attempt to develop models in an area where very little of the groundwork has yet been done. The development of full-scale operational models of the planning process is likely to emerge from the accumulation of relevant and comparable case studies. The case study approach is predicated by the nature of the subject matter under discussion, since the best way to discover the real-world operational constraints faced by planners is to study their behaviour in a real-world situation. When very few other such studies exist, it is impossible to attempt to compare the behaviour of planners in one situation with that in another, to attempt to move towards a general model. Instead, all that can be done is to present a systematic and detailed case study which can be used by other research workers at a later date both as a model and for comparative purposes, and to attempt to answer certain questions in relation to the particular case. Thus, the study is concerned to build a model of the particular situation chosen, to assess the relevance to that situation of the model of planning as technical rationality and to answer certain of the questions that a fully-fledged operational model of the planning process would need to answer in relation to the specific case. The specific questions that this study will attempt to answer in relation to the particular case chosen

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74. S. Damer and C. Hague. "Public Participation in Planning: a Review". *Town Planning Review*, Volume 42, number 3. July 1971. Pages 217-232.

75. P. Davidoff, op.cit. Pages 331-338.

are as follows:

- (1) What kinds of operational constraints do the planning agencies face?
- (2) To what extent are they able to overcome these constraints?
- (3) How do the planning agencies relate to the other organisations involved in the process?
- (4) What parts do professional planners play within the planning agencies?<sup>76</sup>

At the outset, it is as well to recognise that the case study approach has certain difficulties and limitations inherent within it, and that these will have to be recognised and overcome insofar as this is possible. Many of the developments of the approach have occurred in the literature of community power structure, where many of the quarrels between protagonists have been over research approaches.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, this debate has also enabled the inherent limitations of the case study approach to be crystallised, and they have been summarised by Rhodes as follows:

- a) it can be argued that the case study is "atypical";
- b) there is a problem of the confidentiality of information; and,
- c) the study of any situation is artificial because that situation changes and is set within a context which is also evolving.<sup>78</sup>

The first difficulty is accentuated by the fact that it is impossible to set up a sample frame of decisions from which to choose, because the actual moment of decision can never be identified with certainty and because the decision not to decide something is often as important as it is unidentifiable.<sup>79</sup> Thus, whilst it is impossible to demonstrate that a study is "typical" because what it is typical of cannot be specified, it is equally impossible to demonstrate that it is "atypical". It is true that many such studies appear to concentrate upon highly controversial matters and that, whilst this tests a system when it is under stress,<sup>4</sup> it tends not to examine the routine of a system.<sup>81</sup> Professor Mackenzie has argued that this problem can be minimised by adopting a comparative approach to case studies, so that the individual case does not remain in isolation.<sup>82</sup> This study attempts to draw upon the lessons of the literature cited by concentrating not upon a single case study

76. For some American research on this subject see R.T. Daland and J.A. Parker, in F.S. Chapin and S.F. Weiss (eds). "Urban Growth Dynamics". John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1962. Pages 188-225. C.E. Patterson, "Politics of Planning in Small Cities: Case Studies of Four Illinois Communities". Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1963. F.F. Rabinovitz. "Politics and Planning: on the Role of the Expert in Urban Development". Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1965.

77. See the bibliography for details of the references used. Useful summaries are contained in J.A. Robinson and B.R. Majak, in J.C. Charlesworth (ed). "Contemporary Political Analysis". Free Press, New York, 1967. Pages 175-183.

but upon a set of related case studies stretching over several years and involving both the controversial and the routine which together form a policy-making process. It will not be argued that it is "typical" of anything, but that it is concerned with a slice of the general subject area which is sufficient to enable certain observations to be made with a reasonable degree of confidence.

The second difficulty outlined by Rhodes (that of "confidentiality") has been overcome very largely in this study. Information has been given freely on the understanding that it will only be used within the study and will not pass into general circulation.<sup>83</sup> The only real difficulty has been with operations at Central Government level, but it is hoped that sufficient information has been presented for this not to imbalance the study too greatly. The advantage with this approach is that it has not been necessary to attempt to disguise participants, organisations, places and events, a process which gives an air of unreality to so many case studies. Rhodes' third difficulty (that of "artificiality") has been very largely overcome by concentrating not upon a single decision but upon a whole policy-making process. Of course, that process itself is set within a context, but extensive attempts have been made in Part 2 to examine that context.

Thus, the general approach to the problem of the choice of a case study (or, in reality, a set of related case studies) has been based upon an understanding of the difficulties inherent in the method and upon a conscious attempt to overcome them. The detailed basis for the choice of the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport is outlined in Chapter 2. Because the orientation of the study is towards the behavioural aspects of the planning process, its concern is not only with planning agencies but also with the variety of other organisations which are involved in the system and which form part of the operational context for the planning agencies. In other words, it is important to understand the system as a whole and all the participant organisations within it, rather than just to present the perspective of the planning agencies. The term "system" is used in a sense similar to that developed by Mililand, that is that it is possible to understand its behaviour by concentrating upon

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W.J.M. Mackenzie, "Politics and Social Science". Penguin Books, London. 1969. Pages 213-243. G. Parry. "Political Elites". George Allen and Unwin. London. 1969. R. Presthus. "Behavioural Approaches to Public Administration". University of Alabama Press. University. Alabama. 1965.

78. R.A.W. Rhodes. "A Comparative Study of the Decision-Making Process within Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils. 1963-1968." Unpublished D. Phil. dissertation. University of Oxford. 1971. Pages 87-94.

79. P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, in E.C. Banfield (ed.) "Urban Government". The Free Press. New York. 1969. Pages 454-464.

80. E.C. Banfield. "Political Influence". op.cit. Page 9.

the characteristics of the organisations involved, the relationships between the organisations and the constraints upon their activities that they perceive.<sup>84</sup> This means that the lowest level of analysis is that of the organisation and its relation to the system under examination. The choice of this level of analysis means that a great deal of detail has to be sacrificed, but that it is possible to view the system as an entity. This is predicated by the nature of the subject matter of the study, since the aim is to examine a process as a whole, and it has governed the selection and presentation of material throughout the study.

The various organisations are analysed in Part 4 in clusters or sub-systems. A fine classification of sub-systems was not drawn up, to attempt to avoid the imposition of a predetermined form of order upon the proliferating variety of the situation under examination. Instead, a coarse classification emerged from initial data gathering, and sub-classifications were developed later within these broad sub-systems. Of the organisations under examination, sub-systems focussing upon Local Government, Central Government and regional planning agencies were self-identifying, but the remaining organisations formed a congeries of interest groups for which it was decided to adopt a two-fold classification of "special" and "general". This was based upon the breadth of their concern with the issues and the degree of exclusiveness of their membership, with special interest groups having a relatively narrow concern with the issues and a membership restricted according to certain qualifications, and general interest groups having a broad concern with the issues and a relatively open approach to membership. No difficulty was experienced in fitting organisations into their appropriate categories.<sup>85</sup>

The process under examination is that of policy-making within the public sector. This is because it is considered that policy-making with regard to matters originating in the public-sector is a reasonable test of the behaviour of planning organisations which are also located within that sector. Such conditions are relatively favourable to planning agencies because they are likely to be involved in policy-making earlier than if policy originates in

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81. Bachrach and Baratz. *op.cit.*

82. W.J.M. Mackenzie, *op.cit.* Pages 242 and 243.

83. And readers are requested to respect this undertaking.

84. R. Miliband. "The State in Capitalist Society". Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London, 1969. Pages 49-67.

85. This distinction is similar to Blondel's differentiation between "protective groups, which defend the defined interests of a relatively narrow segment of society, and "promotional" groups, which seek usually to advance a relatively

the private sector, and because the "public component" (that part relating to their responsibilities as public authorities) of the policy-making process is likely to be larger. To the planning agencies, the concept of a "policy-making process" in which they are involved is likely to be synonymous with that of "the planning process", but other agencies will probably see the former as being related to their particular functions. In other words, whilst the concept of a policy-making process is likely to be common to all the organisations involved, that of a planning process will not necessarily be so; hence the use of the more generic term, "policy-making process".

A particular concern of the study is an attempt to throw some light on the operational constraints faced at present by regional planning agencies. Local planning in Britain has an extensive statutory base which provides the framework within which local planning authorities can and do operate. Similarly, many of the planning activities of Central Government are based upon the framework provided by the Town and Country Planning Acts. At the regional level, however, a variety of agencies has evolved in response to perceived needs, without any clear-cut statutory basis and without the relatively rigid organisational framework provided by Local and Central Government. It is becoming clear that it is at the regional and sub-regional levels that more and more human activities are taking place and from which, as a consequence, such activities need to be viewed in terms of Governmental involvement in them.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the inertia created by the existing structure of government tends to pull the consideration of policy matters towards either Central or Local Government, which suggests that an intermediate viewpoint might have a useful role to play in policy-making activities whilst at the same time forming a significant organisational constraint upon such a development. In all events, over the past few years the number of regional planning agencies in existence has increased markedly, along with a greater interest in the idea of "regionalism".<sup>87</sup> No attempt has as yet been made to assess the performance of such agencies in actual planning situations, however, although this would appear to be a significant step in any attempts to guide their evolution. This study

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broad cause and attempt to attract as many members as possible whose views can be deemed to be congruent with this cause. J. Blondel, "Voters, Parties and Leaders". Pelican Books, London. 1969. Page 160.

86. P.G. Hall, "Theory and Practice of Regional Planning". Pemberton Books. London. 1970. Pages 13-31. J.B. McLoughlin, op.cit. Pages 19-37.

87. J.P. Mackintosh. "The Devolution of Power". Chatts and Windus, Charles Knight. London. 1968.

attempts to fill this particular gap by concentrating upon an arena of policy-making of significance at the scale at which such agencies operate and in an area where several of them exist, and attempts to assess their contribution to the policy-making process and the limitations under which they appear to be operating.

At this particular point in time, with the report of the Crowther (Kilbrandon) Commission on the Constitution imminent, a discussion of this nature appears to be particularly apposite.

It is clear from all the above discussion that this is not the kind of study which attempts to test hypotheses derived from a well-developed field. Rather, following Glaser and Strauss, it attempts to contribute towards the build-up of theory in an under-developed field by attempting to ground that theory in empirical observation.<sup>88</sup> An appropriate strategy for this situation is to build concepts upon initial data collection and to refine and generate concepts as data collection advances, so that there is an iterative relationship between concept and datum.<sup>89</sup> One example of this has already been referred to in passing; the term "system" was adopted after it had become clear that it was in fact an open-ended system (regarded by Beer as being something recognised mentally as an entity, comprising a coherent assemblage with a pattern in its set of relationships and concerned to achieve a purpose<sup>90</sup>) that was being observed and not just the random actions of a conglomeration of organisations. Another example is the definition of sub-systems, and particularly the distinction between general and special interest groups which emerged from the early stages of the case study work. Yet another example is the understanding of the term "involvement" (given below in the discussion of some concepts which have been used), which also derived from initial observations. The detailed research methods used (which form the subject of Chapter 2) draw very heavily upon the work of Glaser and Strauss and other authors who have sought to develop research approaches whereby theory is grounded in empirical observation rather than emergent from the testing of predetermined hypotheses.

#### Some Concepts.

This section attempts to explain the usage of some key concepts in the study which have not been defined already. The notions of "involvement",

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88. B. Glaser and A.L. Strauss. "The Discovery of Grounded Theory". Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London. 1968. Pages 21-43.

89. Ibid. Pages 45-77, 101-115.

90. S. Beer, op.cit. Pages 241-246.

"organisations", "policy-making" and "regional planning agencies" will be examined in turn.

### Involvement.

Three kinds of involvement have been identified;

- (1) passive involvement: where a participant's actions affect the development of an issue without his being aware of it and without his altering his course of action in any way on being informed of this impact. For example, the Budget developed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer affects policy-making with regard to the future of Luton Airport, but it is doubtful whether the Chancellor is aware of this consciously or whether it would affect his decisions in any manner if he were made aware.
- (2) instrumental involvement: where a participant makes use of a convenient argument in relation to one issue to seek a favourable outcome to another issue, but might in passing affect the decision on the first issue without any conscious attempt to do so. For example, the Wing Airport Resistance Association argued to the Roskill Commission in favour of a fivefold expansion of Luton Airport to provide support for the view that the Commission should not recommend Cublington as the site for the third London Airport. W.A.R.A. had no interest whatsoever in the Luton Airport issue other than as a convenient argument against Cublington, and once it became clear that the lobby against Luton Airport was strong (and W.A.R.A.'s action, by providing something for the lobby to react against, clarified just how strong it was), it dropped the argument for fear of prejudicing its own case and took no further part in policy-making for Luton Airport.
- (3) active involvement: where a participant feels himself to have a direct stake in the matter at issue and makes a conscious attempt to involve himself in some manner in its resolution.

It is of the essence of passive and instrumental involvement that there is no systematic means of identifying them, because it is impossible to trace all the ramifications of an issue which might promote such forms of involvement. Active participants, on the other hand, tend to identify themselves by their actions. This study, therefore, is concerned primarily with a system of active participants, although instances of instrumental and passive involvement will be noted as they are unearthed. The term "involvement" has been chosen as a more neutral word than "participation", which in planning literature tends to be associated with the narrowly-defined concept of "public participation". The term "participant" has been chosen in preference to the term "actor" because the latter has overtones of unreality associated with the playing of games or the presentation of entertainment.

Organisations.

Following Etzioni, organisations will be defined as, "...social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals." They are characterised by :-

- (1) deliberately planned divisions of labour, power and communication responsibilities;
- (2) the presence of one or more power centres which control, review, re-pattern and direct the organisation in pursuit of its goals; and,
- (3) substitution of personnel if they are unsatisfactory in certain dimensions.<sup>91</sup>

Policy-Making.

The important difference between policy-making and decision-making is well summarised by Etzioni;

"Policy-making is a form of decision-making in which sets of decisions are considered and the contexts for decisions concerning bits are reviewed. It is not that contexts are never considered when a single, especially-important decision is made, but their critical examination is likely to be more extensive in the determination of policy." 92

Regional planning agencies.

A large number of agencies have powers which can be described as being regional planning powers,<sup>93</sup> in the sense that particular functions which are their responsibility are planned at the regional level. Tasks of this nature form important components of the process of managing the development of a region, and such organisations will be regarded as being participants in the regional planning process. The term "regional planning agencies", however, will be reserved for those organisations the stated task of which is to attempt to take an overview of the developing regional or sub-regional situation as a whole, rather than of its individual functional parts.<sup>94</sup> This begs the age-old question, "What is a region?" For present purposes it will be regarded as being any administratively convenient sub-division of that area which falls between the concept of a nation (the total area which is the responsibility of a Central Government) and a locality (governed by an all-purpose local authority or by a two-tier set of authorities), and there is some support in the literature for the viewpoint that this is a realistic way of looking at planning regions.<sup>95</sup>

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91. A. Etzioni. "Modern Organisations". Prentice-Hall. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964. Page 3.

92. A. Etzioni. "The Active Society". The Free Press, New York, 1968. Page 252.

93. B. Howell, in C. Cooper, B. Howell and D. Lyddon. "Regional Planning and Implementation". Journal of the Town Planning Institute. Volume 56, number 8. September/October 1970. Pages 325-331. Technical Committee of Planning Officers

Recapitulation.

This study has five related tasks:-

- (1) to present a detailed case study of the operational aspects of the planning process;
- (2) to construct models of that process;
- (3) to examine the relationship between such models and the model of planning as technical rationality;
- (4) to answer certain questions about the operational characteristics of the planning agencies observed:-
  - (a) what kinds of operational constraints do the planning agencies face?
  - (b) to what extent are they able to overcome these constraints?
  - (c) how do the planning agencies relate to the other organisations involved in the process?
  - (d) what parts do professional planners play within the planning agencies? and,
- (5) to concentrate upon the behaviour of the regional planning agencies involved.

In sum, these tasks attempt to take a step along the road towards the creation of operational models of the planning process in Britain.

North Regional Planning Committee. "Aide Memoire on Functions and Relationships of Regional Committees." Unpublished mimeograph, Newcastle. 1968.

94. This distinction is made particularly clearly by D. Lilienthal. "TVA-Democracy on the March." Harper and Brothers. New York. 1944.

95. J. Friedmann. "Regional Development Policy: a Case Study of Venezuela." M.I.T. Press. Cambridge (Mass.) 1966. A.R. Kuklinski. "Regional Development, Regional Policies and Regional Planning." Regional Studies. Volume 4, number 3. October 1970. Pages 269-278. R. Joseph. "Local Authorities and Regions." Public Administration. Volume 42, number 3. Autumn 1964. Pages 215-226. P. Self. "Regional Planning and the Machinery of Government." Public Administration. Volume 42, number 3. Autumn 1964. Pages 227-239.

## Chapter 2. Research Methods.

### Introduction.

Chapter I has already outlined the major concepts which delineate the subject matter of the present study, and the present Chapter is concerned with the particular research methods which have been adopted. The first task in this context is to spell out the basis of the choice of the set of related case studies which formed the bulk of the research project. Chapter I has already introduced the factors in this respect which derive from the nature of the study's objectives, but another set of factors also derives from more practical considerations of researchability. The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport was considered to be adequate when measured against both sets of criteria. The second task involves the detailing of the case study methods that were adopted, and the third involves a discussion of the research process that was followed.

### The Choice of Case Study.

Chapter I has indicated that the case study approach is predicated by the nature of the subject matter of this particular study, and has indicated certain conceptual criteria which any particular case would need to satisfy. A set of related case studies extending over several years and involving both the controversial and the routine as part of a policy-making process needs to be examined. As far as possible, the problems of confidentiality of information need to be overcome. The process under examination should be one of policy-making in the public sector, where it might reasonably be expected that spatial planning organisations exercising powers under the Town and Country Planning Acts would play an important part. Finally, the scale of the issues ought to be such that it would also be reasonable to expect regional planning agencies to wish to play a part in the process. All of these criteria derive directly from the discussion contained in Chapter I.

Certain other considerations derive directly from problems of researchability. For example, the scale of the project needs to be small enough to allow the major potential interactions (which increase geometrically as the number of participants increases arithmetically) to be adequately comprehended, and yet large enough to encompass sufficient interactions to negate the possible criticism that those aspects of the cases which are studied in detail are in some manner eccentric. This is also related to the resources which could be brought to bear upon the project, and in particular the fact that the period available for direct case study work was of the order of 12-15 months. One particular problem was over whether the case study should be of the historical

or the ongoing variety. An historical study is dependent upon documentation and memory, neither of which may be wholly accurate, and it affords no opportunity to gauge reactions at first hand, but it is possible to take a synoptic view of the process and there is little prospect of observer-participation introducing a bias. On the other hand, an ongoing study enables the process to be observed at first hand and the memories of interviewees to be tapped while they are still fresh, but it is difficult to take a synoptic view and there is a real danger of bias through observer-participation. The most reasonable approach appeared to be to combine the two and to search for a case study with both historical and ongoing dimensions so that the strengths of the one approach could be used to cancel out the weaknesses of the other.

Even when taken together, these two sets of criteria are not sufficiently precise as to be able to single out the one best case study, even if such a thing could be said to exist. Rather, it appeared to be a matter of finding a case which was eminently satisfactory on all of these grounds. In other words, all that it was possible to do was to "satisfice", to select something that was good enough.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport passed such tests.<sup>2</sup> The issue was known to the author by virtue of his having worked as a planner for one of the local authorities involved in it (Luton County Borough Council), and thus a rudimentary network of contacts already existed which would be of great value in gathering information and in making further contacts.<sup>3</sup> In particular this helped to overcome the problem of confidentiality, because a degree of trust already existed between the author and some of the participants. At the same time, of course, it is possible that some of the author's preconceptions may have influenced the study, although a conscious attempt to avoid this plus a concentration upon the process rather than upon the rights and wrongs of the issues should have minimised this problem. The issue impinges upon several substantive areas of policy-making, one of which is the spatial planning powers of Local and Central Government, and since Luton is a municipally-owned Airport the case passes the test of public sector policy-making. In addition, the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport had a forty-year history, and formed part of a subject area (airport development)

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1. H. Simon. "Administrative Behaviour". The Macmillan Company, New York. 1957. Pages XXV-XXVII.

2. Throughout this study, the phrase "the expansion of Luton Airport" will be used to refer not merely to the consumption of extra land for Airport purposes but also to the growth of its activities.

3. At the same time, the author had no personal stake in the case by virtue of continual employment in the area or intention to return to a post with one of the organisations involved in it.

which was engaging the attention of the planning mechanisms in the South-East of England to a considerable extent in the late 1960s.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this last factor in particular, it is reasonable to expect that regional planning agencies would wish to be involved in such an issue. As Ash puts it;

"If one had to select one single factor to demonstrate the city-region's originality of form, one might well concentrate upon its ports. Not of course, its seaports: rather, its airports. For, undoubtedly, this is where over the next few decades the phenomenal growth in shipments will occur and around which, as a result, great complexes of development will emerge. Here, moreover, the technological factors encouraging 'spread' operate with a vengeance. The requirements for air space to serve any one airport are such<sup>as</sup> to enforce separation of airports on the ground by great distances. These alone would be forces, even if there were no others, wrenching great cities apart."<sup>5</sup>

The importance of the particular issue has been stressed by Thorburn, in a "state-of-the-game" assessment of British regional planning;

"There are many other cases where environmental decisions are being prejudiced by other Government Departments. This is especially serious in airport development. Here responsibility lies with Trade and Industry, which has never published its policy. It is national policy that the cost of flying from airports in the Midlands shall be several pounds higher than from the London airports, so that package tour operators from Sheffield and Derby take passengers in coaches down the M1 past the East Midlands airport to Luton. The East Midlands airport is in open country; Luton's affects four or five big towns. After the Raskill Commission one would expect the Government to be probing oddities such as this very deeply, for they are running into airport environment trouble at Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, Birmingham, Southampton and elsewhere."<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult to advance any justifiable quantitative indicator of the airports which are significant at the regional level in support of the above judgements, although in America the Federal Aviation Administration uses the criterion of 1% of the country's airport passengers for this purpose.<sup>7</sup> If this criterion is applied to the British situation (and the author has been unable to find any other criteria, although even here the absolute significance of the figure 1% is doubtful), Luton Airport would be third in a list of fifteen airports of significance at the regional level (see Table 1), which reinforces the view that it would be reasonable to expect regional agencies to wish to be involved in some manner in policy-making in respect of the Airport.

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4. Chapter 6 attempts to assess the major planning problems associated with the development of Luton Airport, and to introduce some of the common planning techniques of relevance to such a discussion.

5. M. Ash. "Regions of Tomorrow." Evelyn, Adams and Mackay. London 1969. Page

6. A. Thorburn. "Towards an Effective Regional Framework". Built Environment. Volume 1, number 1. April 1972. Page 31.

Table 1. Airports of Significance at the Regional Level.

<u>Airport</u>	<u>Terminal Passengers (1971)</u>	<u>Share of National Total</u>
Heathrow	16,147,159	44.1%
Gatwick	4,650,255	12.7%
Luton	2,703,392	7.3%
Manchester	2,082,132	5.7%
Glasgow	1,744,128	4.8%
Jersey	1,196,398	3.3%
Belfast	1,114,845	3.0%
Birmingham	835,777	2.3%
Edinburgh	679,528	1.9%
Liverpool	496,507	1.4%
Stansted	492,316	1.4%
Southend	456,436	1.3%
Newcastle	432,640	1.2%
Guernsey	400,101	1.1%
Isle of Man	390,993	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,822,607</b>	<b>92.4%<sup>x</sup></b>
<b>National Total</b>	<b>36,590,983</b>	<b>100%</b>

x The column actually accumulates to 92.6%, and the discrepancy of 0.2% is caused by rounding. Source: Department of Trade and Industry. Business Monitor. Civil Aviation Series. CA2. Air Passengers. 1971 Summary.

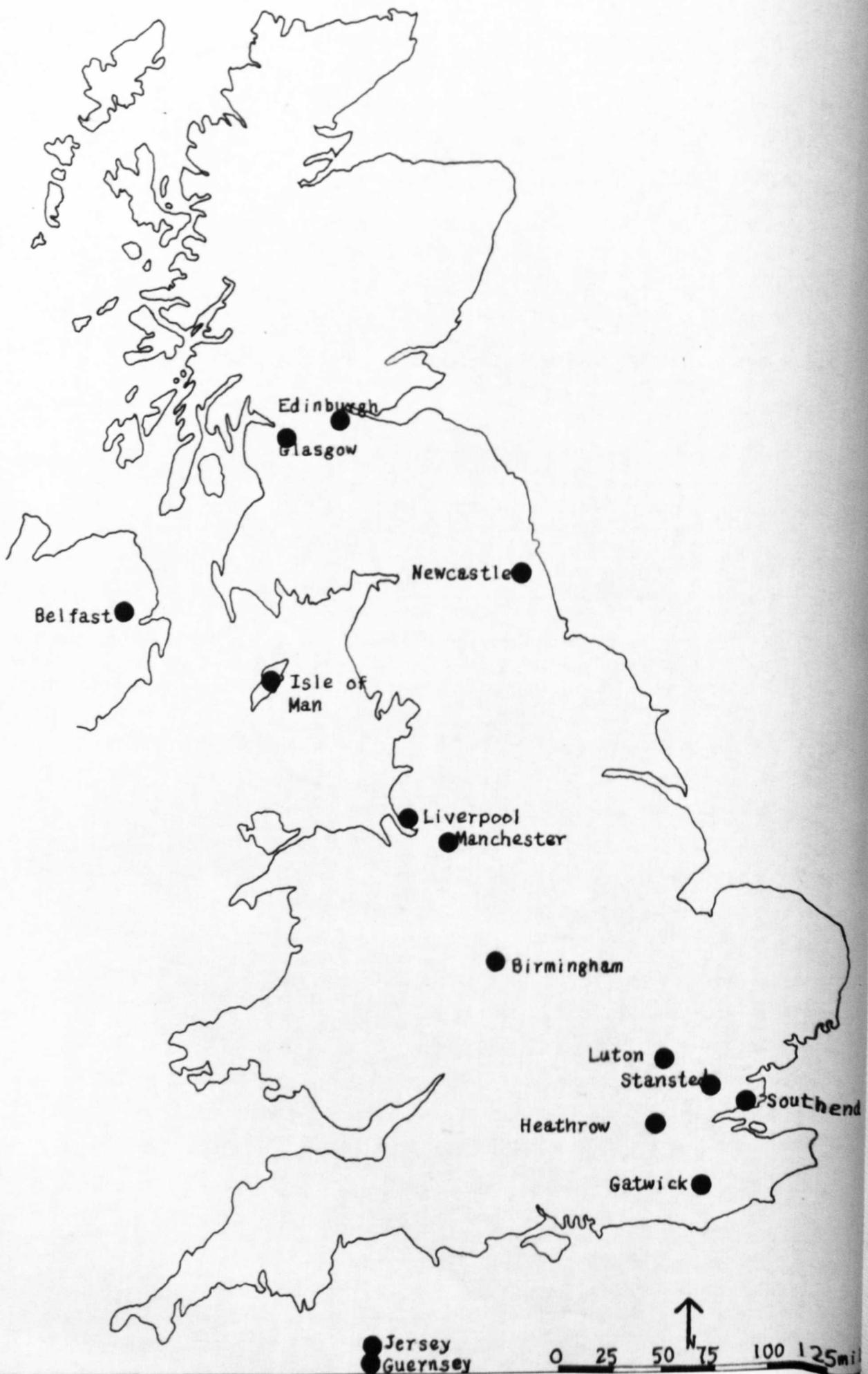
When the airports listed in Table 1 are mapped (see Diagram 1), they appear as the main airports throughout the regions of the United Kingdom plus the offshore holiday islands.<sup>8</sup> There is also a clustering around the national capital in the South-East. This gives further weight to the viewpoint that the airports listed in Table 1 are the major airports of significance to planning activities at the regional level, especially in the South-East.

During the period of this study, the controversy over the future of Luton Airport was by no means the only major airport location or expansion problem of significance at the regional or national levels. In Britain, there was the long drawn-out controversy over the location of the third London Airport,<sup>9</sup> the proposal for an extended runway and a second runway at Gatwick,<sup>10</sup> the approval of a runway extension at Glasgow,<sup>11</sup> the rejection of a

7. R.D. Shimm. "Regional Airport Planning: a Systematic Model". Urban Planning/Development Series, number 8. Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington, Seattle. 1970. Page 15.

8. The major omissions are Wales and the South-West, both areas with small and relatively scattered populations, and the Yorkshire-East Midlands area. The next airport down the list in Table 1 would have been East Midlands (Castle

DIAGRAM 1. MAJOR AIRPORTS, UNITED KINGDOM.



runway extension at Leeds/Bradford and the consequent search for a new site in Yorkshire<sup>12</sup> and the proposal to realign the runway at Turnhouse (Edinburgh) Airport.<sup>13</sup> Overseas there were controversies over a second international airport for Copenhagen,<sup>14</sup> a fourth airport for New York,<sup>15</sup> a third airport for Paris<sup>16</sup> and a second international airport for Tokyo.<sup>17</sup> Airport development throws into particularly harsh relief the problem of who gains and who loses by planning decisions, which is probably one of the reasons for the existence of the extensive list of controversies cited. The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport studied here is simply one of many similar problems with which planning mechanisms have had to deal in recent years.

For all of these reasons, therefore, it is considered that the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport satisfies all the criteria laid down for the choice of case study in a manner which no other issue known to and researchable by the author was able to do.

The opportunity was also taken to talk about the behaviour of regional planning agencies with a small number of participants in the planning processes of the West Midlands and of Scotland. These interviews were not intended to provide direct research data but to enable insights into the case study to be gained as the result of utilising different perspectives. Thus, their value lay in their indirect contribution in this manner to the analysis of the case study material. The West Midlands and the Scottish situations were chosen because in terms of the major socio-economic characteristics of the regions and their planning problems one (the West Midlands) would be expected to be fairly comparable with the South-East situation and the other (Scotland) would be expected to be fairly different. The other major factor in this choice was accessibility, since interviews with participants in the process in the West Midlands presented no difficulties whilst undertaking the major study in the South-East, and similar interviews in Scotland were facilitated by having as a base the University of Glasgow.

#### Case Study Methods.

As Chapter 1 has already indicated, the case study was carried out along

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Donnington), with 336,675 terminal passengers (0.9%) in 1971.

9. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report". H.M.S.O. London, 1971.
10. The Times, 25th April 1970, 9th December 1970, 21st January 1971, 15th March 1971. D. White "Growth at Gatwick?" New Society, 22nd. October 1970. Pages 717-720.
11. Glasgow Herald, 21st. July, 1971.
12. Guardian, 28th. October 1970, 29th. January 1972. B. Dixon, "The Case for a New Yorkshire Airport". Town and Country Planning, Volume 39, number 7-8. July/August 1971. Pages 351-354.
13. K. Hall. "Parish Airport". New Society. 4th. November 1971. Pages 882 and 883.
14. The Times, 16th. August 1971.

some of the lines recommended by Glaser and Strauss.<sup>18</sup> That is, a distinction was not drawn between theory and datum, but the relationship between the two was seen to be iterative. In particular, sufficient information was gathered from published and unpublished documents during the first part of the case study period to enable certain subject areas to be selected for the purpose of interviews, and the information derived from the initial interviews was used to structure further interviews.<sup>19</sup> Thus, whilst the first part (seven months) of the case study period was used basically to collect together data from various sources and the second part (seven months) was used basically to check and to extend this data in extensive interviews, the two parts overlapped considerably.

Other than the interviews, the main sources of information about the case study were published and unpublished documents and the local press, and the files of some of the participant organisations to which the author was allowed access. All of these proved to be useful, in particular the local press coverage for the forty years over which the issue was extant. The value of the local press was largely in terms of its detailed reporting of the events which occurred; its commentaries upon the events were never accepted unless it was possible to cross-check them. During the period of controversy about the future of Luton Airport, the issue was covered extensively in the local press and, fortunately, there were two competing newspapers which were used as a cross-check upon each other.

Nevertheless, the main source of information was the interviews which were carried out.<sup>20</sup> Altogether, 76 people were interviewed on 131 separate occasions and these 76 people represented 134 roles of relevance to the study (or nearly two roles per person). Only five people refused to be interviewed. Interviews lasted for between half an hour and eight hours at the two extremes with an average of between an hour and an hour and a half, and took place in a variety of different surroundings, the most common of which were the office, the home, the public house and the car. The interview technique adopted was that of the "mental questionnaire" developed by Gans,<sup>21</sup> whereby an interviewer does not use a written questionnaire but uses one firmly lodged in his

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15. The Times, 19th February 1971.

16. The Times, 6th April 1970.

17. Guardian, 25th. February 1971. The Times, 17th. September 1971.

18. B.G. Glaser and A.L. Strauss. "The Discovery of Grounded Theory". Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London. 1968. Pages 21-77, 101-115.

19. Ibid, Pages 45-77.

20. Interviewees are listed in Appendix 1.

21. H.J. Gans. "The Urban Villagers". Free Press of Glencoe. New York 1962. Pages 336-350.

own memory. This was done to attempt to create as informal and as conversational an atmosphere as possible, on the assumption that this would be the most conducive to the imparting of the kind of information the author was seeking. In order not to break the flow of the interview, the author restricted note-taking to a minimum consistent with being able to remember correctly what was said, and wrote a report of the interview based upon these notes and the author's memory as soon as possible after it. Where in the author's judgement this was either necessary or expedient, this report was checked by the interviewee. In addition, since the author lived in the area (Luton) for the fourteen months of the case study period, extensive use was made of the telephone and to a lesser extent the postal service to check matters on which any doubt had arisen. Although there was no reason to believe that interviewees would consciously attempt to mislead the author, it was necessary to introduce a check into interviews to cover this possibility. This was done by deliberately introducing into each interview judgements which were inaccurate or inadequate and which might reasonably have been expected to fall within the interviewee's sphere of knowledge. Almost unfailingly the author was corrected along the lines anticipated. Where this did not occur, the test judgement was re-checked to ensure that it had been a fair test of the scrupulousness of the interviewee. Information deriving from the two interviews which did not satisfy this procedure was disregarded unless it had been cross-checked and verified.

Within public organisations interviews tended to be with people at the "middle management" level, who were the most senior staff who dealt with the issue on a day-to-day basis, although senior staff were approached also to ensure that a distorted perspective had not been obtained. Within local authorities, both Council members and officers were approached. As far as organisations outside the public sector were concerned, approaches were made to the most senior people who appeared likely to be best placed to talk about the involvement of their organisations. As far as possible approaches were made by personal recommendations from people who had been interviewed already, who were specifically requested to do this by virtue of their contacts with the target interviewee. This was supplemented by documents from the University of Glasgow describing the author's study and guaranteeing that information derived from the interview would not be used outside the confines of the study without their permission. Interviewing continued until diminishing returns appeared to

be setting in; that is, all of the important organisations had been covered in depth, and the more peripheral organisations had also been studied, to the point where further interviews were revealing very little new information. Thus, no attempt was made to predetermine the appropriate number of interviews, but this was allowed to emerge from the interviewing process, and the case study work stopped when a sufficient degree of saturation had been attained.<sup>22</sup> The value of the interviews should be apparent from the study. As a rough approximation, the documentary sources formed the basis of the historical perspective of Part 3, and the interviews formed the basis of the organisational perspective of Part 4.

Apart from access to documents, living in the area provided a range of data of value to the study. Gans' experiences in the West End of Boston are appropriate in this context, and he lists six major sources which were all used by the author:-

- (1) use of the facilities of the area (for example, the local newspapers were all taken during the period of the study, and this provided the data for an examination of the involvement of the local press in the process);
- (2) attendance at meetings, gatherings and public places;
- (3) informal visiting with neighbours and friends;
- (4) formal and informal interviewing of community functionaries;
- (5) use of informants; and,
- (6) observation.<sup>23</sup>

Some of this data is sensory in character, but together with written and verbal data it provides a richness which could not have been obtained by visiting the area on occasions to carry out selective interviews<sup>24</sup> (quite apart from the practical difficulties that this would have entailed). As Gans points out, it would be very difficult to undertake such a study without developing a particular viewpoint of the issues being studied (although the nature of this viewpoint can be obscured from the participants being observed), and it is better to make this explicit so that its impact upon the analysis can be assessed.<sup>25</sup> The author is of the opinion that aircraft noise nuisance around Luton Airport had reached an unacceptable level by the summer of 1971, and that expansion proposals should not lead to any worsening of the situation and if possible should bring about an improvement. The analysis does not appear to have been biased as a result of this viewpoint, however, especially since the study is more concerned with the nature

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22. Glaser and Strauss, op.cit. Pages 65-69.

23. H. J. Gans, "The Urban Villagers", op.cit. Pages 337 and 338.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid. Page 346.

of the process than with the rights and wrongs of particular issues, but the aim has been to present sufficient evidence to enable this judgement to be assessed.

The short, comparative studies of the behaviour of regional planning agencies in the West Midlands and in Scotland were done through the medium of a small number of interviews (listed in Appendix 1), supplemented by the reading of published reports. Interviewees were selected to represent the range of regional planning agencies extant in the situation examined. The interviews were structured around the understandings of the behaviour of regional planning agencies in the South-East that were emerging from the main study, and informants were asked to compare the behaviour of the agencies in their particular situations with that described to them by the author. In particular, informants were requested to relate their answers to issues of airport expansion which had occurred in their regions, so that a common thread of this nature could facilitate comparison.

#### The Research Process.

The period from October, 1969 to June, 1970 was used to clarify the nature and approaches of the study and to begin to read the literature bearing upon its subject matter. The clarification process was aided by the preparation of a series of five short papers which were discussed with a group of social scientists in Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities, and which were designed to obtain their suggestions as to how the study methodology as it appeared to be developing could be improved. During March, 1970, a week was spent in the Luton area to confirm that the study was feasible in terms of the availability of information, and this was combined with attendance at four days of the public inquiry then being held into expansion proposals for the Airport.

The case study period lasted for fourteen months, from June, 1970 to August, 1971. The first three months were spent very largely looking at material in the possession of Luton County Borough Council (the owner and operator of the Airport) before moving out to look at documentary evidence in the possession of other organisations and at the files of the local press. Most of the interviewing took place between February and August, 1971 inclusive, once documentary sources had been virtually exhausted, although new sources were being discovered for most of this period and some unstructured interviews had already taken place during 1970. Interviewing stopped in August, 1971, when diminishing returns appeared to be setting in and at a convenient point in the chronology of events. The area was revisited for three weeks during January, 1972, when events between the finish of the case study period and the revisit were examined, and the public inquiry into expansion plans for the Airport which was then taking place was attended on ten days. During the period of the case study, progress reports were sent to the author's supervisor at

quarterly intervals.

The study of the West Midlands situation was undertaken during the period of the major case study, because of the physical proximity of the two regions. The study of the Scottish situation was undertaken in the autumn of 1971, after the author had returned to the University of Glasgow. In both cases, selected interviewees were approached initially with the help of members of staff of the University of Glasgow who already knew them, and further introductions were then effected through the medium of the first interviewees. In other words, as far as possible the two supplementary regional studies were treated as being microcosms of the major study in these terms.

### Recapitulation.

The theme running throughout this Chapter has been that an attempt has been made to be as systematic as possible in terms of the choice of the case study, of the case study methods and of the research process adopted. Detailed criteria enabling the major requirements of a suitable case study to be specified were derived, and the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport was shown to be a case which satisfied all of these criteria. The case study methods and processes were based firmly upon authoritative literature in the field of participant-observation studies, and the particular techniques adopted were spelled out in some detail. In part this is a requirement of good research practice. In part, however, the particular methods adopted were considered to be worthy of some attention as a possible model which later research workers seeking to undertake case studies as part of the search for operational models of the planning process could modify to suit their particular requirements whilst at the same time retaining the essence of the approach in order to facilitate comparisons between studies.

Part 2. The Case Study: Context.

Connective Summary.

One of the problems inherent in system definition is that of the relationship between the system and its environment. This problem becomes particularly acute when the purpose of system definition is to isolate a set of factors for analytical purposes at a specified level. At this level, it is tempting to conclude that the major features of the system can be explained in terms of system variables; that is, that they are endogenous to the system. At the same time, it is doubtful whether this would be much more than a process of analytical over-simplification when dealing with social systems, because all such systems exist and function in relation to an environment. The process of closing the system in order to isolate key variables is necessary for analytical purposes, but in so doing there is a danger that the linkages which remain between the system and its environment will be obscured. The purpose of Part 2 of this study is to attempt to avoid this particular pitfall, by concentrating in some detail upon the environment within which the Luton Airport policy-making process has been functioning.

For these purposes, the Part is divided into four Chapters, each of which deals with a key element of the system's environment. Chapter 3 is concerned with national policy towards airport development, and no consistent and coherent policy is seen to have existed. From time to time, policies have been adumbrated by various Governments, but have not been followed through either because of national economic circumstances or because of a change in the political complexion of the Government. Instead, airport policy at the national level has been characterised by ad hoc approaches to specified problems and projects.

Chapter 4 examines the inclusive tour industry, since it is this upon which the expansion of Luton Airport has been grounded. The economics of the industry and Government pricing policies are seen as important factors in the growth of night jet traffic, which has been responsible for a great deal of the political debate over the future of the Airport. In addition, the rapid growth of the industry and the speed of technological advance in civil aviation in general have militated against the development of long-term plans and have promoted incrementalist and/or "middle-range" approaches.

Chapter 5 looks at the Airport sub-region, an area identified on the basis of aircraft noise complaint levels and seen as having a core area where complaint levels are relatively high and a periphery where they are

lower. Data are presented on certain basic facets of the sub-region; its location and land use, population growth, employment, socio-economic structure and the major characteristics of the local planning authorities within the area.

Chapter 6 looks at the issues which have been of greatest importance within the process, not in terms of how they are perceived by the various participants (the concern of most of the rest of the study) but in an attempt to assess the validity of some of the major claims which have been made about particular issues. The interplay between the "subjective" interpretations of the participants and the "objective " interpretation of the author contained within Chapter 6 should contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature of the process as a whole. Noise, profitability, the place of the Airport in the developing airports system, spatial planning considerations and employment are the **issues** selected for examination.

In all four Chapters, it is clear that the material examined represents an important contribution towards an understanding of certain features of the process, and these environment-system relationships are identified as and when appropriate.

Chapter 3. National Policy Towards Airport Development - a General Review.

One of the contextual dimensions against which the Luton Airport situation has unfolded has been the development of national policy towards airports and airlines. In fact, coherent national policy towards airport development is very difficult to identify, although from time to time different Governments of different political persuasions have made some attempts to lay down certain guidelines. Policy towards airlines, although affected similarly by changes of political control at the national level, has appeared to be somewhat more coherent. To the extent that such policy-making activities have influenced developments in connection with Luton Airport, this Chapter seeks to identify the major points of contact. This operation has been hindered by the relative lack of attention devoted to airport development and planning in British literature, although a few more detailed historical appraisals of policy exist elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s, it was Government policy to encourage the growth of civil aviation as much as possible. This meant not only the promotion of the development of municipal airports, but also a policy of scattered subsidies to and protection for individual airlines which led eventually to the creation of the British Overseas Airways Corporation (B.O.A.C) as the first public corporation in civil aviation in 1939. The worsening international situation appears to have given this process added impetus, and when the War started in 1939 a large number both of aerodromes

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1. See, Committee of Inquiry into Civil Air Transport (Edwards Committee). "British Air Transport in the Seventies." Cmnd. 4018. H.M.S.O. London, 1969. Pages 38-46. D. Corbett, "Politics and the Airlines." George Allen and Unwin, London, 1965. Pages 26-32, 57-65, 98-106, 144-160 and 248-269. R.S. Doganis, "Airport Planning and Administration: a Critique". Political Quarterly, Volume 37, number 4, October-December 1966. Pages 416-428. R. S. Doganis, "The Implication of the Demand for Air Transport on Airport Planning for England and Wales". Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1967. Pages 7-55. K. R. Sealy, "The Siting and Development of British Airports." The Geographical Journal, Volume 33, part 2. June 1967. Pages 148-177. An American and European context is provided in, K.R. Sealy. "The Geography of Air Transport." Hutchinson University Library. London. 1968. Pages 89-157.

and airlines were available for requisitioning if necessary.<sup>2</sup>

After the War, the new Labour Government embarked upon a policy of nationalisation of both airports and airlines. Two new corporations were created in 1946, British European Airways (B.E.A.) and British South American Airways (B.S.A.A., which was disbanded in 1949 when its routes, assets and staff were handed over to B.O.A.C.), and for a while the three public airlines had a near-monopoly position.<sup>3</sup> The nationalisation of the major municipal airports proved to be a harder battle, however, with those municipal authorities which had not lost control over their airports as a result of wartime requisitioning being very reluctant to see them nationalised. Luton Airport was too insignificant to be considered for nationalisation, and so Luton Council was not involved in these battles. The test-case came over Manchester Airport. Manchester Corporation managed, by several delaying tactics, to postpone nationalisation to the point where it had become clear that the life of the Government might be fairly limited and that further nationalisation might be electorally unpopular.<sup>4</sup> Some airports were nationalised, nevertheless, but the policy of the new Conservative Government which came into office in 1951 was to denationalise wherever possible and to encourage local or private interests to provide airport facilities.<sup>5</sup> Airports such as Birmingham (Edmdon) and Liverpool (Speke) were transferred back to the local authorities concerned. In addition, the Government's policy was gradually to allow private airlines more operating freedom, and a benchmark in this process was the setting-up of the Air Transport Licensing Board in 1960 to consider applications for licences on both domestic and international routes and thus to regulate public-private competition.<sup>6</sup>

During the 1960s, the Ministry of Aviation continued to shed as many airports under its ownership as possible, and an important stage in this process was the creation of the British Airports Authority.<sup>7</sup> The Authority's task was to operate the international airports at London (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) and in Scotland (Prestwick), which had previously been operated by the Ministry of Aviation. Thus a fragmented pattern of ownership and operation emerged. The British Airports Authority owned

2. D. Corbett. op.cit. Pages 26-32.

3. Ibid. Pages 57-65.

4. K.P. Brookes. "The Development of Manchester Airport. 1928-1964." Unpublished M.A.(econ.) dissertation. University of Manchester, 1964. The approaches and successes of the Corporation are summarised on page 211.

5. R.S. Doganis (1966). op. cit.

6. D. Corbett. op. cit. Pages 98-106.

the four international airports, but the Ministry of Aviation (later the Board of Trade) still owned the "social Service" airports (principally in the Highlands) and held a substantial stake in Edinburgh Airport (Turnhouse). In addition, several airports were operated by local authorities either individually (such as Luton Airport) or in consortia (such as Leeds/Bradford Airport), and some (such as Southampton (Eastleigh) and Lydd) were privately operated.<sup>8</sup> This had led to conflict between airport authorities for traffic from the same area (for example, between Liverpool and Manchester Airports, and between East Midlands Airport at ~~Castle~~ Donnington and Birmingham Airport), which has probably been wasteful in terms of expenditure of public funds<sup>9</sup> and inefficient in terms of the provision of services.<sup>10</sup> Doganis summarised the position in the mid- 1960s as follows;

"It is clear that in the United Kingdom in 1966 there was neither the conceptual framework nor the administrative machinery to do this (to plan the development of airports in an integrated manner). Airport development has become a "free for all" in which each locality tries according to its initiative and local resources to develop its own airport within the financial constraints imposed by the Ministry of Aviation and the route licensing constraints imposed by the Air Transport Licensing Board, but without regard to the actions or hopes of neighbouring areas or to any national plan for airport development." 11

A National Airports Plan or Programme was seen as being a possible improvement,<sup>12</sup> although there was little sign of any Governmental recognition of a need for such an approach. The controversy over the third London Airport problem was growing, and it was treated in a very largely ad hoc fashion first by the setting-up of the Inter-Departmental Committee of Government officials and then by the creation of the Commission on the Third London Airport.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that the original intention of the Board of Trade in constituting the Commission had been that it should prepare, in effect, the south-eastern part of a National Airports Plan, but the Commission considered

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7. By the Airports Authority Act, 1965. This legislation started its life under the Conservative Government, and was continued by the Labour Government which replaced it in 1964.

8. R. S. Doganis. (1966) op. cit.

9. Ibid. Pages 425 and 426.

10. Ibid. Page: 426 and 427.

11. R. S. Doganis (1967). op. cit. Page 55.

12. Ibid. Pages 7-15. K.R. Sealy (1967). "Towards a National Airport Plan." New Society, 4th. November, 1965. Pages 9-11. The Edwards Committee reported that "a very large proportion" of its witnesses had urged the need for a National Airports Policy or Plan. op. cit. Page 220.

13. Commission on the Third London Airport (Roskill Commission). "Report". H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Pages 1-5.

this to be beyond its terms of reference.<sup>14</sup> By 1970/71, the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries, which examined the British Airports Authority, could still "...regret the present dilatoriness in starting to prepare a national plan",<sup>15</sup> and recommended that work should start on it immediately without waiting for the proposed Civil Aviation Authority.<sup>16</sup> In 1971, one commentator was still arguing that airports planning was typified by a laissez-faire attitude on the part of the Government,<sup>17</sup> although it is clear that the need for a greater degree of involvement than was the case in the mid-1960s had been accepted by 1971. The decision to set up a Civil Aviation Authority and the acceptance of the need for a greater degree of control over municipal airports<sup>18</sup> are evidence of this change, although it may be a change of degree rather than of kind.

The policy of creating more scope for the private sector airlines continued during the 1960s, and was enhanced from 1965 onwards by a relaxation of the stringency with which the Air Transport Licensing Board viewed applications from the private sector.<sup>19</sup> This made it easier for the private sector to provide specific kinds of services, of which the most notable have been in relation to the inclusive tour industry.<sup>20</sup> The growth of the importance of Luton Airport during the 1960s has been based very largely upon this particular development. It appeared to be a logical extension of the policy of giving the private sector more freedom than a major "second force" scheduled airline should emerge, following a recommendation of the Edwards Committee,<sup>21</sup> operated by private enterprise. This was achieved by the merger of Caledonian Airways and British United Airways, and by the decision of the Conservative Government, in the face of strong opposition from the Labour party, to take away some of the profitable routes of B.E.A. and B.O.A.C. and give them to the new airline.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the increasing freedom given to the private sector has created some tensions between B.E.A. and B.C.A.C., the private airlines and the Government. As far as possible, the Government has attempted to minimise its

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14. Select Committee on Nationalised Industries. "First Report. Session 1970-71. British Airports Authority". H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Page XV. Paragraph 36.

15. Ibid. Page XV. Paragraph 37.

16. Ibid. It is clear that the Civil Aviation Authority (to be set up during 1972 under Part I of the Civil Aviation Act, 1971) at the very least will have the task of taking an overview of the whole airports system, although whether this will involve the preparation of a plan for the future development of that system has not been specified. Ibid. Page 359. The creation of the Authority was originally recommended by the Edwards Committee in its Report. op.cit. Pages 244-256.

17. W. A. Robson, "British Airports Authority". Political Quarterly. Volume 42, number 4. October-December, 1971. Pages 423-428.

involvement in this aspect of civil aviation policy, but this has been very difficult when the Board of Trade (Department of Trade and Industry) has been in the position of hearing appeals from the decisions of the Air Transport Licensing Board.<sup>23</sup>

In summary, then, for most of the time period covered by this survey, Government policy towards airports planning has been characterised by proliferating and disjointed administrative structures and by ad hoc approaches to problems.<sup>24</sup> Policy towards airlines has, in recent years, taken the form of enabling greater operating freedom for the private airlines, which has resulted in the rapid development of specialised services (such as inclusive tours) and greatly intensified competition between the public and the private sectors. The achievement of a consistent policy both towards airports and towards airlines has been hindered by problems of political ideology, with the Conservative party tending to favour as much competition as possible (and therefore limiting the amount of protection afforded the State-owned airlines) and a decentralised approach to airport operation, and the Labour party favouring a greater degree of national control both of airports and of the activities of private airlines. At individual points in time, one or other of these philosophies has been dominant dependent upon whichever party was in power, but neither Labour nor Conservative Governments have chosen to declare their policies in a highly specific manner and then to pursue them vigorously. As a result, it has usually been very difficult to determine Government policy in relation to any specific airport situation until a planning inquiry has been held or an application for loan sanction submitted, both of which have tended to be determinative.

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18. Largely resulting from experiences in connection with Luton Airport. See Chapter 9. Government control over municipal airports has until recently been through land use planning controls (relying on some objections to the proposals bringing them officially to the notice of the Government) and/or through loan sanction for municipal borrowing. J.M. Wilson, "The Administrative Problems of the Long-Term Planning of Airports". Public Administration. Volume 42, number 1. Spring 1964. Pages 33-44. The Luton Airport experience demonstrated that these were inadequate in terms of exercising real control over activities at the Airport.

19. Report of the Edwards Committee. op. cit. Page 22.

20. See Chapter 4.

21. op. cit. Pages 99-125.

22. The Times, 25th. November, 1970.

23. D. Corbett. op. cit. Pages 248-269.

24. Shinn reports a similar situation in relation to four case studies of major aspects of airport development in the United States of America. R.D. Shinn. "Regional Airport Planning: a Systematic Model". Urban Planning/Development Series number 8. Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington. Seattle 1970. Pages 46-173.

"on their merits" in relation to national economic circumstances and without any apparent long-term policy objectives. Thus, the concept of Government control over airport policy-making has appeared to be relevant only in terms of particular projects. The history of the part played by Central Government in the Luton Airport policy-making process is a good illustration of this phenomenon.

Because the factors described above are affected by political ideology, it is unlikely that the new Civil Aviation Authority will be able to achieve any very great consistency over a long period of time during which both parties have periods when they form the Government, although it might be possible for it to achieve a more comprehensive and consistent approach to the problems extant at any one time than has appeared hitherto to be the case. The degree of regulation of the activities of Luton Council (or its successor) in relation to Luton Airport that the Authority will be able to achieve is something which at the time of writing is unknown, although its potential impact upon the future of the Airport and of the inclusive tour industry could be considerable.

## Chapter 4. The Inclusive Tour Industry.

### Introduction.

Chapter 3 indicated that the growth of the importance of Luton Airport during the 1960s was largely a function of the rapid expansion of inclusive tour activities. Many of the problems connected with the growth of the Airport have stemmed directly from particular features of the development and functioning of the inclusive tour industry, and its economic basis, the nature of Government controls, the importance of Luton Airport to the industry and some of the operational problems that it poses are explored in some detail.

### The Economic Basis of the Industry. 1

The concept of the inclusive tour revolves around the notion that, by assembling the component parts of any holiday as a package and then by offering that package to the customer as a unified entity, great savings can be made when compared with the cost to the individual of assembling the components separately. The key to this notion is utilisation. By achieving high rates of utilisation of all the component parts of the package (and aircraft and hotels are the two most important aspects), greater efficiency and economies of scale are obtained, both of which enable costs to be cut. This is achieved through block-booking of facilities, with guaranteed minimum prices to the operators of the facilities even if, ultimately, they are not fully used. Thus, the resources necessary to provide a guaranteed level of service can be predetermined with considerably more accuracy (and therefore with less waste) than would otherwise be the case, which promotes efficiency and enables optimum economies of scale to be obtained. This also transfers the risk from the operator of the facilities to the assembler of the package and, because it removes much of the uncertainty which would otherwise persist in relation to the provision of specific facilities within the tourist industry, enables low rates to be negotiated for the use of those facilities.

For present purposes, the workings of this in relation to the operations of

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1. This section is based principally upon information obtained from interviews with M. Elgood (Planning Executive, Monarch Airlines), 25th. June, 1971, A.D. Harvey (Director, Court Line), 1st. July 1971, I. Hydon (Assistant to the Commercial Director, Britannia Airways), 12th July, 1971, J. Sauvage (Managing Director, Britannia Airways), 12th, July 1971 and D.G. MacQueen (Aviation Director, Clarksons), 9th. August 1971. Use has also been made of the following. M. Lumb, "How Britannia Counted the Cost", Aeroplane. 31st. May 1967. Pages 14-16. J.E.D. Williams, "Williams on Waste". Aeroplane. 14th. February 1968. Page 27. J.E.D. Williams. "System Design of Inclusive Tours". Flight International. 22nd. February 1968. Pages 257 and 258. (Proofs of evidence of P.H.A. Linnett (Deputy Managing Director, Clarksons), J. Sauvage and R.S. Doganis (Lecturer in Air Transport, University of Birmingham) at the public local inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, 12th. March 1970. Edwards Committee. op.cit. Pages 171-174.

airlines are much more important than its implications for hotel operation. The airlines tend either to be wholly-owned subsidiaries of tour operators (for example, Britannia Airways, which is a subsidiary of Thomson Holiday Holdings, the parent company which also operates hotels and owns another company the task of which is to assemble the package) or to be independent companies which negotiate contracts with tour operators (for example, Court Line, which flies passengers mainly for Clarksons on a contract basis). The former is basically a vertical form of organisation where operations take place under the aegis of a parent company, and the latter is a horizontal form of organisation where operations take place by agreement between different specialist companies. There is also a middle position, typified by Monarch Airlines, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cosmos Tours, a company which owns very few of the hotels it utilises; thus, the aircraft part of the package is vertically integrated and the hotels part is horizontally integrated. Whichever organisational method is used, the tendency is for the scale of operations to increase. Equally, the severity of the bargaining which takes place to obtain the lowest possible seat-mile rate for a particular package does not appear to be unduly affected by such organisational considerations, because the industry in all its aspects is highly competitive and marginal savings can make a significant difference to the market price of the overall package.

Britannia's arrangements with Sky Tours (the subsidiary company which assembles the packages for Thomson Holiday Holdings) will serve as an example of how this process works.<sup>2</sup> For the year 1971, Sky Tours made use of approximately 60% of Britannia's capacity, nearly all in Boeing 737s. The remainder was utilised by ad hoc and usually short-term chartering and by a contract with Horizon Midland, another tour operator which was charged slightly higher rates than Britannia's sister company. This situation of spare capacity arises because Sky Tours cannot make even demands throughout the year, and so Britannia, equipped to cater for Sky Tour's new-peak requirements, has a significant amount of under-used aircraft space throughout much of the year. For the six 737s allocated permanently to Sky Tours, the first 1700 hours' flying time for each was paid for at a rate of £400-£430 per hour. This is a guaranteed payment, even if all that time is not used, and it enables the major fixed costs of operating those aircraft for the year to be covered. The next 600 hours were charged for at a rate of £350 per hour, although no guarantees are usually given for this period and the rate is negotiable. After 2300 hours' flying time, fixed costs have all been covered, and so

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2. The figures in the following two paragraphs are developed from information given in the interview with I. Hydon, op. cit.

Britannia makes most of its operating profits once this figure has been passed; the rate after 2300 hours was of the order of £280-300 per hour. These figures assume an average stage (journey) length of between 800 and 1,000 miles, the distance from Luton Airport to the popular Mediterranean destinations. Thus, the more hours the tour operator books, the lower the average cost per seat that he can include in his package. Equally, the more hours that are booked by tour operators, the less the airline operator needs to rely on ad hoc chartering, and so his business position is improved by a higher proportion of firm bookings.

The difference in the retail price of the tour as a result of a higher level of block-booking of aircraft by the tour operator can be significant at the margin. The average seat-cost to a tour operator at the above rates (assuming that the normal near 90% average utilisation of seats can be achieved, which would involve an average utilisation of say 115 out of the 130 seats in a 737, and that each journey involves two hours' flying time) when 2000 hours are booked works out at £7.27, whereas for 3000 hours (virtually full utilisation of the aircraft) the figure becomes £6.67. This is not, of course, the amount which is actually included in the package as the cost to the customer of the aircraft seat, since revenue from the package as a whole must not only include the tour operator's direct costs (principally hotel and aircraft block-booking) but must also cover his profit, the profits of the travel agent and any extra unanticipated costs which cannot be met by specific items of the package (such as the hire of coaches to take passengers from one airport to another if one becomes unusable). In addition, of course, the return journey must be paid for. The actual amount written into the retail cost of the package as the aircraft component is usually double the average seat-cost to the tour operator plus about 15%, so that in terms of the cost to the customer, £7.27 and £6.67 would really be much nearer to £16.74 and £15.33 respectively.<sup>3</sup> A difference of £1.41 in an overall package of approximately £40 is significant in a highly competitive industry, and this is achieved solely as the result of a higher rate of utilisation in one of the main components of the package. A similar saving in the other main component (the hotel) could mean that the overall saving on the package is of the order of 7%, which is close to the savings that a large tour operator can expect simply because of his greater ability to block-book the whole of the

3. As has already been pointed out, these figures relate to Britannia's operating experiences, but very similar results were pointed out by Mr. MacQueen in relation to Clarksons' arrangements with Court Line. On the Luton-Palma (Majorca) run, which is comparable with the hypothetical example in that it requires about two hours' flying time, and using BAC 1.11s, with marginally different operating costs from Boeing 737s, Clarksons charge about £15 per seat (return) as the aircraft component of the package. Interview with D.G. MacQueen, op.cit.

available facilities of an aircraft and an hotel. If the tour operator can achieve a better average rate of seat utilisation than 115 out of 130, his costs are cut still further; if, in the above example, the operator booking the 3000 hours could achieve an average utilisation of 120 of the seats (about 92%), the average seat-cost to him of the journey in question drops from £6.67 to £6.39, which would mean that the retail cost of the aircraft component of the package could drop from £15.33 to £14.70. Further savings can be made by making minimal use of travel agents to sell the package and by the operator promoting it directly himself (which is the present trend). It can be seen, therefore, how the largest operators (such as Clarksons and Thomsons Holiday Holdings) can achieve return rates of £15 for the Luton-Palma journey and make a profit both for themselves and for the airlines.<sup>4</sup>

This, of course, substantially undercuts the scheduled fare for such a journey. In 1970, the minimum scheduled return fares on the Luton-Palma run were £48.25 (during the day at the week-end) and £40.10 (at night).<sup>5</sup> These figures compare with the £15 or so quoted in the above example; indeed, the total cost of the package in the above example, at about £40, is the same as the minimum scheduled return fare. The reason for this is, simply, utilisation. In 1965-66, Sky Tours achieved 92% utilisation of aircraft seats in its dealings with Britannia, whereas B.E.A. achieved only 63% seat utilisation.<sup>6</sup> The evidence indicates that since then the relative position of the scheduled carriers has worsened; one estimate was that the large tour operators achieved virtually 90% utilisation of seats in 1970, whereas scheduled services as a whole tended to average little above 45-50% utilisation.<sup>7</sup> Whatever the true figures, this situation has led to pressure on the Government from the scheduled carriers to control the activities of charter (and particularly inclusive tour) operators, as a form of protection for scheduled services.

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4. Competition within the industry is so keen, however, that profit margins are relatively small, and some operators reported losses in 1970 as a result of a slight recession in the industry. The aggregate profit of the 57 largest tour operators in 1969 was £1.5 million, but this became a loss of more than 1.6 million pounds in 1970. The Times, 29th. October 1971 (leading article, business section). P.H.A. Linnett, under cross-examination at the public inquiry held into expansion proposals for Luton Airport in January, 1972, disputed these figures. He said that the profit and loss figures for the two years were slightly inaccurate, and that they referred to the 21 largest tour operators only a small proportion of which had made losses in 1970, although he agreed that these losses were more than enough to offset the profits of the majority.

5. Evidence of P.H.A. Linnett (1970), op. cit.

6. J.E.D. Williams (22nd. February 1968), op. cit.

7. I. Hydon, op. cit.

Government Control of the Inclusive Tour Industry.

The Government at present has two specific controls over the activities of inclusive tour operators that it could use; controls over licences and controls over prices. The evidence indicates that the Air Transport Licensing Board, in recent years, has given inclusive tour operators most of the licences they have requested,<sup>8</sup> and that the operators have tended to request more capacity than they can actually utilise.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, then, control over licences is not used to any great extent to curtail the activities of inclusive tour operators.

The main controls are those over prices, and these centre on the so-called "Provision 1". This is derived from a resolution of the International Air Transport Association (I.A.T.A.) designed to protect its member airlines' fares agreements. Basically, Provision 1 means that an inclusive tour holiday may not be sold at a price which is less than the lowest applicable return fare for a scheduled service on the route used and at an equivalent time. This has been adopted by the Air Transport Licensing Board as part of its tariff controls.<sup>10</sup>

The effect of this has been to promote the development of the inclusive tour flight at night, simply because the night tourist fare is the cheapest scheduled fare available. In the Luton-Palma example quoted above, a package could be re-tailed at a minimum price of £40.10 if travelling at night but at £48.25 if travelling during the day and at the week-end. For a two-weeks' holiday in Palma, a large operator in 1971 was capable of retailing the package at approximately £40 (as in the example above), and so the price he wished to charge corresponded with the price he was allowed to charge if departure and arrival took place at night. If flying takes place during the day, however, he must raise his prices by 20%, even though the costs to him are the same whether the passengers fly at day or at night. Because of the intense competition in the inclusive tour industry, operators attempt to sell as many tours flying at night as possible. The effect of this on Luton Airport has been immense, because it is night jet noise more than anything else which has prompted the protest movement.<sup>11</sup> Both airlines and airport authorities have argued that the solution to the jet noise problem is the abolition of Provision 1, so that operators can offer tours at an economic price during the day-time.<sup>12</sup>

The argument against this is that airlines would still need to fly at night so that aircraft utilisation could be kept up to the present levels to

8. Edwards Committee, op. cit. Page 171.

9. The Times, 20th. October 1970.

10. Edwards Committee, op. cit. Page 171.

11. See Chapter 8.

12. For example, one of the few matters on which Luton Airport Consultative Committee has obtained unanimous agreement from all its members has been that approaches be made to the Board of Trade (Department of Trade and Industry) in an attempt to get Provision 1 repealed. Minutes of the Committee meeting, 16th. September 1969.

retain the price advantages of inclusive tours. This is a powerful argument, and it is clear that the repeal of Provision 1 would not lead to the abandonment of night jet flying in the inclusive tour industry, although it might reduce the number of such flights.<sup>13</sup> It has been argued that this problem could in turn be overcome by flying short-haul tours during the day and long-haul tours at night, which would retain high utilisation and restrict night landings and take-offs.<sup>14</sup> Provision 1 as originally formulated would have prevented this, simply because the savings on a long-haul inclusive tour flight when compared with the equivalent scheduled fare are so large (the Edwards Committee estimated that the difference would be of the order of £80 over 4,000 miles<sup>15</sup>) that the retail price of the package that the operator would want to charge would be considerably less than he would be allowed to charge. This was seen as militating very strongly against the development of long-haul inclusive tours, and so the Air Transport Licensing Board made specific exceptions to Provision 1 for certain long-haul inclusive tour licence applications.<sup>16</sup> Even so, for this to have any real effect on the night jet noise problem a long-haul inclusive tour market would have to be developed to enable such services to make full use of the night hours. As yet, such a market has not been developed, although trends in the industry are in this direction (at present, the industry concentrates overwhelmingly on the short-haul Mediterranean destinations).<sup>17</sup> Another problem with this proposal is that very few aircraft have both the flexibility and the payload to operate both short-haul and long-haul;<sup>18</sup> this issue is examined below in more detail.

In terms of the development of the industry, the other major problem with Provision 1 was that it prevented the development of short off-season tours. Basically, the summer season brings the airlines and the hoteliers enough business to cover their fixed costs for the whole year,<sup>19</sup> and since Provision 1 imposes a floor level on the price at which a package holiday in summer may be marketed it suits the operators to regard the summer season as the period during which the whole year's fixed costs are to be recouped. Until recently, it was inevitable that the operators should seek to do this anyway, since outside the summer season they had very little business. Provision 1 no longer applies to short winter holidays,<sup>20</sup> however, which means that operators can market them at whatever prices they can negotiate. As a result of this, the operators have been able to piece together short packages which greatly undercut the scheduled alternatives (see Table 2) by continuing to regard the whole year's fixed costs

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13. Interview with J. Sauvage, op. cit.

14. This theory is an integral feature underpinning Luton Council's 1971 package of proposals for the development of Luton Airport. See Chapter 9. Interview with Councillor V. Dunnington (Chairman of the Airport Committee, Luton Council), 29th. July, 1971.

as being attributable to the summer season. The costs of utilising facilities in winter are considered to be the extra operating costs such as fuel, meals on board, ground handling and extra administration, and major costs such as aircraft maintenance and staff wages are considered to have been covered out of the revenue of summer operations. Whilst Provision 1 remains in operation there would be little point in seeking to spread fixed costs over the whole year's activities, since any savings made as a result could not be passed on to the customer of the summer package and since the price of the winter package would have to rise. At present, the short winter holiday market is being opened up rapidly, and price rises might militate against this trend. Hence, at present it suits the operators to continue to treat the summer season as the period when the whole year's fixed costs are to be recouped, and to exploit the advantages that this brings in terms of the development of short off-season holidays.

Table 2. Thomson Holiday Holdings' Estimate of Equivalent Costs of Sample Short Off-Season Tours.

Holiday	Cost of Scheduled flight	Scheduled Carrier plus private hotel	Thomson package (equivalent hotel)
Palermo, Sicily, 7 nights	£71.25	£101.75	£40
Athens, Greece, 4 nights	£136.50	£158.10	£29
Marrakech, Morocco, 7 nights	£75.55	£124.40	£47

Source: four-page advertisement, Sunday Times Colour Supplement, 18th. July, 1971.

15. Edwards Committee, op. cit. Page 172.

16. Ibid.

17. Interview with D. G. MacQueen, op. cit.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. It was revealed by the Government on an experimental basis for such promotions in October, 1970. Evening Post, 20th. October, 1970. Luton News, 22nd. October, 1970.

It can be seen from Table 2 that in each case the cost of the scheduled return flight is substantially more than that of the total package being offered by Thomson Holiday Holdings. Thus, whilst Provision 1 applied to short off-season holidays, it had a dampening effect upon the prospect of really cheap packages being offered. This in turn, of course, tended to force the inclusive tour industry to rely almost exclusively upon the summer season for its total annual revenue. The decision to repeal Provision 1 on an experimental basis for short off-season tours changed this particular situation, and if the experiment is continued and if the industry can develop the market the implications for the future of Luton Airport could be wide-ranging. The Airport's activities will be likely to become markedly less seasonal, which amongst other things might spread the problem of aircraft noise nuisance into periods of the year from which it has been absent hitherto. If anything, this might add to the degree of contention which already exists over the Airport's future. In addition, more business in the slack part of the year is likely to improve the Airport's potential profitability still further.

#### The Place of Luton Airport in the Inclusive Tour Industry.

The importance of Luton Airport to the inclusive tour industry can easily be demonstrated.

Table 3. Passengers Carried on Inclusive Tours by the Main Charter Airlines.

Airline	1971	1970	%age Change 1970-71
British Caledonian	1,303,041	1,079,218	+21
Court Line <sup>†</sup>	1,151,466	809,179	+42
Britannia <sup>†</sup>	1,046,238	688,961	+52
Dan-Air <sup>†</sup>	981,292	605,745	+62
B.E.A. Airtours	<del>543,866</del>	<del>416,522</del>	<del>+31</del>
Monarch <sup>†</sup>	408,243	274,677	+49
British Midland <sup>†</sup>	323,683	210,802	+54
Channel	304,478	386,366	-21
Laker	243,317	225,221	+8

Source: Department of Trade and Industry. Business Monitor. Civil Aviation Series. CA5. Airline Operations. Yearly summary, 1970. Table 3.1. The 1971 yearly summary was not available at the time of writing, but the results contained in the four quarterly returns for that year were aggregated to produce a total figure.

Notes: † airlines operating out of Luton Airport. The figures for British Caledonian in 1970 and for the first quarter of 1971 are the combined figures for the two Companies British United and Caledonian, which were amalgamated during 1971 to create the new "third force" scheduled airline.

Table 3 shows that five of the nine biggest inclusive tour operators are those which operate substantial parts of their programmes out of Luton Airport, and three of them (Court Line, second in the list, Britannia, third in the list, and Monarch, sixth in the list) are based at the Airport. It is notable that the five Companies which operated out of Luton Airport showed the biggest percentage increases of all the major operators in inclusive tour passengers handled from 1970 to 1971. Virtually 95% of the traffic from Luton Airport in the late 1960s was in inclusive tours,<sup>21</sup> and it is possible to derive an approximate estimate of Luton Airport's increasing share of the inclusive tour market by using this figure.

Table 4. Luton Airport's Share of the Inclusive Tour Market.

Year	Inclusive Tour Passengers.	Luton Airport's Inclusive Tour Passengers.	Luton Airport's share of the Inclusive Tour Market.
1964	1,181,000	162,500	13.8%
1965	1,516,000	196,500	13.0%
1966	2,428,000	340,000	14.0%
1967	2,825,000	392,500	13.9%
1968	3,216,000	656,000	20.4%
1969	3,717,000	1,413,500	38.0%
1970	4,902,500	1,865,500	38.0%

Source: figures of the total number of inclusive tour passengers were supplied by M. Elgood, Planning Executive, Monarch Airlines. Luton Airport's inclusive tour passengers were derived by taking 95% of the total terminal passengers from the Airport for each year. The Business Monitor, Civil Aviation Series statistics, published by the Department of Trade and Industry, do not divide charter flights into inclusive tours and others for the purposes of defining airport activity, and so this more circuitous method was necessary. A.D. Raby, giving evidence on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council at the January, 1972 public inquiry, argued that Luton Airport's share of the total inclusive tour market in 1970 was probably nearer 33%, since the passenger throughput figure for the Airport would have included some passengers on inclusive tours run by foreign companies which would not have been included in the figure for the total market. R.F. Collins (Director of Luton Airport), giving evidence on behalf of Luton County Borough Council at the same inquiry, claimed that Luton's share of the market in 1970 was 42.5%. This figure was based upon a survey which Mr. Collins accepted as being unreliable, although he regarded Mr. Raby's figure as an underestimate. The figure of 38% quoted in the above Table occupies the middle ground between Mr. Collins' and Mr. Raby's figures. Provisional estimates for 1971 indicate that Mr. Collins' figure of 42.5% was still a little high, with Luton Airport handling 2.6 million out of 6.7 million inclusive tour passengers, or 40%.

21. Evidence of R. S. Doganis, op. cit.

All the estimates of the tour operators and of the airlines point to the probability of Luton Airport's share of the market increasing,<sup>22</sup> and it is clear that its recently-gained position as Britain's leading inclusive tour airport is likely to be retained. Much of this appears to be attributable to its location, within easy access of both the Greater London and the West Midlands conurbations via roads of motorway standard, although the enterprise of the airlines operating from Luton Airport and the incentives given to the airlines by Luton Council have also been significant.<sup>23</sup> Clarksons regard the Airport's catchment area as including the whole of the Midlands and East Anglia, and parts of the West Country and the South-East.<sup>24</sup> The evidence indicates that a substantial proportion of passengers come from much further afield,<sup>25</sup> however, and it is Clarksons' experience that customers will travel considerable distances to Luton Airport to obtain a cheaper package (since Luton is counted as being a London airport, for these purposes, and thus the same tariffs can be charged when flying from Luton as from Gatwick), rather than fly from their local airports and pay more for the package.<sup>26</sup> Thus, whilst Luton Airport acts as a regional airport for both the Midlands and the South-East, it also acts as a national airport for the inclusive tour industry. This has resulted in the rapid expansion of activities at Luton Airport, but it has also brought many problems. Some of the specific operational problems of the inclusive tour industry (as distinct from the general operational problems that all airlines face) have created special difficulties in the Luton Airport policy-making process, and some of these are now discussed in outline.

Some Operational Problems of the Inclusive Tour Industry as they Affect the Luton Airport Situation.

The major problem in this context has already been described, namely that because of both Provision 1 and the need to achieve maximum utilisation the industry wishes to achieve as many night jet flights as possible. This results in a major problem of night jet noise, and, indeed, for the 1971 summer season, Luton Airport with a permitted maximum of 4000 night jet movements was operating at above the level of London Heathrow Airport (3500 similar movements).<sup>27</sup> One suggested palliative has been that the tour operator should

22. For example, estimates based upon figures supplied by Monarch Airlines (the total number of inclusive tour passengers) and by the Airport Director's Department (passengers at Luton Airport) indicate that, in 1972, Luton Airport's share of the market might have risen to nearly 45%. 1971 experience adds some credence to this possibility.

23. These points are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

24. Interview with D. G. MacQueen, op. cit.

25. As near as it is possible to make the zones used in the Luton Airport Passenger Catchment Survey coincide with the area as defined by Mr. MacQueen (ibid), during the two periods of the passenger survey 58.6% and 55.4% of

offer short-haul tours taking off during the day and long-haul tours taking off at night. If this were possible (and it assumes that Provision 1 would be repealed, since at present the price of day-time inclusive tours is forced by the Provision to be higher than those at night-time if they are short-haul), it would result in a change from "4-rotation" to "3-rotation" operations. One of the advantages to the inclusive tour operator of Luton Airport is that it is just possible to fly from it to and from the popular Mediterranean destinations on four occasions during any twenty-four hour period, which means that two of the take-offs can be at night (to make the maximum use of Provision 1). If the two day-time trips were retained, but one long-haul trip substituted for the two short-haul trips at night, this would result in a halving of the total number of night take-offs. As has already been indicated, however, there are two major problems with this; the problem of developing a sufficient long-haul market to make this a feasible proposition in economic terms and the problem of aircraft availability. These problems are inter-related.

The trend in the inclusive tour industry is to develop the long-haul markets more and more. It is clear, however, that to retain the degree of utilisation necessary to minimise prices, very substantial developments in the long-haul market would have to take place before the 3-rotation proposition could become feasible on any significant scale. The problem of aircraft availability is an added complication, because the trend amongst the airlines specialising in inclusive tours is towards the purchase of larger aircraft on the basis of their operating performances over the 800-1,000 miles range, which accounts for the bulk of inclusive tour traffic. The normal process is for the inclusive tour airlines to purchase second-hand jets from the scheduled airlines, and Luton airlines anticipate that their complement of Boeing 707s (seating 189 passengers) will grow in this manner from two in 1971 to eleven by 1975.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the airlines anticipate that they will order up to ten new Lockheed TriStars (seating 400 passengers) by 1976.<sup>29</sup> This kind of equipment can operate

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inclusive tour passengers came from within the defined area, which means that, in both cases, just over 40% of the passengers came from outside this area. K. Seymour. "Luton Airport Passenger Catchment Survey 1968". County Borough of Luton. Luton. 1969. Pages 10 and 11.

26. Interview with D.G. MacQueen, op. cit.

27. Letter from P.W. Le Blond (Planning Department, British Airports Authority) to the author, 4th. May, 1971. The difference between the Heathrow and the Luton situations was widened by the decision of the Government in November, 1971 to ban night jet take-offs from Heathrow during the summer season, starting in 1972. The Times, 9th. November, 1971. Luton Council cut the permitted number of night jet take-offs for summer 1972 from 2,250 to 1,890 at about the same time, but the extent to which this can be regarded as a real cut is dealt with in Chapter 9.

28. Evidence of J. H. Sauvage to the January, 1972 public inquiry.

29. Ibid. Court Line has already placed a firm order for two TriStars, with an option for another three. The Times, 29th. October, 1971.

long-haul services as well as the short and medium-haul services for which it is mainly bought, although the long-haul economics of operation of the 707 and the TriStar are not as favourable to the airlines as would be those of a purpose-built inclusive tour aircraft.<sup>30</sup> The problem is that the larger the aircraft, the bigger the number of holidays that has to be sold to make it economical to operate, and the more difficult it becomes as a consequence to market such a holiday as an exclusive product.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the extent to which the large, short-haul equipment will actually be used to fly long-haul at night in an attempt to reduce the noise problem around the Airport is problematic. It would require both a substantial growth in the long-haul market and a change in the policy towards the marketing of long-haul holidays, and at present the growth is being created by a marketing policy which stresses that an exclusive holiday is being offered at a price within the reach of many more people than would normally take such a holiday. If the main feature of the holiday is no longer to be its exclusiveness (and it is difficult to market a package in this way when 400 seats on an aircraft have to be sold), it is possible that such holidays will lose much of their attraction when compared with cheaper inclusive tour alternatives, and this might affect the rate of growth of long-haul holidays. In other words, it would probably be unwise to pin too much faith on the 3-rotation as an answer to the night noise problem, since it is dependent upon several rather doubtful propositions.

One further problem needs to be mentioned and this concerns the degree of adaptability required by the industry. Growth in the industry has been so rapid (Table 4 indicates that the number of passengers on inclusive tours more than quadrupled between 1964 and 1970) and changes have taken place in its standards so quickly and so unpredictably that airport authorities have been unable to plan their facilities for the industry on any long-term basis. At the same time, brochures for holidays are printed about a year in advance of the holidays they advertise,<sup>32</sup> and the operators wish to minimise changes which take place during that year. Airport authorities are under heavy pressure not to impose any sudden changes which will affect packages already advertised and possibly booked. As a result, airport authorities are forced into a middle-range position as far as the provision of facilities for the inclusive tour industry is concerned. Anything other than an insignificant package of facilities for airport improvement can often take at least three years to implement, since the almost inevitable public inquiry and then the need to minimise disturbance to airport activities during construction work can consume that amount of time with little difficulty. In practice, therefore, airport

30. Such an aircraft does not exist of course, but Mr. MacQueen (interview, op.cit) said that it would have to be one which could carry about 200 passengers, with a range of at least 1,500 miles but economical to operate for distances of upwards of about 800 miles.

authorities tend to find it expedient to provide facilities one year in advance on a year-by-year basis, and to make attempts to implement longer-term proposals at periodic intervals. Many of these longer-term proposals will be overtaken by the pace of change within the industry, and will either be shelved before they are implemented or will become obsolete much more quickly than was originally anticipated. This process is an almost exact replica of Luton Council's approaches to the development of Luton Airport during the 1960s,<sup>33</sup> and emanates largely from the nature of change within the inclusive tour industry.

#### Conclusions.

It is clear that the special characteristics of the inclusive tour industry have had a major determining effect on the development of Luton Airport since the early 1960s, and have conditioned many of the features of the policy-making system under examination. There seems to be relatively little doubt that, had Luton Airport developed principally in terms of other sectors of civil aviation with less onerous demands (for example, with less need for night jet flying), the process under examination would have been significantly different. In particular, the process of rapid development of the industry from very small beginnings has created problems in terms of the long-term planning of the Airport, and at least a part of the incrementalist approaches adopted by both Luton Council and Central Government appears to be attributable to this factor. In addition, there is little evidence of any systematic attempt on the part of Central Government to formulate policies which seek to fit the inclusive tour industry into the wider context of civil aviation policy, as Chapter 3 has already indicated, and this has contributed to the tendency of the Airport administration to deal with the industry's problems on a year-by-year basis. Chapters 8 and 9 chart this process in some detail.

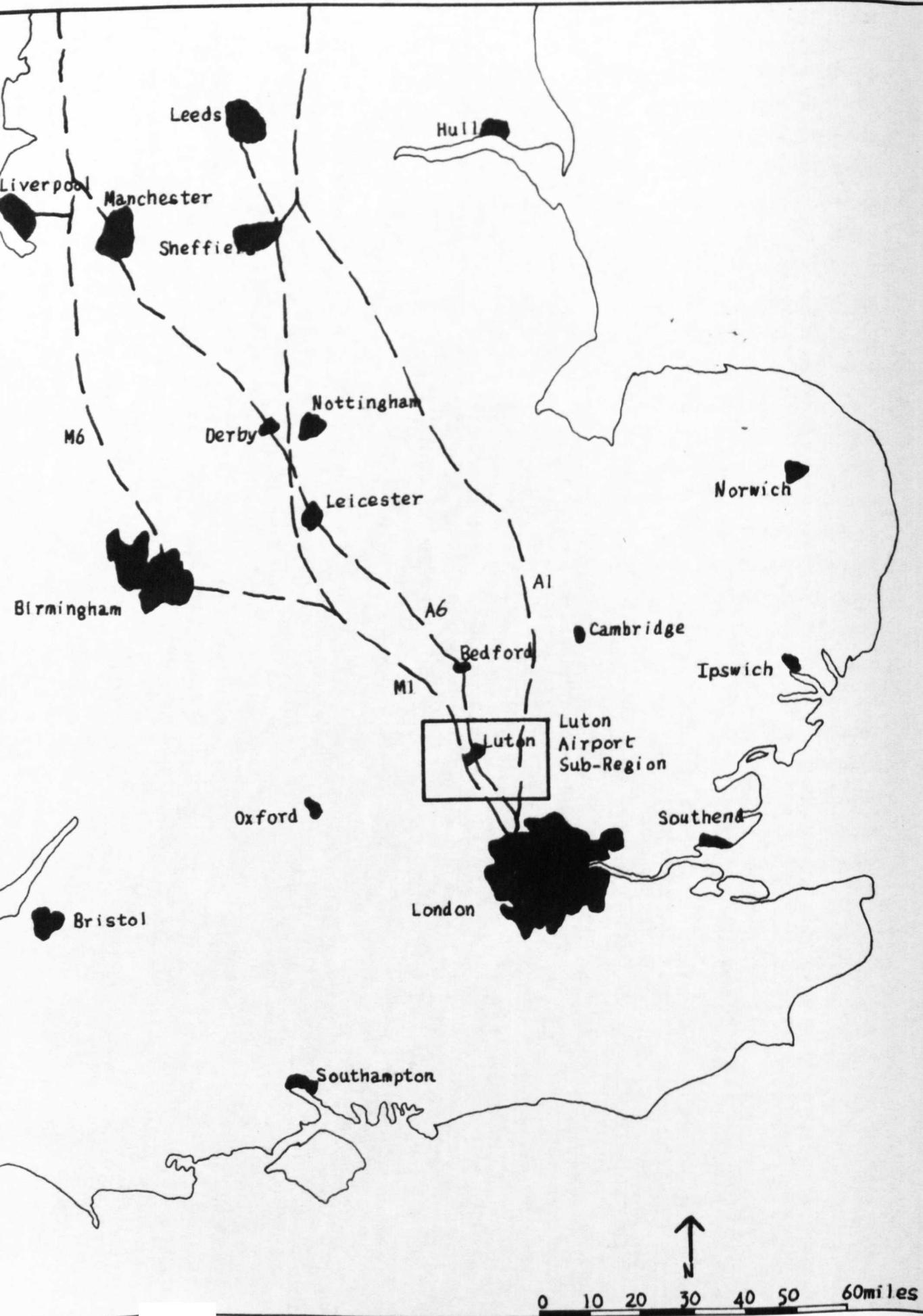
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31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. See Chapters 8 and 9.

DIAGRAM 2. THE NATIONAL SETTING  
OF THE LUTON AIRPORT SUB-REGION.



## Chapter 5. The Luton Airport Sub-Region.

### Introduction.

Several of the features of the area and of the people affected by the existence of Luton Airport have had a significant bearing upon the issues under examination in this study. In particular, location and land use, population growth, employment, socio-economic structure and certain of the characteristics of the local planning authorities within the area have been important variables, and this Chapter seeks to collect together some basic information about these factors.

The use of the term "sub-region" is not intended to suggest that the Airport is the major feature which in some manner binds together the people of this area, and neither does it necessarily imply that the area is in any sense a sub-region other than that it is the area over which the problem of aircraft noise deriving from activities at Luton Airport is significant. The basis of the definition of the sub-region has been aircraft noise complaints data,<sup>1</sup> and two sub-divisions have been identified; a core area which has experienced a relatively high rate of aircraft noise nuisance, and a peripheral area which has experienced a lower rate of nuisance. Diagram 2 indicates the regional setting of the sub-region, and Diagram 3 identifies this sub-division of the area in question.

For present purposes, a sub-region can be regarded as being an area larger than a locality but smaller than a region, which is administered by more than one planning authority and which has an identifiable degree of cohesion along certain selected dimensions. In this particular instance, aircraft noise nuisance is the selected dimension, and the area in question covers the south of Bedfordshire and most of Hertfordshire. Despite the caveat expressed in the previous paragraph to the effect that the Airport sub-region is not necessarily a sub-region in terms other than those identified, it corresponds very closely with one of the sub-divisions of the South-East region advanced by F.J.B. Stilwell in a study for the South-East Economic Planning Council.<sup>2</sup> Stilwell identified thirteen sub-divisions, one of which (an area entitled Outer Metropolitan Area (North)) covers most of Hertfordshire, the south of Bedfordshire and a small part of Buckinghamshire. Stilwell's sub-region had a population of 1,113,000 in 1966, compared with the 1,090,990 of the Airport sub-region (see

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1. See Chapter 6 and Appendix 3.

2. F.J.B. Stilwell. "South-East: Study of Sub-Divisions". South-East Economic Planning Council, London, 1970.

DIAGRAM 3. THE LUTON AIRPORT SUB-REGION.

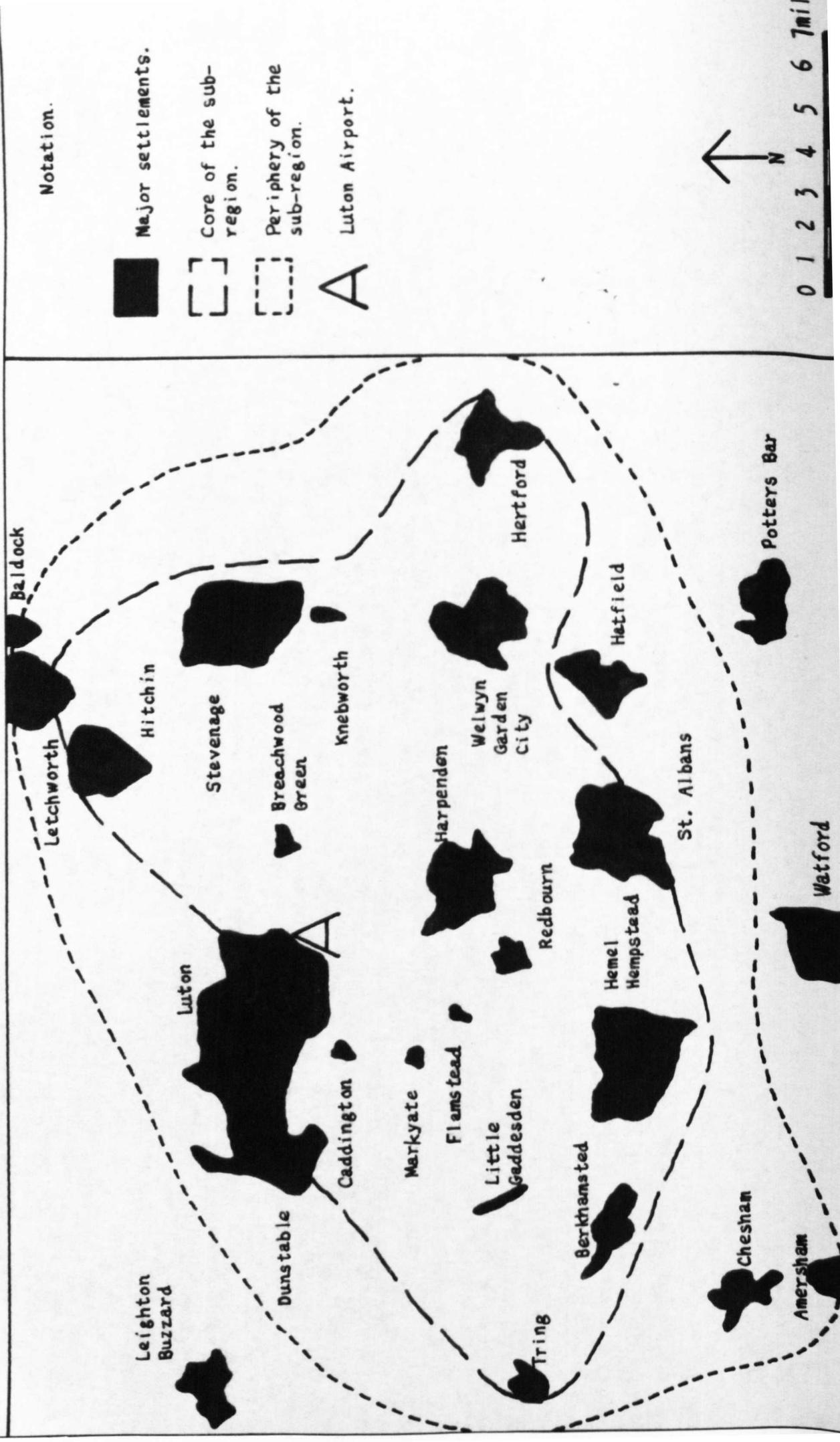


Table 5). The main features of the area identified by Stilwell when compared with the other sub-divisions are its rapid rate of population growth during the 1950s, the very young age composition of its population, its high dependence on manufacturing industry and its low rates of unemployment. Stilwell's data will be used to supplement those obtained from other sources.

#### Location and Land Use.

The major features of the area are identified in Diagram 3. In particular, the Airport itself is located at the south-eastern edge of Luton, the largest town in the area, and to the south and east it is surrounded by a semicircle of medium-sized towns at a radius of between six and twelve miles from the Airport. The area of which this semicircle forms the perimeter (from Hitchin in the north-east to Tring in the south-west, with Luton located along the diameter) is for all intents and purposes the core area of the sub-region.

In general terms, the area is one of rolling and attractive countryside, of which the Chiltern Hills form the major physical feature. During the twentieth century, urbanisation in the area has taken place on a substantial scale, especially since the imposition of the Metropolitan Green Belt effectively transferred the urbanisation pressures created by Greater London away from its periphery and towards the towns and countryside beyond the Green Belt, and the area achieved the greatest absolute increase of population in the period 1951-1966 of all the thirteen areas identified by Stilwell.<sup>3</sup> As a reflection of this rapid growth, four of the South-East's new towns are located within the sub-region, at Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Hemel Hempstead, and the area also has the two established garden cities of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. The area also has a substantial number of free-standing towns, but coalescence has taken place at Luton-Dunstable-Houghton Regis and Hitchin-Letchworth-Baldock. The commuting function of the area is important, and it has more transport corridors to Greater London than any of the other areas identified by Stilwell.<sup>4</sup> The main industries of the area are those of modern technology, such as the motor vehicles industry, which have grown rapidly during the present century and which have contributed to the growth of the area. In contrast to this, the area has retained a large number of attractive agricultural and commuter villages, and the Chilterns provide one of the major areas of open countryside which act as an outlet for the population of Greater London.

Detailed statistical information on land use to supplement a general description of the above nature is very difficult to come by, although Stilwell's study provides some data of interest. The average number of persons per acre in his Outer Metropolitan Area (North) rose from 1.45 in 1951 to 2.00 in 1961

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3. Ibid, page 9.

4. Ibid.

and to 2.18 in 1966, an increase of 50% during the fifteen year period and the second fastest rate of growth recorded amongst the six sub-divisions of the Outer Metropolitan Area.<sup>5</sup> Stilwell defines "urban places" as County Boroughs, Municipal Boroughs, Urban Districts and all Civil Parishes with a population density in excess of two persons per acre, and 85.8% of the home population of the area lived in urban places in 1961 (the second highest figure recorded for the sub-divisions of the Outer Metropolitan Area and higher than for any of the six sub-divisions in the Outer South-East), and such places formed 28.6% of the land surface of the area (the fourth highest figure recorded amongst the thirteen sub-divisions).<sup>6</sup> Thus, the land use picture that is presented is of an area still predominantly rural in terms of overall land use but where the large majority of the population lives in urban areas and where the extent of urbanisation is growing rapidly. Projected forward, these trends would tend to indicate that the area will become progressively more urbanised, and as Chapter 6 will argue an expanded Luton Airport would contribute to this process in no small measure.

#### Population Growth.

Diagram 3 indicated that the area could be viewed as being in two parts; a core area, which has experienced a relatively high rate of aircraft noise nuisance (as judged by aircraft noise complaints), and a peripheral area, which has experienced a lower rate of nuisance. The following analysis refers to the area as a whole unless otherwise specified. Because population figures relate to local authority areas, it is difficult to give a precise indication of the population of the core area, but in 1966 the local authority areas parts of which are included in the core represented 58% of the population of Hertfordshire and 92% of the population of Luton and South Bedfordshire (combined).<sup>7</sup> For 1971, the figures were little different, at 56% and 92% respectively.<sup>8</sup> For these purposes, South Bedfordshire refers to the area defined for the South Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Study, which comprised Luton C.B. Dunstable M.B., Luton R.D. and Leighton-Linslade U.D. The peripheral area also includes parts of Chesham U.D., Amersham R.D. and Wing R.D. in Buckinghamshire, with a combined population of virtually 90,000 in 1966 and virtually 100,000 in 1971, but it also excludes small extreme parts of Hertfordshire. As far as it is

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5. Ibid, page 42.

6. Ibid, page 43.

7. Calculated from the 1966 Census County Reports for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. The local authority areas concerned are those listed in Table 9.

8. 1971 Census, England and Wales. "Preliminary Report". H.M.S.O. London, 1971

possible to judge, these two virtually cancel each other out and so, for convenience of presentation, the sub-region as a whole is treated as having a population broadly equivalent to that of Hertfordshire and South Bedfordshire (including Luton).

Table 5. Population Growth in the Airport Sub-Region.

Area	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961	1966	1971
Luton	36,404	49,978	57,075	68,523	110,381	131,583	153,060	161,178
South Bedfordshire except Luton	25,202	28,205	30,252	29,607	45,768	73,852	82,530	88,324
Hertfordshire	258,423	311,284	333,195	401,206	609,775	832,901	855,400	922,188
Totals	320,029	389,467	420,522	499,336	765,924	1,038,336	1,090,990	1,171,690

Source: Censuses. County Reports, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, 1971 Census, England and Wales. Preliminary Report.

For the period 1901-1966 (the only period for which comparative figures are available at the time of writing), the population of the sub-region grew by 341% and of the South-East as a whole by 162%.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the population of the sub-region has grown at a rate more than double that of the region as a whole during the current century. As near as it is possible to estimate, the population of the local authority areas containing the core area of the sub-region was 745,000 in 1971, virtually 65% of the sub-region as a whole. Generally, growth rates within the sub-region were highest in the early part of the century before World War I, and then after World War II until about 1960. This description masks significant differences within the area, however.

9. South-East Joint Planning Team. "Strategic Plan for the South-East". H.M.S.O. London. 1970 Page 7.

Table 6. Average Annual Population Growth Rates within the Airport Sub-Region.

Area	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1951	1951-1961	1961-1966	1966-1971
Sub-region	2.2%	0.8%	1.9%	2.7%	3.6%	1.0%	1.5%
Luton	3.7%	1.4%	2.0%	3.1%	1.9%	3.3%	1.1%
South Bedfordshire except Luton	1.2%	0.8%	-0.2%	2.7%	6.1%	2.4%	1.5%
Hertfordshire excluding new towns	2.0%	0.7%	2.0%	2.6%	2.1%	-0.2%	1.4%
Hertfordshire including new towns					3.7%	0.5%	1.6%

Sources: Censuses, County Reports. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. 1971 Census. England and Wales. Preliminary Report.

The extent to which the post-war urbanisation of Hertfordshire has been dependent upon the four new towns within the County is illustrated by Table 6. In fact, 51.4% of the growth which took place in the County between 1951 and 1966 was attributable to the four new towns, and for the period 1951-1971 the figure was 46.5%.<sup>10</sup> This change when the period 1966-1971 is included reflects a slowing down of new town building in the area, with the population of both Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City growing by only slightly above 1,000 people during this time as their original targets had been virtually attained.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the impact of a restrictive County planning policy upon population growth can readily be seen, with a net loss of population taking place between 1961 and 1966 when the new towns are excluded. County planning policy is to concentrate population growth into a few selected locations (notably the new towns) and then to treat the rest of the County as if it were green belt.<sup>12</sup> This means that, outside the selected population growth areas, most substantial applications for planning permission are refused. One of the implications of this is that pressures are transferred elsewhere, and Bedfordshire as an adjoining County receives many of them. This is one major factor in the very rapid growth rates achieved by South Bedfordshire since World War II.<sup>13</sup>

10. Calculated from figures in the 1951, 1966 and 1971 Census Reports, op.cit.

11. Ibid.

12. Interview with A.D. Raby (Assistant County Planning Officer, Hertfordshire County Council). 18th. November, 1970.

Urbanisation in the south of Bedfordshire has been much more rapid than in the remainder of the County until very recently, with the share of the south (including Luton) rising from 35.9% of the total County population in 1901 to 55.0% by 1966 before dropping back slightly to 53.8% in 1971. As Table 6 has already indicated, until World War II the rapid industrialisation of Luton was a major feature of this growth, but after the War and the advent of planning controls the transfer of pressure from the Hertfordshire area was an added factor. Throughout Luton Council's long fight for County Borough status between 1945 and 1964, the fact that the south of the County (and particularly Luton) had been growing much more rapidly than the north was a source of much friction between the County Council and the (then) Municipal Borough Council, felt that County planning policy was being directed towards channelling as much of the south's growth as possible away from Luton, in an attempt to frustrate the Council over the County Borough status issue.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the Municipal Borough Council felt that County planning policy was being directed towards channelling as much of the south's growth as possible away from Luton, in an attempt to frustrate the Council over the County Borough status issue.<sup>16</sup> As Table 6 indicates, between 1951 and 1961 Luton grew at a rate of less than one third of that of the rest of the south of Bedfordshire. Whether this was a deliberate result of a County planning policy geared towards the frustration of Luton Council's ambitions appears to depend on whether one is looking through Luton or Bedfordshire spectacles. The evidence of the period 1961-1966 is of little value either way, since the apparently rapid growth rate of Luton during that time was largely a function of the creation of new boundaries for the County Borough in 1964.<sup>17</sup> The evidence of the period 1966-1971 indicates that the growth rate in the south of Bedfordshire excluding Luton had slowed down substantially when compared with the experience of the previous fifteen years, and that the growth rate of Luton was still beneath that experienced by the rest of the south of the County. Thus, the evidence is inconclusive, except that the acquisition of County Borough status and the consequent transfer of planning powers to the new Luton Council might have been a factor in the narrowing of the growth rate gap between Luton and the rest of the south of the County which occurred during the period 1966-1971.

#### Employment.

The employment structures of the two Counties of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire changed drastically between 1901 and 1966. In 1901, the three categories of farming, forestry, mining and quarrying (18.8%), clothing (24.6%) and domestic offices or services (14.8%) accounted for nearly 60% of the total number of employed persons in Bedfordshire.<sup>18</sup> The main feature of clothing manu-

13. Interview with J. Hubbard (Chief Planner, Bedfordshire County Council), 13th July, 1971.

14. Census Reports 1901, 1966 and 1971, op. cit.

15. J. Dyer, F. Stygall and J. Dony. "The Story of Luton". White Crescent Press. Luton, 1964. Pages 213-218.

16. Ibid.

facture was the hat industry of Luton, which was the town's major industry in 1901 and gave employment to 28.6% of the town's occupied males aged ten or over.<sup>19</sup> Hertfordshire did not have such a significant clothing industry (although it still accounted for 8.3% of employment in 1901), but together with farming, forestry, mining and quarrying (15.9%) and domestic offices or services (22.6%) the three categories still accounted for nearly 50% of employment in the County in 1901.<sup>20</sup> The fact that domestic offices or services accounted for approximately 50% more employees (pro rata) in Hertfordshire than in Bedfordshire possibly indicates a more significant "upper crust" to Hertfordshire society than in Bedfordshire, although the numbers living on their own means in the two Counties were similar (2.1% of the population aged ten and over in Bedfordshire and 2.4% in Hertfordshire).<sup>21</sup>

When the general structure of employment in the two Counties in 1901 is compared, it is clear that Bedfordshire had a much more significant manufacturing industry component, whereas Hertfordshire was much more significant on the services side.

Table 7. Structure of Employment in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, 1901.

	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire
Primary.	18.8%	15.9%
Manufacturing.	35.8%	21.3%
General Service.	{ 39.5%	{ 54.9%
Professional and administrative service.	45.4% { 5.9%	62.8% { 7.9%

Source: compiled from 1901 Census. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Reports. Table 32. In general terms, "primary" refers to agriculture, forestry, mining and quarrying, "manufacturing" to the manufacture of goods from raw materials, "general service" to the provision of services (including construction and transport) and "professional and administrative service" to those aspects of service industry specifically described as such in the census reports. The occupational categories changed greatly between the Censuses of 1901 and 1966, and, although every effort has been made to keep the four categories used in Tables 7 and 8 constant for the two dates for comparative purposes, figures should only be regarded as being approximate.

By 1966, substantial changes had taken place. The three categories of farming, forestry, mining and quarrying, clothing and domestic offices or

17. Ibid. Page 219.

18. 1901 Census. Bedfordshire County Report. Table 32.

services, which in 1901 had accounted for nearly 60% of employment in Bedfordshire and nearly 50% in Hertfordshire, accounted for 8% and 4.5% respectively by 1966.<sup>22</sup> Their place had been taken largely by electricals and engineering and by professional and administrative services, which together employed 48.9% in Bedfordshire (11.2% in 1901) and 51.3% in Hertfordshire (11.3% in 1901) in 1966.<sup>23</sup> A comparison of the general structure of employment in the two Counties in 1966 will illustrate the changes which have taken place.

Table 8. Structure of Employment in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, 1966.

	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire
Primary.	3.7%	2.6%
Manufacturing.	40.6%	33.3%
General Service.	55.7% { 28.0% 27.7%	64.1% { 28.0% 36.1%
Professional and administrative service.		

Source: compiled from 1966 Census. Economic Activity County Leaflets for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Table I. Information from the 1971 Census on employment was not available at the time of writing.

When Tables 7 and 8 are compared, certain general features stand out. Employment in the primary sector has fallen rapidly as a result both of increasing mechanisation and of a general drift away from the land. The manufacturing sector has grown significantly, as has the services sector. Within the services sector, however, general service has declined substantially and professional and administrative service has increased markedly.

Hertfordshire's growth in this respect has been affected very substantially both by commuting to the London area and by the designation and subsequent growth of the new towns and their attraction of industry.<sup>24</sup> Bedfordshire's growth, on the other hand, has been affected particularly by its association with one industry--the manufacture of motor vehicles. This has centred particularly around Vauxhall Motors (a division of General Motors, which has four large factories in the Luton/Dunstable area) and Commer Cars (a division of Chrysler U.K. with two large factories in the area). By 1969, 32.2% of the jobs in Luton Employment Exchange Area were

19. Ibid. Table 35A.

20. 1901 Census. Hertfordshire County Report. Table 32.

21. 1901 Census. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Reports. Table 32.

22. 1966 Census. Economic Activity County Leaflets for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Table 1.

23. Ibid.

in the motor vehicles industry, and another 29.0% were in other manufacturing industries (many of which were making products for the vehicle industry).<sup>25</sup> The existence of such high-wage industries has acted as a magnet, and migrant labour has been a feature of the high rates of population growth experienced in the south of Bedfordshire.<sup>26</sup> This, in turn, is reputed to have made a great deal of difference to the social structure of the town.<sup>27</sup> It is clear even from this brief appraisal that significant differences in terms of socio-economic structure do exist between the component parts of the sub-region, and these will now be explored in more detail.

#### Socio-economic Structure.

Information on the socio-economic structure of the area was not available from the 1901 Census, although it has been noted that the 50% greater employment in domestic offices or services in Hertfordshire than in Bedfordshire was possibly indicative of a more significant "upper crust" in the former. Specific and detailed information was available from the 1966 Census, however, relating to males aged fifteen and over.<sup>28</sup> The most significant factor appears to be the proportion of managerial and professional workers, and local authority areas

24. Interview with A.D. Raby, *op. cit.*

25. Department of Employment information supplied to the Planning Department, Luton County Borough Council.

26. J. H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer and J. Platt. "Volume 1. The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour". Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1968. "Volume 2. The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour". Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1968. "Volume 3. The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure". Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1969. The authors were interested in testing the theory of "embourgeoisement", which is "...the thesis that, as manual workers and their families achieve relatively high incomes and living standards, they assume a way of life which is more characteristically "middle class" and become in fact progressively assimilated into middle-class society;" (Volume 1, page 1). Luton was chosen as the testing-ground for this thesis on the basis that it was probable that, if embourgeoisement had not taken place in Luton, then it would be unlikely to be taking place in British society to any significant extent (Volume 1, pages 2 and 3). They interviewed 283 male workers, and found that, of this sample, 71% were not natives of Luton and district and 56% had parents living entirely outside the area (Volume 2, page 9). The authors concluded that there were many areas in which the sample had remained distinctively working-class (including in attitudes to national politics), although they noted some tendencies towards increasing material possessions (Volume 3, pages 157-195).

27. *Ibid.* See also G. Turner. "The Car Makers". Eyre and Spottiswoode. London. 1963. Pages 101-115 (the chapter describing Luton is entitled, "Gadgetville, UK"). Turner describes Luton as a town hovering between two societies; the "...comfortable English town, bucolic and in repose" (page 101), and "...the glittering gadgetry...refrigerators and motor vehicles...which have drawn men from the far corners of the nation to share the new wealth...(and) which have injected into Luton a perpetual goldrush mentality" (page 101).

28. At the time of writing data relating to the socio-economic structure of the populations of local authority areas were not available from the 1971 Census.

in the core of the sub-region have been ranked accordingly in Table 9. Hertfordshire has 50% more such people than Bedfordshire. Of the twenty-one non-County authorities included in the Table, it is notable that the three within Bedfordshire fill three of the bottom four places, and that the top seventeen places are all filled by authorities within Hertfordshire. Harpenden, at the head of the list, has more than three times as many managerial and professional workers (pro rata) as has Luton at the foot of the list. Both Luton and Dunstable (as motor vehicle-producing towns) have a high proportion of skilled workers, as do the two new towns of Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead. Both Luton and the rural area around it have a high proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and the lowest proportions tend to fall to those areas of Hertfordshire with the highest proportions of managerial and professional workers.

Table 9. Socio-economic Structure of the Core of the Luton Airport

Local Authority Area.	<u>Sub-Region.</u>		
	Managerial and Professional.	Skilled.	Semi-skilled and Unskilled.
Hertfordshire C.C.	21.5%	55.4%	23.1%
Bedfordshire C.C.	14.3%	56.6%	29.1%
Harpenden U.E.	40.1%	46.9%	13.0%
Berkhamsted R.D.	35.8%	41.2%	23.0%
Berkhamsted U.D.	28.4%	53.6%	18.0%
Hertford R.D.	27.0%	46.1%	26.9%
Welwyn R.D.	26.9%	52.4%	20.7%
Hemel Hempstead R.D.	24.3%	52.3%	23.4%
Hatfield R.D.	24.1%	55.2%	20.7%
St. Albans R.D.	23.4%	56.2%	20.4%
Welwyn Garden City U.D.	21.7%	55.3%	23.0%
St. Albans M.B.	21.1%	58.0%	20.9%
Hitchin R.D.	21.0%	47.7%	31.3%
Hertford M.B.	20.6%	59.0%	20.4%
Tring U.D.	20.3%	53.0%	26.7%
Letchworth U.D.	20.1%	58.7%	21.2%
Hitchin U.D.	19.2%	58.3%	22.5%
Watford R.D.	18.9%	57.8%	23.3%
Hemel Hempstead M.B.	16.9%	58.1%	25.0%
Dunstable M.B.	16.4%	59.1%	24.5%
Stevenage U.D.	15.6%	60.9%	23.5%
Luton R.D.	14.5%	54.4%	31.1%
Luton C.B.	12.4%	58.2%	29.4%

Source: compiled from 1966 Census County Reports for Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Table 14 (Males aged 15 and over). Semi-skilled and unskilled workers includes armed forces and inadequately described occupations. Statistics for local authority areas with populations of less than 15,000 were not published in the Census, but were supplied on request by the Census Branch of the General Register Office.

### Local Planning Authorities.

There are three local planning authorities within the area of concern; Hertfordshire County Council, Bedfordshire County Council and Luton County Borough Council. A fourth (Buckinghamshire County Council) lies partly within the periphery of the Airport sub-region, but until the public inquiry of January, 1972 the County Council did not involve itself in the Luton Airport policy-making process, and so it will not be discussed here. In addition, there are three new town Development Corporations (Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield are under one Corporation, and Hemel Hempstead and Stevenage each have one of their own), which are not local planning authorities in their own right, although they are not responsible directly to the County Council on planning matters but to the Department of the Environment. The Development Corporations will not be examined here.

Of the forty-five County Councils in England in 1969, Hertfordshire ranked eighth in terms of population size (with 903,390) and Bedfordshire ranked thirty-third (with 287,270). In terms of rateable value per head of population, Hertfordshire ranks highest of the English Counties, with £63-8-2d. (£63-41), and Bedfordshire ranks sixth with £52-4-6d. (£52-22½). Hertfordshire levied a rate of 9-8½d. (£0-48½), which was the twentieth lowest, and Bedfordshire's rate at 10-2d. (£0-51), was the thirtieth lowest.<sup>29</sup> Thus, both in terms of population and spending power, Hertfordshire County Council ranks as one of the biggest County authorities (and therefore, presumably, one of the most influential with Central Government<sup>30</sup>) in the country, whereas in population terms Bedfordshire County Council is one of the smaller Counties and in spending power it ranks as of middling importance. In general terms, therefore, its influence with Central Government is presumably less than that of Hertfordshire.

Of the seventy-nine County Borough Councils in England in 1969, Luton ranked twenty-seventh in population terms, with a 1969 population of 156,690. Because of its industrial base in motor vehicles, its rateable value per head of £66-6-3d. (£66-31) was the fourth highest. Both political parties on the Council took pride in keeping the rates as low as possible, and with a 1969 rate of 11.5d. (£0-57) Luton ranked second lowest among County Boroughs.<sup>31</sup> Thus, in population terms, Luton is a middle-rank County Borough, but it is also one of the wealthiest of the County Boroughs. Even so, its influence with Central Government, in general terms, would almost certainly not compare with that of the large County Councils (such as Hertfordshire) or the large County Borough Councils (such as

29. "The Municipal Year Book and Public Utilities Directory, 1971". Municipal Journal. London. 1971. Pages 778 and 779.

30. J.A.G. Griffith. "Central Departments and Local Authorities". George Allen and Unwin. London. 1966. Page 528. Boaden calls this conventional wisdom into question, however, arguing that size and wealth alone are not always the major determinants of this relationship, but that many other factors may be significant

Birmingham, with a population in excess of 1,000,000), especially since County Borough status has only recently been acquired.<sup>32</sup>

### Conclusions.

This brief survey of a few of the major aspects of the Luton Airport sub-region has indicated that significant differences exist between its constituent parts. Many of these differences appear to relate to the distinction between Hertfordshire and the south of Bedfordshire; the differences between Luton and the rest of the south of Bedfordshire are by no means so acute, although they still exist. These differences will recur constantly in the analysis that follows, as important (and sometimes explanatory) features of the phenomena under examination, and they form a significant part of the backcloth against which the processes are played out.

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including the quality and dynamism of the officers and Council members of the authority. N.T. Boaden, "Urban Policy-Making". Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1971. Particularly in relation to Hertfordshire, a further complicating factor might be the fact that it contains either the homes or the second homes of many civil servants, M.P.'s, industrialists and other "top people", who might as a consequence take a special interest in its affairs from the national level.

31. Municipal Year Book. op. cit. Page 902.

32. Griffith. op. cit. Page 528.

## Chapter 6. The Issues.

### Introduction.

Most of this study is concerned with the major arguments in favour of and in opposition to the expansion of Luton Airport as they appear to be perceived by the participant organisations in the Airport policy-making process. Clearly, the issues as they are perceived by the participants in the process form the ground over which the whole process is structured, and thus an understanding of the process from the viewpoints of the participants requires an attempt to appreciate the issues from a similar standpoint. At the same time, it is possible to contribute to an understanding and an analysis of the process as a whole via an attempt to make as objective an appraisal as an independent research worker is capable of making of the validity of some of the arguments which have been advanced in relation to certain specific issues. In this manner, the "subjective" appraisals of the participants and the "objective" appraisal of the author are seen as complementary aspects of an understanding of the process as a whole. This particular Chapter presents the analysis of the author.

After a brief examination of the main indicators of the growth of the Airport over the previous decade, the analysis will concentrate upon the five arguments (in descending order of importance) which have dominated the debate over the Airport's future:-

- 1) noise;
- 2) profitability;
- 3) the place of Luton Airport in the developing airports system;
- 4) spatial planning considerations; and,
- 5) employment.

It is convenient to peg the analysis around the situation and the arguments advanced at the time of the public inquiry of January, 1972, since the package of proposals then under examination was intended to look ahead throughout the decade of the 1970s.<sup>1</sup>

### The Growth of Luton Airport.

During the 1960s, Luton Airport's rate of expansion in terms of several dimensions was very substantial.<sup>2</sup> To provide a context for the analysis which follows, tables as to this growth in terms of passengers, commercial air passenger transport movements, profitability, employment and aircraft noise are included. Relatively little comment is required on them, since they are able to speak for themselves. It is clear from all of them that the Luton Airport of 1971 was of an entirely different order from the Luton Airport of 1960, and the analysis seeks to elucidate some of the problems which derive from this change and which can be expected to be contingent upon further changes.

Table 10. Passengers and Passenger Transport Movements, Luton Airport.

Year	Passengers	Commercial Air Passenger Transport Movements	Passengers per Commercial Movement
Pre-1961	insignificant	insignificant	--
1961	8,305	580	14
1962	42,186	1,258	34
1963	123,892	3,153	39
1964	171,091	4,248	40
1965	206,856	3,895	53
1966	357,109	6,033	59
1967	412,958	7,839	53
1968	690,610	9,513	73
1969	1,487,685	18,136	82
1970	1,963,570	22,354	88
1971	2,703,392	27,923	97

Source: Board of Trade/Department of Trade and Industry. Business  
Monitor. Civil Aviation Series. CA2. Air Passengers.

Growth along these dimensions has been very rapid, although not uniformly so. Relatively, the period between 1963 and 1967 was one of slower growth after the initial impetus of the early years of the decade, but the growth rate accelerated after 1967 helped substantially by the introduction of jets in 1968. Growth of this magnitude is regarded by members of Luton Council as being a source of considerable prestige, with Luton having risen to the top of the "municipal airports league".<sup>3</sup>

1. The package is described in more detail in Chapter 9 and Appendix 8.
2. The many factors involved in this expansion process are detailed in Chapters 8 and 9.
3. See Appendix 2.

Table 11. Trading Account, Luton Airport.

Accumulated deficit prior to 1960-61. £46,855.

	Balance of income over expenditure
1960-61	-£6,094.
1961-62	-£19,825.
1962-63	-£17,687.
1963-64	-£3,512.
1964-65	-£21,066.
1965-66	-£25,156.
1966-67	-£55,367.
1967-68	-£118,415.
1968-69	+ £43,367.
1969-70	+ £199,460.
1970-71	+ £318,000.
1971-72 (estimate).	+ £630,000.
Net loss up to 1967-68.	£313,977.
Net profit 1968-69 to 1971-72.	£1,190,827.
Cumulative profit to date.	£876,850.

Source: Borough Treasurer's Department. County Borough of Luton.

The picture here is very straightforward, with the Airport showing annual losses up to and including 1967-68 (with the heaviest losses in the years 1964-65-1967-68 inclusive), until a substantial net deficit had accumulated. From 1968-69 onwards, however, the Airport showed increasing annual profits and this also coincided with the introduction of jets. During the four financial years from and including 1968-69, the net losses of the previous thirty years had been wiped out and a cumulative profit of nearly £900,000 had been built up, much of which was used for rates relief.

Table 12. Estimated on-site Employment (summer season), Luton Airport.

Year.	Employees	Passengers handled per employee.
Up to 1961	not significant	--
1962	170	240
1963	350	354
1964	500	342
1965	630	328
1966	900	397
1967	1,250	330
1968	1,650	419
1969	2,500	595
1970	3,000	655
1971	4,000	675

Source: Planning Department. County Borough of Luton.

The labour force has built up very rapidly throughout the 1960s, to the point where the number of jobs provided on-site has become a political factor of some potential significance. To the extent that the number of passengers handled per employee ~~can be used as~~ a criterion of the efficiency of the labour force, a steady improvement has taken place, although the period between 1963 and 1967 was one in which no real gains were made in this respect.

Table 13. Noise Complaints, Luton Airport.

1938-1967	284.
1968	787.
1969	1,004.
1970	2,038.
1971	1,681.

Source: Airport Director's Department. County Borough of Luton.

Prior to 1968, aircraft noise was not a substantial problem, but the introduction of jets in that year changed the picture completely. The number of complaints recorded in 1968 was nearly treble the number for the whole of the previous thirty years consequent upon the introduction of jets, and the

former figure was itself nearly trebled in 1970 before the numbers fell back slightly in 1971.

Whilst the overall rate of expansion during the 1960s has been high, after an initial period of very rapid growth the position of the Airport was consolidated during the middle of the decade, and then in both absolute and relative terms the growth rate increased again with the introduction of jets. This ushered in a period of growing profitability after years of losses, but it also brought a spate of complaints about aircraft noise, and it is as a result of this factor that much of the political pressure against the continued expansion of the Airport has developed.

#### Aircraft Noise.

Aircraft noise nuisance is measured in Britain by the noise and number index (N.N.I.), a composite figure which takes account of the noisiness of individual flights and the average daily number of flights. It was devised by the Wilson Committee and was based upon two tests, both of which were carried out in 1961. A jury of sixty people under different conditions during three days was asked to make subjective ratings of the annoyance of aircraft noise, which were then compared with noise levels measured in decibels, and a sample survey of 1,731 people was carried out in relation to reactions to different kinds of noises within a radius of ten miles of London (Heathrow) Airport. The results were then compared, and the correlations between noise levels and reactions to them were analysed.<sup>4</sup> At any one point on the ground, the N.N.I. level is calculated by the expression, average peak noise level (PNdB) +  $15 \log_{10} N - 80$ , where N is the number of noise incidents during the specified period. Human reaction to aircraft noise is measured in PNdB, a unit which weights the different frequencies making up a noise to take account of the relative loudness or noisiness actually perceived by the hearer. The PNdB scale is logarithmic, so that every increase of ten represents a doubling of the apparent loudness, and the figure of 80 which is subtracted to complete the N.N.I. expression takes account of the fact that it is only above 80 PNdB that aircraft noise is distinguishable from the ambient noise level. Contours can be drawn by joining together points with an equal N.N.I. rating, and the work of the Wilson Committee indicated that at 35 N.N.I. people began to recognise a threat to their living environment as a result of aircraft noise,

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4. Committee on the Problem of Noise (Wilson Committee). "Noise. Final Report". Cmd. 2056. H.M.S.O. London. 1963.

and that it reached an unreasonable level somewhere in the range 50 - 60 N.N.I.<sup>5</sup>

Since the publication of the report of the Wilson Committee in 1963, the concept of the N.N.I. has come increasingly into disrepute. A major factor in this has been the work of the Roskill Commission on the Third London Airport, which concluded that many of the criticisms have force but that at present nothing better exists.<sup>6</sup> The major criticisms which have been advanced can be summarised as follows:-

- a) the social survey results are not necessarily applicable to airport situations other than Heathrow;
- b) the social survey is in any case out of date;
- c) the quality of the social survey is doubtful since many of the questions used were phrased in such a way that they might have suggested certain "correct" answers to respondents;
- d) insufficient attention is paid to the differences in noise levels and qualities emanating from individual aircraft types;
- e) significantly different factors are at work in relation to the night noise problem, since one or two incidents can disturb a night's sleep without recording a very high N.N.I. level;
- f) the ambient noise levels around most airports are probably much lower than around Heathrow, which means that 80 is probably too large a figure to subtract from the expression in most cases;
- g) differences in ground form can make a substantial difference to perceptions of aircraft noise nuisance, as can differences in air temperature; and
- h) observed noise complaint patterns do not relate closely to N.N.I. contours.<sup>7</sup>

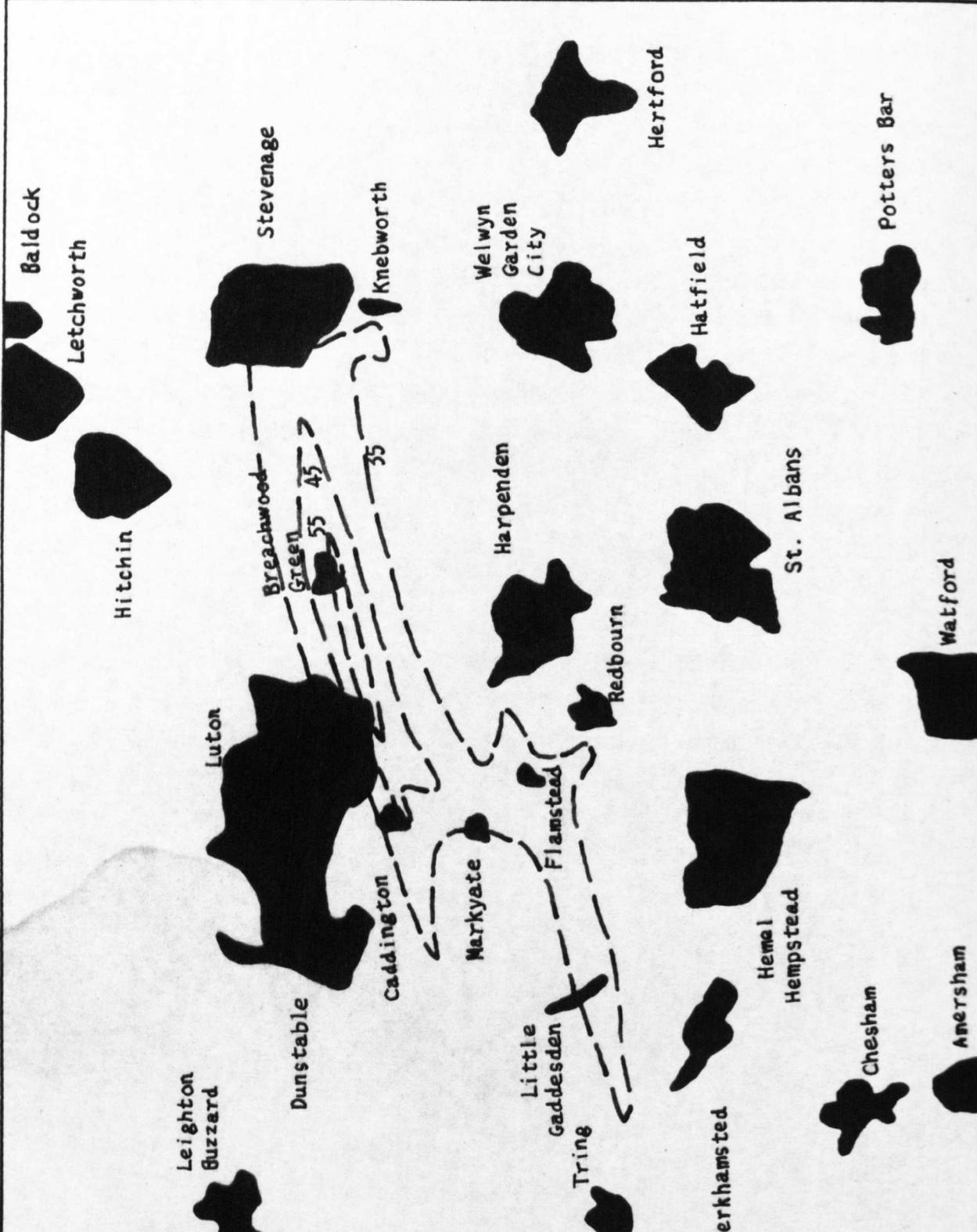
Many attempts have been made to improve the N.N.I. formulation, although to date none have been widely accepted. The 1961 social survey of the environs of Heathrow was repeated in 1967, with a sample of 4,699 over a wider area than that used for the original survey. Publication of the results of this survey was delayed until 1971, although it did little to change the situation other than to confirm that night-time N.N.I.'s were not valid and to argue that for daytime the equation ought to include a weighting to account for different ambient noise levels.<sup>8</sup> Professor Large has suggested that the number of

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5. Ibid, pages 75 and 208. The complex science of acoustics is introduced in a relatively simple manner in R. Taylor. "Noise". Pelican Books, London, 1970. Pages 52-61, 101-107, 139-154 and 206-229 are especially relevant for present purposes. A useful summary of the present position with regard to aircraft noise is also contained in, Board of Trade. "Action Against Aircraft Noise". H.M.S.O. London. 1969.

6. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report". H.M.S.O. London, 1971. Pages 57-63. A similar conclusion was reached by the Research Committee of the Noise Advisory Council in, "Aircraft Noise: Should the Noise and Number Index be Revised?" H.M.S.O. London. 1972.

DIAGRAM 4. N.N.I. CONTOURS FOR LUTON AIRPORT, 1971.

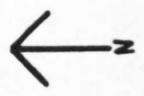


Notation.



Major settlements.  
 1971 daytime N.N.I. contours.

Source: evidence of C.S. Waters on behalf of Luton County Borough Council to the public inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, January, 1972.



movements taken into account in the equation should be weighted according to the time of day, so that night and evening movements are penalised more heavily (in N.N.I. terms) than those during the day.<sup>9</sup> Such suggestions, however, are essentially marginal improvements to a concept which is of doubtful validity, although nothing better has as yet gained general acceptance. The concept is probably of most value when seeking relative comparisons of the situations likely to obtain at the same airport at different points in time. As an indicator of the actual distribution of noise nuisance occurring at any one time the N.N.I. concept is unlikely to be an accurate guide, but it can give a useful general idea of the degree of change likely at any one airport between two relatively closely defined sets of circumstances. Even here, however, the experience of the Luton Airport situation would counsel caution in the use of the concept, as Table 14 indicates. The concept is of least value when used in an attempt to make an absolute comparison of two or more different airport situations, because the parameters of the situations are likely to be sufficiently different as to render impossible the use of the concept under closely controlled circumstances.

Table 14. Population within 35 N.N.I. Contours, Luton Airport.

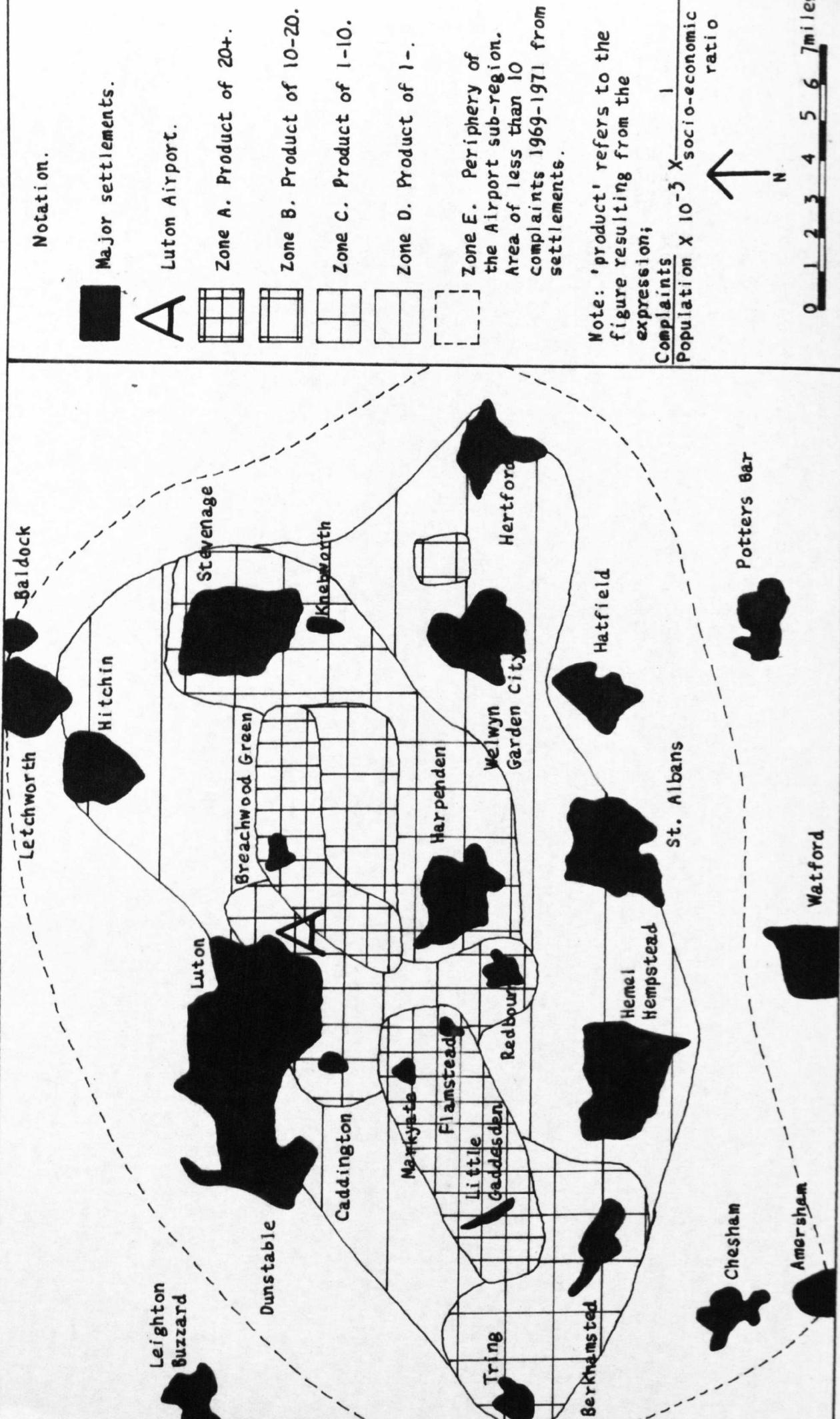
Year	Richards	Waters
1969	3,774	
1970	4,496	
1971		34,050
1972		45,550
1976 with TriStar		46,350
1976 without TriStar		141,150

Sources: evidence of Dr. Richards and Mr. Waters on behalf of Luton County Borough Council to the public inquiries on Luton Airport in March, 1970 and January, 1972 respectively. Dr. Richards and Mr. Waters are colleagues at Loughborough University of Technology, and Mr. Waters actually did the work for Dr. Richards' evidence at the 1970 inquiry, and so the two sets of figures ought to display some consistency. Nevertheless, the large jump from 1970 to 1971 is surprising, especially since it has already been shown in Table 13 that noise complaints declined between the two years, and it is probable that the 1969 and 1970 figures were considerable under-estimates. The figures for 1976 were fiercely disputed at the public inquiry in January, 1972, and the fact that they deal with future points in time, when combined with the other criticisms of the N.N.I. concept which have been advanced, should render them liable to being treated with the greatest caution.

7. These criticisms were summarised by Professor J. B. Large of the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research, University of Southampton, in an interview on 14th. June 1971.

8. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. "Second Survey of Aircraft Noise

DIAGRAM 5. THE PATTERN OF NOISE COMPLAINTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LUTON AIRPORT, 1969-1971.



The area covered by the 35 N.N.I. contour for 1971 is shown in Diagram 4. It is substantially smaller than that shown in Diagram 5, which derives from noise complaints information for the three years 1969-1971 inclusive. The total number of complaints recorded by the Airport Director's Department, Luton County Borough Council, over this three-year period was 4,723 (Table 13). Of these, 1,892 (40%) came from settlements lying within the 1971 35 N.N.I. contour for Luton Airport, which means that well over half of the total number of complaints recorded over the full period came from areas outside those covered by the 35 N.N.I. contour at its maximum extent during that period. This is perhaps a measure of the degree to which N.N.I. contours underrepresent the actual distribution of annoyance from aircraft noise. Thus, noise complaints are probably a better basis for representing the actual distribution of aircraft noise annoyance in past situations than are N.N.I. contours.

Each complaint itself represents a degree of annoyance sufficient to persuade the individual to go to the trouble of writing to or telephoning the Airport authority. The number of complaints over the three-year period emanating from any one settlement or area depends upon its location in relation to aircraft activity and its population. In addition, propensity to complain about aircraft noise has been shown to be directly related to the socio-economic structure of the settlement, however this is measured.<sup>10</sup> The complaint rates for settlements used to prepare Diagram 5 attempt to allow for the greater propensity to complain of communities higher up the socio-economic ladder, and have been calculated according to the following expression;<sup>11</sup>

$$\frac{\text{Complaints}}{\text{Population} \times 10^{-3}} \times \frac{1}{\text{Socio-economic ratio.}}$$

It can be argued that complaints statistics are an unreliable basis for an expression of the distribution of aircraft noise nuisance because they

Annoyance around London (Heathrow) Airport". H.M.S.O. London. 1971.

9. J. B. Large. "Containing Aircraft Noise Nuisance in the U.K.". Physics Bulletin. Volume 22, number 11. November, 1971. Pages 659-662.

10. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, op. cit. Page 16. K.P. Shepherd. "Luton Airport: a Study of Complaints due to Aircraft Noise". Unpublished B.Sc. dissertation, University of Southampton. 1971. Page 12. Shepherd measured socio-economic structure by asking four local estate agents to rate communities in terms of their residential desirability from 1 (most desirable) to 5 (least desirable), and then by averaging the results. The range was from 1.0 (Harpenden, Berkhamsted, Studham, Potten End) to 3.5 (Dunstable, Stevenage, Luton, Hitchin). Ibid. Page 34. This method is unnecessarily crude and subjective, although it is unlikely to distort the general validity of his finding.

11. See Appendix 3 for details of the method, the data used and the calculations.

depend a great deal upon the vigour of an anti-aircraft noise lobby.<sup>12</sup> Theoretically, this is possible, although the existence in strength of such a lobby would probably be another manifestation of the noise nuisance, and it would have to be demonstrated that the lobby was able to persuade people to complain gratuitously to a considerable extent for the proposition that the complaints recorded over-represent "reality" to be valid. In the case of the lobby in the vicinity of Luton Airport, there is very little evidence that people have been urged to any significant extent to submit formal complaints, and, indeed, it would be very difficult for such a policy to be sustained successfully over a period as long as three years. What the existence of such a lobby can do, however, is to make the mechanisms of complaint known to its members, so that there are no procedural difficulties in their way if they wish to register a formal complaint. In this sense, it can be argued that the lobby promotes complaints, although this is not the same thing as arguing that the complaints do not represent genuine annoyance, since the onus is still upon the individual to exert sufficient effort to register a formal complaint. Indeed, the obverse is probably true, since the removal of procedural difficulties for genuine complaints probably makes the global statistics more representative of the distribution and scale of aircraft noise nuisance.

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that complaints statistics under- rather than over-represent the degree of nuisance caused by aircraft noise. The statistics refer only to those complaints recorded by the Airport Director's Department of Luton County Borough Council. An unrecorded number of complaints also go to other local authorities, to the local M.P.s<sup>13</sup> or direct to the airlines, and these are not usually passed on for formal recording. In addition, a large number of complaints are made direct to the Department of Trade and Industry (which until relatively recently only recorded them spasmodically), and these also are not passed on to the County Borough Council. In 1970, the Department received 290 complaints about noise from aircraft using Luton Airport, and in 1971 this figure rose to 354, representing an addition of 14.25% and 21.05% respectively to the numbers officially recorded for the two years.<sup>14</sup>

The largest volume of complaint of all remains unrecorded because it never

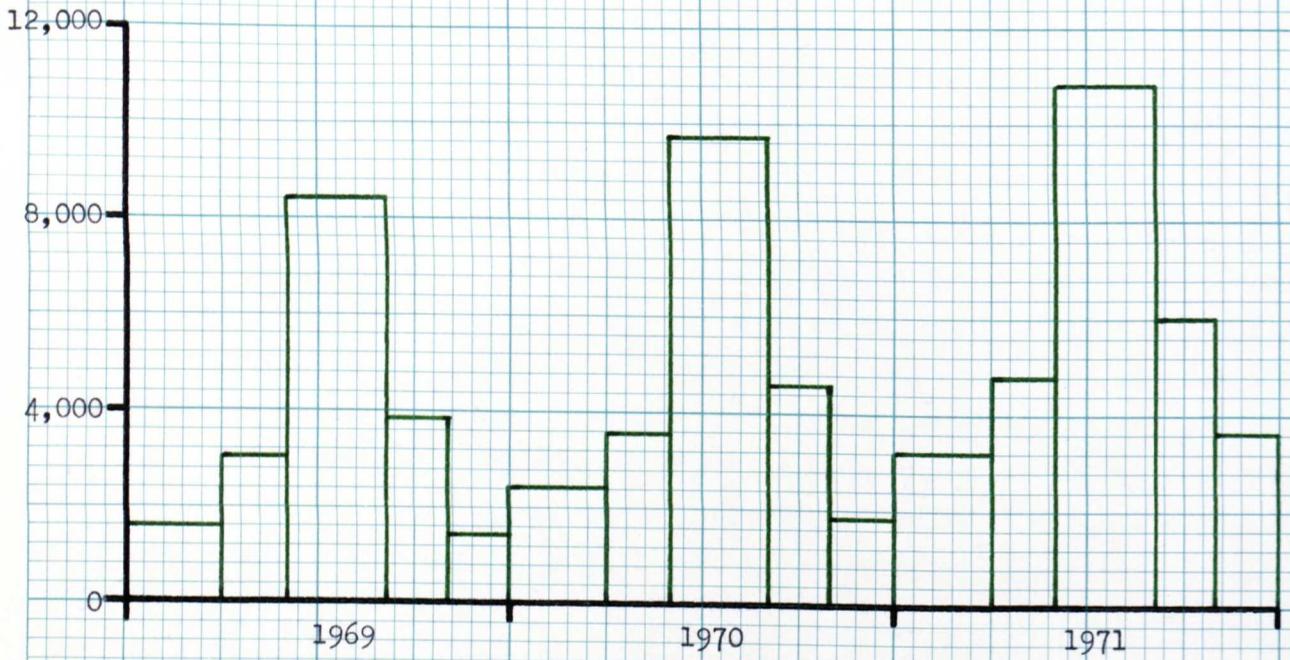
12. Interview with Professor Large, op. cit. C.S. Waters in cross-examination at the public inquiry in January, 1972.

13. For example Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P., told the public inquiry of January 1972 that between September, 1970 and September, 1971 she had received 800 letters on the subject of Luton Airport, only five of which were in any sense favourable.

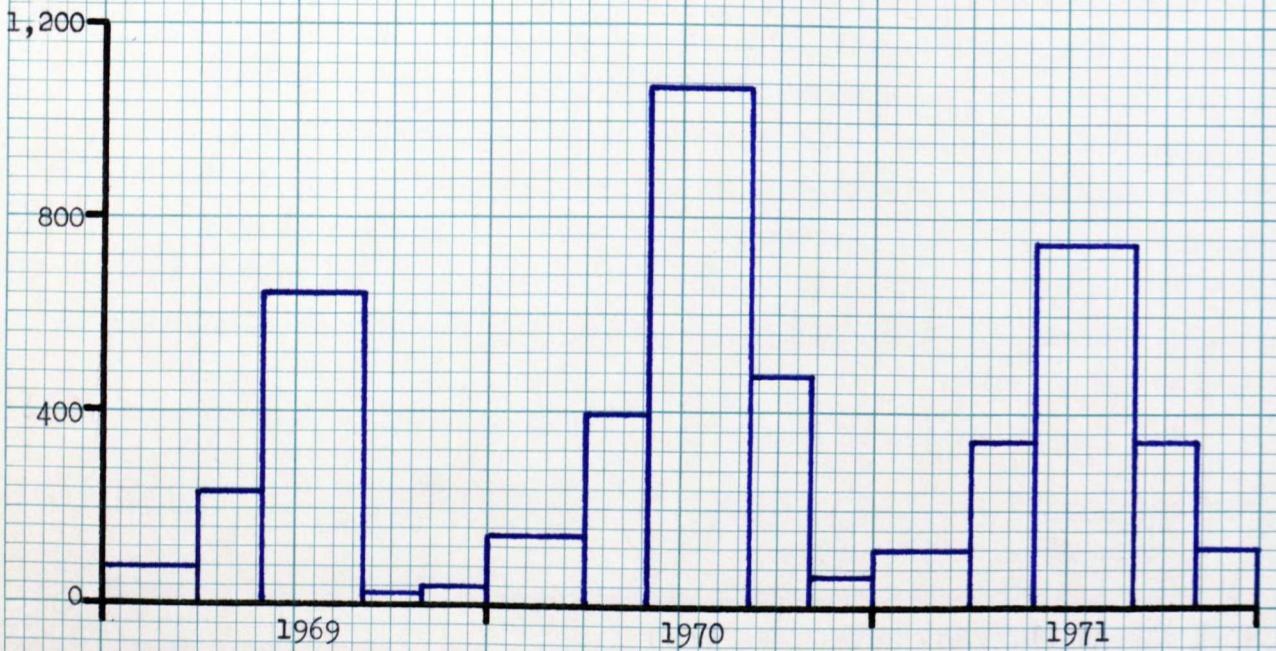
14. For details of complaints to the Department of Trade and Industry, see Table 37, Appendix 5. As a result of this factor, the add-on in 1970 (1971 figures in brackets) would be 30% (20%) at Heathrow, 12% (6%) at Gatwick and 5% (5%) at Stansted.

DIAGRAM 6. NOISE COMPLAINTS AND COMMERCIAL  
AIR TRANSPORT MOVEMENTS, LUTON AIRPORT, 1969-1971.

COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORT MOVEMENTS



NOISE COMPLAINTS



gets to the point of a formal complaint actually being submitted. This is complaint in normal conversations with family, friends, workmates and other acquaintances, and it is obviously very difficult to collect evidence on the scope of this. One survey (known as the KASARAN survey<sup>15</sup>) has been undertaken, however, which perhaps throws an interesting light upon this problem. The survey was centred around the small town of Knebworth in Hertfordshire and covered the period 7th. August.- 17th. October, 1969, during which period 1,583 precisely timed and located complaints were recorded from 382 separate people. In contrast with this, only 35 complaints from that area were officially recorded for the slightly longer period 1st. August - 31st. October, 1969. Whilst the survey method was such that it probably prompted people to complain, it is doubtful whether the large discrepancy between the survey figures and the official figures can be explained merely in terms of survey technique.

The burden of the preceding arguments, therefore, is that on balance the official noise complaints statistics will under - rather than over-represent the degree of aircraft noise nuisance experienced, although they are likely to be more representative than N.N.I. contours in this respect. Further weight is given to this argument by the observation that, over the three-year period under consideration, the frequent adjustments to the flight paths did not affect the volume of complaints recorded to any significant extent but merely resulted in a transfer of the complaints from one community to another,<sup>16</sup> and it can be seen from Diagram 6 that the pattern of complaints over the three-year period was very similar to the pattern of commercial air transport movements during that period.<sup>17</sup>

In attempting to evaluate the aircraft noise nuisance situation around Luton Airport as it is expressed in noise complaints statistics, it is necessary to relate the gross number of complaints to the number of potentially noisy movements. This gives an indication of the relative performance of the Airport in terms of noise annoyance per movement, and can be put in context by comparing the Luton situation with that obtaining at the other major airports in the region (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted).<sup>18</sup> An exact measure of potentially noisy movements is impossible, since it would require detailed information on the types of aircraft used for each movement. Virtually all the noisy move-

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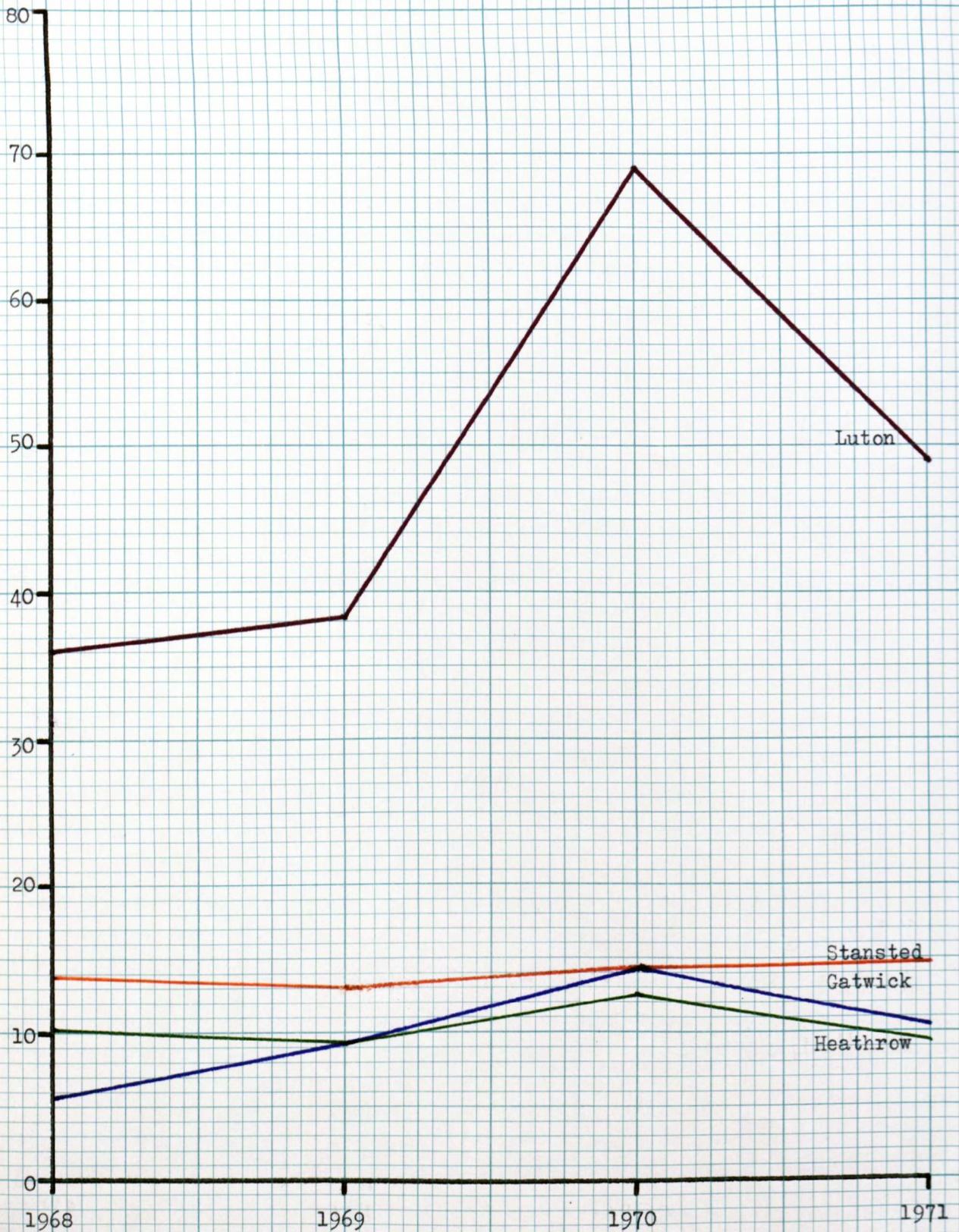
15. See Appendix 4 for details.

16. K. Shepherd, op. cit. Page 24.

17. With the exception of the absolute fall in the number of complaints during 1971 (and Appendix 5 examines the hypothesis that this fall, which was also experienced by the other major airports in the region, was related to the resolution of the issue of the location of the third London Airport), although the pattern of distribution of the complaints throughout the year correlates with the pattern of commercial air transport movements.

18. Clearly, in absolute terms the problem around Heathrow Airport is of a

DIAGRAM 7. AIRCRAFT NOISE COMPLAINTS  
PER 1,000 POTENTIALLY NOISY AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS.



ments are subsumed within the three categories " commercial air transport movements", "empty charter positioning" and "test and training", however, and so they will be used in sum as a rough measure of the number of potentially noisy movements.

Table 15. Aircraft Noise Complaints per 1000 Potentially Noisy Movements.

Airports	Noise Complaints. A	Potentially Noisy Aircraft Movements. B	A <u>B x 10<sup>3</sup></u>
Heathrow 1968	2,356	233,345	10.1
Heathrow 1969	2,201	240,280	9.2
Heathrow 1970	3,139	250,362	12.5
Heathrow 1971	2,359	253,656	9.3
Gatwick 1968	304	59,934	5.7
Gatwick 1969	599	65,373	9.2
Gatwick 1970	950	66,866	14.2
Gatwick 1971	826	77,533	10.7
Stansted 1968	432	31,139	13.9
Stansted 1969	439	33,827	13.0
Stansted 1970	512	36,069	14.2
Stansted 1971	468	31,903	14.7
Luton 1968	787	21,772	36.1
Luton 1969	1,004	26,169	38.3
Luton 1970	2,038	29,496	69.1
Luton 1971	1,681	34,323	49.0

Sources: complaints information from the Airport Director's Department, Luton County Borough Council, and from the Planning Department, British Airports Authority. Movements information has been obtained from, Department of Trade and Industry. Business Monitor. Civil Aviation Series. CAI. Airport Activity. Yearly Summaries. Table I. See also Diagram 7.

Table 15 demonstrates (and Diagram 7 illustrates) that activities at Luton Airport generate a relatively much higher level of complaint than at the

different order to that around Luton Airport, with approximately ten times as many movements taking place over a largely urbanised area. As a result, direct comparisons between the two situations are both very difficult and not very relevant. Professor Large (op. cit. page 662) recognises this point in his argument that noise control policy around airports should be related to the number of movements and to the proportional distribution of those movements throughout the day and night. In other words, the noise characteristics of an airport in relation to its level and structure of movements should be the guiding feature of noise control policy.

other major airports in the region. Indeed, the difference between Luton and the others is really quite striking. For the four years in question the products for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted all fall within the range 5-15, whereas those for Luton fall within the much broader range 35-70. In fact, in these terms the performances of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports are similar, and the performance of Luton Airport stands apart from the other three, at a much higher level of relative noisiness.

One other measure of the success of an airport in increasing throughput in relation to the number of people affected by noise has been devised, and this is the Airport Noise Efficiency Factor (A.N.E.F.).<sup>19</sup> This is calculated by dividing the population adversely affected by noise (as distinct from the population exposed to it) by the number of air transport movements in the year in question. The population adversely affected by noise is regarded as being (0.75 N.N.I.) (people exposed to noise), although this has not been justified empirically.<sup>20</sup> In addition, of course, it is based upon the N.N.I. concept, and the doubts about the validity of this have been rehearsed already. Nevertheless, a comparison of the A.N.E.F. when calculated for Luton Airport for 1971 and 1976 with that for Gatwick for 1970 and 1975 produces the same general result as appeared in Table 15.

Table 16. Airport Noise Efficiency Factors, Luton and Gatwick Airports.

Airport.	Population exposed 35 N.N.I.	Population affected 35 N.N.I.	Commercial Air Trans- port Movements	A.N.E.F.
Gatwick 1970	-----	-----		0.103
Gatwick 1975	-----	-----		0.139
Luton 1971	34,050	11,288	27,923	0.404
Luton 1976 with TriStar	46,350	14,797	32,770	0.452
Luton 1976 without TriStar	141,150	44,044	41,050	1.073

Sources: Richards and Sibert. op. cit. Graph 3 following page 16. Evidence of B.F. Collins (Airport Director) and C.S. Waters to the Luton Airport public inquiry of January, 1972.

19. E. J. Richards and E. G. Sibert. "London Gatwick Airport: an Environmental Study". Surrey County Council. Kingston-upon-Thames. 1970. Pages 10, 11, 52 and 53.

20. This notion was used by Dr. Richards at the Luton Airport public inquiry of March, 1970, and was challenged by N. Fleming (noise consultant to Hertfordshire County Council), as being unproven. The work on the concept for the Gatwick study was carried out by C.S. Waters, and it may be significant that he did not use it in his evidence to the Luton Airport public inquiry of January, 1972.

Similar information for Heathrow and Stansted is not available, but the fragmentary evidence of Table 16 adds some support to the evidence of Table 15 (even when allowance is made for the doubtful validity of the former) that Luton Airport has a much greater noise problem in relation to its throughput than do the other major airports in the region. It is difficult to offer precise reasons why this should be so, although six factors peculiar to the Luton situation make a contribution to such an explanation.

- 1) Since jets were only introduced at Luton Airport in 1968, the people of the surrounding area have had very little chance to acclimatise to the substantial increase in noise.<sup>21</sup> Not only are people able to remember the relative quiet before 1968, but the annual increase in the noise nuisance since then has been very substantial and has probably prevented any acclimatisation taking place.
- 2) The inclusive tour industry uses largely second-hand jets which tend to be noisier than the new aircraft starting to operate on scheduled services, and this factor is likely to be significant with regard to an inclusive tour airport such as Luton.
- 3) There is a marked contrast between the number of movements in summer and in winter, which means that noise is concentrated at a time of year when people wish to make use of gardens and to have windows open in houses and are thus likely to find it more intrusive.
- 4) An air traffic control "ceiling" of 3,000 feet above sea level exists over the Luton Airport area, because of the presence overhead of the main Amber airway out of Heathrow, which means that aircraft cannot climb above that height until they are cleared to do so by London Air Traffic Control. The effect of this is to promote a long, slow climb by aircraft, which disperses intrusive noise over a wide area, rather than a short, steep climb which concentrates intensive noise over a small area.
- 5) The ambient noise level in the area around Luton Airport is probably quite low, with aircraft for the most part over open countryside or planned new settlements or small towns.
- 6) Luton Airport has a very high proportion of night jet movements during the summer season, and it is this factor, with its consequent disturbance of sleep,<sup>22</sup> which is of great significance in seeking to understand the relative noisiness of the Luton Airport situation.

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21. A degree of acclimatisation to aircraft noise appears to take place. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. *op. cit.* Pages 26 and 27.

22: Disturbance of sleep is only one of many areas in which aircraft noise nuisance might have an impact upon general health. Very little work appears yet to have been done on this factor, although Abey-Wickrama and others have shown that the incidence of admissions to mental hospitals in the vicinity of Heathrow Airport might be related to differences in aircraft noise levels. I. Abey-Wickrama.

Above all else, the problem of night jet noise around Luton Airport has brought the issue into the political arena. Measures of the significance of this particular problem have not yet been developed, although it is recognised that the N.N.I. concept is not truly applicable. The Wilson Committee made a tentative estimate that night-time N.N.I. contours should be 15-20 units less than the corresponding daytime figure,<sup>23</sup> but the report following the 1967 survey of the Heathrow area found no evidence to support this assertion.<sup>24</sup> The real difficulty is that, at night, one or two loud noises which are sufficient to disturb sleep may be a serious problem, whereas the same number of noises during the day might cause little annoyance. Because of its composite nature, the N.N.I. concept is unable to take account of this factor. It is probable that three incidents during the night at an average level of 95 PNdB would wake more people than 30 incidents at an average level of 80 PNdB, that being the level above which aircraft noise starts to become distinguishable in the area around Heathrow. Both situations would produce a figure of 22 N.N.I., a level which would not normally be regarded as being significant. This would be a reasonable representation of the latter situation but not of the former, since the three noisy incidents spaced throughout the night could destroy the sleep of someone (especially a light sleeper) by waking him on each occasion.

The relative significance of the problem around Luton Airport has been illustrated by Professor Large. For the 1970 summer season, he estimated that night jet movements to and from Heathrow represented 2.2% of the total number of movements, with the corresponding figures for Gatwick and Luton being 12.3% and 21.9% respectively.<sup>25</sup> The reason for this situation (the desire of the inclusive tour operators to take advantage of tariff regulations which enable them to sell holidays at their cheapest when passengers fly at night) has already been discussed.<sup>26</sup> The effect of this situation has been to promote a great deal of complaint about night jet movements to and from Luton Airport. It is impossible to obtain figures as to the proportion of official noise complaints relating to the period 11p.m. - 6 a.m., since they are not recorded by time of day. Of the 1,583 precisely dated and timed complaints recorded in the KASARAN survey between 7th. August and 17th. October 1969, however, 371 (23.5%)

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M.F.A'Brook, et. al. "Mental Hospital Admissions and Aircraft Noise". The Lancet, 13th. December, 1969. Pages 1275-1277.

23. Committee on the Problem of Noise, op. cit. Page 75.

24. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, op. cit. Pages 43-48.

25. J.B. Large, op. cit. Page 660.

26. See Chapter 4.

referred to the night period as defined above.<sup>27</sup> For the 1969 summer season, night jet movements formed about 13% of the total number of commercial air transport movements,<sup>28</sup> so that, if the KASARAN survey is at all representative, night jet noise complaints occur nearly twice as often as would be expected from the proportion of night jet movements which take place.

In absolute terms, Luton Airport handles more night jet traffic than does Heathrow, although in total it handles only about one sixth as many passengers. The limit for the summer season (April - October 1971) at Heathrow between 23.30 and 06.00 hours was 3,500, whereas that for Luton between 23.00 and 06.00 hours was 4,000. In fact, Luton Airport actually handled 3,841 jet movements during this period, 281 of which were in the extra half-hour between 23.00 and 23.30 hours. Thus, over a comparable time period to that at Heathrow, Luton Airport actually handled 3,560 jet movements, marginally more than the maximum permitted at Heathrow. For 1972, the disparity will become greater, since no night jet departures will be permitted from Heathrow during the summer season (although arrivals will be unlimited), whereas Luton Airport will be permitted to handle 1,890 departures (with arrivals unlimited). In effect, the total number of night jet movements at Luton Airport in the summer of 1972 will probably be a little less than 4,500 (the number originally permitted), which will be a significant increase over the 1971 level. Indeed, the 1972 level will begin to approach the limit set for Gatwick (Britain's busiest airport at night, also handling large numbers of inclusive tour passengers), of 4,950 movements between 23.30 and 06.00 hours. The major difference is that the limit at Gatwick will remain constant between 1971 and 1972, and will apply to a period beginning half an hour earlier than in 1971, so that an effective reduction will have taken place rather than the year-by-year increases which have taken place so far at Luton. These figures<sup>29</sup> perhaps put into perspective the seriousness of the night jet noise problem in the area surrounding Luton Airport. In an area of countryside that did not experience jet noise nuisance until 1968, it is hardly surprising that a rapid build-up to the point where the Airport was second only to Gatwick in terms of night jet movements in 1971 has created a great deal of resentment, which supplied much of the fuel for the political controversy over that period.

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27. See Appendix 4.

28. Calculated from information given in the proofs of evidence of E.F. Collins (Luton County Borough Council) and A.D. Raby (Hertfordshire County Council) to the public inquiry held in January, 1972.

29. Derived from the evidence of E.F. Collins, op. cit.

The decision of Luton Council to promote a package of proposals for the development of its Airport which would encourage the operators to introduce wide-bodied (and reputedly relatively quiet) aircraft such as the Lockheed TriStar was part of a process of adjustment on the part of the Council to the political controversy sparked off by activities at the Airport.<sup>30</sup> The argument was that, by introducing such equipment, the operators would reduce the number of movements required to handle a given number of passengers, and this would produce significant improvements in noise terms. Naturally, this argument was the main feature of the public inquiry held in January, 1972 to examine the package of proposals in question. One argument was over whether the improvements in noise terms to be expected were absolute (that is, over the 1971 situation) or relative (over what the situation might be in 1976 if the proposals are not implemented). On the basis of the evidence of Luton Council's noise consultant in terms of N.N.I. contours (as quoted in Table 14), the former proposition was unlikely to be true. These arguments, however, depend to a critical extent on the number of movements assumed, on the types of aircraft operating them and on the noisiness of these aircraft types. The evidence on these points, perhaps hardly surprisingly, was conflicting.

The number of movements assumed depended upon the extent to which it was anticipated that aircraft of the capacity of TriStar would be introduced, and upon the number of passengers who would be handled. Mr. Savage,<sup>31</sup> in giving evidence in association with the case of Luton Council, anticipated that the airlines would be operating ten TriStars from Luton Airport by 1976. This was challenged as being over-optimistic, and it was accepted that it represented the upper end of the range of possibilities, with the lower end being no TriStars at all but two boeing 707s in place of each wide-bodied aircraft.<sup>32</sup> Differing projections of the future numbers of passengers to be handled were either made or implied by Mr. Collins, Mr. Linnett<sup>33</sup> and Mr. Allen.<sup>34</sup> By adopting and extending these figures, and by comparing them with Mr. Savage's upper and lower estimates of the aircraft in operation, it has been possible to prepare six different sets of movement projections for Luton Airport up to and including 1981.<sup>35</sup>

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30. See Chapter 9.

31. Managing Director, Britannia Airways, representing the airlines resident at Luton Airport.

32. Mr. Sauvage in cross-examination at the inquiry.

33. Deputy Managing Director, Clarksons.

34. Noise consultant to LADACAN (Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise).

35. The details of these calculations are contained in Appendix 6.

DIAGRAM 8. PROJECTED COMMERCIAL AIR  
TRANSPORT MOVEMENTS, LUTON AIRPORT.

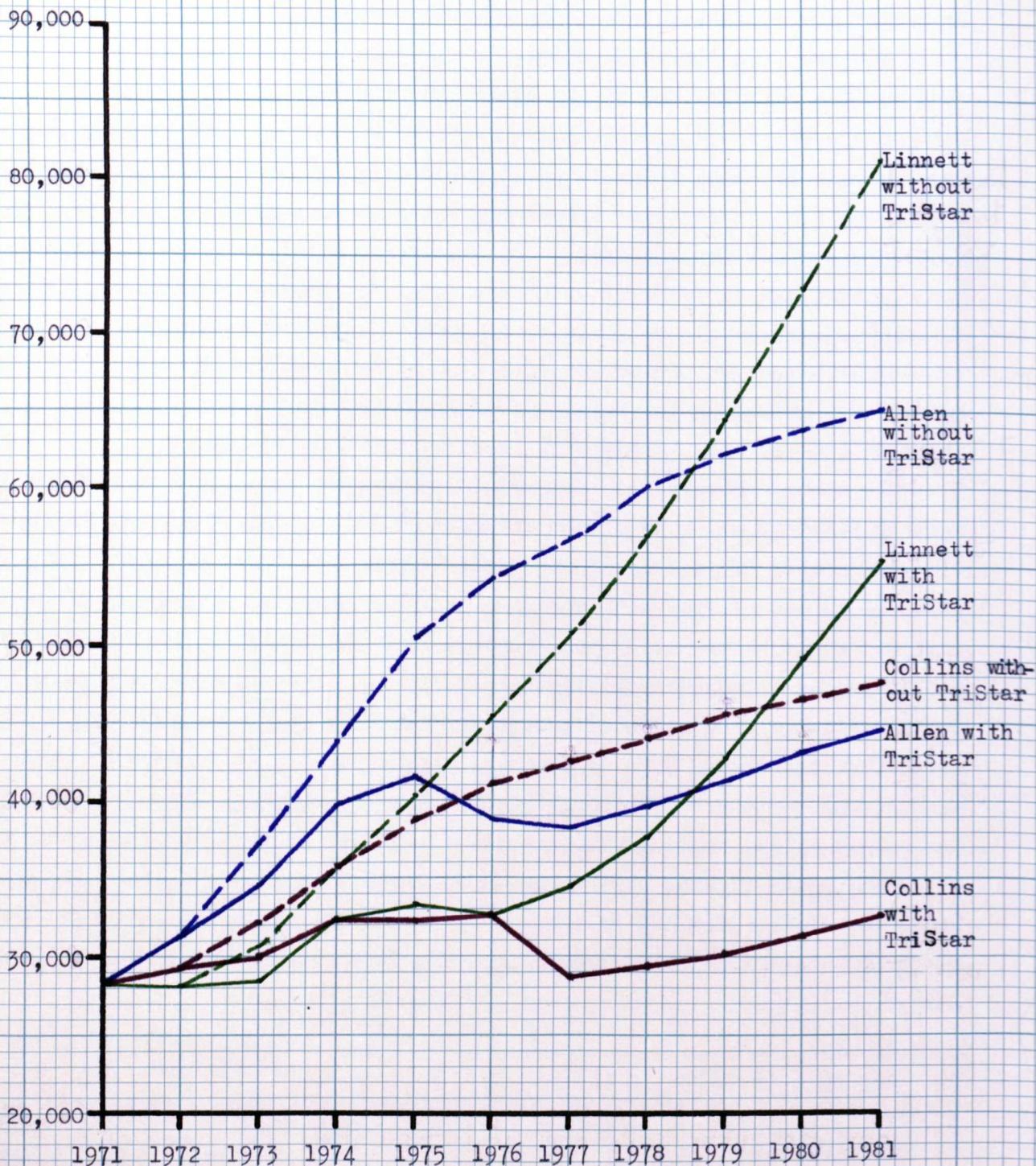


Table 17. Projected Commercial Air Transport Movements, Luton Airport.

Year	Collins		Linnett		Allen	
	With TriStar A	Without TriStar B	With TriStar C	Without TriStar D	With TriStar E	Without TriStar
1972	29,350	29,350	28,040	28,040	31,300	31,300
1973	30,000	32,140	28,520	30,550	34,820	37,300
1974	32,360	35,600	32,360	35,880	39,730	43,940
1975	32,140	38,850	33,330	40,300	41,660	50,360
1976	32,770	41,050	32,660	45,440	38,830	54,050
1977	28,850	42,720	34,400	50,950	38,460	56,960
1978	29,350	44,200	37,850	57,000	39,930	60,120
1979	30,220	45,500	42,910	64,610	41,420	62,360
1980	31,300	46,680	49,200	73,000	43,010	63,830
1981	32,700	47,730	55,540	81,060	44,630	65,150

Note: these projections are presented graphically in Diagram 8. For the purpose of illustrating different potential levels of growth, they make the assumption that movement levels will not be pegged at a fixed round-figure by administrative decision but will be allowed to grow.

Some of the projections in Table 17 exceed the capacity of the Airport to cope with that amount of traffic without substantial extensions over and above the proposals which were the subject of the 1972 inquiry. The planning of airport facilities is normally on the basis of the standard busy rate, which is the level of activity (passengers through the terminal or movements along the runway) exceeded on no more than thirty occasions (usually hours) during the period in question (usually years).<sup>36</sup> The standard busy rate of the runway at Luton Airport is thirteen movements per hour.<sup>37</sup> In theory, then, provided that the other facilities at the Airport matched the standard busy rate of the runway, it would be possible to achieve up to 113,880 movements per annum. This assumes thirteen movements per hour, twenty four hours per day for every day of the year, and in practice this would not be achieved. It would require an absolute ability to schedule flights such that there were no peaks and no troughs, no interference with Airport operations as a result of maintenance, weather or other factors and an administrative machine able to cope with such a high and absolutely uniform level of operation. In fact, Mr. Collins thought that 40,000 movements would

36. J.M. Wilson. "The Administrative Problems of the Long-Term Planning of Airports". Public Administration. Volume 42, number 1. Spring 1964. Pages 33-4

37. B.F. Collins in cross-examination at the inquiry.

be the maximum that could be handled given the present seasonal state of the inclusive tour industry, although he conceded that a better distribution of the load over the year as a whole and tighter scheduling could probably improve on this.<sup>38</sup> Under these circumstances, it is likely that the traffic levels of projections A, B and E, and quite possibly C, of Table 17 could be handled at Luton Airport by 1981. On this basis, the ranges in the number of movements that might be handled by 1976 (32,770 minimum - 41,050 maximum) and by 1981 (32,700 - 55,540) are very large. From a 1971 base of movements, a degree of growth in absolute terms would take place under any of these sets of circumstances, although the most optimistic (from the noise point of view) would result in a relatively slow rate of growth up to 1976 and no increase from then onwards. The most pessimistic would result in a continuous and substantial growth in the number of movements.

The evidence reviewed so far indicates that the number of commercial air transport movements handled by Luton Airport is likely to continue to increase under any circumstances (assuming that the facilities are available), but that the anticipated rate of increase is variable. The extent to which the airlines will introduce the TriStar is a key feature of this variability, since its capacity is slightly more than double that of the canvassed alternative, second-hand Boeing 707s. The airlines were unwilling to reveal to the public inquiry their future equipment plans, in part because this information is regarded as being vital to their competitive positions, in part because the future of the TriStar remains a factor in international politics<sup>39</sup> and in part because the availability of alternative second-hand equipment some years hence is not precisely known. At the time of the inquiry, firm orders for two TriStars had been placed by Court Line, which also had an option for a further three, but the other five (to make up Mr. Sauvage's ten by 1976) were "best estimates" of the kind of equipment the airlines were likely to want to introduce.<sup>40</sup> There was thus no certainty that the predicted level of introduction of TriStars would actually materialise; if it did not, the introduction of large second-hand jets such as the Boeing 707 would take place at a faster rate than anticipated, since it was doubted whether the kinds of aircraft operating would make any difference to the total number of passengers to be carried.<sup>41</sup> This would have the effect both of increasing the number of aircraft movements handled and of increasing the noisiness of many of the movements.

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38. Ibid.

39. The Governments of the United States and Britain are concerned respectively with the futures of the Lockheed and Rolls Royce companies, and it is quite possible that the ability of airlines to buy TriStars or alternative equipment will be significantly affected by decisions at Governmental level.

40. Evidence of J. H. Sauvage, op. cit.

41. Ibid.

This last proposition depends upon the assertion that the TriStar is less noisy than the alternative aircraft. This is a specific feature of its design, although it has not been tested as yet in normal commercial operation.

Table 18. Noise Characteristics of Selected Aircraft in relation to Luton Airport.

Aircraft	Perceived Noise Level in PNdB
TriStar	95
Boeing 737	96
BAC 1-11	102
Boeing 707	108

Source: evidence of B. F. Collins, op. cit.. Mr. Collins obtained his figures from Rolls Royce via the Department of Trade and Industry, and they relate to the level at a point 3.5 nautical miles from the start of the aircraft's roll along the runway, with take-off and climb at a 4% gradient.

Table 18 shows the anticipated noise level of TriStar in relation to the other types of aircraft at present operating from Luton Airport. If this Table is accurate (and it derives from the manufacturers of the engines of TriStar, who might reasonably be expected to present their product in its most favourable light), the introduction of TriStar would result in a significant improvement when compared with the noisiness of the other aircraft types at present operating from the Airport, provided that the noise characteristics at the one point illustrated in Table 18 are repeated over the area affected as a whole. It is this point that was in dispute at the inquiry. It was argued that the operational characteristics of TriStar (principally its slower rate of climb because of its increased weight when compared with the present generation of aircraft) are such that the effect of its operation in conjunction with existing aircraft types would be to spread the noise nuisance over a wider area (albeit perhaps at a slightly lower level) than that at present affected.<sup>42</sup> This cannot be tested properly until the aircraft comes into operation, but it is sufficient to show that the benefits of the introduction of TriStar might not prove to be as great as Luton Council has anticipated.

In summary, if the most optimistic assumptions (from the viewpoint of noise) amongst the range of possibilities are adopted, the impact of the proposals under examination at the public inquiry of January 1972 upon the noise problem would be to slow down its rate of increase and then to contain it. Thus, a problem already severe in 1971 would become slightly worse during the early 1970s. Any

42. Evidence of W. Allen, op. cit.

substantial departure from this most optimistic set of assumptions would almost certainly lead to a significant worsening of the situation, although there are several imponderables which make it impossible to attempt any accurate quantitative assessment of the degree of deterioration which could take place. It is possible, however, that if this latter situation materialised, an administrative decision would be taken to peg the number of commercial air transport movements allowed at a convenient round-figure.

#### Profitability.

Table 11 has already indicated that Luton Airport had started to afford significant operating profits to the Council by the late 1960s. Income from the Airport derives very largely from landing charges, hangar rentals, various trading concessions, the bonded store, parking fees and the passenger tax, and the Council's expectation is that the excess of revenue from these items over expenditure on Airport development and debt charges will continue to grow during the 1970s. Estimates were advanced by the Council at the 1972 public inquiry as to anticipated operating profits during the 1970s, and the only challenge to them was on the ground that they were too conservative. They will suffice, nevertheless, as an indication of the magnitudes involved.

Table 19. Estimated Future Operating Profits, Luton Airport.

£millions.		£millions.	
Cumulative profit to 1971-72	0.88	1977-78	2.97
	1972-73 1.25	1978-79	3.29
	1973-74 1.50	1979-80	3.59
	1974-75 2.12	1980-81	3.69
	1975-76 2.37	Cumulative profit to 1980-81	£24.28m.
	1976-77 2.62		

Source: evidence of R. F. Waterfall (Borough Treasurer, Luton County Borough Council), to the 1972 public local inquiry.

To say the least, a cumulative operating profit of some £24 million is a very rare asset for a local authority, and is sufficient in itself to explain Luton Council's desire to develop the Airport to such levels. Some of this money would undoubtedly have to be used to give soundproofing grants to applicants within a specified area who wished to insulate their houses against the most intrusive effects of aircraft noise,<sup>43</sup> but this would only account for

43. Under the Luton Corporation Act, 1971.

a fraction of the operating profits.<sup>44</sup> The vast proportion could be used to reduce the rate burden, thus enabling the rate levied by the County Borough Council (until it ceases to exist under local government reorganisation) to remain one of the lowest in England amongst County Boroughs.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, of course, the Airport represents an asset to the Council in another way. If the Airport were eventually to be closed down as a result of Government policy, an alternative use would have to be found for the land and the buildings thereon. In an area where land shortage is a problem, and where land prices are rising very rapidly, 676 acres on the edge of the County Borough and close to the largest employer in the area (Vauxhall Motors) would have obvious attractions for housing purposes. Many of the necessary works (such as drainage and access roads) would already exist, and some of the buildings (such as the terminal building) could probably be converted to other uses. Housing land in large plots in the Luton area sells (1971 levels) at £10,000 - 20,000 per acre,<sup>46</sup> and so the minimum value of the Airport site for housing purposes in 1971 was £6,760,000. The closure of Luton Airport is not regarded as being a possibility until after 1980, once the third London Airport at Foulness has become operational,<sup>47</sup> and by that time the value of the land is likely to increase still further. Thus, in addition to very substantial operating profits from its Airport, the Council has the prospect of a large capital gain on the value of the site, since it cost the Council only £456,304 to acquire.<sup>48</sup> In addition, of course, the Council might be entitled to some compensation for loss of operating profits should the Airport be forced to close as a result of Government policy.<sup>49</sup>

In summary, the position of the Council is one in which very large profits appear to be inevitable no matter what happens, and if as a district council (following the reorganisation of local government) it is allowed to retain control of its Airport, it is quite possible that Airport profits would be sufficient to nullify the need to levy a rate to perform the reduced number of functions left to the authority.

In terms of profitability, the position of the airlines is also significant. Court Line, Britannia and Monarch, the three resident airlines at Luton Airport, all started there as very small companies and have expanded considerably during the 1960s and early 1970s. They argue that the continued expansion of Luton

47. See the following section of this Chapter, on the place of Luton Airport in the developing airports system.

48. Evidence of R. F. Waterfall, op. cit.

49. R. F. Waterfall, in cross-examination.

44. Chapter 9 estimates that the figure would be of the order of 6.5%.

45. See Chapter 5.

46. R. F. Waterfall in cross-examination.

Airport is necessary for them to continue to grow, since there is no other airport with such good accessibility from large sections of the population at which they can concentrate such a high proportion of their operations. It is more economical to continue to use Luton Airport as a maintenance and flying base than to spread one or both of these functions around other airports, since economies of scale can be obtained this way, and in principle this argument remained unchallenged at the 1972 public inquiry. In detail, it was argued (and accepted) that a degree of split operation was necessary anyway to enable markets in the regions peripheral to Luton Airport's catchment area to be developed, but it was clear that from the airlines' point of view split operation is unpopular. Not unnaturally, the airlines' argument in this respect is supported by their associated tour operators, who take the view that the prices of tours would have to rise if operations from Luton Airport were to be greatly restricted, in part because a greater degree of split operation would be forced upon the airlines and in part because tariff provisions are such that minimum prices are higher from airports outside the South-East Region.<sup>50</sup> The profitability and competitiveness of the tour operators has already been described.<sup>51</sup> As an example of the profit levels achieved by the airlines, during the 1972 public inquiry it was announced that the pre-tax profits of the Court Line company (which also includes shipping and hotel interests) had risen in 1971 by 64% over the previous year to £3.4 millions.<sup>52</sup> Clearly, therefore, not only Luton Council but also the airlines operating from the Airport find it highly profitable, which explains their desire that growth should continue.

#### The Place of Luton Airport in the Developing Airports System.

During the 1960s, Luton Airport developed as a regional airport for both the Midlands and the South-East and as a national airport for the inclusive tour industry.<sup>53</sup> This development took place incrementally (although each increment was of itself fairly substantial), without reference to any overall policy for airports development. Indeed, the situation at Luton Airport may have contributed to the pressure for the formulation and implementation of a national airports policy, in some form or another.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, the controversy over the location of the third London Airport was at its height, and it was clear that

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50. Evidence of J. H. Sauvage (op. cit) and P.H.A. Linnett (op. cit.) to the 1972 public inquiry. See also Chapter 4.

51. See Chapter 4.

52. Daily Telegraph, 19th. January 1972.

53. See Chapter 4.

54. See Chapter 3.

one major factor in the timing of the need for the new facility would be the extent to which it was decided to make use of existing airport capacity. The position of Luton Airport in the discussion of this particular issue by the Commission on the Third London Airport was a significant one.<sup>55</sup> In the Commission's view, some trade-off clearly existed between Luton Airport's contribution in terms of delaying the need for a third London Airport and the environmental damage (principally in terms of noise intrusion) that would ensue as a result of higher levels of operation, and the Commission saw this point as being at 54,000 commercial air transport movements allocated between Luton and Stansted, rather than 54,000 movements originally assumed for Luton alone by the Commission's Research Team.<sup>56</sup> The Commission did not indicate how it anticipated these movements being divided between the two airports, but the tenor of its argument was that Luton Airport should not be expanded to maximum capacity with all the environmental problems this would raise to defer for a relatively short while the need for a third London Airport.

The problem of catering for the anticipated growth of traffic up to 1980<sup>57</sup> was not one which the Commission attempted to resolve. The Government's policy statement of 27th. July 1971 on this particular issue<sup>58</sup> went some way towards providing for an answer to this question by ruling out the need for any new runways at Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted, whilst recognising that some investment would be necessary to improve facilities at some existing airports (unspecified) in the period up to 1980. The statement went on to say that the Government did not foresee a need for Luton to continue to be a major public transport airport serving the London area once the third London Airport was operational. This appeared to imply that Luton Airport's future was assured at least until 1980, but that any expenditure on facilities would have to relate to the period up until then and not to any longer-term ambitions, and that, in any case, a new runway would not be permitted. This left considerable room for manoeuvre between bounds, but the bounds appeared to be that the Airport would have to continue to take a significant share of the anticipated traffic in the

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55. Commission on the Third London Airport, op. cit. Pages 29 and 30.

56. Ibid. Page 33.

57. The date recommended by the Commission (ibid. page 34) and accepted by the Government (Guardian, 3rd. February 1972) as the appropriate time for the first runway at the third London Airport to come into operation.

58. See Chapter 9. Pages 165 and 166.

short-term whilst making use of the existing facilities and such other incidental facilities as were needed for the period up to 1980. Luton Airport was regarded as having very little potential for accepting overspill traffic from Heathrow in the future, being solely concerned with the problem of accommodating its own natural growth of traffic.<sup>59</sup>

Luton Council's package of proposals, which became the subject of the public inquiry of January 1972; was based upon an approach very similar to that just outlined. The argument at the inquiry polarised around whether an absolute limit on the number of movements was desirable, or whether it would be more reasonable to make as much use as possible of the facilities which were the subject of the inquiry provided that the noise problem was not made any worse as a consequence. An absolute limit, it was argued, might force the introduction of larger, quieter aircraft because this would be the only way in which passenger throughput could be increased, but at the same time it was possible that the imposition of such a limit, by curtailing the expansion prospects of the airlines, might not make it economic for them to re-equip on any significant scale. Both of these arguments appear to have some validity. Similarly, the transfer of more services to other airports in other regions (which might follow from restricting growth at Luton) would reduce the amount of travelling time to their departure airport on the part of many passengers and would reduce the noise burden around Luton Airport, but it would increase the cost of inclusive tour holidays (because of the structure of tariffs and the increased operating costs of the airlines) and would increase the noise burden around these other airports. These arguments, whilst clearly being very relevant to decisions over the future of Luton Airport, cannot properly be evaluated in the context of the Airport alone. This wider context does not really exist at present, however, since airport growth in Britain has tended to be treated in an ad hoc and incremental manner.<sup>60</sup> As a consequence, none of the participants in the Luton Airport policy-making process has been able to mount a very convincing case in terms of the place of Luton in the airports system. Many of the questions have been posed, but very few satisfactory answers have been provided. This explains why the place of the Airport in the developing airports system ranks behind both noise and profitability in terms of its importance in the debate over the Airport's future.

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59. Department of Trade and Industry. "Report of the Working Party on Traffic and Capacity at Heathrow". H.M.S.C. London. 1971. Page 20.

60. See Chapter 3.

A much more tangible feature of this particular issue has been the problem of airspace and air safety. Because the main Amber airway out of Heathrow utilises airspace above the Luton Airport area, Luton aircraft occupy airspace with a ceiling of 3,000 feet above sea level until they are cleared by London Air Traffic Control to climb higher. This adds to the noise problem in the area because it enforces a long, slow climb away from the Airport and, in addition, exacerbates the conflict between commercial and light aviation over the use of airspace. The main conflict has been with the gliding activities of the London Gliding Club, and an uneasy compromise which satisfies neither airline nor glider pilots has been worked out.<sup>61</sup> It is doubtful whether higher levels of commercial activity than exist at present at Luton Airport are compatible for safety reasons with a major gliding centre underneath flight paths along which the height of aircraft is restricted for air traffic control reasons. This has been interpreted as both an argument against the further expansion of Luton Airport and against the London Gliding Club, but the proper perspective of this issue is probably that a decision on the future of the Gliding Club should be consequent upon the level<sup>of</sup> activity to be allowed from Luton Airport rather than a determining feature of the latter decision.

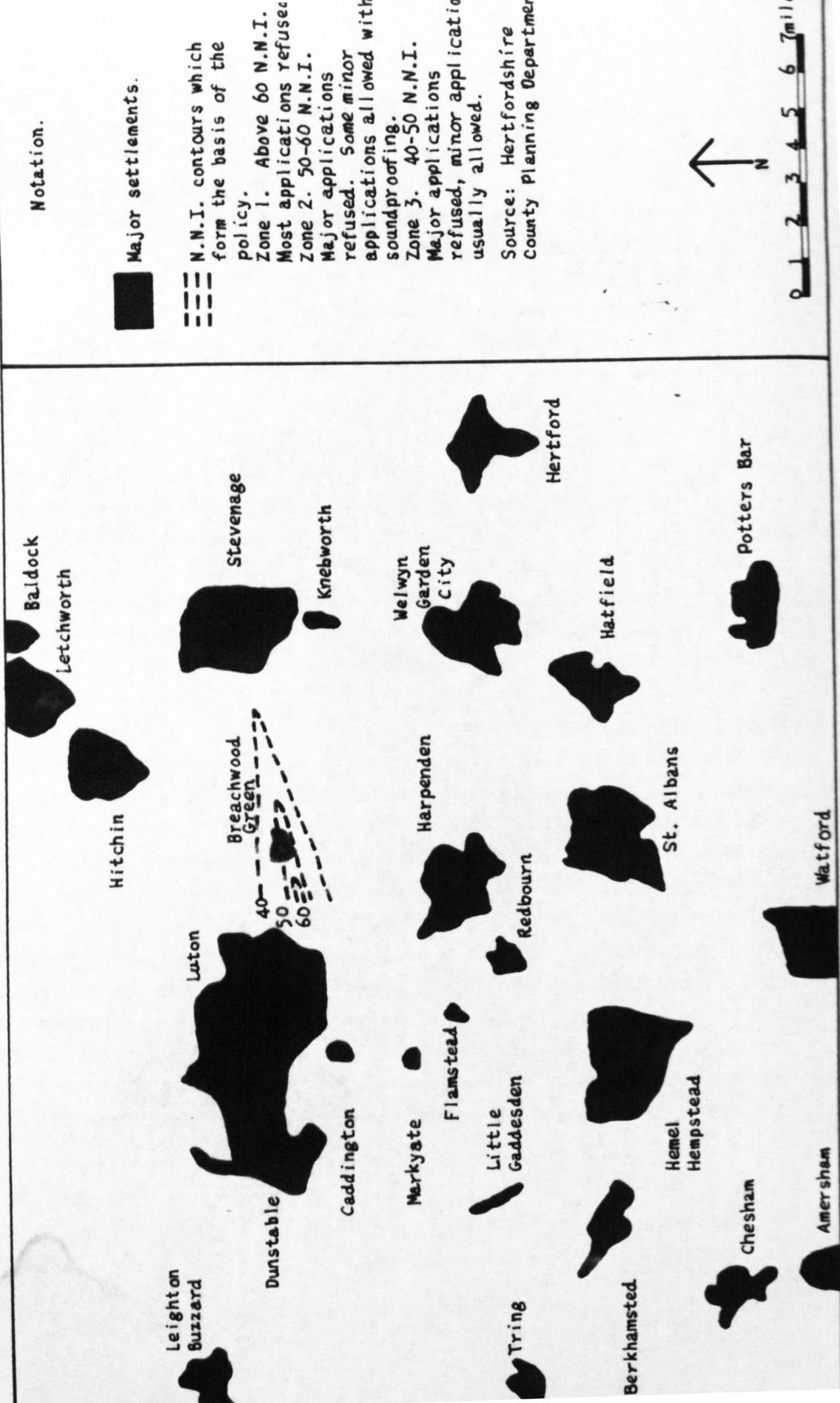
#### Spatial Planning Considerations.

The work of the Commission on the Third London Airport demonstrated that airport development has two major **spatial** planning implications; aircraft noise as a factor limiting possible areas of urban development, and the very substantial amount of urban development which an airport is capable of generating. In combination, these two factors, by increasing the amount of urban development to be accommodated in an area and by reducing the potential of parts of that area to accommodate it, can make a very substantial difference to a particular spatial planning situation. It is clear that this happened in the case of the work of the Commission on the Third London Airport, which was impressed by the magnitude of the task involved in locating between 228,000 and 511,000 extra people in the sub-regions focussing on the four sites short-listed by the Commission.<sup>62</sup> The importance of these factors in the debate over the future of

61. See Chapter 14.

62. Commission on the Third London Airport, op. cit. Pages 41-49.

DIAGRAM 9. HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY IN RESPECT OF LUTON AIRPORT.



Luton Airport has been limited, however, and no comparable study of the urbanisation implications of the expansion of a municipal airport appears to exist against which the following assessment can be examined. In addition, aircraft noise nuisance can impinge in other ways which also appear to have attracted very little study, and one of particular importance to the Luton Airport situation might be its impact upon the enjoyment of an attractive area of countryside such as the Chiltern Hills. The attempt to present a balanced appraisal of the various issues involved in the question of the expansion of Luton Airport has been frustrated in particular by this lack of study attention given in comparable situations to factors other than noise, and further work in such areas would form a valuable addition to the stock of knowledge on airport planning matters.

In July, 1970, Hertfordshire County Council adopted an interim development control policy to take account of the problem of noise emanating from aircraft using Luton Airport. It was based upon the policy originally devised by Surrey County Council in consultation with Dr. Richards for the area around Gatwick Airport, which related the degree of willingness to grant certain kinds of planning permissions to the location of the facility in question in terms of N.N.I. contours for the Airport.<sup>63</sup> The policy adopted by Hertfordshire County Council made use of N.N.I. contours drawn by its noise consultant (N. Fleming) for the purpose of the County Council's case at the public inquiry of March, 1970, on the assumption that traffic movements would be at double the level then anticipated for 1970, and the area covered is shown in Diagram 9. Three zones are distinguished for development control policy purposes; above 60 N.N.I., where most applications will be refused, between 50 and 60 N.N.I., where approval may be given for certain uses provided that insulation is satisfactory, and between 40 and 50 N.N.I., where the majority will be permitted with insulation provided that they do not constitute major developments. The main problem with this method is that it is dependent upon the N.N.I. concept, the limitations of which have been discussed above in some detail. A second problem is that it probably does not cover those parts of the County with an aircraft noise problem which are likely to receive planning applications on any significant scale. The area covered is a rural area to the east of the Airport, whereas the area to the west which is equally badly affected and which contains more substantial settlements (see Diagram 5) is not covered at all. Nevertheless, the policy is pro-

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63. E. Sibert. "Aircraft Noise and Development Control - the Policy for Gatwick Airport". Journal of the Town Planning Institute. Volume 55, number 4. April 1966. Pages 149 - 152.

bably better than having no policy at all, which is the situation with regard to Bedfordshire County Council and Luton County Borough Council, the other two planning authorities with parts of their areas affected by aircraft noise nuisance to a significant extent.

The amount of urbanisation that the expansion of Luton Airport might generate has not apparently been considered by the planning authorities at all, although they were warned by the South-East Joint Planning Team that this could have a particularly important effect upon the development of the area.<sup>64</sup> Whilst it is possible to identify factors which explain this omission and indicate that it is deliberate rather than accidental,<sup>65</sup> it is nonetheless surprising in view of the very wide-ranging powers conferred upon the planning authorities by the Town and County Planning Acts. The size of the total dependent population which could be generated by Airport expansion up to the levels envisaged in Table 17 (assuming that an administrative decision to peg the number of movements from the Airport at a convenient round-figure is not taken) is considerable, and possible orders of magnitude are illustrated in Table 20.<sup>66</sup>

Table 20. Possible Levels of Total Dependent Population attributable to

Year	<u>Luton Airport.</u>			
	On -site employment.	Total Dependent population.	On -site employment increase over 1966.	Total dependent population increase over 1966 (rounded)
1966	900	2,940	-----	-----
1981 - Collins.	8,200	31,550	7,300	28,600
1981 - Linnett.	13,900	53,500	13,000	50,500
1981 - Allen.	11,150	42,900	10,250	40,000

The total population increases in the fifteen year period 1966-1981 contained in Table 20, although substantial, are very small when compared with the degree of urbanisation consequent upon the establishment of a third London Airport. Nevertheless, they compare with a population growth of 60,000 expected by the South-East Joint Planning Team in the Luton planning area between 1966 and 1981.<sup>67</sup> The discussion following Table 17 indicated that expansion to the level predicted by the "Linnett" calculations would be difficult for the

64. South-East Joint Planning Team. "Strategic Plan for the South-East". H.M.S.O. London. 1970. Page 117.

65. See Chapters 11 and 12/66. The calculations are described in Appendix 7.

67. South-East Joint Planning Team, op. cit. Page 110. The Luton planning area is the same as that referred to in Chapter 5 as comprising the area defined for

Airport to accommodate without further works being undertaken. Even so, an increase in population of up to 40,000 by 1981 over and above the level anticipated by the local planning authorities would clearly have a sizeable impact upon planning policies. Curiously, it fell to L.A.D.A.C.A.N. to consider this issue in any depth at the public inquiry of January 1972,<sup>68</sup> by virtue of the default of the local planning authorities.

#### Employment.

The employment issue is all that remains of the once-significant argument that the Airport would provide a service to the town of Luton (other than the rates relief which accrues as a result of Airport profits). It has not been prominent because it is capable of interpretation in several different ways. It can be argued that the alternative to expanding Luton Airport is to disperse inclusive tour operations throughout the regions from which their customers originate, and that this would have the advantage of providing jobs where they are more needed than in the Luton area. It can be argued that by expanding Luton Airport in the knowledge that it may be forced to close once the third London Airport becomes operational, the Council is creating for the area a potential local unemployment problem in the early 1980s. Vauxhall Motors argues that the expansion of the Airport might increase the competition for labour in an area where it is normally a relatively scarce commodity, and that this would affect the Company's productivity.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, it can be argued that the expansion of Airport employment will diversify the employment base of Luton, making it less dependent upon the motor vehicle industry. In addition, it can be argued that the failure to continue Airport expansion would place existing jobs in jeopardy because the airlines would be tempted to move elsewhere. The possible numbers of on-site employees by 1981 are given in Table 20, and it is clear that by then the Airport could be second only to Vauxhall Motors as an employer of labour in the area. Nevertheless, the two-edged nature of most of the arguments on this particular issue has prevented their widespread use, although they may become more prominent as the absolute number of on-site jobs increases.

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the South Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Study, and the Joint Planning Team's figures are derived from work on the Sub-Regional Study. They refer to the anticipated natural growth of the area without explicit account being taken of the expansion possibilities of Luton Airport.

68. Evidence of A.J. Duncan.

69. Interview with J. Frankish, Assistant Secretary, Vauxhall Motors, 8th. March. 1971.

### Conclusions.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the critical issues in the debate over the future of Luton Airport have been those connected with noise and with profitability. Indeed, both appear to take relatively extreme forms, with the noise problem in relation to the number of movements being very severe and with a potential level of profitability markedly different from what local authorities normally derive from the facilities they operate. Judged solely in their own terms, the cases against expansion on the ground of noise and for expansion on the ground of profitability are both very strong. The other issues have been largely peripheral, either because the context of settled policy has not existed (in the case of the place of the Airport in the developing airports system), or the local planning authorities have chosen not to discuss the matter (spatial planning considerations) or the issue is two-edged (employment). In future, it is possible that all three of these points will be of greater significance, but up to the present time they have been of small importance when compared with the noise and profitability issues.

Part of the problem with these two main issues is that their burden falls on different organisations and people. Profits go to the airlines, the tour operators and Luton Council (and thence to Luton ratepayers in terms of a reduced rate demand), and, indirectly, to the inclusive tour passenger by virtue of the lower cost of his holiday. The noise problem mainly affects people living in Hertfordshire, south Bedfordshire and the southern part of Luton. Only to a very small extent do these two sets overlap, so that individuals or organisations merely have to trade-off for themselves the noise nuisance they suffer against the financial benefits they gain. By and large, one set benefits from profits and another set loses by virtue of noise.

That both the noise nuisance and the level of profitability issues are of considerable importance and scale should be clear from the foregoing analysis. Apart from recognising the validity in its own terms of each of the sets of arguments, however, this says very little about the balance between them. Indeed, the problem of balancing costs to one set of people against benefits to another set is one of the classic dilemmas of welfare economics, and no calculus which enables this to be done without dispute has been devised despite many attempts. One technique which is sometimes used to attempt this task is cost/benefit analysis, although it is extremely doubtful whether in principle the technique is capable of such an assessment<sup>70</sup> even if acceptable costs can be computed for each input component.<sup>71</sup> Two such attempts have been made

70. See for example, P.J. Self. "Nonsense on Stilts: the Futility of Roskill". New Society, 2nd. July 1970. Pages 8-11.

71. Ibid. See also M.E. Paul. "Can aircraft Noise Nuisance be Measured in Money

in relation to the Luton Airport situation,<sup>72</sup> but both cost/benefit exercises are open to criticism both in terms of the meaning that can be attached to the global sum at the end of the calculation (the output) and the validity of individual cost or benefit assessments in money terms (the input). The provision of grants towards soundproofing houses against aircraft noise is a form of palliative in this respect, although it has never been argued in the Luton Airport situation that this would rank as full compensation from those who gain as a result of the Airport's activities to those who lose.

To the extent that any resolution of this particular difficulty has taken place in the Luton Airport situation, it has not been as a result of the application of particular and sophisticated techniques but as part of a political process, and it is probably along such a dimension that resolutions of the general welfare dilemma described inevitably will lie. It is the main purpose of this study to explore the complex and largely political process which has occurred in respect of the Luton Airport situation, and the aspects reviewed in this Chapter represent but a part of the input to this process.

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Oxford Economic Papers. Volume 23, number 3. November 1971. Pages 297-322.

72. Sir Frederick Snow and Partners. "Luton Airport Development". Luton County Borough Council. Luton. 1969. Pages 93-193. Commission on the Third London Airport, op. cit. Pages 118-129.

Part 3. The Case Study: Historical Perspectives.  
Connective Summary.

Part 2 set the context for the detailed case study by elaborating some of the important subject areas into which the Luton Airport policy-making process fits, and by developing in detail the major issues which have dominated the process. Parts 3 and 4 represent in essence the core of the study, since they involve a critical examination of the process from two complementary perspectives -- the historical and the organisational.

The aim of Part 3 is to present the forty year process of the development of Luton Airport as being something continuous if far from smooth, and it deals mainly with the major events which occurred during this period. The intention, however, has been to advance beyond narrative, important though this is, and to identify some of the important features of the process as they appear through such an historical perspective. To this end, the forty year period has been subdivided to permit periodic analytical pauses, and this forms the basis of the structure of the Part, with three historical Chapters and one concerned with an initial overview. Part 4 looks at the process in terms of the behaviour of the sets of organisations participating in it, in the belief that the utilisation of both perspectives will lead to a broader understanding of the nature of the process than the exclusive adoption of either.

Chapter 7 deals with the period up to 1959. This represents about three-quarters of the time period under consideration, although it was relatively incident-free when compared with the late 1960s. During this time, the idea of promoting a municipal airport was formulated and translated into reality, but the Airport remained small, unimportant and unprofitable for Luton Council. The difficulty of finding functions for it was screened by the advent of the Second World War, but the problem of attracting operators prepared to run services from the Airport was to face the Council constantly until the early 1960s. Wartime activities left a legacy of an aircraft engineering industry in Luton, but a grass airfield was already obsolete for the testing needs of such companies by the 1950s. The Council's decision to construct a concrete runway, ostensibly to satisfy the needs of the engineering companies but also in the hope of attracting commercial airline operators, was frustrated by its inability to obtain loan sanction, but the clearance of this administrative hurdle and the subsequent construction activities paved the way for the rapid growth of the 1960s.

Chapter 8 deals with the years of rapid growth during the decade of the 1960s. The construction of a concrete runway and (shortly afterwards) the

acquisition of permanent customs facilities had occurred at a propitious time, because several small companies were looking around for a base from which to begin inclusive tour activities. The growth of Luton Airport during the 1960s was largely a function of the very close business relationship which sprang up between Luton Council and the inclusive tour operators based at its Airport. As a result of their commercial success, the decision to introduce jet aircraft on inclusive tour services from the Airport was taken by the operators in collusion with the Council in 1964, but it was not implemented until 1968. As soon as jets commenced regular operations, aircraft noise nuisance became a major problem and triggered off a protest movement which was able to affect Airport policy to an extent and, in consequence, to change the relationship between the Council and the operators.

The impact of the protest movement upon Airport policy did not become readily visible until the period from the middle of 1970 until early 1972, which forms the subject of Chapter 9. Both Luton Council and Central Government made certain concessions during this time to the opponents of their Airport policies, and there are some indications that in future an equilibrium policy position might be reached.

The results of the assessments contained in these three Chapters are then amalgamated in Chapter 10, which identifies the most important features of the process which have emerged from the historical appraisal. Chapter 10 forms one of the main streams which feed into Chapter 19, which draws together the conclusions which have been reached as to the nature of the process.

## Chapter 7. The Early Years.

### Introduction.

This Chapter charts the establishment and growth of Luton Airport up to 1959, when it acquired a concrete runway and was shortly to obtain permanent customs facilities, and was thus equipped for the rapid commercial growth of the 1960s. During this initial period of virtually thirty years, two phases are visible, and temporally they divide the period neatly into two. The first was concerned with finding a site for the Airport, with opening it for commercial activities and then with finding operators for it; for a while, World War II solved this latter problem. The second was a period of stagnation after the War, when the high hopes which were held for the Airport failed to materialise as a result of Luton Council's inability to obtain the necessary facilities for Airport expansion and as a result of over-optimism as to the scope of the local market for air transport. During this era, a relatively stable pattern of policy-making activities with regard to Luton Airport evolved, and the Chapter closes with a brief description of these.

### Establishment and Early Years.

Like many other local authorities in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s, Luton municipal Borough Council regarded the possession and operation of a municipal airport as being a major potential factor in the development of the town.<sup>1</sup> Many factors together appear to have been important in the emergence of this viewpoint. Civil aviation was seen as being the transportation means of the future, and few growing towns wished to be "left off the map" in this respect.<sup>2</sup> As well as a desire to provide a place for Luton in the transportation network of the future, civic pride was also involved, in that the possession of an airport was itself a source of prestige. The services provided from an airport would be of value both to the townspeople and to local industry, and the existence of the airport might attract further industry to the town. The operations of the airport and any industry attracted by its existence would be a source of further jobs, a potent factor in the 1930s. These features, then, were seen

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1. An Air Ministry press release in 1935 stated that 229 municipalities had approached the Ministry about the possibility of establishing aerodromes, and 23 of them already operated their own airports. Beds. and Herts. Pictorial, 22nd June, 1935.

2. The Council was well aware of the possible consequences of overlooking a developing form of transportation. Main-line passenger trains to London had not started to operate from the town until 1868 (although an indirect branch line had been opened in 1860), because the townspeople were unwilling to see a large area of common land to the north of the town bisected by a railway line. Plans for

as constituting so overwhelming a case for the promotion of a municipal airport that no opposition to the idea appears to have existed.<sup>3</sup> It was regarded as being an essential amenity for a rapidly-expanding industrial town, and the Council was given enthusiastic backing by the Luton and District Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to create such a facility.<sup>4</sup>

Civil aviation was then still in its infancy, and as a result the site requirements for an airport were totally different from what they would be today. There was also no conception of the impact aircraft noise would have on a large area of the countryside some thirty years later, and as a result an airport was not seen as being in any sense a "bad neighbour".<sup>5</sup> The Council was simply looking for a flat and relatively unobstructed site fairly close to the town on which grass runways could be laid, and which would have minimum

such a line had been promoted and frustrated for at least thirty years, and the 1851 Census Return had observed that Luton was the largest town in the country without either a railway line or some means of navigable water transport. This delay was widely regarded as having retarded the industrial development of the town, and the whole affair was often cited as a precedent of the dangers of ignoring "progress". J. Dyer, F. Stygall and J. Dony. "The Story of Luton". White Crescent Press, Luton. 1964. Pages 125, 140-142.

3. A survey of local press files for the 1920s and early 1930s failed to reveal a single instance of opposition to the idea of a municipal airport being recorded.

4. A larger alliance appears to have existed in the case of similar efforts by Manchester Corporation. Manchester wished to be the first local authority in Britain to operate a municipal airport (and this objective was achieved, if only by the expedient of using a field soon to be developed as a housing estate as a temporary flying area whilst the municipal airport was under construction), and was supported by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce (wishing to see Manchester develop as an air transport centre to enable the promotion of local business), the aviation Ministries (wishing to promote the development of municipal airports) and several usually short-lived airline operators (wishing to make profitable use of the new facilities). K.P. Brookes. "The Development of Manchester Airport 1928-1964". Unpublished M.A. (Econ.) dissertation. University of Manchester. 1964.

5. To have expected any such comprehension in the 1930s would have been asking far too much, of course. The technological gulf between the aircraft of the 1930s and the 1970s is enormous, and, looking back, it is difficult to believe that such a scale of development has occurred in a mere two generations. That this should have been anticipated and allowed for in the 1930s is a totally unreasonable request. Nevertheless, the forces of inertia are apparently strong in airport planning, and nearly all of the busiest airports in Britain today were first used in an era when there was still relatively little incompatibility between the operational requirements of an airfield and its users and the strains these impose upon the environment of the surrounding area. R.S. Doganis. "Airport Planning and Administration: a Critique". Political Quarterly. Volume 37, number 4. October-December 1966. Pages 416-428.

dimensions of about 800 yards square (just over 130 acres).<sup>6</sup>

Even this was <sup>not</sup> so easy to find. The search for a site had certainly started in 1930,<sup>7</sup> and it continued for at least five years before being brought to a successful conclusion. The local press reported at least four different sites as being under active consideration,<sup>8</sup> but always there were difficulties. Land acquisition would have proved very costly, because there was usually speculative buying of land promoted by rumours that the Council was interested in a particular site.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the Director of Civil Aviation (a Civil Servant), who had to approve the suitability of any proposed airport site for aviation purposes, was unwilling to do this in the cases of three of the four proposed sites. Negotiations over the other site, to the north-east of the town, foundered over what now appears to be a minor matter; shooting rights. The land was owned by the Commissioners for Crown Lands, who were willing to sell it to the Council but were unable to negotiate satisfactory terms for the reversion of a lease of the shooting rights over the land, which still had ten years to run.<sup>10</sup>

An acceptable site was eventually found and purchased, however. Nearly £40,000 was paid for 373 acres of land to the east of the town which met all the requirements, and the necessary construction work commenced early in 1936.<sup>11</sup>

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6. Interview with K. Seymour, 29th. July 1971. The minimum area of the site required was about one fifth of the present area of the Airport.

7. The Air Ministry wrote to the local authority in September 1930 asking for details of progress made in the search for a site. Luton News, 2nd. October 1930.

8. Luton News, 14th. April 1934, 21st. June 1934, 18th. April 1935, 19th. September 1935. Beds. and Herts. Pictorial, 15th. June 1935.

9. Interview with K. Seymour, op. cit. Mr. Seymour went to Luton as an engineer in 1940 after having worked on the development of Southend Airport, and so the information is relatively contemporary. He believed that this speculative buying resulted from the links between and the strong overlapping of the Council and the local business community at that time.

10. Beds. and Herts. Pictorial, 15th. June 1935. As it happened it is quite possible that an airport located at such a site would not have expanded to the extent that Luton Airport has, for two reasons. First, many more of the aircraft would have had to fly over most of the town of Luton, which would have experienced much more noise as a result (at present, most of the noise from aircraft using Luton Airport is dissipated over other settlements), and secondly, accessibility from the national motorway network would not have been so good as it is to the present Airport. Of course, it is possible to speculate about all manner of developments which might have occurred had circumstances been different. The factor of inertia has been such, however, that the initial siting requirements and negotiations have proved to be of great importance in the story of the Airport.

11. Luton News, 9th. January 1936. The site was actually outside the Borough boundary, but control over the area was transferred to the Borough as from 1st. April 1939, following a public inquiry held on 2nd. November 1938 at which there were no objectors.

Having an airfield was not enough, however. It was also necessary to persuade operators to make use of it, and so the Council set up an Airport Committee to do this and to attempt to attract ancillary industries to the town. The first success was announced at the Council meeting of 15th. September 1936, when an agreement negotiated with the Percival Aircraft Co. was described.<sup>12</sup> The Company dealt mainly with the manufacture of light aircraft for private and recreational purposes, and the Council started a pattern which was continued in future negotiations with potential operators by offering to build and lease to the Company a small hangar to suit its needs at the time.<sup>13</sup>

The Airport was officially opened on 16th. July, 1938.<sup>14</sup> It is clear that the Council did not regard it as just another municipal airport. The Mayor, at the opening ceremony, saw the significance of the occasion as follows;

"For us in Bedfordshire it marks an eventful epoch in the progress of our town and county. For the country, it means that there will be at long last an aerodrome on the northern side of London, close to a railway line, which can avoid both mileage for those flying to and from London and cities north of the capital, and provide quick access to the metropolis from the air station." 15.

The implications of this were spelled out more directly in a press interview given by the Mayor at the same time;

"The Mayor hopes that airline operators will not be slow to note the advantages of using Luton as London's northerly terminal. He predicts that from its location, the airport must eventually become one of the most important air centres in Great Britain." 16

Thus no secret was made of the Council's ambitions for its Airport, although the process whereby those ambitions were translated into reality was to prove tortuous in the extreme. For both the Council and the Chamber of Commerce, the opening of the Airport represented the culmination of several years' work. An informal alliance appears to have existed between the two to promote the development of the Airport. During the 1930s, when the Council was dominated by local businessmen and included only a small organised Labour group, the Chamber of Commerce was the local organisation which the Council most sought to consult. In part this was a function of extensive overlapping membership between the two, which in turn contributed to a feeling that their interests coincided. In part it was a function of the importance in local life attributed to the Chamber of Commerce by many Council members, which was also reinforced by overlapping membership.<sup>17</sup> The support of the Chamber was of

12. Luton News, 17th. September 1936.

13. Interview with Alderman F.S. Lester, 27th. 1971. As well as being a former Chairman of the Airport Committee of Luton Council, Alderman Lester has worked in civil aviation in Luton for all of his adult life, and was formerly chief flight test engineer for Napier Bros. at Luton Airport. Alderman Lester and Mr. Seymour were the major contemporary sources of information.

value to the Council in terms of the promise that this appeared to hold out of economic viability for the Airport, and the demonstration of this support via joint deputations to and pressure upon Central Government helped the Council to obtain the permissions necessary to establish a municipal airport.

The Chamber of Commerce was not in a position to be able to guarantee that business for the Airport would be forthcoming, however, although this did not become apparent until after the War had been over for some time. The advent of War (and, as it turned out, a War in which aviation was to play a major part) ushered in a period of activity for the Airport, which was requisitioned and developed for service needs. The activities of the newly formed Luton Flying Club were extended to provide pilot training facilities, but it became clear that its main function was to be in relation to the testing and development of aircraft. The aero engine Company owned by the Napier brothers was decentralised to Luton from Northolt in 1940 (since the latter was needed by the Royal Air Force), and it grew alongside the Percival Aircraft Company, the production of which was also geared to War-time needs. In addition, further land was requisitioned for service requirements, bringing the total area up to just under 500 acres, and several ancillary factories and hangars were constructed. Thus, when the Airport was handed back to the Council after the War, several physical improvements had been made and a thriving aircraft industry established.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Years of Relative Stagnation.

From 1945 until 1960, the Airport was of virtually no significance at all in the structure of British civil aviation. It remained a grass airfield dependent upon (and increasingly inadequate for) the test flying operations of its two Companies of aeronautical engineers, and in addition it provided a base for the activities of Luton Flying Club, but the freight and passenger business which the Chamber of Commerce had anticipated that local industry would generate

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14. The opening ceremony was performed by Sir Kingsley Wood, then the Secretary for Air, who had done much to encourage the development of municipal airports. It is quite likely that the worsening international situation may have been a factor in the promotional policies he adopted, especially since the Spanish Civil War had demonstrated the military potential of air power.

15. Beds. and Herts. Pictorial, 16th. July 1938.

16. Ibid.

17. Dyer, Stygall and Dony, op. cit. Pages 190-200. Interviews with Alderman F. S. Lester (op. cit.) and K. Seymour (op. cit.).

18. Evidence of K. Seymour to the public local inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, 12th. March 1970. Interviews with Alderman F.S. Lester (op. cit.) and K. Seymour (op. cit.). The Council purchased the improved facilities

did not materialise. In 1945 this discovery lay in the future, however. The Airport had not been considered to be significant enough to figure in the nationalisation plans of the post-War Labour Government,<sup>19</sup> and so the Council was able to recommence its promotional policies without fear of losing control of the Airport. The acquisition of two facilities (a concrete runway and permanent customs arrangements) was seen to be the sine qua non of Airport expansion, and the story of the period 1945-1960 is really the story of the attempts to obtain these two. Wider questions were occasionally raised (for example, in relation to the closure for civil aviation purposes of Northolt as a terminal for the North London area and in relation to the choice of Gatwick as the second London Airport<sup>20</sup>), but these were treated as being essentially peripheral to the two major matters.

The Council did not wish to see the Airport remain solely as a base for flight testing purposes, and so it was necessary to attempt to attract airline operators to Luton. Customs facilities were an essential inducement to airline operators, since without them services overseas from Luton would be impossible. The first efforts after the War, therefore, were concentrated upon a campaign to persuade the Government to provide customs facilities. The Airport Committee of the Council and the Luton and District Chamber of Commerce were joined by the aircraft Companies in this campaign, and eventually it was announced by the Ministry of Civil Aviation that customs facilities would be granted for a twelve months trial period from April 1951.<sup>21</sup> Local industrialists were exhorted by the campaigners to make use of the Airport during this trial period even if it hurt them financially, so that customs facilities would remain. The trial period was not a success, however, and the facilities were withdrawn in May 1952 because "...the experiment has failed to justify the continuation of such services."<sup>22</sup> This was a considerable setback, and the campaign for customs facilities petered out, to re-emerge several years later once the concrete runway was assured. Pressure was then again put on the Government by the Council and by the Chamber of Commerce,<sup>23</sup> and facilities were again granted for a trial period, this time for three months from July 1960.<sup>24</sup> H.M. Customs and Excise subsequently extended the trial period for a further year,<sup>25</sup> and the facilities became effectively permanent in 1962 with the designation of Luton as a "Category C" airport.<sup>26</sup>

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from the Government on relatively generous terms over a long period of time, the last transaction not being completed until 1966. Luton News, 21st. April 1966.

19. D. Corbett. "Politics and the Airlines". George Allen and Unwin. London 1965. Pages 57-65, 98-106.

20. Respectively, Tuesday Telegraph, 10th. January 1950, and Saturday Telegraph, 25th. July, 1953.

Thus, whilst the campaign for permanent customs facilities began before that for a concrete runway, success was not achieved until traffic started to grow following the runway's construction. Local commerce and industry, although requested to help, was unable of itself to provide enough business to warrant the provision of permanent customs facilities, and yet, without such facilities, the Council doubted whether the Airport could attract other operators. The first customs trial period (1951-52) was the first time local industry's support for the Airport was really tested, although the claims of the Chamber of Commerce on behalf of local industry had been a factor in the original decision to establish a municipal airport. It may have been coincidental, but the relationship between the Council and the Chamber of Commerce, the closeness of which had been a feature of the history of the Airport until then, appears to have been of less and less significance in the story since that time.<sup>27</sup> It had been clearly demonstrated that local business interests could not provide enough traffic to support the Airport. The Council would have to look elsewhere.

The pressure for the construction of a concrete runway came principally from Percival (Hunting) and from Napier, for flight testing purposes.<sup>28</sup> There were two main reasons for this. First, the Airport, as a grass airfield, was unusable for much of the winter because the ground was too soft for take-off and landing purposes. The second (and related) factor was that the Companies themselves were manufacturing larger and heavier equipment and, indeed, started to do more of their testing away from Luton. Thus the Council decided to construct a concrete runway, both to accommodate the operators' and to attempt to ensure that they did not move away. But there was also another reason, and this was that a concrete runway would be an attractive facility with which to obtain new operators. To this end, agreements were reached with Hunting and with Napier that the two Companies would share the costs of construction with the Council and then be reimbursed out of future revenue.<sup>29</sup>

The Council incorporated the idea of a concrete runway into a ten-year development plan for the Airport, announced in April 1951, which would make Luton a "...large and important civil aviation centre."<sup>30</sup> The plan, which envisaged the development of two perpendicular concrete runways, formed the basis of the Council's policy towards the expansion of the Airport in the early 1950s, but it was soon overtaken by events (specifically, the inability to obtain loan sanction) and shelved. Nevertheless, permission for the construction of

21. Luton News, 23rd. November 1950.

22. Ministry of Civil Aviation press statement. Luton News, 8th. May 1952.

23. By this time known as the Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce.

24. Luton News, 28th. April 1960.

a concrete runway was given in May 1953 by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.<sup>31</sup>

The whole proposal was opposed by the Ministry of Agriculture, because it involved the acquisition of good agricultural land.<sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Supply was prepared to grant a building licence (then still necessary as part of the post-War austerity measures) to cover the laying of the runway, provided that the objections of the Ministry of Agriculture could be overcome and provided that planning permission could be obtained.<sup>33</sup> Negotiations were conducted on a Ministry-by-Ministry basis by Dr. Charles Hill, M.P. for Luton, and by the time that he had been able to overcome the objections of the Ministry of Agriculture<sup>34</sup> and get the plans approved the whole project was caught in a Government credit squeeze. The Council thus was unable to borrow money to commence work. Once the credit squeeze had been lifted, renewed efforts were made in 1958 through the agency of Dr. Hill (by this time a member of the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), and this time the process of obtaining loan sanction was relatively smooth. Dr. Hill arranged for a deputation from Luton Council and from the aircraft engineering Companies to be received at the Ministries of Supply and of Transport, and the deputation was told that the matter would first have to be approved by the Treasury and the Board of Trade.<sup>35</sup> Their support was forthcoming, and a further meeting with the Minister of Transport (Harold Watkinson) in person secured the support of his Ministry.<sup>36</sup>

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26. Luton News, 26th. April 1962. A "Category C" airport as far as customs facilities are concerned is one where customs staff must attend where prior notice that they will be needed is given. Provided that services from overseas arrive with reasonable regularity, customs officers are effectively permanently based at such an airport.

27. For example, the first complaint by the Chamber of Commerce about lack of consultation on the part of the Council was recorded in the Saturday Telegraph of 23rd. February 1952. This proved to be the first of many.

28. Interviews with Alderman F.S. Lester (op. cit.) and K. Seymour (op. cit.). Alderman (then Councillor) Lester was in the difficult position in the 1950s of being both a member of the Council and of putting pressure on it to construct a concrete runway in his capacity as an employee of Napier.

29. Ibid, and interview with Bedfordshire County Alderman L.S. Bowles (in his capacity as a former leader of Luton Borough Council), 8th. July 1971.

30. Saturday Telegraph, 14th. April 1951.

31. Luton News, 7th. May 1953.

32. Ibid.

33. Luton News, 25th. June 1953.

34. The Ministry was prepared to grant permission for the acquisition of 242 acres of agricultural land so that a short concrete runway 4,760 feet in length could be constructed. Luton News, 30th. August 1956.

35. Luton News, 24th. July 1958, 2nd. October 1958.

36. Luton News, 16th. October 1958.

By December, 1958 the support of the Ministry of Supply had also been obtained, and after this the grant of loan sanction by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was a formality, it being obtained early in April, 1959.<sup>38</sup>

From the first permission granted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to the granting of loan sanction by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the process of obtaining the necessary permissions took six years. The impact of a credit squeeze when the circle was almost completed for the first time was an unconsidered factor when it was decided to embark upon the project and probably resulted in a delay of a little over two years, but even so a great deal of time appears to have been consumed by the mechanics of the administrative processes of Government. Seven different Ministries were involved (Agriculture, Civil Aviation, Housing and Local Government, Supply, Trade, Transport and Treasury), each examining the project from its own viewpoint and each consuming time with its separate administrative procedures. The position of Dr. Hill appears to have been significant in finding a way through this maze, especially in his capacity as a Cabinet Minister during the second cycle. The first cycle (which was not completed) took over three years, whereas the second (which was completed) took less than a year. What appears to have been decisive in this second cycle was Dr. Hill's ability to have the matter dealt with expeditiously at a high level within the Ministries, rather than as one of a large number of matters awaiting their turn for decision. His position as a Cabinet Minister with direct and personal access to the other Ministers involved appears to have enabled him to accelerate the process,<sup>39</sup> although another important factor was clearly the changed economic circumstances, 1959 being a year of relative prosperity after the stringency of the credit squeeze.

By the time that loan sanction had been obtained, the aircraft engineering Companies were becoming increasingly reluctant to be involved financially in the concrete runway project. The reason for this was that their manufacturing processes were changing, and a flying field for testing purposes was becoming an anachronism. For example, Napier was turning more and more to the manufacture of rocket and guided missile systems, an area peculiarly susceptible to changes of Government policy and the resultant cancellation of contracts.

37. Luton News, 11th. December 1958

38. Saturday Telegraph, 4th. April 1959.

39. This was certainly the opinion expressed by Bedfordshire County Alderman L.S. Bowles, Alderman F.S. Lester and E. Seymour, all of whom were actively involved in the negotiations, in interviews (op. cit.). Dr. Hill (now Lord Hill of Luton) said that it was part of his job as M.P. for Luton to "smooth the paths for such matters", and agreed that, whilst his position as a Minister left him less time for constituency work, it did also make it easier for him to "make the paths smoother." He was at pains to point out, however, that this in no way committed either himself or the other Ministries to the project in question, and that all he did was to push them to decide upon it. Interview with Lord Hill, 27th. May 1971.

Indeed, this is precisely what happened to the Company just before loan sanction was finally obtained. It had been agreed with both Hunting and Napier that they would, between them, pay £25,000 per annum to the Council for the use of runway and hangar facilities, as a contribution to the cost of the concrete runway project. Napier decided to review its position as a result of the cancelled contract, however, and opted out of the long-term agreement, paying only interim landing fees.<sup>40</sup>

Thus the major purpose of the concrete runway project (the needs of the manufacturing Companies) was no longer as valid as it had been at the start of the quest for loan sanction. Having obtained loan sanction, however, the Council had to decide whether to accept that a concrete runway fulfilling its original functions was no longer an economic proposition, or to construct it as an investment and seek to attract passenger and freight services. The latter course was chosen. The Council had never intended that the Airport should be merely an adjunct to the activities of manufacturing Companies, useful though such revenue was in the short-term. The creation of a passenger and freight airport had always been the Council's long-term aim, and a concrete runway, although immediately for the use of the manufacturing Companies, was an essential prerequisite of such a notion. Consequently, the Council decided to take over Napier's contribution itself as well as continuing with its own share, whilst Hunting agreed to abide by its portion of the original agreement.<sup>41</sup>

No longer could the Council be sure of revenues from the manufacturing Companies, even in the short-term.<sup>42</sup> Instead, it would have to attract operators to the Airport. Eagle Aviation<sup>43</sup> had operated from the Airport for less than two years in the mid-1950s, but had moved away because a concrete runway and customs facilities were not apparently forthcoming.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, hangars and office facilities had been constructed for the Company, and these were to prove useful in future. Derby Aviation<sup>45</sup> commenced operating scheduled services on the Luton-Jersey run for the 1959 summer season knowing that a concrete runway would be in operation for the following season, and reported success.<sup>46</sup> The real growth was to come as a result of charter operations, however, and especially in the inclusive tour sector. This was to prove the main feature of the commercial success that Luton Airport eventually became during the 1960s.

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40. Luton News, 16th. April 1959. Confirmed by K. Seymour (interview, op. cit.).

41. Luton News, 30th. April 1959.

42. The aircraft manufacturing industry has declined in Luton ever since, and all that now remains is a small factory owned by Rotax (taken over from Napier). Hunting was taken over by the British Aircraft Corporation, and subsequently production was moved away from Luton. Rotax does not use the Airport for flight testing purposes at all, and this particular Airport activity is thus now defunct.

The east-west concrete runway, 5423 feet in length, came into use in December, 1959.<sup>47</sup> Planning permission had been no problem at all. Bedfordshire County Council as the local planning authority (Luton **then having a Municipal Borough Council** with substantial delegated planning powers) examined the proposal carefully before deciding not to call it in, leaving it to be determined by the Borough Council.<sup>48</sup> As a result, there was no public inquiry into the proposal, and neither was there any pressure for one. The Airport was simply not an issue to anyone. There was unanimity within Luton Council that the town needed a municipal airport. Aircraft noise had not been a factor and, as far as anyone could see, would not be a factor.<sup>49</sup> Public debate on the matter hardly existed, and what little there was related simply to the possibility of some extra employment being created. Local business was apparently interested neither one way nor the other, and this had already been reflected in the loosening earlier in the 1950s of the tacit alliance which had existed between the Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Apart from Bedfordshire County Council, local authorities in the surrounding area took no interest in the matter, and the County Council wished to minimise its involvement so as not to exacerbate its already difficult relationship with Luton Council.

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Dyer, Stygall and Dony, op. cit. Pages 206 and 207.

43. Later British Eagle.

44. Interview with Alderman F. E. Lester, op. cit.

45. Later British Midland, which still operates from the Airport.

46. Luton News, 24th. September 1959.

47. Evidence of K. Seymour to the public local inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, 12th. March 1970.

48. Interviews with Alderman F.S. Lester (op. cit.) and former Bedfordshire County Alderman H. J. Aldridge (7th. April 1971). Mr. Aldridge was Chairman of the County Planning Committee in 1959, and he saw the proposal then as a necessary step in the process of creating an airport to serve the municipality of Luton (but nothing wider). He testified to some unease at the proposal, nevertheless, but relationships between Bedfordshire and Luton were so difficult at that time (because of the long fight for Luton's County Borough status which was then taking place; see Chapter 12) that he had no wish to exacerbate them over the Airport issue. Like Lord Hill (see note 39 above), Mr. Aldridge was later to play a significant part in the protest movement, and he also received a substantial amount of criticism for an apparent volte-face over Airport policy. A more reasonable explanation is that, like Lord Hill and many other people (including most Luton Council members and most of his subsequent critics), he was simply unable in the late 1950s to conceive of what the Airport would become by the late 1960s.

49. The only complaints in the 1950s had been about the noise of engine testing on the ground, and the reduction in importance of the Airport as an adjunct to manufacturing processes was likely to mean that complaints from this source, if anything, would decline. Such complaints were recorded in the local press on three occasions in the 1950s; Luton News, 27th. November 1952, 24th. September 1957. Tuesday Telegraph, 22nd. July 1958.

### Overview.

For the period under examination in this Chapter, the policy-making process in respect of Luton Airport remained relatively closed. That is, active involvement within it was limited to a small and prescribed number of participants, with others being involved peripherally (for example, Bedfordshire County Council in its capacity as the local planning authority) or in an ad hoc manner (for example, Central Government in terms of the granting of certain specific permissions). The centre of the stage was occupied by Luton Council, as the owner and operator of the Airport, and although it developed certain linkages with first the Chamber of Commerce and then the manufacturing Companies it never relinquished this central position.

The alliance with the Chamber of Commerce was a tacit one, based upon overlapping membership, perceived mutuality of interest and the apparent intrinsic importance of the Chamber as the spokesman for local business on Council policy matters at a time when the Council was concerned to attract as much industry to the area as it could. The support of the Chamber was of value to the Council in establishing the Airport project, but the continuation of the Chamber as an important participant in the process depended upon the ability of local businesses to provide some trade for the Airport. This they did not do, and since the Chamber had no means of coercing them into using the Airport it was unable to satisfy the Council's needs in this respect. In addition, with the rise to prominence of the local Labour party the position of the Chamber in community life in the 1950s was probably not what it had been in the 1930s. As a result of these two factors, the importance of the Chamber in the process declined visibly in the 1950s. For a while, the Council also developed a relationship with the two manufacturing Companies based at the Airport, but this was destined not to last much beyond the 1950s because the Airport was becoming increasingly unsuitable for their needs.

Airport policy-making never became controversial during this period. The small number of participants within the process either agreed in essence or found it expedient not to pursue their differences. Examples of the former have been cited in Luton Council's alliances with the Chamber of Commerce and with the manufacturing Companies. As to the latter factor, Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Council had been engaged throughout the 1950s in a prolonged Parliamentary battle over whether Luton should obtain County Borough status, and this had strained the relationships between the two. Rather than risk the further deterioration of an already difficult situation, the County Council preferred not to use its powers as a planning authority to involve itself in Airport

policy-making, although in any case it had no fundamental objections to the creation of a municipal airport to serve the Luton area. During the period under examination here, there is no record of any member of Luton Council coming out in opposition to the Council's Airport policy, although the Labour and Conservative parties on the Council made many issues matters of party dispute. Even Central Government's obduracy over the granting of loan sanction in the early 1950s was related not to its opposition to the concrete runway project as such but to the economic circumstances of the time, and was circumvented when these changed for the better and as a result of the elevation of Dr. Hill to the Cabinet. Thus, none of the possible sources of controversy over Airport policy-making actually materialised as such. The major reason for this appears to have been that even as late as 1959, when the concrete runway was opened, none of the participants (including Luton Council) was aware of the extent to which the Airport would have expanded by the end of the following decade.

With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is possible to discern the seeds of future trouble which were already extant by 1959. The site requirements of an Airport in the 1930s were different from those of the late 1950s, but the forces of inertia were such that little thought appears to have been given in 1959 to the wider planning implications of laying a concrete runway at the Airport. Noise complaints had already started, albeit in relation to ground testing activities rather than to commercial air transport movements, but this does not seem to have acted as a warning about the implications of expanding an Airport in close proximity to several large housing areas. The Airport development plan of the early 1950s had very quickly become out of date, a fate that was later to be shared by its successors during the 1960s. Nevertheless, the history of Luton Airport in the period up to 1959 was one very largely of failure to achieve the objectives originally set out for it, and on this basis at any rate there was little reason to expect any rapid developments which would jerk such pointers into focus. In fact, the situation was to change suddenly and quite unexpectedly during the 1960s, by which time the available room for manoeuvre had been sharply reduced.

## Chapter 8. The Years of Rapid Growth.

### Introduction.

The decade of the 1960s was the period during which Luton Airport was transformed from being the insignificant facility described in Chapter 7 to being the busiest municipal airport in Britain. This Chapter is concerned with the forces that resulted in this transformation, insofar as they were reflected in the major occurrences within the system during the 1960s. At the same time, the seeds of future difficulties already extant during the era which was the concern of Chapter 7 began to blossom, such that a process which had never been characterised by controversy became by the end of the decade the subject of bitter conflict. The watershed during this period was the introduction of jets on a regular commercial basis at Luton Airport early in 1968, because it was this which sparked off the rapid growth in the noise nuisance problem. This event will be used as a dividing point in the narrative of this Chapter, therefore, not because it interrupted the continuity of the process but because it led very quickly to a marked change in its nature. The events from the summer of 1970 onwards are dealt with in Chapter 9. Again, this does not reflect a break in the continuity of the process, but rather it is a function of the different research methods involved in a direct observation rather than an historical study. Whilst 1959 represented a reasonably "natural" break in the course of events, and presented an opportunity for looking both backwards and forwards, no such break is discernable during the 1960s and 1970s. Consequently, the overview attempted at the end of this Chapter is restricted to a small number of observations about the process changes which took place during the 1960s, and a fuller overview of the events analysed in Chapters 8 and 9 in the context of the events of Chapter 7 is left until Chapter 10.

### The Pre-Jet Era.

Difficult though it was for the Council then to appreciate, retrospectively it is clear that the opening of the concrete runway occurred at a propitious time. The aircraft manufacturing Companies could no longer be relied upon to provide a steady revenue upon which to build up the Airport, and so the Council was forced to look further afield. At the same time, several small companies were looking for an airport in the south-east accessible both from London and the Midlands to use as a base for charter operations. The concept of the inclusive tour was just starting to gain adherents among small new companies, and it was these in particular who were looking for an airport from which to commence operations.<sup>1</sup> The accessibility of Luton Airport from both London and the

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1. It is very difficult to pinpoint particular reasons why the idea of the inclusive tour holiday should have started to become attractive at this time.

Midlands had been considerably improved by the opening of the first part of the M1 motorway, also in 1959.<sup>2</sup> These factors were coincident, and created the conditions in which growth could occur.

The Council, working through the Airport Director, attempted to encourage airlines to make use of the Airport. This was done through specific inducements, such as promises to create facilities tailored to the specific requirements of the airlines and then to lease them on favourable terms, and discounts on such matters as landing fees.<sup>3</sup> The facilities originally provided for Eagle Aviation in the mid-1950s were to be a key feature of the negotiations with Autair (later Court Line), the first operator to base itself at the Airport. The arrangements with Autair were completed by the end of 1960. The Company, operating only a helicopter fleet but with expansion plans in the area of independent charter work, was to base itself at Luton, initially moving into the facilities provided originally for British Eagle and later being provided with further facilities as and when necessary. The terms given Autair were the most generous given to any of the airlines.<sup>4</sup>

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Probably part of the reason lies in general rising affluence, bringing the idea of a continental holiday within the scope of more and more people. Probably, also, the advertising industry was able to convince people that it really was possible to have such a holiday nearly as cheaply and up to the same standards as the British equivalent, with the added attraction of better and surer weather. Probably the fact that both hotel and airline operators could work to a fairly high and guaranteed use of their facilities made better economic sense to them than relying entirely on an open and (at that time) limited market. Certainly, the private airlines had much more scope for the development of specialised services following the establishment of the Air Transport Licensing Board to regulate public/private competition under the Civil Aviation (Licensing) Act, 1960; this was, after all, one of the functions of the Act. All these features together probably created a climate conducive to growth.

2. P.H.A. Linnett (Deputy Managing Director, Clarksons Holidays), in his evidence to the 1970 public inquiry into expansion plans for Luton Airport, said that in the opinion of his Company Luton Airport had better accessibility than any other airport in Britain. This could mean several things, since "better" is open to several interpretations. For example, it could mean that more people live within X hours' driving time of Luton Airport than of any other British airport, or it could mean that if the driving times from all settlements in Britain to all the airports in Britain were computed, the aggregate for Luton Airport would be the lowest. Whatever specific interpretation is placed on Mr. Linnett's statement, the important point is that Clarksons believe Luton Airport to be the most accessible airport in Britain and, as a result, operate from it.

3. It was extremely difficult to obtain any specific information about the inducements offered, although the fact that it had been done was not in dispute. Interviews with J.V. Cowan (Town Clerk, Luton), 10th. March 1971, A.D. Harvey (former Town Clerk, Luton and now Director, Court Line), 1st. July 1971, Alderman P.S. Lester, 27th. July 1971 and K. Seymour, 29th. July 1971. Certain specific pieces of information were given, however, and will perhaps give some idea of how generous the inducements were. Mr. Seymour said that not only had "extensive reductions" been negotiated for Autair, but also that the Company had been allowed to get a long way in arrears with its payments without being pressed by the Council. More specifically, K. Elgood (Planning Executive, Monarch Airlines), in an interview on 25th. June, said that his Company had

The second Company to base itself at Luton Airport was Euravia (later Britannia). Euravia also came as a very small Company, which would concern itself with inclusive tour operations plus whatever freight charter work it could obtain. Negotiations were completed a year after those with Autair, and the reductions, although not quite so generous as for Autair, were still significant.<sup>5</sup> The growth of these two Companies has led to the growth of Luton Airport, and in 1970, as Britannia and Court Line, they handled more inclusive tour traffic than any other British airlines.<sup>6</sup> They happened to be early operators in what proved to be one of the fastest-growing sectors of British civil aviation during the 1960s,<sup>7</sup> and their growth has been both a function of and a significant contributor to the development of this sector.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Council was aware that such a growth was inevitable, and therefore set out deliberately to attract those particular operators. On the contrary, what appears to have happened is that the two Companies, then in an embryonic state, were looking around for an airport from which to commence operations in the new and untried inclusive tour sector, at the same time as the Council was looking around for operators wishing to make use of the Airport's new facilities. This coincidence has apparently proved beneficial for both sides, with the generosity of the Council's terms helping the Companies in their difficult early days and the subsequent growth of the Companies ultimately providing a profitable operation for the Council. But it is doubtful whether it was anything more than a fortunate coincidence.<sup>8</sup>

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been formed at Luton Airport in July 1967 and then had been given a cut of 25% in landing fees, which would reduce to 20% in November 1971.

4. Luton News, 1st. December 1960. Confirmed by Alderman F.S. Lester (interview op. cit.).

5. Saturday Telegraph, 30th. December 1961.

6. Department of Trade and Industry, Business Monitor. Civil Aviation Series. CAS (Airline Operations). 1970 summary, Table 3.1.

7. Committee of Inquiry into Civil Air Transport (Edwards Committee). "British Air Transport in the Seventies". Cmnd. 4018. H.M.S.O. London. 1969. Page 22. J.H. Sauvage (Managing Director, Britannia), in his evidence to the public inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, 12th. March 1970, estimated that, ".....Their (British airlines) output on Inclusive Tour Charter Services has grown so rapidly from small beginnings that it was nearly twenty times as great in 1968 as in 1958." Proof of evidence of J.H. Sauvage. Page 5.

8. Interviews with Alderman F. S. Lester (op. cit.) and E. Seymour (op. cit.). It is pure speculation whether other operators might later have been attracted to the Airport because of its accessibility if Autair and Euravia had either not occurred or had not succeeded. If either of these two eventualities had occurred, however, any subsequent growth would almost certainly have started later and, as a result, would probably not have reached current proportions.

Other than the generosity of the terms offered by the Council, the other large "carrot" dangled in front of the operators was the promise to provide them with the facilities required for their growth. The 1960s saw growth take place in small increments, with the operators annually requesting and being provided with improved facilities for the following season. This process started for the 1962 season, the first during which both Autair and Euravia were operating from the Airport.<sup>9</sup> But the operators were also pressing for longer-term commitment on the part of the Council, and the Council agreed, as a result, to prepare a five year development plan for the Airport.<sup>10</sup> This was apparently seen, and not objected to, by the Ministry of Aviation, and it was based upon the assumption that Luton Airport would become an important international link.<sup>11</sup> The then Chairman of the Airport Committee had presaged this in a speech to the Chamber of Commerce, when he said:

We must get rid of the idea that Luton Airport is Luton's airport and by that I mean that most of its business will come from Luton and district. I doubt if there is enough business here for the kind of airport we have in mind. Our selling of the Airport must go beyond Luton." 12

The draft Luton and Dunstable Town Map had already revealed something of the Council's intentions with regard to the Airport (although not very much, because this would have meant releasing details to Bedfordshire County Council; the proposals contained within the Town Map were minimal). The Council proposed to extend the existing runway at the western end to a length of some 6,700 feet (which would be an extension of about 1,200 feet) and to create a concrete north-south runway some 5,160 feet in length. These proposals, similar in concept to the perpendicular runways of the ten year development plan of the early 1950s, had attracted only perfunctory opposition at that part of the Town Map public inquiry which dealt with the Airport,<sup>13</sup> and the proposals were accepted as part of the approved Development Plan.<sup>14</sup> The proposals were without incorporation into the five year development plan for the Airport, published in January 1963.<sup>15</sup> This involved the expenditure of just over £2 million up until the end of 1968, and included the two concrete runways described above, a parallel taxiway for each runway, an improvement in the terminal facilities and the provision of such ancillary services as extra car parks. The plan was

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9. Luton News editorial, 12th. April 1962.

10. Saturday Telegraph, 29th. September 1962. Luton News, 10th. January 1963.

11. Ibid.

12. Luton News, 26th. October 1961.

13. Held in May, 1961. The opposition came from local landowner Sir Harold Wernher and one of his tenant farmers, on the grounds that some loss of land would be involved and agricultural productivity would be impaired. See Appendix 3.

14. Approval dated 30th. November 1963.

never implemented. As with the previous ten year development plan, it was quickly overtaken by events and was shelved.<sup>16</sup>

The plan did achieve something, however, and that was to bring some opposition out into the open. There had already been a small number of complaints about noise from aircraft in the air, rather than from testing engines on the ground.<sup>17</sup> Many of these came from Caddington, a village a little to the west of Luton, over which aircraft flew just after take-off and just before landing, and Caddington Parish Council registered its worry that the proposals would facilitate the introduction of jets.<sup>18</sup> The worries of one parish council would hardly be enough to stop the Council's plans, but this opposition was compounded by the first signs of dissent from within the Council itself. The Council decided that, rather than go ahead with an extension of the runway to 6,700 feet and then probably a further extension later, it would be more economical to extend to 7,000 feet in one operation.<sup>19</sup> This caused a Conservative, Councillor J. Letham (who represented South Ward, over which aircraft flew almost immediately after take-off), to make public the doubts he had already raised within the Conservative group.<sup>20</sup> He obtained no support within the Council, being attacked by members of both parties who continued the tradition of all-party support in the Council for the Airport, and was ultimately forced to resign the Conservative whip on the issue.<sup>21</sup> But he did obtain some support from within the town. The Airport was no longer located in fields away from the edge of the town, but was now at its south-eastern extremity (housing having been developed in the intervening fields since the War), and with the introduction of larger and noisier aircraft many people living close to the Airport were beginning to be annoyed by noise.<sup>22</sup>

On the face of it, that this situation should have been allowed to occur represents a failure of the spatial planning mechanisms which had been put in operation by the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. Virtually all of the housing development which had taken place on the land between the Airport site and the edge of the town as of 1938 had been subject to the provisions of the Act, but nevertheless the town had been allowed to continue to grow outwards in this direction. The major reason why the existence of the Airport had not been

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15. Luton News, 10th. January 1963. The proposals were described in, S.A. Keeler and R.T. Davies. "Luton Airport". Paper presented to a symposium on municipal airports held by the Institution of Civil Engineers. 27th. November 1962.

16. The runway and taxiway facilities of the Airport are still not up to the standard of these proposals.

17. Luton News, 3rd. May 1962.

18. Luton News, 7th. February 1963.

19. Luton News, 20th. June 1963.

regarded as being inconsistent with further housing development during the 1950s was that the level of Airport activities at that time and in the apparently foreseeable future was very low. This is not a full explanation, however, since it was clear that if the Council was able to acquire permanent customs facilities for its Airport and to obtain loan sanction for the construction of a concrete runway the pattern of activities was likely to change. The complicating factor was the difficult relationship between Bedfordshire County Council and the then Luton Municipal Borough Council. The Borough Council had certain delegated planning powers in connection with decisions on planning applications, but the County Council retained plan-making functions plus an overview of the Borough Council's activities. In a situation already made difficult by the long and ultimately successful fight for County Borough status on the part of Luton Council,<sup>23</sup> the division of powers in this manner was pregnant with possibilities in terms of each misrepresenting the other's activities. In particular, the County Council wished to avoid the charge of interfering too much, and tended to restrict its activities to areas where problems existed at that time.<sup>24</sup> Luton Council, on the other hand, wanted to follow a policy of Airport expansion, but also wanted to retain as much of its population as it could within the Borough boundary to enhance its claim to County Borough status. As a result, it preferred to overlook the potential conflict between these two objectives and to see the vacant land close to the Airport developed for housing purposes. The Council's development control functions at the time were exercised through the Borough Engineer, who was also responsible for many facets of Airport development. Even if the incumbent in that post was aware of the potential conflict between his functions he preferred to ignore it,<sup>25</sup> and the fact that his Department did not begin to employ qualified planners in any significant number or with any significant seniority until after 1964 perhaps contributed to his willingness to overlook potential difficulties of this nature. In all events, something which (with the benefit of hindsight) is clearly bad spatial planning practice appears to have resulted in part from the difficulties inherent in dealing with a facility

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20. Which he did in a letter to the Luton News, 22nd. August 1963. Bedfordshire County Alderman L.S. Bowles, who at that time was leader of the Conservative group on Luton Borough Council, confirmed in an interview on 8th. July 1971 that Councillor Letham had previously been voicing his doubts within the group.

21. Luton News, 26th. September 1963. Interview with Bedfordshire County Alderman L.S. Bowles, *ibid*.

22. Petitions to this effect from within Luton and from Caddington containing 343 and 908 signatures were reported in the Luton News of 12th. and 26th. September respectively.

23. This is described in more detail in Chapter 12. See pages 215 and 216.

24. Interview with former County Alderman H.J. Aldridge (in his capacity as former Chairman of the County Planning Committee), 7th. April 1971.

subject to rapid technological change and in part from the particular political circumstances surrounding a delegation agreement which, at best, would be likely to produce awkward situations from time to time.

The fears of residents about aircraft noise were probably heightened by talk of Luton as a possible choice for the location of the third London Airport. The Inter-Departmental Committee was sitting and examining the problem at the time, and the Chamber of Commerce had already asked the Council what it was doing to promote Luton's case.<sup>26</sup> Press speculation on the matter<sup>27</sup> plus the Council's published proposals were creating a level of debate which made it certain that any public inquiry into the Council's plan to extend the runway to 7,000 feet would not pass unnoticed, as had the Town Map inquiry in 1961.

The application involved an extension of the runway into the area of Luton Rural District Council, and so the planning application went in the first instance to the R.D.C.. At first, the R.D.C. Plans Committee recommended that the proposal be approved,<sup>28</sup> but subsequently received approximately 1,200 objections and changed its mind.<sup>29</sup> This put Bedfordshire County Council, as the responsible planning authority, in a very difficult position. It had received a recommendation from one of its District Councils to refuse a planning application by another. But Luton Municipal Borough Council was due to become Luton County Borough Council on 1st. April 1964, the long fight for County Borough status having finally been successful, and it was clear that it would be able to give itself planning permission for much of the proposal after that date anyway. Clearly, the County Council did not want to make relations with its new neighbour any worse than was necessary by what might have been interpreted as a spiteful retaliation for its defeat on the County Borough status issue. Yet, at the same time, it did not like to go against the recommendations of the R.D.C. and the weight of protest already recorded. Its position was made no easier by a resolution from Stevenage Urban District Council (Hertfordshire) asking Bedfordshire to refuse the application,<sup>30</sup> and the County Council

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25. Interviews with K.S. Seymour (op. cit.) and S. Mc Ardle (Deputy Planning Officer, Luton County Borough Council), 13th. January 1971. Mr. Seymour was Deputy Borough Engineer throughout the 1950s, and Mr. Mc Ardle was one of the first of the planners to be appointed (as a Chief Assistant within the Engineer's Department) upon the acquisition of County Borough status in 1964).

26. Saturday Telegraph, 22nd. September 1962.

27. Saturday Telegraph, 29th. September 1962. Luton News, 27th. June 1963.

28. Saturday Telegraph, 29th. June 1963.

29. Luton News, 12th. September 1963. Details confirmed by P. Green (Clerk to Luton R.D.C.) in an interview on 2nd. April 1971.

30. Luton News, 3rd. October 1963.

ultimately decided to ask the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to determine the application.<sup>31</sup> This was explained by the then Chairman of the County Planning Committee in the following terms;

"National issues rather than local prejudices might be the deciding factors during consideration by the Minister of Housing on the future of the Airport." <sup>32</sup>

Instead, the County Council concentrated upon attempting to persuade Luton to retain jointly with Bedfordshire the services of Professor Richards of Southampton University as an independent noise expert, ultimately with success.<sup>33</sup>

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Harpenden Urban District Council also decided to object, but after a meeting between representatives of Luton Council and the U.D.C. it withdrew its objection.<sup>35</sup> This appears to have been for no other reason than that the U.D.C. had been convinced that the proposed extension would make no difference to the noise nuisance suffered by Harpenden residents.

One fear of many people was removed (if temporarily) by the decision that Stansted should be the location of the Third London Airport.<sup>36</sup> It was clear from the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee that Luton had been canvassed as a possible site;

"We were able to shorten the list by the exclusion of areas in the north-west, south and south-east already eliminated on air traffic routeing grounds, though we mention below one northerly site, Luton, because it has been canvassed as a possible third airport for London.

Luton Airport has often been suggested as a promising candidate for a third London airport; it is already operating and lies close to M1, which gives it very good access to north London. A major airport able to sustain a rate of 64 hourly movements could not, however, operate there without depriving Heathrow of its northern sequencing area.... Moreover, a pair of runways of sufficient length for a major airport could not be built there because of the hilly terrain (sic). We therefore conclude that Luton would not be a good site for a third London airport." <sup>37</sup>

It seems that informal suggestions to the effect that Luton Airport was a candidate for third London airport status were made at officer level to Ministry staff, rather than publicly.<sup>38</sup> Certainly, the Inter-Departmental Committee took the suggestions seriously enough to examine the case, even though Luton had already been excluded in its early sieving processes.

31. Luton News, 17th. October 1963.

32. Saturday Telegraph, 26th. October 1963.

33. Saturday Telegraph, 23rd. November 1963.

34. Luton News, 3rd. January 1964.

35. Luton News, 2nd. April 1964.

36. The Minister of Aviation's decision to this effect was based upon the

Equally, it is clear that the possibility that Luton might be chosen was a factor in the mounting protests of 1963.

The acquisition of County Borough status for Luton on 1st. April 1964 made little difference to the Luton Airport story other than that the Council became a planning authority in its own right, and was thus able to give itself permission for developments at the Airport. This it proceeded to do. The approved Luton and Dunstable Town Map had included the proposal to extend the runway to a length of some 6,700 feet, and the Council decided to go ahead with as much of this as lay within the County Borough boundary.<sup>39</sup> This would, in fact, take the runway up to some 6,600 feet in length, and thus the forthcoming public inquiry would only be about the extra 400 feet which lay outside the new County Borough boundary. Perhaps not unnaturally, this was regarded as being somewhat high-handed by the opponents of the runway extension proposal. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government's decision letter following the public inquiry commented thus;

"The existing area of Luton Airport is defined in the approved Luton and Dunstable town map.<sup>40</sup> Approval in principle for the extension of the runway from 5,532 feet<sup>40</sup> to 6,700 feet was also given in approving the town map, and it appears that the runway is in fact at present being extended, under a previous planning permission,<sup>41</sup> to a length of 6,600 feet. It is noted that there is some dispute whether the Luton County Borough Council had power to proceed with these works without obtaining the Minister's approval of detailed plans for the extension of the runway, but this issue is not before the Minister. Consideration of objections made at the inquiry has therefore been confined to matters within the scope of the applications under decision."<sup>42</sup>

The Council's action in this respect changed the scope and nature of the public inquiry by reducing its area of concern and by increasing the bitterness between the contesting parties. The inquiry was held between 24th. and 26th.

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Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee, which had been completed in June 1963 but which was published along with the announcement of the decision. "Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Third London Airport." H.M.S.O. London. 1964.

37. Ibid. Page 11.

38. G.V. Hole, Chairman of the Inter-Departmental Committee, at a press conference. Luton News, 26th. March 1964. The Town Clerk was reported at the same time as saying that "...no-one connected with Luton Corporation has ever suggested that Luton should be the third London airport."

39. Saturday Telegraph, 25th. January 1964. Councillor Letham attempted to stop this in a Council meeting, and received only one supporter, another of the Councillors representing his ward. Luton News, 2nd. April 1964.

40. This is a marginal increase over the 5,423 feet which came into operation in December, 1959. The difference is accounted for by incremental increases in the intervening years to improve safety margins.

41. There is no record of such a planning permission having been issued formally,

November 1964, and the Council was opposed by Luton Rural District Council, Stevenage Urban District Council, Caddington Parish Council and an ad hoc body, the South Luton Airport Objection Association.<sup>43</sup> Bedfordshire County Council remained uncommitted, except to point out that the works Luton Council had already put in hand were unauthorised. All the candidates in the Luton constituency for the 1964 general election had already condemned the proposal on noise grounds, thus effectively stopping it from becoming a local issue at the election.<sup>46</sup> It was clear, therefore, that political opposition to the proposals came from outside the Council rather than from within. Other than Councillor Letham and his one occasional supporter, the pattern of firm two-party support for the Airport on the Council continued and has continued ever since. It has never been an issue between the parties.<sup>45</sup>

The 400 feet extension of the runway was approved, on the basis that it would make a small difference to the nuisance created by the Airport's operations but would be tantamount to a major reversal of policy following the Town Map decision of November 1963. The Inspector found himself in difficulties nevertheless, because he was unsure of the position with regard to the Council's action in commencing work on the runway extension and felt that the objections made had some force, and so he decided to make no recommendation.<sup>46</sup> The Ministry appears simply to have accepted the inevitable; after all, there would be little point in forcing Luton Council to stop construction work to go through the technicality of giving itself a planning permission, and a refusal would undoubtedly have been inconsistent with the decision on the Town Map.<sup>47</sup> It is clear, however, that the extra 400 feet of runway which formed the subject

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as the next sentence of the letter concedes. Since by that time the Council was a planning authority in its own right, such a permission would undoubtedly have been a formality, and so the legal objections to the Council's actions were on a technicality. The much more forceful objections were on the ground that it was doubtful whether it was proper for the Council to take such action in view of the impending public inquiry. Many of the Airport's opponents interviewed during 1970 and 1971 cited this as an early example of the extent to which the County Borough Council was prepared to "bend the rules" in order to achieve its objectives.

42. Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Decision letter under the signature of W. C. Knox, dated 26th. April 1965 and addressed to the Town Clerk, County Borough of Luton.

43. Formed in October 1964 by residents in the Cutenhoe Road-Ludlow Avenue area in Luton's South Ward, with the objective of presenting a unified residents' case at the inquiry. It disbanded after the inquiry but remained latent, to re-emerge in a different form less than four years later. Luton News, 8th. October, 1964. See Appendix 8.

44. Luton News, 17th. September 1964. This pattern has since been repeated at both general and municipal elections with great regularity. See Chapter 11.

of the inquiry was critical for the future growth of the Airport. It is also clear that both Luton Council and the operators knew this at the time of the inquiry, but preferred to say nothing to avoid stirring up any further opposition. The extra 400 feet made the difference between the Airport being able and not being able to accept jet aircraft with a full complement of passengers for the short-haul trips to the Mediterranean holiday resorts, and this was the reason for seeking immediate planning permission for the further runway extension. Compared with the five year plan for the Airport published in 1963, this represented an advancement introducing jets. This was a further feature of the Council's conduct over the public inquiry of 1964 which raised some doubts in the minds of Airport opponents at the time and, even more, retrospectively about the propriety of the Council's actions, and this undoubtedly contributed to the difficult relationship between the two once jets had commenced commercial operations. The Council has never conceded publicly that it was aware in 1964 that the extra 400 feet of runway would make the critical difference described above, but future events damaged the credibility of this claim and as a result of the Council itself as an authority which was prepared to consult those likely to be affected by its decisions.<sup>48</sup>

At this time, negotiations between the Council and the operators were carried out through a series of meetings between the senior executives of the airlines and the party leaders of both parties on the Council, plus the Town Clerk, Borough Treasurer, Airport Director and Borough Engineer.<sup>49</sup> It is doubtful whether other Council members were aware of the implications of the additional amount of runway space being requested. This appears to have been the normal pattern of policy-making activity in the early and mid-1960s, and it appears to have been designed to ensure that the operators' plans were not widely known (for perfectly valid commercial reasons) and that changes in party control of the Council did not affect agreed Airport policy on which the operators were basing their plans.<sup>50</sup> It did also render opposition to Airport policy on the part of individual back-bench members such as Councillor Letham extremely difficult, however, because very little information about other than

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45. There were signs in 1971 that this might be about to change, although in the event nothing materialised. See Chapter 9, page 161.

46. Report of W.H. Fennell to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, dated 17th. December 1964.

47. Although the objections had not then been significant.

48. This section is based upon the interviews with Bedfordshire County Alderman L.S. Bowles (op. cit.), K. Seymour (op. cit.) and J. Sauvage (Managing Director, Britannia Airways), 12th. July 1971. At the time of the events referred to, all three were major participants. Alderman Bowles was leader of the majority

short-term proposals was made available to them. The evidence indicates that this also was an intended consequence of the agreement between the party leaderships to work in tandem over Airport policy. This pattern of policy-making had changed by the late- 1960s as a result of forces which will be described below, but the atmosphere of secrecy which it engendered and the consequent suspicions which it promoted were both regarded as having contributed to the difficulties which the Council was later to face in dealing with opponents of its Airport policies.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the Council's actions and processes around the time of the 1964 public inquiry promoted for the first time an element of suspicion as to its objectives which, whilst it became dormant following the decision on the public inquiry, was to re-emerge as an important feature of the process from 1968 onwards.

As well as the extension of runway facilities, the operators were pressing for an improvement in terminal facilities at the Airport. The five year plan had thought in terms of temporary facilities, but the growth potential with the runway extension was such that more commodious and permanent facilities were required. The Council thus approved in December 1964 another package of proposals designed to meet the operators' requests, the main feature of which was a new terminal building.<sup>52</sup>

It might be appropriate at this point to quote the views of two publications which described Luton Airport as it was in the mid-1960s, just before the inclusive tour industry started to grow very rapidly. Dyer, Stygall and Dony, referring to the year 1963, wrote;

"Progress at the Airport was slow until full Customs facilities were obtained in 1962. Its grass runways were inadequate for modern traffic and in 1960 (sic) a concrete runway of 5,500 feet was constructed, and it is hoped that this will be lengthened. The main use of the Airport now, apart from test flying and flying training, is for charter aircraft providing inclusive holiday tours, although there are scheduled services to the Channel Islands, Belfast, Blackpool, Ostend and Malta. There is some freight traffic, and a number of executive aircraft belonging to private firms are based at Luton. It is also used for diversions from London and Gatwick Airports. The Airport will undoubtedly play an increasing part in Luton's future development. The increase in the number of passengers using it from 9,000 in 1961 to 133,000 in 1963 should give rise to optimism." <sup>53</sup>

Referring to 1964/66, Doganis wrote;

"Luton strictly speaking is not one of London's official airports, although it is within the London area. Hitherto it has been of little importance. It had no winter services at all and summer services only to the Channel Islands and Blackpool. In May 1966, the lengthened 7,000 feet runway and the new terminal building were completed, and the local

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Conservative group on Luton Council, Mr. Seymour was its Borough Engineer and Mr. Sauvage the Managing Director of one of the two operating Companies upon which the Airport was substantially dependent for its business.

authority clearly hopes to develop more scheduled services." 54

These two quotations are useful in that they serve to put the Airport into perspective in the early 1960s. Then, it was a small and relatively unimportant municipal airport, with a growing traffic in inclusive tours but with an insecure and constantly changing scheduled services sector. It was recognised as having some growth potential, but neither study presaged the very rapid growth which was to characterise the late 1960s.

Very little happened in 1965 and 1966 in relation to Luton Airport. The process of year-by-year incremental expansion continued, but there seems to have been a decline in interest following the 1964 public inquiry. In these two years, there is only one report of a complaint about aircraft noise in the local press, from Caddington Parish Council.<sup>55</sup> There was, however, some disagreement within the Labour and Conservative groups on Luton Council about whether the Council should continue to think in terms of another runway running north-south, or whether a parallel east-west runway would give greater scope for expansion. This was a cross-party issue; it did not take the form of a fight between the parties. The leader of the faction which wanted a parallel runway was Councillor (later Alderman) F. S. Lester, subsequently to become Chairman of the Airport Committee, but he was unable to command enough support in the Council to substitute his proposal for the transverse runway proposal which was still the Council's official policy.<sup>56</sup>

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. This point was made by both Councillor Dunington (interview, 29th. July 1971) and Councillor White (interview, 2nd. April 1971) when they were asked about the extent to which the Council's previous actions had contributed to the difficulties they faced as Chairmen of the Airport Committee from September, 1969 and May 1971, respectively.

52. Luton News, 3rd. December 1964. The Council subsequently gave itself planning permission, and the new terminal building was opened in 1966. It was designed to have a life of ten years before being converted to a freight shed, but by 1969 it was inadequate. This is perhaps some measure of the extent to which even the Council under-estimated the rate of growth with its full knowledge of the operators' plans. Interview with K. Seymour (op. cit.).

53. Dyer, Stygall and Dony, op. cit. Pages 208 and 209.

54. R. S. Doganis. "The Implication of the Demand for Air Transport on Airport Planning for England and Wales." Unpublished Ph. D. thesis. University of London. 1967. Page 109.

55. Saturday Telegraph, 10th. July 1965.

56. Luton News, 22nd. December 1966.

The inclusive tour industry grew especially rapidly after about 1965, when the Air Transport Licensing Board relaxed its licensing policy,<sup>57</sup> and this created a need to re-think the five year development plan for the Airport, which had been based upon an assumption of steadier growth than now appeared likely. The Council debate referred to above was the only visible manifestation of this process, but at officer level several possibilities were under examination. The Airport had handled 357,109 passengers in 1966, and the Airport Director made public a prediction that by 1971 this figure would more than quadruple, to 1,480,000.<sup>58</sup> This degree of growth was much larger than had previously been admitted publicly as a possibility, and formed the background to the reappraisal of the future of the Airport which was then taking place. Symptomatic of the brighter hopes for the future was the decision early in 1967 to seek permission to change the Airport's name to "Luton Airport-London". The argument used by the Chairman of the Airport Committee was that Luton already was the third London Airport, and that the proposal, if accepted, would simply be a formal recognition of a de facto situation.<sup>59</sup> This brought out into the open the disagreements that Councillor Aldridge had already had with the majority Labour group on Airport issues, which had contributed to his loss of the party whip.<sup>60</sup> Again, however, as in the previous case of Councillor Letham, Councillor Aldridge had no support, and after he left the Council in May, 1967 there was again no dissent for a while on Airport policies.

The third major operator to base itself at Luton Airport came in the summer of 1967, when Monarch Airlines was officially formed at the Airport. The extent to which the Council was still encouraging operators in 1967 (by when a financially successful Airport appeared to be virtually assured) can be gauged from the experiences of Monarch Airlines. Monarch and Britannia both had directors who had previously been directors of British Eagle, and so the directors of the new Company knew via personal contacts of Luton Airport's possible

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57. Committee of Inquiry into Civil Air Transport, op. cit. Page 22.

58. Saturday Telegraph, 4th. February 1967. The 1971 prediction was actually surpassed in 1969, and the actual 1971 figure was virtually double the Airport Director's expectation.

59. Luton News, 2nd. February 1967.

60. His whip had been withdrawn in 1966, only two years after he entered Luton Council following eighteen years as a County Councillor and Alderman before County Borough status had been obtained. Although previously a County Councillor for part of Luton, he had opposed County Borough status for the town and this, plus the fact that he had been Chairman of the County Planning Committee under what was nominally a Conservative administration, made his relations with Luton's Labour group very difficult. There were also personality clashes, he being unable to accept the hierarchical leadership and strict discipline of the County Borough

advantages as a base. Nevertheless, their first visit to Luton was in the nature of a courtesy call; their minds had already virtually been made-up in favour of Stansted. The Council's terms were so generous, however, that the directors changed their minds. The Council was prepared to alter a hangar to suit the Company's needs, and to undercut Stansted on both rental facilities and landing charges. These factors, coupled with Luton's undoubtedly superior accessibility when compared with Stansted, weighed very heavily in the directors' decision.<sup>61</sup>

### The Advent of Jets and its Implications.

Monarch would only be operating jet-prop aircraft for some years, but the first public announcement that pure jets would soon be operating from the Airport on a regular basis came in November 1967.<sup>62</sup> Although it would be possible for jets to operate from the runway, it was anticipated by the Council (and demanded by the operators) that facilities would be necessary for future generations of aircraft. Accordingly, the Management Group of chief officers<sup>63</sup> was asked to re-examine the agreed proposals for the Airport. The Group looked at four possibilities;

- 1) extending the existing runway to the east to a length of 10,000 feet;
- 2) constructing a new runway 10,000 feet in length set obliquely across the existing runway;
- 3) constructing a new runway 10,000 feet in length parallel to the existing runway at such a separation that simultaneous operations would be possible; and,
- 4) constructing a new runway 10,000 feet in length parallel to the existing runway but without a separation as great as in scheme 3).

Of these, the Group thought that scheme 4) was preferable, but that it was essential that independent consultants be employed to advise the Council.<sup>64</sup>

Rumours of the existence of this report (which was treated as being highly confidential, and only had a very limited circulation even within the Council) began to appear in the local press.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, training flights in jets in preparation for the operations of the forthcoming season had just started, and complaints about noise started to mount as a result.<sup>66</sup> The Luton and

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Labour group after many years of relative political freedom on the County Council. After a series of arguments on many different matters, his whip was withdrawn in 1966, ostensibly because he supported the decision of the Government to amalgamate the Bedfordshire and Luton police forces against the wishes of the Labour group. This was more a convenient excuse than the real reason, however; it was simply the latest in a long line of disputes. Luton News, 26th. January 1967. Interview with R.J. Aldridge, op. cit. The bitterness between Mr. Aldridge and his former colleagues on Luton Council was subsequently to colour all his work in opposition to Airport expansion. See Chapter 13.

61. Interview with M. Elgood (Planning Executive, Monarch Airlines) 25th. June, 1971.

District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (LADACAN) was formed at this time (April 1968) from a nucleus of those people who had written protest letters to the local press, who were brought together by Lord Hill.<sup>67</sup> It was established on fertile ground. Not only were noise complaints mounting as a result of the regular operations of jets, but fears as to the scope of the proposals reputedly under consideration by the Council were growing. This also was related to an old fear, that Luton might be chosen as the third London Airport. This fear had been remote between early 1964 and early 1968, when the Stansted decision appeared to be firm, but early in 1968 the Government decided to re-open the issue.<sup>68</sup> The fear was not long-lasting, since less than a year later the Commission on the Third London Airport (Roskill Commission) had submitted its short-list of possible sites to the President of the Board of Trade, and this list did not include Luton.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, LADACAN was able to feed on this uncertainty, especially when the apparent scope of the Council's proposals was compared with the requirements for a third London Airport.<sup>70</sup>

The debate in the Council over the proposal to employ consultants to examine the future of the Airport was a long and acrimonious one, although only because the minority Labour group did not regard it as a reasonable expenditure of money. The group did not depart from its traditional policy of support for the Airport, but simply did not believe that it was necessary to employ consultants for this purpose. The party whips were on, however, and the proposal was accepted by the Council.<sup>71</sup>

The terms of reference given to the consultants are indicative of the Council's approach to Airport policy at this time. Engineering consultants were appointed (and Dr. Richards, the Council's noise consultant, was requested to assess the noise implications of the engineers' proposals) with the task of preparing a blueprint for Airport development. The wider implications of Airport development in terms of the socio-economic character and development of the sub-region were not included as necessary subjects for study. In fact, the notion that growth should take place was implicit in the remit to the consultants, and they were asked simply to concentrate upon the facilities that ought to be provided within the Airport's perimeter to cater for growth.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, the prospect of a thorough examination of developing Airport policy by independent experts was pre-empted by the terms of reference they were given. The policy of as much growth as could be attracted was not in doubt; the consultants were asked merely to tell the Council how best to achieve this objective.

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62. Saturday Telegraph, 11th. November 1967.

63. Chief Executive Officer and Town Clerk, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Solicitor to the Council, Borough Treasurer and Borough Engineer, augmented for the purposes of the study by the Airport Director, Borough Architect and Borough Valuer.

The pressure on the Council was growing rapidly, nevertheless. LADACAN's membership was increasing very speedily, as a result of an intensive series of public meetings on the issue throughout the area,<sup>73</sup> and its activities were awakening other organisations to the potential importance of the issue. The most significant of these was Hertfordshire County Council, which shared a boundary with the Airport. For geographical reasons, most of the noise generated by aircraft using the Airport was experienced by towns in Hertfordshire, but the County Council had taken no part in what debate there had been until this time because the noise problem had not been significant. Awakened by press rumours and by the pressures of LADACAN members, the County Council started to look at the problem.<sup>74</sup> Members of Parliament for the surrounding area also started to become interested, and to put pressure on the Board of Trade for a Government statement on the problem.<sup>75</sup>

This process, nevertheless, was occurring in a vacuum. Luton Council had made no information available about its proposals,<sup>76</sup> and rumours in the local

64. Report of the Management Group to the Policy Advisory Committee on the Development of Luton Airport. 1st. March 1968.

65. Saturday Telegraph, 16th. March 1968. Evening Post, 23rd. April 1968.

66. Pictorial, 27th. February 1968. The difference in perceived noise levels at 500 feet distance during take-off and initial climb between a large turbo-prop aircraft such as the Britannia (operated by Monarch Airlines) and a medium jet of the type introduced at Luton Airport in 1968 is approximately 7 PNdB. An increase of 10 PNdB doubles the sensation of noisiness. Evidence of N. Fleming on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council to the public inquiry into Luton Airport expansion proposals. January 1972.

67. Its first Chairman was ex-Councillor Aldridge, who appears to have used it in part to conduct a personal vendetta against his former colleagues. The establishment and subsequent growth of LADACAN will be examined in detail in Chapter 13.

68. Sunday Times, 25th. February 1968. This decision was obviously the end-result of a highly complex process, but it appears that the balance may have been tipped towards re-opening the issue by the change from Douglas Jay to Anthony Crosland as President of the Board of Trade. Anthony Crosland noted the opposition of his officials to his desire to re-open the case in the Sunday Times, 25th. September 1971. This opinion is also held by P.H. Levin. "On Decisions and Decision Making". Public Administration, Volume 50, Spring 1972. Pages 21, 35 and 36.

69. The list was submitted on 24th. February 1969, but details had previously appeared in the national press. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Short-list of Sites". H.M.S.O. London 1969.

70. Alderman Lester (by then Chairman of the Airport Committee) was reported as saying that the proposals under consideration would enable up to 64 aircraft movements per hour to be sustained at Luton. This was exactly the same figure to which the Inter-Departmental Committee had worked in its original recommendation in favour of Stansted. Evening Post, 9th. May 1968.

71. Luton News, 2nd. May 1968. 72. See Appendix 9.

73. LADACAN was formed in April 1968, and by the beginning of October of that year claimed 10,000 paid-up members within a 10 miles radius of the Airport. Evening Post, 5th. October 1968.

press were all that other organisations had. This position was soon changed, however, because on 10th. July 1968 the Evening Post published the report of the Management Group under the title "Airport Confidential", devoting over three pages to the issue. This brought matters out into the open and it became clear that what was under consideration was not simply the natural growth of a relatively insignificant municipal airport but the creation of another major airport in the South-East, with all the attendant implications of such a proposal. How the Evening Post came to be in a position to publish this report, which had a profound effect upon the process by confirming the suspicions of some of the participant organisations and awakening others, remains a mystery. The blame for the "leak" was attributed by the members of his own Labour group to Councillor T. Kenneally (South Ward, one of those badly affected by aircraft noise), and for a while he was ostracised by it. As a member of the Airport Committee at the time, he had access to the report of the Management Group and he made known his dislike of the scale of the thinking implicit in it to his group. From time to time he had passed material to the Evening Post when he wanted it to be aired in public, and he did threaten to do the same with the Management Group's report.<sup>77</sup> He denies having implemented his threat, however, although the feeling that he was responsible cost him his seat on the Airport Committee.<sup>78</sup> The reporter who drafted the story is no longer employed by the Evening Post, but his successor believes that Councillor Kenneally was the source of the information.<sup>79</sup> If Councillor Kenneally was not responsible, the most likely explanation appears to be that a copy of the report was sent anonymously to the Evening Post by a member of the Council's staff. The leaderships of the two parties were solidly in favour of Airport expansion, and at that time the junior members of the ruling Conservative group did not have access to the report, so both of these possible sources appear somewhat unlikely.<sup>80</sup> Whatever the source of the report, its accuracy was unquestionable, and it changed the nature

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74. Evening Post, 22nd. May 1968. Luton News, 23rd. May 1968. See Chapter 12.

75. James Allason, Conservative M.P. for Hemel Hempstead (Pictorial, 27th. February 1968). Mrs. Shirley Williams, Labour M.P. for Hitchin and Minister of State for Education and Science (Evening Post, 3rd. May 1968). Gwilym Roberts, Labour M.P. for South Bedfordshire (Pictorial, 27th. February 1968). Mr. Roberts was at that time a confirmed expansionist, being a member (until May 1968) of the Labour group on Luton Council.

76. This included to the Government. It was announced that William Rodgers, Minister of State, Board of Trade, would be coming to Luton on 14th. July for a "fact-finding" visit. Evening Post, 5th. July 1968. This was the second visible result of pressures put on the Government. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government had already decided that, as from 22nd. April 1968, Luton Council should notify the Ministry of any planning proposals for the Airport before granting itself planning permission, so that the application could be called in if the Ministry so desired. This decision arose out of another incremental

of the process by supplying one of its missing ingredients for the majority of participants -- information.

It has been shown that Luton Council had thought consistently in terms of more than a municipal airport serving a defined locality ever since the 1930s, although very little notice had been taken of this outside or even within Luton. In part, this was because such ambitions had always seemed inconsistent with the then current scale of operations. In part, also, the nature of civil aviation had changed a very great deal, and the concept of a major international airport of the 1970s was very different from that of an important aerodrome of the 1930s. An element of suspicion as to the Council's intentions had been introduced as a result of its conduct around the time of the 1964 public inquiry, however, and the introduction of jets and the publication of the Management Group's report brought these suspicions into focus. IADACAN's initial growth had both fed upon and added to the suspicion which had re-emerged following the introduction of jets, and the Evening Post's disclosures confirmed many fears, gave opponents something more tangible against which to react and promoted a change in the scale of thinking as far as the future of Luton Airport was concerned. Before this time, the future of the Airport had not been taken seriously in planning studies at any level. At the regional level, neither the South-East Study nor the South-East Strategy considered the Airport to be a serious factor.<sup>81</sup> At the sub-regional level, the South Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Study (which commenced in 1966 as a partnership between Bedfordshire County Council, Luton County Borough Council and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government) had been carefully skirting around the main issues for the future of the area, and it was shelved following the institution of the South-East Joint Planning Study in 1968.<sup>82</sup> The Luton<sup>and</sup> Dunstable Town Map, whilst giving some information about short-term policies for the Airport, was prepared by a County Council shortly to lose control over much of the area covered by the Map and, consequently, it was caught

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expansion, this time in connection with improvements to the terminal building.

77. Interview with Councillor Kenneally, 8th. April 1971.

78. Ibid.

79. Interview with B. Bird (Municipal Reporter, Evening Post), 18th. November, 1970.

80. Councillor Spooner (Conservative) told an Evening Post reporter that the back-bench members of the Council of both parties had only learned of the details of the report of the Management Group from the paper's coverage. Evening Post, 10th. October 1968.

81. Ministry of Housing and Local Government. "The South-East Study, 1961-1981." H.M.S.O. London. 1964. South-East Economic Planning Council. "A Strategy for the South-East". H.M.S.O. London. 1967.

82. These matters are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 15.

in the complexities of Luton-Bedfordshire relations.<sup>83</sup> Hertfordshire County Council, the planning authority responsible for much of the area affected by aircraft noise, had not become involved until this problem emerged in 1968 because it had not been aware of the possibilities under discussion. In fact, the only consideration given to Luton Airport in terms of airport planning for the region as a whole had been to reject it as a possible site for the third London Airport. The widespread comprehension of the scale of the Council's thinking following the publication of the Evening Post's report ensured that, at least, this situation would not be allowed to continue without strenuous attempts being made to assess the strategic context within which Airport development would take place.

Very few scheduled services had ever operated from the Airport, although the Council had never made any secret of the fact that it would like to see a thriving structure of such services.<sup>83 A</sup> As an incentive to the development of scheduled services, the Council gave them a reduction in landing fees of up to 50%.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, permanent scheduled services had never become established at Luton. During 1968, Autair decided that it could not continue to operate its scheduled services from Luton Airport at a loss. The figure that was apparently agreed as being necessary to keep the services at Luton was an extra £25,000 per annum over the following five years, and the Town Clerk wrote to the President of the Board of Trade asking him to consider such a subsidy to Autair.<sup>85</sup> The party leaderships decided that it would be politically unacceptable for the Council to give such a subsidy, although they did consider it.<sup>86</sup> The President of the Board of Trade refused even to receive a deputation from Luton to discuss the matter,<sup>87</sup> and Autair's scheduled services were subsequently transferred to Heathrow before being withdrawn altogether.<sup>88</sup>

At the same time, the Town Clerk retired and his appointment as a director of Autair was announced.<sup>89</sup> With the degree of suspicion of the Council's activities which existed at this time, it was inevitable that this move would be seen by the Airport's opponents as offering proof of the collusion which was

83. See Chapters 11 and 12.

83A. LADACAN was quite prepared to welcome scheduled services, provided that jets were not used on them, as being valuable to both the local and the national economy. Evening Post, 24th. October 1968.

84. Interview with W.C.J. Easterbrook (Deputy Airport Director), 6th. April 1971. The Evening Post (23rd. September 1968) claimed that such fees were waived altogether for scheduled services, although there is no evidence to support this assertion.

85. Councillor Kenneally was shown a copy of this letter by Will Howie, M.P. for Luton. Howie was, at that time, a Parliamentary Labour party whip, and therefore in direct contact with Ministers. Kenneally took the matter to the Evening

reputed to have existed between the Council and the operators. LADACAN originally intended to insert a denunciatory article in the local press, but received legal advice against this as well as a threat from the Town Clerk's solicitor to sue for libel, and the whole matter was resolved between the legal representatives.<sup>90</sup> This was probably the lowest point to which relations between LADACAN and the Council have ever sunk, but it was symptomatic of a time when accusation and counter-accusation formed the only contacts between the two organisations.

More formal contacts were soon to be established, however. Will Howie (Labour M.P. for Luton) and James Allason (Conservative M.P. for Hemel Hempstead) had succeeded in introducing an amendment to the Civil Aviation Bill, 1968, giving the responsible Minister power to designate airports other than those operated by the British Airports Authority (which already had such facilities) for the purpose of instituting consultative committees.<sup>91</sup> Pressure was being put on Luton Council to institute some form of interim consultative machinery before designation made this mandatory.<sup>92</sup> Alderman Lester, the Chairman of the Airport Committee, gave a cautious welcome to the idea, as providing "...a forum for people who say that they have no chance to influence the development of Luton Airport", and it was decided to institute an interim committee consisting of members of surrounding local authorities.<sup>93</sup> One of the Committee's first decisions (before formal designation, which took place in February 1969)<sup>94</sup> was to request that LADACAN be represented on it, and this was conceded.<sup>95</sup> A formal channel of communication was thus developed and has remained.<sup>96</sup>

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Post, because it had not been decided by the Council and by the appropriate Committees. This was hurriedly done to regularise the position, but it seems that, again, the decision was made by the party leaderships and senior Council officials. Interview with Councillor T. Kenneally, op. cit. This Howie-Kenneally link was apparently used as a means of keeping the M.P.s interested in the issue in touch with the few anti-expansionist Luton Councillors and supplied with information (source: files of Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P. for Hitchin).

86. Evening Post, 23rd. September 1968. Luton News, 26th. September 1968, 3rd. October 1968.

87. Luton News, 17th. October 1968. Evening Post, 17th. October 1968.

88. Luton News, 19th. December 1968.

89. Evening Post, 4th. October 1968. Luton News, 10th. October 1968.

90. Interviews with N.S.C. Reid (former Secretary, LADACAN), 8th. April 1971, and J. Williams (Honorary Solicitor, LADACAN), 27th. June 1971.

91. Hansard, House of Commons, Volume 768. Columns 1839-1844, 1872. 19th. July 1968. Civil Aviation Act, 1968, Section 8. It is clear from the debate on this amendment that the situation at Luton precipitated the proposal.

92. The pressure seems to have emanated from Central Government, Hertfordshire

The process of incremental expansion was still continuing, although the increments had now to remain small to prevent planning applications on them being called in by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Following the demise of British Eagle in 1968, other companies were able to acquire its inclusive tour business. One of these companies was Dan-Air Services (which normally operated out of Gatwick Airport), which announced an inclusive tour contract involving 200,000 passengers for the 1969 season.<sup>97</sup> An application was made to the Council to operate out of Luton Airport for the purposes of this contract, but the Council turned the application down on the ground that adequate facilities could not be provided in time.<sup>98</sup> The Ministry of Housing and Local Government had originally requested that all planning applications involving the use of over 8,000 square feet of land should be referred to it, and the refusal of Dan-Air's application had been on the basis that any extension of the terminal would have to be by more than this amount, which (even if a public inquiry had not been ordered) would probably have taken so long to be processed by the Ministry that the extra facilities could not have been made operational for the 1969 season. The matter was re-examined, however, and it was decided to accommodate Dan-Air by a temporary expansion of less than the 8,000 square feet threshold. This was done by a special meeting of the Airport Committee, and sanctioned by a hurriedly-convened meeting of the Finance Committee. Neither the newly-formed Consultative Committee nor the full Council were given a chance to discuss the matter until construction had already started.<sup>99</sup> This intensified the pressure for a full public inquiry into the issue of the expansion of the Airport. A small increment in the facilities provided could make a significant difference to the operations from the Airport, as the Dan-Air incident illustrated, and there were fears that expansion would continue on this basis, with no proposal substantial enough (in spatial planning terms) to justify a public inquiry being advanced. It was also an inauspicious start for the new consultative machinery.

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County Council and LADACAN. In addition, an interim committee was regarded by Luton Council as being a more controlled way of supplying the Airport's opponents with information than through the revelations of the Evening Post. Interview with J.V. Cowan (Town Clerk, Luton), 10th. March 1971.

93. Saturday Telegraph, 26th. October 1968. Evening Post, 18th. December 1968. Luton News, 19th. December 1968.

94. Evening Post, 6th. February 1969. Saturday Telegraph, 8th. February 1969.

95. Saturday Telegraph, 18th. January 1969. Evening Post, 18th. January 1969.

96. Its effectiveness will be considered in detail in Chapter 12.

97. Evening Post, 27th. November 1968.

98. Evening Post, 18th. December 1968. This followed strong lobbying against

During the controversy over the provision of facilities for Dan-Air, an opportunity had arisen for the electors of Luton to express their views on the whole issue of Airport expansion. The Council had decided to promote a Private Bill to enable it to borrow up to £1 million on the London money market. It was necessary to hold a public meeting before proceeding with this, and if at least 100 electors requested it a Town Poll on the Proposal would also be necessary.<sup>100</sup> LADACAN was worried that this Bill might provide a means of raising extra money for the expansion of the Airport, and decided to seek an assurance at the public meeting that this would not be so. No such assurance was forthcoming, and as a result the meeting (held on 18th. December 1968) was extremely noisy.<sup>101</sup> LADACAN decided to press for a Town Poll, hoping to convince the electorate of Luton that the issue was not a relatively obscure financial matter but the expansion of the Airport. No difficulty at all was experienced in obtaining the necessary signatures to ensure a Poll and it was fixed for Saturday, 11th. January 1969.<sup>102</sup> LADACAN started to campaign throughout the town, although its efforts were concentrated particularly in the three wards (Central, Crawley and South) most affected by aircraft noise. The Council did not reply until two days before the date of the Poll, when a joint statement by the leaders of the Conservative and Labour groups pointed out that the vote was neither for nor against the Airport, but was about a method of raising money that would save the ratepayers £4,000 per annum in interest charges. It was also pointed out that the Poll was costing the ratepayers some £1000 of these savings.<sup>103</sup> In addition, the Luton branch of NALGO (National and Local Government Officers Association) sent an information circular to its 800 members, pointing out that the provisions of the Bill included a clause which would improve the investment potential of their superannuation fund, and arguing that members should vote for the Bill. LADACAN, already suspicious that the public meeting had been deliberately packed by NALGO members, criticised this as yet another dubious tactic on the part of the Council, and called for a 20% poll and a large vote against Airport expansion.<sup>104</sup>

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the proposal from the existing operators at the Airport, who were worried about congestion in the terminal building. Interviews with J. Sauvage (Managing Director, Britannia), op. cit., and M. Elgood (Planning Executive, Monarch), op. cit.

99. Evening Post, 27th. January 1969. Luton News, 30th. January 1969.

100. Borough Funds Act, 1872, as incorporated in the Local Government Act, 1933.

101. Evening Post, 19th. December 1968.

102. Pictorial, 31st. December 1968.

103. Luton News, 9th. January 1969.

104. Ibid. Saturday Telegraph, 11th. January 1969.

In the event, only 6.4% of the electorate voted, 3,673 in favour of the Bill and 2,776 against it.<sup>105</sup> Inevitably, both sides claimed this as a victory,<sup>106</sup> but the most significant figure is probably the 93.6% of the electorate who did not vote. The Town Poll was apparently a watershed in LADACAN's activities, because it was the last attempt it made to build a base of support within Luton.<sup>107</sup> Many of the people involved in LADACAN were prepared subsequently to admit that it had been a mistake ever to force a Town Poll, because it had alienated the people of Luton.<sup>108</sup> It was possible to increase the Parliamentary pressure against the Airport, however, through the opposition to the Bill of M.P.s from surrounding constituencies.<sup>109</sup> The M.P.s were not allowed by the Speaker to raise the wider issues of Airport expansion when discussing the Bill, despite repeated attempts,<sup>110</sup> but it had been made clear that an adjournment debate on the issue would be welcomed, and the first was granted on 17th. March 1969.<sup>111</sup>

Safety in the air had not, until this point, become a real issue. The only accident which had occurred at Luton Airport had involved the crash of a small jet training aircraft on the roof of one of the workshops at Vauxhall Motors on 23rd. December 1967, when the factory had been shut for Christmas, which resulted in the deaths of the pilot and the training pilot.<sup>112</sup> The prospect of further accidents had since been used as his main argument against Airport expansion by Charles Simeons, prospective Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Luton,<sup>113</sup> but it had not been taken up by many others. The issue came to the fore in 1969, however, through the activities of the British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA). The main problem was that gliders from the London Gliding Club's field at Dunstable Downs were operating in airspace used also by the airlines, as were light aircraft from several nearby airfields. BALPA had attempted to raise the matter with both Luton Council and the Board of Trade, but each had passed on responsibility to the other, and so BALPA decided to make the issue public knowledge.<sup>114</sup> A press statement was issued, describing the pilots' case in full,<sup>115</sup> and the matter was immediately taken by Will Howie (M.P. for Luton) to William Rodgers (Minister of State, Board of Trade).<sup>116</sup>

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105. Evening Post, 13th. January 1969. Pictorial, 14th. January 1969. Detailed information about the vote was obtained from the Town Clerk's Department, Luton, and will be analysed in Chapter 11.

106. Ibid.

107. See Chapter 13.

108. For example, N.S.C. Reid (8th. April 1971), Lord Hill of Luton (27th. May 1971) and J. Williams (op. cit.).

109. Notably Victor Goodhew (Conservative, St. Albans), James Allason (Conservative, Hemel Hempstead) and Gwilym Roberts (Labour, South Bedfordshire). Mrs. Shirley Williams (Labour, Hitchin) was in the difficult position of being an opponent of the Airport but also a Minister in a Government which approved in

After hurried consultations with Luton Council, it was decided to institute a "Special Rules Area" around Luton Airport which, whilst controlling airspace, would still leave the London Gliding Club some space in which to continue its activities.<sup>117</sup> BALPA thought that these controls were not strict enough, whereas the London Gliding Club thought that they were too restrictive, and started to lobby (through the British Light Aviation Centre and the British Gliding Club, as well as on its own account) for their postponement.<sup>118</sup>

It was clear that the Special Rules Area as originally envisaged (as a quick and easy solution to the problem) would satisfy neither of the main protagonists. Officials in the Board of Trade told BALPA that not enough near-miss reports had been filed to justify any more restrictive measures, to which BALPA retaliated by instructing its members to report all near-misses in full. Since when a miss was "near" was not precisely defined, the number of such reports increased very rapidly, especially since the summer season saw both Airport and gliding activities at their peaks.<sup>119</sup> The matter was referred to the Civil Aircraft Control Advisory Committee (CACAC), a body consisting of representatives from the Board of Trade, airlines, airport authorities, light aviation and gliding interests, the function of which was to advise the Board of Trade on matters referred to it.<sup>120</sup> BALPA was still concerned at the apparent lack of urgency being shown, and issued a directive to its members that, if it was necessary for safety reasons, noise abatement procedures at Luton Airport should be ignored. This was an unnecessary directive, since the pilots already knew that air safety was the prime consideration should an emergency arise, but it was done to remind the public of BALPA's concern and succeeded in making national press headlines.<sup>121</sup> This was on a Friday; on the same day, BALPA representatives were called to see the Minister (Mr. Rodgers), and were told that a detailed survey of the safety problems at Luton Airport would begin on the following Monday, with a view to instituting a Special Rules Area in time for the 1970 season. In return, the BALPA representatives were asked to give an assurance that noise abatement procedures would be followed, and this

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principle of the Council's method of raising money, which was the subject of the Bill.

110. Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 778. Columns 841-849. 20th. February 1969.

111. Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 780. Columns 160-174. 17th. March 1969.

112. Board of Trade. Civil Aircraft Accident Report SER 11 510256 6. H.M.S.O. London. August 1969.

113. See, for example, Evening Post, 6th. January 1969. He was elected M.P. for Luton in June, 1970.

was done.<sup>122</sup> This stopped the ramification of the issue, because it occurred at a time when LADACAN had decided to use BALPA's criticisms against Luton Council as further evidence of the incompatibility of the Airport with its surrounds.<sup>123</sup> The Council did not bother to reply (as it might well have done, had the controversy continued), and the matter receded in importance.<sup>124</sup>

The issue of airspace and air safety, although of central concern for a period during 1969, is not the issue which has attracted most public attention since the introduction of jets at Luton Airport early in 1968. Night jet noise had been the cause of most complaints, and the issue had also been a principal contributor to the growth of LADACAN. During the 1968 summer season, there had been approximately 13 night jet take-offs per week, and a programme for the 1969 summer season of 36 night jet take-offs per week had been agreed. The process was for the operators to tell the Council how many flights they required, and for the Airport Committee to put the statements of the individual operators together and ratify the sum as an agreed flying programme. In other words, the operators were given whatever flights they requested. This process was beginning to cause doubts amongst some junior members of the ruling Conservative group, however, and the most articulate exponent of these worries was Councillor K. White (himself a member of the Airport Committee). Matters came to a head when the operators requested a programme of 68 night jet take-offs per week for the 1970 summer season.<sup>125</sup>

Alderman Lester pushed the increase through the Airport Committee, but Councillor White (who had been unable to persuade the Airport Committee of his views) voiced his objections to such an increase at a meeting of the Conservative group, and found he had some support. A formula was found, therefore, whereby the ruling Conservative party asked for the proposal to be withdrawn from consideration by the Council, until the report of the consultants on the future of the Airport had been received by the Council (it was then being printed). Alderman Hillier (leader of the Conservative group) referred the matter back to the Airport Committee, with the proviso that it attempt to negotiate a reduction with the operators. A four-man sub-committee was set up to do this, its membership including both Alderman Lester and Councillor White. It was unable to make any headway at all with the operators. They refused to negotiate a cut between themselves, and threatened to leave the Airport if the Council imposed a cut. Alderman Lester therefore wished the sub-committee to recommend that no cut be imposed; on the other hand, Councillor White wished to impose a 25;

114. Interviews with Captain J. Richardson (former Vice-President, BALPA), 9th. June 1971 and G. Hurley (Public Relations Officer, BALPA), 18th. June 1971. BALPA's relations with the national press were extremely good, and the only widespread national press coverage of the Luton Airport issue has been in relation to BALPA's activities. The reasons for this will be examined in more detail in Chapter 14.

cut on the operators' demands (to 50 night jet take-offs per week). The sub-committee compromised by recommending that whilst a negotiated cut was impossible, the Airport Committee should itself reduce night jet take-offs by twelve per week (to 56), taking ten from the newly-arrived Dan-Air and two from Autair (Court Line). Alderman Lester persuaded the Airport Committee to reject its sub-committee's recommendation and to leave the provisional programme untouched, but the Conservative group, on the direction of its leader, restored the sub-committee's recommendation as party policy. This then became the subject of a party whip for the next Council meeting, but Alderman Lester threatened to resign as Chairman of the Airport Committee if his policies were defeated by the full Council. The full Council vote went very heavily against him (by 25-8), with only the remnants of the Labour group and three Conservatives supporting him, and he immediately announced his resignation. The Conservative leadership replaced him as Chairman by Councillor White, and four "natural expansionists" (Alderman Lester and his three Conservative supporters) were subsequently removed from the Committee.

This was the first cut on the operators' demands that the Council had ever imposed. Before this, the operators were given what they requested, and this was the main feature of the "natural expansion" approach which had become known

115. Luton News, 1st. May 1969.

116. Saturday Telegraph, 3rd. May 1969.

117. Luton News, 8th. May 1969.

118. Daily Telegraph, 17th. June 1969. Luton News, 28th. June 1969.

119. The Observer, 22nd. June 1969.

120. Ibid.

121. Daily Express, 8th. August 1969. Guardian, 8th. August 1969. Sun, 8th. August 1969. Times, 8th. August 1969. Interview with G. Hurley, op. cit.

122. Interviews with Captain Richardson (9th. June 1971) and G. Hurley (18th. June 1971). Daily Telegraph, 9th. August 1969. Guardian, 9th. August 1969. Times, 9th. August 1969.

123. Saturday Telegraph, 9th. August 1969.

124. Although the issue was examined in a Times leading article of 12th. August 1969. A special Rules Zone and Special Rules Area were subsequently introduced for the area around Luton Airport as from 2nd. April 1970 by Notam 114/1970 (Board of Trade).

125. The following account has been pieced together from interviews with Alderman J. Hillier (5th. March 1971), Alderman F.S. Lester (op. cit.), Councillor K. White (op. cit.), Councillor V. Dunnington (op. cit.) and J.V. Cowan (op. cit.), and from press articles (Luton News, 17th. July, 24th. August, 28th. August, 15th. September 1969. Saturday Telegraph, 12th. July, 1969. Evening Post, 11th. July, 18th. July, 1st. August, 15th. August, 16th. August, 22nd. August, 28th. August 1969). Probably not unnaturally, there is a great deal of conflict between these various sources, but the account presented here has been checked and cross-checked as carefully as was possible and is believed to be accurate.

as "the Lester line". Alderman Lester had been given a great deal of freedom as Chairman of the Airport Committee to make policy, provided that his policies could command support within the Conservative group and did not impair its political stability. The reactions from outside the Council to his expansionist policies had been extreme, much more so than anyone had apparently anticipated. As a result, pressure on the ruling Conservative group had begun to build up, and many of the doubts which this sustained pressure had been inculcating polarised around the particular issue of the 1970 summer night jet programme. As a result, the Conservative leadership found it necessary to make a concession to these pressures to preserve party unity, and Alderman Lester chose to regard this as a test of his Chairmanship. The Conservative group would have preferred the cut to have been imposed without the resignation of Alderman Lester following and, if this had happened, the Airport's opponents would probably not have regarded the incident as being so significant. The reason for this was simply that Alderman Lester was personally identified with the notion of "natural expansion" (meeting the operators' demands as they arise), and if he remained as Chairman the Council's overall policy would still have been regarded as being congruent with his known views. But instead of simply being able to make a gesture to party unity (which is what the cut was originally intended to be), the leadership was forced by Alderman Lester's actions into examining wider issues. It decided that "natural expansion" was not a reasonable policy to continue to pursue, and confirmed this by appointing Councillor White (who had led the "controlled growth" faction) as Alderman Lester's successor and by removing from the Committee the nucleus of "natural expansionists".

A factor in this had undoubtedly been the receipt, during this process, of the consultants' reports on the future of Luton Airport.<sup>126</sup> The scale of the thinking in these reports clearly frightened the Conservative leadership.<sup>127</sup> The Airport was envisaged by the consultants as ultimately having three runways, with investment on the interim and first phases alone being of the order of £18 million.<sup>128</sup> Local reactions to the Report were almost universally condemning in character,<sup>129</sup> yet Alderman Lester's approach to the problem of expansion was basically the same as that of the consultants. The Snow Report demonstrated to the Conservative leadership what Alderman Lester's policies might lead towards; an Airport totally out of scale with the resources of a medium-sized County

126. Sir Frederick Snow and Partners. "Luton Airport Development". County Borough of Luton. Luton. June 1969. C.S. Waters. "The Noise Effects of Extending Luton Airport". Loughborough University of Technology. Loughborough. June 1969.

127. Interview with Alderman J. Hillier, op. cit.

128. Sir Frederick Snow and Partners, op. cit. Page 91.

129. Luton News, 24th. July 1969, 31st. July 1969. Evening Post, 23rd. July 1969, 24th. September 1969.

Borough Council and inevitably creating very strained relations with all the other surrounding local authorities. The leadership drew back from this vision, and at the same time the cut in the 1970 night jet programme was imposed; the two appear to have been mutually supporting.

The Council never discussed the Snow Report, and at the time of writing it is regarded by virtually all the participants in the process as having been shelved permanently. Since its publication in 1969, it has been overtaken by several events which will be detailed below, and a great deal of revision of it would be necessary before it could be regarded as an up-to-date policy document. Its importance was largely in terms of the vision it provided of the likely end-result of the Council's policy at that time, and the political difficulties which were regarded as being inherent in attempting to implement the document's proposals by the leaderships of both parties were such that they saw no point even in allowing it to be debated by the Council. In addition, it provided the Airport's opponents with yet another stick with which to belabour Luton Council. As has been argued already, its terms of reference were such that the consultants concentrated upon the preparation of a blueprint for maximum feasible expansion. The other policy alternatives open to the Council were not examined, and the consultants made very little attempt to assess the wider planning implications of their proposals. In a Report of 109 pages and several fold-out plans, the consultant engineers devoted precisely three short paragraphs to "regional and urban development."<sup>130</sup> Particular use was made at the public inquiries of March, 1970 and January, 1972 of the consultants' statement that, "...it is also clear to us that this would not be considered a suitable site for an entirely new airport purely on these social and amenity considerations,"<sup>131</sup> since the preparation of a master plan for a three runway international airport does not appear to be a logical extension of this viewpoint. An attempt was apparently made at that time, with the support of the Borough Engineer and Planning Officer, to prepare within the Planning division of his Department a report designed to fill some of the gaps left by the consultants. This report, apparently, concentrated upon the definition of a range of policy options open to the Council, and attempted to assess each in the light of ongoing regional and

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130. Sir Frederick Snow and Partners, op. cit. Page 13.

131. Ibid.

132. Interview with K. Seymour, op. cit.

sub-regional planning work. Its conclusion that only a moderate rate of expansion was justifiable was unacceptable to Alderman Lester, however, and he instructed the Town Clerk to prevent its distribution to other members of the Council and chief officers.<sup>132</sup> This is further evidence of the lack of importance attached at that time to factors outside the traditional policy of "natural expansion," and to attempts from within the Council to call it into question.

One reaction to the cutback was the formation of a pro-expansion interest group, the Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's Natural Expansion (PLANE). This was formed initially by local travel agents, and attempted to provide a nucleus around which pro-expansion feeling could coalesce. The original intention was that support would build up so rapidly that the travel agents could hand control of PLANE over to the general public, to prevent the organisation from being tarred with the brush of the travel agents' apparent vested interest in expansion. This has never happened. PLANE grew very slowly and, other than engaging in slanging matches with LADACAN, it appears to have had very little impact upon the process under examination.<sup>133</sup>

Councillor White saw his terms of reference as the new Chairman of the Airport Committee as involving the creation of a policy of controlled expansion. This meant, amongst other things, attempting to obtain a reasonable solution to the problem of night jet noise. His first step was to go to the Minister of State at the Board of Trade (Goronwy Roberts), and to ask whether the Government would institute a national policy on the problem. He was told that the Government would not do this, but that it would support any initiatives on the part of the Aerodrome Owners Association in this respect. A.O.A. as a body did not want to take such initiatives, because the British Airports Authority (one of its members) did not want to lose revenue and because many of the provincial local authorities which operated municipal airports at a loss would have been glad of more night flying as an extra source of revenue.<sup>134</sup> So it was clear that any initiative would have to come from Luton Council.

He went back to the operators to attempt to agree with them a policy for the next two years. For the 1971 and 1972 seasons, the operators wanted 25% of their movements to be at night. Councillor White wished this to be cut to 15%. The Policy Advisory Committee (basically a Cabinet of the ruling Conservative group) wanted a figure to be agreed and then not exceeded, as a firm policy which

133. Saturday Telegraph, 30th. August 1969. Interview with H.S. Baggott (Chairman of PLANE), 2nd. June 1971. The activities of PLANE will be examined in more detail in Chapter 13.

134. Interview with Councillor White, op. cit.

would command unequivocal support within the group, and recommended that a compromise figure of 20% be adopted. At the same time, the Policy Advisory Committee was talking in terms of five million passengers per annum at the Airport by 1975 as a policy target, and Councillor White decided to accept the 20% figure as a basis for negotiation with the operators for 1971 and 1972, and to work towards a 15% figure by 1975.<sup>135</sup>

It was necessary to improve facilities at the Airport for the 1970 season, and a package of proposals was prepared to this end. The package, which involved expenditure of the order of £145,000, had to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government under the agreement made in 1968, and a public inquiry was ordered.<sup>136</sup> That a public inquiry on the expansion of Luton Airport was ordered was no surprise; that an inquiry was ordered on these particular proposals was a surprise to many people.<sup>137</sup> It was regarded by many people as being more of a public relations exercise than anything else, but since it was the first such opportunity to examine Airport policy in public, it was taken extremely seriously by all the participants. LADACAN set up an appeal fund to raise money to present its case at the inquiry.<sup>138</sup> Luton Council decided that it ought to approve a longer-term policy against which the 1970 package could be examined.<sup>139</sup> The policy target of five million passengers per annum by 1975 was accepted, and a package of proposals (costing £1,155,000) was prepared for this five-year period.<sup>140</sup>

The main feature of this five-year package was a parallel taxiway. Luton Airport does not have a fully-developed taxiway system; instead, the runway has also to be used as a taxiway with aircraft turning at either end, and this process of backtracking and turning greatly restricts the number of movements per hour that the runway can sustain.<sup>141</sup> In addition, the package also involved the construction of a new arrivals terminal, so that the whole of the existing terminal could be used for departures, thereby considerably increasing capacity. The operators had been pressing for the provision of these facilities for some

135. Ibid.

136. Saturday Telegraph, 13th. December 1969.

137. Including LADACAN and Luton Council representatives. Interviews with N.S.C. Reid (op. cit.) and Councillor K. White (op. cit.). These particular proposals happened to be the first on which a public inquiry could have been called following the upsurge of public interest in the issue in 1968, and it is clear from a letter from G.J. Skinner (Department of the Environment) to the author, dated 18th. May 1971, that this was the main reason why the inquiry was ordered.

138. Saturday Telegraph, 27th. December 1969. Including money promised by covenant (not all of which was utilised), LADACAN raised about £11,000 in just over two months. Interview with N.S.C. Reid, op. cit.

139. This was apparently as a result of strong advice to this effect from the Town Clerk. Interview with Councillor K. White, op. cit.

time, and Councillor White was able to use the proposals as a lever to get the operators to agree to a night jet flights policy. The operators accepted a two-year policy which would allow summer night jet movements to increase by 500 per annum between 1970 and 1972 (the figures were expressed in this way, rather than as night jet take-offs per week, to give the operators more flexibility and to be comparable with the practices at other airports). This meant an increase of from 3,500 in 1970 (although, in fact, only 3,180 movements were actually recorded because of a slight recession in the inclusive tour industry) to 4,000 in 1971 and to 4,500 in 1972. The operators had actually asked for 6,000 in 1971, and so this represented a cutback on the operators' demands but still a real increase in movements.<sup>142</sup> The operators were also told to share these flights out between themselves by organising a scheduling committee, which at first they were unwilling to do but on which they later relented.<sup>143</sup>

When the package and the night jet flights policy were debated in the Council their only opponents were a small group of supporters of Alderman Lester. The general feeling was that Councillor White had obtained as good a compromise as was possible, and the Airport declined in significance as an issue within the Conservative group.<sup>144</sup>

These proposals formed the background to the 1970 public inquiry. Originally the inquiry had been set to open on 10th. February 1970, but LADACAN managed to get the opening put off until 12th. March. There appear to have been three reasons for this. First, LADACAN needed more time to prepare a case. This was the reason given to and accepted by the Ministry.<sup>145</sup> Secondly, more time was needed to collect money, to ensure that expert witnesses and counsel could be employed to present the case and to give LADACAN a working surplus for the future. Thirdly, LADACAN hoped that, by putting off the date of the inquiry for as long as possible, and then by presenting as lengthy and as weighty a case as it could (so that the Inspector and the Ministry would take a long time to consider the evidence), the proposals which were the subject of the inquiry could not be implemented in time for the 1970 season even if planning permission were to be granted.<sup>146</sup>

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140. For details of the "1969 package" (which formed the subject of the public inquiry of March 1970) and of the "1970 Package" (which was prepared to provide a five-year policy context, but which was actually never implemented) see Appendix 8.

141. This is quite a common configuration at small airports which are not very busy because it minimises construction costs and only begins to impose operating costs above a level of activity to which many airports cannot hope to aspire. The standard (although somewhat outdated) text on airport design is, R. Horonjeff, "The Planning and Design of Airports". McGraw-Hill. New York, 1962. The creation of a parallel taxiway at Luton Airport was calculated as being likely to raise the runway's potential from a maximum of 14 movements per hour to at least 24 movements per hour. Interview with W.C.J. Easterbrook (Deputy Airport Director), 6th. April 1971.

The inquiry was on a much larger scale than any of its predecessors, although the actual proposals under discussion were of relatively little importance. The basis of the inquiry was broadened by an instruction from the Ministry to the main protagonists that the Inspector would be concerned to assess the particular proposals in question against the long-term future of Luton Airport.<sup>147</sup> It lasted for a total of ten days, and 44 people gave evidence or made statements. The main participants (Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAN) all employed both C.C.s and expert witnesses to present their cases, and cross-examinations between Luton and the others tended to be somewhat acrimonious.<sup>148</sup> Only Luton Council and PLANE appeared in support of the proposals; Hertfordshire County Council, LADACAN, Vauxhall Motors, the National Farmers Union, two M.P.s and several District and Parish Councils, small groups and individuals appeared in opposition. As in 1964, Hertfordshire County Council remained uncommitted.<sup>149</sup>

Once the public inquiry had closed there was an hiatus whilst the participants awaited the Inspector's report and the Minister's decision. In this sense, the pattern of events following the 1970 public inquiry was similar to that of 1964. Significant events in the process following the 1970 inquiry took place in the period after the direct observation part of the study had begun, and so they will be examined in the following Chapter. This period of quiescence following the public inquiry presents a useful opportunity to attempt to chart the major developments in the process which had taken place during the 1960s, however, before assessing the increment from June, 1970 to January, 1972.

#### Overview.

In 1960, Luton Airport's future was not an issue. Decisions in relation to it were made by Luton Council without arousing any real interest. Indeed, the previous close partnership between the Council and the Chamber of Commerce on Airport matters had already become far less significant, especially after it

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142. Interview with Councillor White, op. cit. Successive Chairmen of Luton Airport Committee have argued continually with D. Samson (Hertfordshire District Councils and LADACAN) at Luton Airport Consultative Committee meetings about whether this is or is not a cutback. Interview with D. Samson, 13th. August 1971.

143. Interviews with Councillor K. White (op. cit.) and J. Sauvage (Managing Director, Britannia), 12th. July 1971.

144. Luton News, 5th. February 1970. Interview with Councillor V. Dunington, 29th. July 1971.

145. Saturday Telegraph, 10th. January 1970.

146. Interviews with N.S.C. Reid (op. cit.) and J. Williams (op. cit.) LADACAN pursued exactly the same tactics with regard to the inquiry set for January 1972.

became clear that local industry would not supply a solid base of trade for the Airport and the aircraft manufacturing Companies could no longer be regarded as having a long-term need for the Airport for testing purposes. Consequently, the Council set out to encourage airline operators to come to Luton Airport, making significant concessions to them if they would base themselves there. The operators that came were those who were looking out for a base at the same time as the Council was looking for customers for its new facilities. They were independent charter airlines, starting off business in the new inclusive tour sector; this sector grew rapidly, and the operators contributed to this growth and grew because of it. A close business relationship developed between the Council and the operators. This was fostered in part because there were no policy differences on Airport development between the Labour and the Conservative groups on Luton Council, and so the Airport did not get caught up in local party politics. The evidence indicates that this close business relationship was also a close personal relationship, between the airline directors and senior executives and the party leaderships and senior officers of Luton Council. The operators simply asked for particular facilities for the next season or the next couple of seasons, and the Council provided them. There appears to have been no disagreement with the view that what was good for the operators was good for the Airport and therefore good for the Council.

The process of Airport development was thus an incremental one. Medium and long-term plans were prepared, but they were always overtaken by events before they could be implemented. This was associated both with the rapid growth of the inclusive tour industry and with the speed of technological advance in civil aviation. By 1964, the operators were thinking of introducing jets in the near future, and a runway extension was required for this. By not revealing

147. Luton News, 8th. January 1970.

148. Personal observation of the author, who attended the opening days of the inquiry. It is notable that the Inspector's report, which runs to 110 pages, appears to have paid very little regard to points made in cross-examination. Report of V.H. Loney to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, 18th. June 1970.

149. For details of appearances at the inquiry see Appendix 8.

this possibility, and by implementing part of the runway extension because in principle it had been part of the approved Luton and Dunstable Town Map without waiting for the public inquiry, Luton Council earned itself a reputation for deviousness which was to become a potent factor in the subsequent controversies.

The process was "opened" a little by the 1964 public inquiry, by virtue of the reactions of several organisations to certain specific proposals, but it became relatively "closed" again until the advent of jets. When jets were introduced on a regular basis in 1968, the issue became a major public controversy. Instead of being a relatively simple matter of a business relationship between the Council and the operators, it became very quickly a complex web of inter-relating interests. A protest movement (LADACAN) was founded initially by some people very eminent in local public life, and as it grew (feeding upon both the sudden high level of noise and the suspicions of Luton Council's intentions) it prodded other local authorities and Central Government Ministries into an awareness of the problem.

The problem was, in fact, multi-faceted, and different issues tended to occupy the centre of the stage at different times. Some of the participants were involved in most of these issue areas whereas others concentrated their attention much more selectively,<sup>150</sup> but the general problem of the future of Luton Airport became and remained a central feature of local public life. This was both fanned by and contributed to by the local press. Certainly, during 1968 the Evening Post fulfilled the valuable role of being a source of information for many of the participants, much to the embarrassment of Luton Council. The result of all this activity was a great increase in pressure on both Luton Council and Central Government. Initially, LADACAN aimed at Luton Council; later, Central Government seemed likely to be a more fruitful target. Hertfordshire County Council, being in a much better position to use the formal machinery, always concentrated more upon Central Government. It became politically necessary (in terms of party unity) for the ruling Conservative group on Luton Council to make a concession to these pressures by imposing a cut on the operators' demands, but this was interpreted as a challenge to his Chairmanship by Alderman Lester, with whom the "natural expansion" policy was identified, and he was defeated in the Council and resigned. This altered the nature of the relationship between the operators and the Council from one of close and harmonious co-operation to one characterised by a form of bargaining and including, from time to time, an element of hostility, and represented an effective change on the part of the Council of its perceptions of the problems. From this point on, the story is

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150. This difference forms part of the basis for the sub-division of interest groups into general (Chapter 13) and special (Chapter 14) organisations.

one of the Council seeking to adjust its policy of Airport expansion to take account of at least some of the pressures being brought to bear on it, and an element of reciprocity (mutual adjustment) can be detected by the time of the public inquiry of January, 1972.

Thus, the story of the 1960s is the story of a policy-making process which changed quite suddenly after many years of apparent stability. The first signs of this "opening" of the process came in relation to the 1964 public inquiry, but the real change was centred around the introduction of jets early in 1968, a step which had been facilitated by the proposals examined at the public inquiry. From 1968, the process became exceedingly complex, exhibiting many facets, operating at many scales and involving many interests. From this time until the 1970 public inquiry, the constraints upon Luton Council's Airport policy-making activities were increasing. From the time of the 1970 public inquiry onwards the impact of some of these constraints became more noticeable as the degree of adjustment on the part of the Council to the changed circumstances increased. This process is the subject of the following Chapter.

## Chapter 9. The Direct Observation Study.

### Introduction.

The events examined in this Chapter occurred at a time when the author was an observer-participant, and they merit a separate Chapter because of this change in research methodology. Nevertheless, the process under examination was a continuous one, with many of the features touched upon in Chapter 8 falling into a more coherent place during the period which is the subject of this Chapter. The period of the direct observation study lasted for fourteen months, from June, 1970 to August, 1971, but this Chapter concerns itself with the events up to and including the public inquiry of January, 1972. As a result it is divided into two parts; the first is the major study, coterminous with the period of direct observation, and the second is by way of a postscript, to carry the observations up to the time of the public inquiry. The Chapter closes with a short overview of the main process developments observed, but no attempt is made to set these into their broader context, this being the function of Chapter 10.

### The Period of Observer-Participation.

The report of the South-East Joint Planning Team was published late in June 1970.<sup>1</sup> It was regarded by many of the protagonists as being likely to provide a regional context within which the problems of the growth of Luton Airport could be examined, but this did not, in fact, happen. The whole problem of airport planning in relation to regional planning in the South-East appears to have fallen between the work of the South-East Joint Planning Team and that of the Commission on the Third London Airport; certainly, this is true with regard to Luton Airport's future. The Team recognised that its urbanisation proposals for the area in general were beneath what would be required if Luton Airport expanded substantially, although no attempt was made to estimate what this degree of extra urbanisation might involve, nor to say whether such a growth would, in regional terms, be desirable.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, the Airport was treated as an exogenous factor in the Team's work, which did not attempt to assess and evaluate the various possibilities in terms of their regional significance.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the Team's work had very little impact upon the evolving policy-making process with regard to the future of Luton Airport, and has been largely ignored by the majority of the participants in this process.

Of much more immediate impact was the decision on the public inquiry of

1. South-East Joint Planning Team. "Strategic Plan for the South-East." H.M.S.O. London, 1970. The work of the Team will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 15

2. Ibid. Page 109.

3. Although it was recognised that the issue would have an effect upon urban

1970. The Inspector had concluded that, whilst all the representations made to him were germane to the wider issues of the future of Luton Airport, the proposals before him were merely concerned with improving the facilities for one season for passengers who were already booked to use the Airport anyway, and would thus make virtually no difference to the amount of aircraft noise incurred. The Minister's decision letter concurred.<sup>5</sup> Luton Council regarded this as a victory, since not only did it have its planning permission but also it had been obtained without any conditions.<sup>6</sup> The Airport's opponents, although disappointed by the decision, seized on one paragraph of the decision letter as offering some hope to them;

"But he (the Minister) also agrees with the Inspector that a further application for facilities which would increase the number of air movements would need to be considered with great care, particularly if an increase in the number of night and evening movements was involved. He wishes to record clearly that any future proposals for development of the airport will be subjected to a rigorous scrutiny."<sup>7</sup>

Both Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAM regarded this as being a useful and worthwhile statement from their viewpoints, at least partially justifying the efforts put into the inquiry.<sup>8</sup>

One of the business problems that the Airport had always suffered from was a slack winter period, because the inclusive tour industry was basically summer-oriented. For economic reasons, however, the airlines wished to improve their winter business, as did both the tour operators and the hoteliers. Thus, the concept of the short winter holiday in addition to the summer holiday had emerged. The main problem with this was that licensing policy was such that inclusive tours could not be offered at less than the equivalent return fare on a scheduled flight. This created problems for the summer holiday packages, but at least they were usually long enough to ensure that the total cost of the package would approximate to the equivalent scheduled return fare.<sup>9</sup> This was not so in winter, where the package only lasted for a few days and where costs were treated as being largely the variable costs of the tour operator, the airline and the hotelier.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the total package could be offered at a price considerably cheaper than the equivalent scheduled return fare, and Sky Tours and

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structure planning in the South-West Hertfordshire, Luton and Hitchin-Hatfield planning areas. Ibid. Pages 117 and 118.

4. Report of V.H. Loney to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, 18th. June 1970.

5. Under the signature of J.A. Hawksworth, dated 2nd. September 1970.

6. Interview with J.V. Cowan (Town Clerk, Luton), 10th. March 1971.

7. J.A. Hawksworth, op. cit. Paragraph 10, page 3.

8. Interviews with County Alderman Major A.J. Hughes (Chairman, Hertfordshire County Planning Committee), 25th. May 1971, and M.S.C. Reid (Executive Chairman,

Britannia (constituent companies of Thomson Holiday Holdings) decided to fight a test case on the issue, their original application having been rejected by the Air Transport Licensing Board.<sup>11</sup> Their appeal was allowed by the Department of Trade and Industry,<sup>12</sup> and immediately the tour operators arranged packages to take advantage of this dispensation. This did not make such a significant difference to traffic during the 1970 season, since the decision came too late,<sup>13</sup> but its future potential is extremely significant in terms of the overall level of activity at the Airport because it provides an opportunity for making economic use of what had previously been a slack period in each year. Subsequently, this particular decision became caught up in international politics. In the spring of 1971, the Spanish Government announced that it was banning all short-stay holidays of less than seven days' duration, ostensibly on the basis that such holidays did not bring enough money into the country (although it was variously interpreted as being an attempt to afford a measure of protection for Spanish airlines and as another move in the continuing dispute between Britain and Spain over Gibraltar).<sup>14</sup> The Spanish Government later relented to the extent of being prepared to permit those holidays already arranged for the winter of 1971/72, following strong pressure from the British Government,<sup>15</sup> but the longer-term future of such arrangements remains to be secured. In addition, the extra freedom given to inclusive tour operators appears to have

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LADACAN), 8th. April 1971. The paragraph appears to be more a diplomatic form of words than a really significant statement. The Ministry would probably be guilty of dereliction of duty if it did not subject an application for the extension of facilities at Luton Airport to "rigorous scrutiny" anyway, since that is one of its normal functions in respect of planning applications that result in public inquiries.

9. See Chapter 4. Pages 51-54.

10. These are not "real" costs, of course. As Chapter 4 explains, the impact of Government policy upon the inclusive tour industry is such that it can regard a year's fixed costs as being attributable to the summer season only and can still offer tours at the minimum prices allowed. This has the advantage of enabling short winter tours to be offered very cheaply (because the element of fixed cost in the price is very small), which has undoubtedly speeded up the rate of development of this particular market. If fixed costs were spread over the whole year, the price of short winter tours would rise and that of the longer summer tours would fall, but there would be no point in doing this when Government pricing policy prevents the benefit of a fall in the summer tour price being passed on to the customer.

11. Saturday Telegraph, 5th. September 1970.

12. Evening Post, 20th. October 1970. Luton News, 22nd. October 1970.

13. Although W.C.J. Easterbrook (Deputy Airport Director) estimated that the Airport handled in excess of 100,000 extra passengers in the winter of 1970/71 because of this decision. Interview 6th. April 1971. P.H.A. Linnett (Deputy Managing Director, Clarksons), giving evidence at the public inquiry of January 1972, stated that Clarksons had carried 47,000 passengers on short holidays during the winter of 1970/71 and expected to carry 178,000 during the winter of 1971/72 an increase of nearly 400%.

been a factor in the pressure from many of the major scheduled airlines of the world to relax the regulations of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) as far as fares are concerned, so that the competitive position of the scheduled airlines vis-a-vis the charter airlines could be improved.<sup>16</sup> Activities such as these in the international political sphere may yet have a profound effect upon the development of Luton Airport. At the very least, they have posed certain questions about the extent to which the Airport will be able to continue to profit from the rapid expansion of inclusive tour activities.

The short-term impact of this relaxation of the rules governing inclusive tour operations was to improve the apparent growth potential of the Airport. The Council wished the Airport to expand, basically because of its revenue potential,<sup>17</sup> but the process of attempting to accommodate at least some of the pressures had already started and would clearly have to continue for expansion to be allowed. A major feature of this process of adjustment was the decision to promote a Private Bill, which would enable the Council to give grants to help towards the cost of soundproofing houses in areas affected by noise.<sup>18</sup> It was envisaged that this proposal would in part be financed out of the recently-announced Airport tax. This tax, which was to commence on 1st. April, 1971,<sup>19</sup> was decided upon in the summer of 1970, much against the wishes of the tour operators.<sup>20</sup> The tax was set at a level of 25p. per head for passengers flying overseas, and it was opposed by the operators because it marginally reduced the competitiveness of operations from Luton Airport.<sup>21</sup> That the Council was prepared to take steps which adversely affected the competitive position of the Airport was a significant change from the position as it had been prior to the resignation of Alderman Lester, and it illustrated the fact that the Council had embarked upon a course of adjusting to pressures as distinct from the previous course of largely ignoring them.

Throughout 1970, the issue of the future of Luton Airport had become more significant in the deliberations of the Roskill Commission. The Commission's Research Team, after examining the situation at the existing airports in the region, concluded that only Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton would take extra traffic to any appreciable extent, and assumed that Luton's capacity would rise to thirty movements per hour on the existing runway.<sup>22</sup> It was also assumed that Luton would have to close if any of the short-listed inland sites (Cublinton,

14. The Times, 4th. May, 5th. May 1971. Evening Post, 4th. May, 5th. May 1971. Sunday Times, 9th. May 1971.

15. The Times, 6th. May 1971. Evening Post, 6th. May 1971. Sunday Times, 9th. May 1971.

16. The Times, 7th. September 1971 (special supplement on air charter operations)

17. Interview with Alderman J. Hillier (leader of the majority Conservative

Thurleigh and Routhampstead) were to be chosen as the site for the Airport, because of air traffic control and operational requirements.<sup>23</sup> The latter assumption was never seriously questioned, but the former came in for extensive criticism at Stage V of the Commission's work,<sup>24</sup> on the basis that the choice of Foulness might create the conditions whereby Luton Airport could continue to expand but that this did not mean that such expansion was automatically desirable. The Commission, in its Report, commented thus;

"The Research Team's work suggested that the effect of increased noise at Luton should also be taken into account on the grounds that the choice of Foulness would not only permit Luton to continue its operations but also would lead to an expansion of Luton's traffic. This suggestion attracted so much attention at the final series of public hearings that at times we devoted more attention to the future of Luton airport than to the siting of the third London airport." 25

The Commission made known its majority recommendation in favour of Cublington in December, 1970,<sup>26</sup> which resulted in an intensification of the lobby in favour of Foulness. LADACAN's position in all this was a difficult one, because the choice of Cublington inevitably would force the closure of Luton Airport whereas the choice of Foulness would place no constraints upon the expansion of Luton. The logic of this argument pushed LADACAN naturally towards a desire to endorse the recommendation in favour of Cublington, except that the environmental arguments which it had used against the continuous expansion of Luton applied with equal or even greater force to the proposed choice of Cublington. So LADACAN joined the pro-Foulness lobby on the understanding that it would press for the problems of the existing inland airports to be dealt with in tandem with a decision in favour of Foulness, and the evidence indicates that LADACAN was able to turn its difficult position to its own advantage by threatening to support the Cublington proposal (and thus to damage the unity of the lobby) unless its demands were met.<sup>27</sup> The outcome of these manoeuvrings in the latter part of 1970 and in the early months of 1971 was that the

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group on Luton Council), 5th. March 1971.

18. Evening Post, 11th. November 1970. Powers were later added (Evening Post, 23rd. December 1970) to the Bill to enable the Council to impose noise limits and to fine airlines whose aircraft exceeded them. Similar powers already existed at airports operated by the British Airports Authority (under the Airport Authority Act, 1965), but not for municipal airports. Royal assent was not granted to the Bill (which became the Luton Corporation Act, 1971) until August 1971, because it was being studied as a model measure for municipal airports (source: interview with M. Coolican, Department of Trade and Industry, 7th. July 1971). The idea of a Bill was first made public during the 1970 inquiry.

19. Evening Post, 7th. July 1970.

20. Interview with D. MacQueen (Aviation Director, Clarksons, and former Secretary of the Tour Operators Study Group), 9th. August 1971. This decision to impose a tax was the only occasion on which the Tour Operators Study Group

Government's eventual decision in favour of Foulness was accompanied by the promise of a policy statement on the existing airports in the region.<sup>28</sup>

Even so, this and the soothing words of the decision letter on the 1970 inquiry were not enough to convince the Airport's opponents that the Government was prepared to deal with the incremental expansion of Luton Airport. The Inspector at the 1970 inquiry had recommended the Council to consider creating a ground run-up area where engines could be started as far away from built-up areas as possible, and this suggestion had been commended to the Council in the decision letter. The Council decided to do this and, accordingly, showed the details of the planning application to the Department of the Environment. The Department decided not to call it in, and Luton Council duly gave itself planning permission. LADACAN found out the details of this from a meeting of the Luton Airport Consultative Committee, and objected strongly on the ground that the section of taxiway required to give access to the ground run-up area formed a substantial part of the proposed parallel taxiway which had not yet been submitted to the Department.<sup>29</sup> LADACAN started to lobby the Department via the local M.P.s to ask for a reconsideration of the decision not to call the application in, but was unable to achieve any success.<sup>30</sup> It appeared that promises to deal with the problem in its long-term context (when Foulness became operational) were not being matched by a full appreciation of the cumulative effect of a series of incremental expansions, and efforts began to be concentrated more and more upon an attempt to persuade the Government to issue a policy statement dealing with the problems of Luton Airport in the interim (the period of virtually ten years before Foulness became operational).

Pressures on successive Governments over the Luton Airport issue had grown since 1968, and, just as Luton Council had embarked upon a policy of adjusting to similar pressures, it appears that the Governments over this time period had also become more sympathetic to the problems the Airport created. In many ways, the position of the Government was much more complex than that of Luton Council, because it had an administrative responsibility for the whole of the

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has intervened directly in the policy-making process with regard to the future of Luton Airport. Saturday Telegraph, 14th. November 1970.

21. Even so, the level of the tax was beneath those in operation at the other major British municipal airports. In the summer of 1971, it was decided to raise the tax at Luton to 50p. to bring it into line with those at Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham Airports, Luton's three main inland municipal competitors. Evening Post, 14th. July 1971. Clarksons winter tours brochure, 1971/72.

22. Commission on the Third London Airport "Papers and Proceedings, Volume VII. Part 1. Proposed Research Methodology." H.M.S.O. London, 1970. Pages 49 and 50.

area affected as well as for regional planning and civil aviation policies generally. The extent to which the Government could adapt itself to the specific pressures on the Luton Airport issue may well have been more limited than that possible for Luton Council simply because it had to look at the issue in these wider contexts; whether or not this is true, the degree of adjustment of Government policy does not appear to have been as great as that of Luton Council. Nevertheless, the Government moved from arguing in 1968 that the problem was basically one for Luton Council,<sup>31</sup> to an acceptance by 1971 that it had a responsibility in the matter. Although two different Governments were involved, the change from one to the other does not appear to have made any significant difference to this process; it appears as a relatively smooth, if somewhat reluctant, gradation.<sup>32</sup>

Michael Noble, the Minister for Trade, saw a deputation of local M.P.'s, to hear their views about the problems caused by Luton Airport,<sup>33</sup> and then saw a deputation from Luton Council.<sup>34</sup> The Luton deputation was apparently told that another runway would not be allowed at Luton Airport, but that it would have to deal with a growing amount of traffic and would have to find a way of containing the growing problem of night jet noise.<sup>35</sup> This was interpreted by the Luton representatives as offering qualified support for their attempts to adapt to the pressures on them, and on this basis the Council went ahead with its preparations for a package of proposals to take the Airport into the middle of the decade, the main features of which were the parallel taxiway and an increase in terminal facilities.<sup>36</sup>

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23. Ibid.

24. See Chapter 16.

25. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report." H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Page 61.

26. The Times, 19th. December 1970.

27. The lobby, and LADACAN's part within it, are examined in more detail in Chapter 13.

28. Hansard, House of Commons. Volume 816. Columns 34-36, 41. 26th. April 1971. This statement included a promise to add powers to the 1971 Civil Aviation Bill to give more control over municipal airports.

29. Interview with N.S.C. Reid, op. cit. J. Hannah (Head of the Airport Section, Borough Engineer's Department, Luton) confirmed in an interview on 30th. April 1971 that the taxiway to the ground run-up area could form part of a future parallel taxiway.

30. Letter from Peter Walker (Secretary of State for the Environment) to Mrs. Shirley Williams (Labour M.P. for Hitchin), 2nd. April 1971.

31. See, for example, J.P.W. Mallalieu (Minister of State, Board of Trade) in reply to a question from James Allason (Conservative M.P. for Hemel Hempstead). Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 760. Columns 1359 and 1360. 13th. March 1968.

Support from within the Council for even qualified expansion of the Airport was no longer unanimous, however, and for the first time dissension on the issue began to take place along party lines. This centred around the figure of Gwilym Roberts, Labour M.P. for South Bedfordshire from 1966 to 1970 and a former member of Luton Council (1965-1968). Roberts had already wrested from Alderman Hedley Lawrence, long-standing leader of the Labour group on the Council, the Chairmanship of the Borough Labour party,<sup>37</sup> and in March 1971 he returned to the Council via a by-election in South Ward (one of the three wards badly affected by aircraft-noise).<sup>38</sup> For much of his time at Westminster he had been an opponent of Airport expansion, and he had made it clear that he was opposed to the traditional attitude of the Labour group of support for the Airport.<sup>39</sup> It seemed clear to members of the Labour group that he was awaiting a suitable opportunity to defeat Alderman Lawrence for the leadership of the group, and the Airport appeared the most likely issue on which he might challenge.<sup>40</sup> Time was on his side in this respect, because not only was he the younger man by nearly thirty years, but also the electoral fortunes of the Labour party were improving rapidly and a group of younger anti-Airport Labour Councillors was starting to emerge.<sup>41</sup> The prospects were that the Labour party might regain control of the Council in 1972, but that in membership terms it would be a very different party group from that which had lost power in 1967.<sup>42</sup> Even if Gwilym Roberts did not succeed in defeating Alderman Lawrence for the group leadership, it appeared that the growing support for the anti-expansionist viewpoint of which Roberts was the most articulate exponent would have an impact upon party policy. Within the Conservative party, a similar phenomenon had occurred, in that the party's massive gains between 1967 and 1969 had resulted in the election of several young Conservative Councillors who had not expected to succeed and who did not expect re-election when subsequently the tide turned against the party. Their unwillingness to accept the traditional party line had contributed to the defeat of Alderman Lester and to the need for the Conservative group to re-examine its Airport policies. Thus, in different ways, the unusual electoral events of the late 1960s had affected the positions of both parties as far as Airport policy was concerned.<sup>43</sup>

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32. These points will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 16.

33. Evening Post, 12th. February 1971.

34. Evening Post, 7th. April 1971.

35. Interview with K. Seymour, 29th. July 1971. Mr. Seymour was a member of the delegation that went to see Mr. Noble, although most of the discussion was apparently between Councillor White (Chairman of the Airport Committee at that time) and the Minister.

36. Ibid. Interview with Councillor V. Dunnington (Chairman, Airport Committee), 29th. July 1971.

37. Luton News, 17th. December 1970.

Councillor White, as Chairman of the Airport Committee following Alderman Lester, had managed to tone down the controversy over Airport policy within the Conservative group by adopting a stance involving the deliberate adjustment of policy to attempt to take account of at least some of the pressures facing the Council. On the face of things, however, he was likely to lose his seat on the Council in May, 1971. In winning Central Ward in 1968 as part of the strong swing towards the Conservatives at that time, he had promised to attempt to do something about the aircraft noise problem which afflicted the ward, and he had acquired his Chairmanship subsequently during a period when noise nuisance had increased markedly. Even though he had played a significant part in the Council's change of policy, a heavy defeat for Councillor White was likely to be interpreted as a vote against this policy. In addition, of course, the party was liable to lose a very able Chairman, who had succeeded in reducing the political temperature of the Airport issue. He decided to defend himself specifically on his record as Chairman of the Airport Committee, fully aware that this entailed at least three risks:-

- (1) he might not be known to the majority of his electorate as Chairman of the Airport Committee despite the extensive local press publicity he had received, and thus might be fighting on the wrong issue;
- (2) he ran the risk of provoking anti-Airport votes which otherwise might not have been cast at all; and
- (3) local issues such as this might not be perceived as being relevant by more than a tiny proportion of the electorate, in which case his campaign might be imbalanced.<sup>44</sup>

On balance, he believed that his moderate stance would attract votes rather than repel them, although he expected the majority of votes to be cast according to party labels.<sup>45</sup> In order to strengthen his identification with the Airport issue, however, in addition to defending his record he also attempted to make explicit his views on the future of the Airport, which included the idea that Luton Council should consider a unilateral ban on night jet movements.<sup>46</sup> This provoked strong opposition from the "traditional" wing of the Labour group, and was further than the Conservative group was prepared to go, and it appears to have put an end to the remote possibility that an aldermanic place might have been created for him (in denial of the seniority convention) in the event of his defeat.<sup>47</sup> The Conservative party won only three of the twelve seats which were the subject of the 1971 election,<sup>48</sup> and Councillor White was one of the many casualties.<sup>49</sup>

38. Evening Post, 12th. March 1971.

39. Interview with Gwilym Roberts, 22nd. March 1971.

40. Interviews with Labour Councillors T. Kenneally (8th. April 1971) and J. Carleton (30th. July 1971).

The new Chairman was Councillor V. Dunnington, Councillor White's business partner in private life and with very similar views on the Airport issue. He carried on the process of attempting to adapt to some of the pressures put on the Council, and on 22nd. June 1971, along with the Airport Director, he became the first representative of the Council on Airport matters to speak on the subject at a LADACAN meeting. This was against the advice of the Town Clerk,<sup>50</sup> and was itself a significant step in the process of adaptation. He told the meeting of the steps Luton Council had taken up to that point to ameliorate the problem of aircraft noise:-

- 1) the cutback on the operators' demands for the summer 1970 night jet programme;
- 2) the imposition of a non-negotiable upper limit of 4,500 night jet movements, which would probably be reached in the summer of 1972 but which would not be exceeded thereafter;
- 3) the installation of noise monitoring points;
- 4) the banning of ground running-up of engines at night;
- 5) the promotion of a Private Bill to enable soundproofing grants to be given;
- 6) powers were being taken to force the operators to stick to the noise abatement procedures or face fines;
- 7) a committee of operators had been set up to investigate fully all noise complaints;
- 8) the Council had started a consultative committee before it was legally bound to do so;
- 9) Luton Council had done much to persuade the Government to improve the minimum noise routeings around Luton Airport; and,
- 10) restrictions had been imposed on training flights.<sup>51</sup>

The greatest degree of apparent adaptation to the pressures was contained in the proposals he revealed to the meeting, however. The proposal to construct the parallel taxiway was to be dropped. This particular proposal had been the subject of very strong opposition because it would have greatly increased the capacity of

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41. Labour fortunes reached their nadir in the three local elections between 1967 and 1969, when the party won only one of the 36 seats available (all were contested). Normally, 12 of these seats would have been considered to be safe Labour seats. The pattern of local electoral politics in Luton will be examined in more detail in Chapter 11.

42. After the local elections of May 1972, the position on the Council was Labour 26, Conservative 22, so that the anticipated change in control did occur.

43. This thesis is developed in more detail in Chapter 11.

44. Interview with Councillor White, 2nd. April 1971.

45. Ibid.

46. Evening Post, 28th. April 1971. Luton News, 29th. April 1971.

47. Ibid.

the runway. Instead, the Airport was to provide facilities suitable for airbus-type equipment, such as the Lockheed TriStar, which was believed to be quieter than the 1-11s, 737s and 707s then operating from Luton Airport, and which would lead to a reduction in the number of movements (and therefore in the amount of noise) because of its greatly increased carrying capacity. The main features of this package (which would cost about £2½ million) were the strengthening of the existing runway and taxiways, a great improvement in terminal facilities and ancillary developments such as car-parks and aircraft standing spaces. Councillor Dunington told the meeting that this married the commercial needs of the operators (for large aircraft that could fly large numbers of people to the popular holiday destinations, rather than the relatively inefficient shuttle service which then operated with much smaller aircraft) with the environmental need for a gross reduction in aircraft noise, and argued that Luton Airport would lead the way in Britain in creating an airport which could live in relative harmony with surrounding settlements.<sup>52</sup>

This was described above as "apparent adaptation" because it over-simplified and tended to obscure the practical difficulties in the way of such a vision.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, if the Council was able to pursue a policy of persuading reluctant operators to convert to similar equipment and if the noise benefits were as great as was hoped, the proposals offered the prospect of a greater amount of support, or at any rate less opposition, than had attended proposals with regard to Luton Airport since the introduction of jets in 1968.<sup>54</sup> This package of proposals apparently had the informal support of civil servants in the Department of Trade and Industry,<sup>55</sup> and secured approval from the Council without a vote being necessary.<sup>56</sup> In addition to this package (which was to replace that decided upon just before the public inquiry of March, 1970), the Council was also examining the possibility of changing the flight paths from the Airport, so that more of the noise was distributed over relatively sparsely populated areas of South Bedfordshire than over more urbanised parts of Hertfordshire.<sup>57</sup> This had two political

48. Evening Post, 14th. May 1971.

49. The evidence of the importance of the Airport issue in his defeat will be examined in Chapter 11.

50. Interview with Councillor Dunington, 29th. July 1971.

51. Ibid. Councillor Dunington confirmed the accuracy of the author's notes of the meeting, and admitted that points 1-7 were the main features of the Council's attempts to contain the noise nuisance and that points 8-10 were of limited validity. He did not mention to the meeting that the Council had also removed its concessions on landing fees to operators with regard to night jet movements, because this would have meant admitting in public that such concessions had been given in the first instance.

52. Ibid. Evening Post, 23rd. June 1971. Luton News, 24th. June 1971.

disadvantages; it might bring Bedfordshire County Council into the process as an active participant, since a large part of the area of its responsibility would be affected for the first time, and it might promote the growth of LADACAN by transferring noise nuisance to an area where it had not previously been a problem, thereby creating potential members. At the same time, it would undoubtedly lead to a net reduction in the total numbers of people affected by aircraft noise, and the fact that at least some members of the Council were prepared to give this consideration greater weight than the political difficulties outlined is a further indication of the degree of adjustment of at least some viewpoints which had already taken place. Consideration of this possibility and of the package was halted, however, as a result of a major development at the level of Central Government.

The long-promised policy statement on the future of the existing major inland airports in the region was finally made by the Minister for Trade in the House of Commons on 27th. July 1971, in reply to a question by Mr. Stephen Hastings (Chairman of the all-party backbenchers' committee which had been formed to press for a coastal site for the third London Airport).<sup>58</sup> The relevant parts of the statement are as follows;

"When the third London Airport becomes operational the new capacity can be used so as to give the maximum benefit to those around existing airports who suffer from noise, as well as providing for the future growth in air traffic in the region after 1980.

It is the Government's intention to continue to provide for the development of civil aviation and to maintain Britain's share in the international field. The Government recognise that investment will therefore be necessary to improve facilities for the growing number of passengers at some existing airports in the period up to 1980.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will consider on their merits any planning applications which may come before him either on appeal or direction, having regard to aviation, environmental, noise and other relevant considerations.

Both he and I consider that the British Airports Authority and the Luton Corporation should bear in mind the following considerations when planning their investment programmes between now and 1980.

First, the Government do not consider that it will be necessary to construct any new runways at Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted in the foreseeable future.....

Fourthly, the Government do not foresee a need for Luton to continue to be a major public transport airport serving the London area once the third London airport is available to accommodate the services now using Luton. The Government expect that the powers contained in the Civil Aviation Bill now before Parliament (the Civil Aviation Act, 1971) would then be used to restrict severely the hours and the routings which might be used by public transport aircraft there. It will then be for the airport management and the airline operators to consider whether movement facilities then remaining available at Luton would be sufficient to justify keeping the airport in use for public transport. As regards the period before 1980, I propose to initiate discussions with Luton Corporation when this Bill becomes law, to see whether further measures to reduce noise can be introduced in the short term." 59

As a long-term statement of policy for the future of Luton Airport, this is fairly precise, although circumstances change so rapidly in civil aviation that

it is quite possible that the statement will be reappraised.<sup>60</sup> As an indicator of the Government's attitude to the £2½ million package prepared by Luton Council, it is much more equivocal. Certainly, the various participants were interpreting it in different ways. It concedes that investment will be necessary at existing airports in the region until the early 1980s (although it does not specify which particular airports), and that they will have to handle a growing number of passengers. It makes it clear, however, that a proposal for a new runway would not be acceptable; a proposal for a new taxiway (which is the greatest present fear of the Airport's opponents, because of its potential for increasing aircraft movements) would presumably be considered on its merits. It is also clear that Luton Council will probably have to demonstrate that expansion proposals will at any rate contain aircraft noise and, if possible, reduce it. This, of course, is part of the Council's case for the £2½ million package, but the statement raised the problem of whether the expenditure would be worthwhile in terms of the apparently short life left for the Airport. The Conservative leadership decided to go ahead, on the grounds that it would be financially justifiable in terms of 1970s traffic alone and that the proposals matched the spirit of the Minister's statement.<sup>61</sup>

The only other event of any significance which occurred during the period of observer-participation was the approval by the Department of the Environment of Stevenage Development Corporation's proposal to develop "sector 9" of the new town for housing purposes according to the approved master plan.<sup>62</sup> This occurred after a long disagreement between the Development Corporation, Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Urban District Council over the use of the area, the principal (but not the only) complicating factor being the impact of aircraft noise emanating from activities at Luton Airport.<sup>63</sup> The importance of the approval lay in the way in which the problem of aircraft noise had been discounted, the Secretary of State arguing that aircraft movements from the Airport would be unlikely

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53. Not the least of which was that the future of the TriStar was dependent upon decisions not then made about the development of the Rolls Royce engines in it, and upon the support of both the British and American Governments (which was not necessarily forthcoming). Some of the other problems are examined in more detail in Chapter 4 and 6.

54. The proposals derived principally from Mr. B. Collins, who had recently been appointed Airport Director. Previously, he had been Deputy Managing Director of Channel Airways (a company which had once operated scheduled services from Luton Airport) and a former Airport Commandant of Southend Airport, and he was well-known to the operators as a result; indeed, this was apparently a factor in his selection for the job. He had talked to the operators about the shape of the inclusive tour industry, and had distilled a package which had the enthusiastic support of the operators and which might lead towards less aircraft noise. Interviews with Councillor Dunington (op. cit.) and W.C.J. Easterbrook (Deputy Airport Director), 5th. August 1971. Mr. Easterbrook thought that these proposals would enable Luton Airport to handle about 7½ million passengers per annum by the late 1970s.

to exceed 30,000 per annum.<sup>64</sup> This was subsequently latched onto by several of the participants as a figure which might be taken to represent an agreed maximum level of Airport activity, and both Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Development Corporation used this argument at the public inquiry in January, 1972.<sup>65</sup> It is probable that the period between the receipt of the Secretary of State's letter and the opening of the inquiry was used to digest this particular idea and to assess its implications, since it did not achieve public currency until the time of the inquiry. Nevertheless, unless it is completely coincidental that the figure quoted at the inquiry by Hertfordshire County Council and by Stevenage Development Corporation matches that used by the Secretary of State (and the chronology of events makes this highly unlikely), this appears to represent the first notable sign of a process of adjustment to and acceptance of a significant level of Airport activity on the part of the two organisations and is perhaps an indication that an equilibrium point reasonably satisfactory to several of the participants is about to be reached.<sup>66</sup>

#### Postscript.

Four events occurring between the finish of the direct observation study and the opening of the public inquiry in January, 1972 are of significance. The period was dominated by the run-up to the inquiry, with all the main participants preparing to present their cases. In this context, the separate decisions of both Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils to take part in the inquiry as opponents of the package under examination were of considerable importance. Bedfordshire County Council's position was a fairly difficult one, in that very little of the County was affected by aircraft noise, relations between the County and the County Borough required delicate handling and the County had been the planning authority which, until 1964, had permitted expansion. In addition, the position of Alderman Bowles (Chairman of the County Council, former leader of the Conservative group on Luton Council and a committed Airport expansionist) was a complicating factor, and the County Council in its evidence to the Roskill Commission in 1970 had stated that it regarded Luton Airport as "...a valuable asset locally and to the nation and supports its continued existence".<sup>67</sup> The Council chose not to give evidence at the Luton Airport public inquiry of March, 1970.

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55. Ibid. Interview with K. Seymour, op. cit.

56. Evening Post, 14th. July 1971. Luton News, 15th. July 1971.

57. Interviews with Councillor V. Dunnington (op. cit.) and W.C.J. Easterbrook (op. cit.).

58. Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 822. Columns 73-75. 27th. July 1971. James Allason (Conservative M.P. for Hemel Hempstead), in an interview on 4th.

The proposal in 1971 to alter the flight paths out of Luton Airport so that more aircraft flew north of Luton and over a larger part of Bedfordshire changed the situation, however. Prompted by the public campaigning of LADACAN and the repeated requests of Hertfordshire County Council, Bedfordshire decided to oppose the application which was to be the subject of the 1972 public inquiry. Even then, however, the County Council chose not to present a separate case but to ally with Hertfordshire, and no witnesses from Bedfordshire County Council actually gave evidence as part of this joint case.

Buckinghamshire County Council's involvement resulted from the gradual spread of aircraft noise nuisance into the County, and was prompted by the institution of LADACAN branches within the County at Amersham and Chesham. Previously, Buckinghamshire County Council had not been involved in the issue, concerning itself very largely with the threatened third London Airport at Cudlington, but it responded to pressure and presented a small case at the January, 1972 public inquiry.<sup>68</sup> Hertfordshire County Council also played a part in promoting the involvement of Buckinghamshire through their joint membership of the Chilterns Standing Conference<sup>69</sup> and through other fora for meetings between officers, but this method does not appear to have been as successful as it was in the case of Bedfordshire County Council. Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire share a long boundary and as a result their officers meet regularly to discuss common problems, whereas the boundary between Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire is very short and creates relatively few common problems which provide opportunities for officers to meet and to attempt to influence each other to recommend certain actions on the part of their respective authorities. Hertfordshire County Council played an important part through this process of interaction at officer level in persuading Bedfordshire County Council to oppose the package of proposals under examination at the public inquiry, but it is likely that the pressure of LADACAN was of greater significance in Buckinghamshire County Council's decision to participate in the inquiry. LADACAN was also successful in persuading the National Trust to make a statement at the inquiry in respect of its estate at Ash ridge.

The third significant event was the adoption of Gwilym Roberts as prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate for the Cannock constituency. As former M.P. for

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August 1971, said that Mr. Hastings had been requested by the Minister to ask this particular question. The Minister was ready to make his statement, and Mr. Hastings was chosen to ask the question as an appropriate acknowledgement of his work in connection with the backbenchers' committee.

59. Ibid.

60. In addition, of course, it is doubtful whether a Government in 1971 can tie the hands of what will probably be a different Government ten years hence on an issue of this nature.

South Bedfordshire, and as Chairman of the Luton Borough Labour Party, it had been expected that he would be adopted as Labour candidate for the new Luton West division and that he would attempt to obtain the leadership of the Labour group on the Council. His challenge for the group leadership was likely to be on the issue of the future of Luton Airport, since he was opposed to the traditional party line favouring expansion.<sup>70</sup> If he had been successful, this would have meant that for the first time the future of Luton Airport would have become an issue between the two parties on Luton Council. His adoption as prospective Parliamentary candidate for a seat in the West Midlands and his decision to move to that area changed all these expectations, since there was no obvious successor to him as challenger to Alderman Hedley Lawrence's position as leader of the Labour group on the Council. By the time the public inquiry opened on 4th. January 1972, the prospects of the future of Luton Airport becoming an issue between the two parties were once again remote.

The fourth event was a repetition of previous disagreements over whether what Luton Council claimed to be a cutback was one in fact. On 2nd. November, 1971, the Airport Committee decided to amend the previously agreed summer night jet movements limit for 1972 from 4,500 in total, of which not more than half could be take-offs, to 1,890 take-offs, "the number of arrivals being determined by the operational requirements of the operators".<sup>71</sup> This was announced as a cutback, and, indeed, the permitted number of night jet take-offs had been reduced from a maximum of 2,250 to 1,890. At the same time, the restriction on the number of landings had been removed, and so it was possible that the total number of movements would increase above the previous limit.<sup>72</sup> On the basis of 1970 and 1971 experience, when summer night jet take-offs formed 45% and 40% respectively of equivalent movements,<sup>73</sup> the total number of such movements for 1972 would lie in the range 4,200 - 4,725. Luton Council's reply to this was that the actual number of movements did not usually reach the permitted number (the figures for 1970 and 1971 were 90% and 96% respectively<sup>74</sup>), and so it was unlikely that the figure of 4,500 would be reached. In turn, the reply to this was that an increase over the 1971 level was being permitted nevertheless, even if it might be true that the

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61. Interview with Councillor V. Dunnington, op. cit. Evening Post, 6th. August 1971. Luton News, 12th. August 1971.

62. Letter from the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Clerk of Hertfordshire County Council, 23rd. July 1971.

63. For further details see Chapter 16.

64. Letter from the Secretary of State for the Environment, op. cit.

65. A.D. Raby (Hertfordshire County Council) and L.G. Vincent. (Stevenage Development Corporation) under cross-examination at the inquiry.

66. It is argued in Chapter 18 that the most likely course of events is that something of this nature will happen.

increase would be less than had been allowed previously. In addition, however, it was argued that the change from a permitted maximum of 2,250 night jet take-offs to 1,890 had taken place after the season had already started, when scheduling for the season had already been completed in outline. This scheduling exercise had demonstrated that the airlines would only achieve 1,890 night jet take-offs anyway (84% of the permitted maximum), it was asserted, and so what the Council had claimed as the imposition of a cut was not a cut at all but merely an opportunistic piece of representation. These tortuous arguments depend in the last analysis upon an assessment of the integrity of Luton Council, but it is symptomatic of the views of LADACAN on this score that the arguments were advanced at all. They made sure that the level of controversy during the run-up to the inquiry remained high.

The inquiry was the longest yet held in connection with Luton Airport. It opened on 4th. January and closed on 9th. February 1972, sitting for a total of 20 days (double the length of the inquiry of March, 1970). Altogether, 39 people gave evidence or made statements (slightly less than the number in March, 1970), and Q.C.'s were again employed by the major participants (Luton Council, Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAN).<sup>75</sup> The total cost of the inquiry, in terms of fees and salaries, was estimated as being towards the upper end of the range £50,000-100,000.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps the most unexpected witness was the Chairman of the Defenders of Essex Association, who emphasised the important part that Luton Airport could play in deferring the need for the implementation of the Foulness decision.<sup>77</sup> Other than this, however, the pattern of the inquiry was very similar to that of March, 1970, with Luton Council concentrating upon the need for the specific proposals at hand and the Airport's opponents attempting to demonstrate that the package was merely one in a series of increments which would result in the creation of a very much expanded Airport. In addition, the degree to which the introduction of TriStar could result in a real reduction in noise nuisance was extensively debated, although no general consensus emerged.<sup>78</sup> The major development at the inquiry was the willingness of

67. J. Hubbard (Chief Planner, Bedfordshire County Council), oral evidence to stage V of the Roskill Commission. 20th. July 1970. Transcript of day 14 of subject F ("Environment and Planning"), pages 65 and 66.

68. The County Council's case depended upon only one witness, the Deputy County Planning Officer, which was in marked contrast to the large number of witnesses called by the major opponents, but the County Council also scored several points in a series of short but effective cross-examinations of Luton Council's witnesses.

69. See Chapter 15.

70. See above. Page 161.

71. Council minute 2315/71, page 807, 9th. November 1971.

72. Landings are normally regarded as being quieter than take-offs unless a great deal of reverse thrust is required to stop the aircraft.

73. Evidence of B.F. Collins (Airport Director) to the January 1972 public inquiry.

74. Ibid.

75. For details of the inquiry and of the package of proposals which it examined see Appendix 8.

witnesses for Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Development Corporation to suggest an upper level of commercial air transport movements (30,000 per annum) for Luton Airport which recognised that some growth would still take place, which has been cited already as evidence of an apparent willingness on the part of those organisations to find an equilibrium point of agreement with Luton Council.

After the inquiry had closed, another period of quiescence was anticipated by the major participants in the process pending the decision of the Secretary of State on the planning application. At the time of writing this expectation appears largely to have been borne out. The only significant development appears to have been the release of the details of the soundproofing grants scheme under the Luton Corporation Act, 1971, by which the Council was prepared to give grants of up to £300 towards the cost of soundproofing dwellings within the 45 N.N.I. contour.<sup>79</sup> This is a considerably more generous system than that which obtains in relation to Heathrow Airport where the British Airports Authority pays 60% of the cost up to a maximum total cost of £250 for houses in wards and parishes through which the 55 N.N.I. contour passes.<sup>80</sup> The extent to which use will be made of the scheme and the extent to which it is capable of alleviating the problem remain to be seen, but the estimate of the Council is that 5,200 homes will be affected at a total cost to the Council of £1.6 million.<sup>81</sup> This expenditure compares with an anticipated cumulative profit from the Airport to the Council of £24.28 million up to 1980/81,<sup>82</sup> and so it is clear that the scheme, whilst being comparatively generous, will only consume a tiny fraction (6.5%) of the Council's anticipated profits.

Following the local elections of May, 1972, control of the Council swung from the Conservative to the Labour party, which had a majority of four prior to the aldermanic elections. For reasons described above, this change is unlikely to affect Airport policy to any significant extent and, indeed, the most likely development is that Airport policy for the decade of the 1970s will be determined in essence by the decision on the planning application which was the subject of the public inquiry, in which case even impending local government reorganisation is likely to make little difference to policy.<sup>83</sup>

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76. Conversation with Mr. M. Wright (Junior for LADACAN) during the course of the inquiry.

77. Evidence of Mr. D. Wood. The Inspector (S. Rollison) ruled most of Mr. Wood's evidence out of order as being irrelevant to the purpose of the inquiry.

78. See Chapter 6.

79. Luton News, 27th. April 1972.

80. Select Committee on Nationalised Industries. "First Report. Session 1970-71. British Airports Authority." H.K.S.O. London. 1971. Page 199.

81. Luton News, 27th. April 1972.

82. See Table 19. Chapter 6.

83. See Chapter 18.

Overview.

The major feature of the relatively small increment examined in this Chapter was the extent to which the process of adjustment on the part of Luton Council noted in Chapter 8 became clearly visible. Whatever the merits and demerits of the package of proposals which formed the subject of the public inquiry of January, 1972, it represented a real attempt to come to terms with the noise problem within certain bounds. The continued commercial success of the Airport was the major precondition of any such process of adaptation, but within this constraint the package attempted to create a situation whereby the expansion of passenger throughput was achieved by the introduction of larger and yet reputedly quieter aircraft rather than by a continuing increase in the number of aircraft movements. Of itself, this would involve a change in the normal cycle of inclusive tour operations, which usually depends upon the introduction of second-hand equipment bought from the major scheduled airlines. This was just one of the many areas in which the validity of the package was open to question, but at the very least it did represent an attempt to ameliorate a problem which, without such action, was worsening annually and rapidly. At the same time, the ends of Luton Council's Airport policy had not really changed; it still wished to expand its Airport substantially and to continue to make large and increasing profits out of it. What had changed was the means the Council was prepared to adopt to achieve these ends. The old policy of pursuing Airport expansion by meeting all the operators' demands without any consideration of their impact upon the surrounding area had been replaced by a policy of providing the operators with a limited number of choices, based upon the realisation that the noise problem could not continue to grow indefinitely and would have to be contained at a level which would achieve at least some degree of acceptability. This is the real adjustment that had taken place and which became visible during the period covered by this Chapter.

At the same time, Central Government came to accept that it had a part to play in Airport policy-making, and that if it did not exert some kind of control over the activities of Luton Council as an airport authority no other organisation could do so. The policy statement of 27th. July, 1971 represented a formal recognition of the validity of this argument and a preliminary stage in the process of etching in such controls. The decision on the planning application which formed the subject of the public inquiry of January, 1972 is likely to mark another stage in this process, whereby policy over the next few years is declared with a degree of precision. In retrospect, it is possible that the Secretary of State for the Environment's intimation in approving Stevenage Development Corporation's proposals for "sector 9" that commercial air transport movements from Luton Airport will probably not exceed 30,000 per annum will be seen as an important benchmark in the process. At the very least, it appears to have indicated to both Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage

Development Corporation that an acceptable compromise might be achieved at a level of movements little above that experienced in 1971, and their willingness to agree to a proposal of this nature was a further development in the process. Previously, individual organisations had come to certain agreements with either Luton Council or Central Government about certain aspects of policy in relation to Luton Airport, but this was the first indication that major opponents of the Council would be prepared to endorse (albeit as a second best situation) an overall policy agreement.

Thus, the period under consideration was marked by a significant and visible degree of adjustment on the part of Luton Council, by growing involvement on the part of Central Government and by the beginnings of reciprocal adjustment on the part of some of the Council's major opponents. This drift towards a process of mutual adjustment might result in an equilibrium policy position being reached, and there were at least some signs by the end of the period under consideration that this is a likely development.

Chapter 10. Some Initial Perspectives.

The purpose of this Chapter is to draw together in summary form some of the more significant observations which have emerged from an historical appraisal of the Luton Airport policy-making process. This will be complemented by a similar summary of the organisational perspective attempted in Part 4, and the two represent the main streams which feed into the concluding Chapters of the study.

Chapter 6 has already presented the basic statistics which were chosen to represent the expansion of the Airport during the 1960s. In those ten years, Luton Airport grew from being an insignificant municipal airport to being the busiest such airport in Britain in terms of passengers handled. For most of its life it remained unprofitable, but from 1968, with the major growth in passengers handled as a result of the introduction of jets, this changed, and in three years the losses of thirty years were more than wiped out. During the 1960s, it also became a substantial employer of labour with concomitant implications for population increase, and the evidence has indicated that such growth is likely to continue. At the same time (and again related to the introduction of jets) noise complaints grew very rapidly, with the number during 1970 being more than seven times the number recorded in all the years prior to 1968. In short, in a few years Luton Airport has become both the most commercially-successful and the most complained about municipal airport in Britain.<sup>1</sup> The relationships between these two form a major part of the planning problems it poses.

It is clear from the foregoing account that the policy-making process with regard to Luton Airport has changed both in nature and in scale during the forty years in question. For virtually the first twenty years or so of the Airport's life, its promotion was handled by a strong, informal alliance between Luton Council and the Chamber of Commerce, with others being only minimally involved. This began to break down in the 1950s, when it became clear that local industry would be unable of its own accord to supply enough business to make the Airport successful, and the fight for loan sanction to construct a concrete runway was very largely the fight of the Council and the town's M.P.. In the early 1960s, a close relationship grew up between the Council and the airline operators, and Airport policy was decided by the interaction of these two. The process thus remained closed; other participants were involved very largely in an instrumental manner, by being requested for specific permissions and services without being given any more general place in policy-making.

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1. Interview with M. Coolican (Department of Trade and Industry), 7th. July, 1971.

Central Government and Bedfordshire County Council were notable in this respect. The former treated the Airport as a series of ad hoc issues to be handled by individual Ministries, and the County Council did not press its planning powers because it did not wish to exacerbate the already difficult Bedfordshire-Luton relationship.

The process opened up a little in connection with the 1964 inquiry by virtue of the opposition to a specific set of proposals by a few District Councils and an ad hoc residents group, but it quickly returned to its former structure once the inquiry was over. A notable feature of the process was the fact that the two political parties on Luton Council, both of which made most matters party political issues and tended to see local politics as a battle with each other, agreed on the need to expand the Airport and so it never became an issue between the two parties and remained outside party political debate. Indeed, policy-making on Airport matters in the early and middle 1960s appears to have been very largely handled by the leaderships of the two parties, the senior officers of the Council (and notably the Town Clerk of the time, who apparently played an important part in the development of the Airport and subsequently became a director of one of the airlines) and the active directors and senior executives of the airlines. It is doubtful whether this group of people exceeded twenty in number and, although they did not meet as a formal committee, their relationships appear to have been both personal and professional.

The introduction of jets in 1968 led to the rapid opening up of the process. LADACAN was formed by some eminent local people, and proceeded to grow rapidly and to exert substantial pressure on Luton Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Central Government. The County Council, responsible for the area which received most of the noise but none of the revenue resulting from the Airport's activities, quickly joined in the fight, and in turn started to exert pressure on Luton Council and, more particularly, on Central Government (and the Hertfordshire M.F.s were noteworthy in this respect). At the same time, Luton Council was also pressuring the Government to support expansion, and was in turn made aware by the Government of the extent of the Centrally directed pressures on the subject of aircraft noise. The Government had previously given de facto support to the expansion of Luton Airport to the extent that it had not intervened to prevent such growth because the Airport was doing a useful job in helping to relieve pressures on Heathrow and Gatwick, and so the Government wished Luton Council to resolve the problems of the Airport without being forced itself to interfere. The cumulative effects of all this pressure began to affect the majority Conservative group on Luton Council as some of its members as individuals came to doubt the wisdom of the Council's traditional policies, and it

became necessary for the leadership to make a concession to preserve party unity. Alderman Lester converted this into an issue of confidence in his Chairmanship, and his resignation brought about a change of policy from "natural expansion" to "controlled expansion". From this point on, Luton Council began gradually to adapt itself more and more to the pressures, rather than to follow its previous policy of largely ignoring them.

The next two Chairmen of the Airport Committee (Councillor White and his successor, Councillor Dunington) changed the relationship between the Council and the operators from one of close business and personal linkages to one nearer to a bargaining situation, although the two parties still considered themselves to be "partners" in the process of Airport development. At the same time as this was happening, the wider context of the Luton Airport problem was being debated by the Roskill Commission, and this change in scale was significant. It was not paralleled by an involvement in the issue of the regional planning machinery, however. Instead, the lobbying on the Luton Airport issue became intertwined, with the former apparently influencing the latter to an important extent, and this combined lobby appears to have succeeded in getting the Government to accept some responsibility for policy-making with regard to Luton Airport. In addition, it increased the pressures on Luton Council to take positive steps to reduce the aircraft noise problem, and the Council's 1971 package was an attempt to balance this interest and the operators' and the Council's interest in continued expansion. The Government's 1971 policy statement appears also to be an outcome of these combined pressures, and represents in addition an attempt to strike a balance between the pressures and its overall responsibilities both for planning and for the development of civil aviation.

Thus, both Central Government and Luton Council, as the two organs of Government with powers to affect the expansion of Luton Airport, have been subjected to heavy pressures and to different degrees and in different ways have tried to adjust to some of them. Luton Council's degree of adjustment appears to have been greater, if only because its starting-point was a position of natural expansion whereas the Government's was one of non-interference. At the same time, it would be possible to over-emphasise the extent to which Luton Council has really adjusted its objectives, as distinct from its means of achieving them. The Airport has grown very rapidly throughout the period of controversy and will continue to do so, and there are serious doubts about whether the philosophy underpinning the 1971 package can be made fully operational. The Council has not succeeded in convincing all the Airport's opponents that real adjustments have taken place; on the contrary, the 1971 proposals were regarded by IADACAN as being an apparent adjustment designed

to deceive the Government into granting planning permission. As a result, the adjustment which has taken place on the part of the Airport's opponents has been limited very largely to Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Development Corporation, both of which are public sector organisations prepared to think in terms of a negotiated compromise. LADACAN does not appear to have made many attempts to adjust its position in a similar manner. Part of the reason for this is the fear on the part of LADACAN that the Government would interpret such a process of mutual adjustment as an indication that the heat had gone out of the issue and that a successful formula had been found. There is a fear on the part of LADACAN that the Government would interpret such a process of mutual adjustment as an indication that the heat had gone out of the issue and that a successful formula had been found. There is a fear that the Government is more interested in discovering such a formula than in actually solving the problems, and this fear does not appear to be wholly without foundation. The evidence of the public inquiry of January, 1972 indicated that LADACAN's fears on these scores might become reality if the movement towards an agreed upper limit on aircraft movements in return for the granting of planning permission bears fruit, because this would divide LADACAN from Hertfordshire County Council and thus split the two main foci of opposition to Airport expansion. Chapter 18 examines this possibility in more detail, and concludes that despite LADACAN's opposition to the compromise position it may well be reached and would probably result in a period of relative quiescence in relation to Airport policy-making.

This encapsulation of the process has identified several of its important features. Although only a slice of it has been examined, and although the process will continue to evolve, it appears to be following a cyclical pattern. That is, for most of the forty year period examined the process was characterised by a small and self-identifying group of participants who agreed on Airport policy and who worked together. Others, such as Bedfordshire County Council and Central Government, were involved in a limited and ad hoc manner. The major change during this time was the replacement of the Chamber of Commerce by the airline and inclusive tour operators as Luton Council's "partner" in the business of Airport expansion. This process was described as being relatively "closed", and apart from a brief flurry of activity centred around the public inquiry of 1964 it remained so until the introduction of jets in 1968. Very quickly, the process was then "opened", largely as a result of the activities of LADACAN, and a growing number of participants sought to involve themselves as and when they considered their interests to be affected. At the end of the period under examination, certain signs were detected that the phase of extreme

controversy might be beginning to draw to a close, to be replaced by the existence of a measure of agreement over policy which, in terms of the nature of the system, would probably create a situation of relative calm in relation to the period 1968-1971. Thus, to use Schon's terminology, the system appears to have passed from a state of stability through a zone of high instability towards a zone of relative stability again,<sup>2</sup> and these apparently cyclical changes in the nature of the system have been reflected in the changes in the involvement of organisations in the process. This involvement has been oriented strongly towards Luton Council, as the owner and operator of the Airport, and latterly towards Central Government as it has accepted the need for it to exert greater control over Airport expansion.

The process of Airport expansion has been characterised also by incrementalism. Both the speed of technological change and the rate of growth of the inclusive tour industry have rendered medium- and long-term plans obsolete before they were implemented and, instead, Airport expansion has been on a year-by-year basis. This has made it very difficult for the Airport's opponents to achieve their ends, because they have rarely had anything specific to which they could react, nor anything long-term enough against which to mount a convincing case. Instead, they have had to rely on demonstrating the cumulative impact of a series of incremental changes.<sup>3</sup> This marks the Luton Airport campaign out from the campaigns against the Roskill Commission's short-listed sites. These campaigns were for specific time periods and involved reactions against specific proposals. The Luton campaign, on the other hand, will last for an unspecified time period and has rarely had anything very specific and very far-reaching to oppose. This appears to be much less fertile ground in which to attempt to cultivate such a campaign when compared with those against the possible third London Airport sites, and LADACAN already admits privately to a loss of grass-roots interest in the issue because it has not been able to prevent the continuation of Airport expansion.<sup>4</sup> It is quite possible that, if the controls over Luton Airport's expansion are tightened by both Central Government and Luton Council, LADACAN's membership will start to decline as more people resign themselves to the Airport's existence at a controlled if high level of activity. This would probably lead to reduced effectiveness on the part of LADACAN, in terms of the pressures it can bring to bear, and this might, in turn, reduce the efforts of Hertfordshire County Council in this context. It might be reasonable to describe this as a process of "adjustment by default" on the part of the Airport's opponents. LADACAN sees this as

2. D. Schon. "Beyond the Stable State." Temple Smith. London. London 1971. Pages 9-30.

a distinct possibility, and sees it as also being possible that Luton Council has deliberately adopted an incrementalist strategy to achieve such an end.<sup>5</sup> The evidence suggests that the Council has approached Airport policy-making in an incrementalist manner because circumstances have forced this, rather than out of Machiavellian designs, but a process of adjustment by default is nevertheless a likely ultimate outcome.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the involvement of Central Government has been on an incremental basis, moving very gradually away from its traditional stance of non-involvement towards a position of a degree of involvement sufficient to damp down the level of controversy and, consequently, of political activity over Airport policy-making. Thus, the behaviour of the two centres of policy-making activity with regard to Airport policy has been characterised by "disjointed incrementalism", where change tends to be marginal, where a restricted variety of policy alternatives are considered, where the orientation is towards specific problems at any one point in time and where, as a consequence, policy-making tends to take place through long chains of policy steps.<sup>7</sup> Attempts have been made to argue that such a process is as much as policy-makers can achieve, faced as they are by a multitude of problems each requiring some kind of a solution, and that an attempt at a more synoptic approach is foredoomed to failure.<sup>8</sup> Whilst the adoption of incrementalist tactics in relation to policy-making for Luton Airport on the parts of both Luton Council and Central Government was largely predicated by their perceptions of their operational circumstances, this study has pointed to one of the weaknesses endemic in such a situation, by emphasising the difficulties that groups such as LADACAN have faced by virtue of the inch-by-inch progress of policy-making and the lack of definitive opportunities for involvement that this has provided.

One other point about the structure of the process remains to be made at this stage. Before 1968, very little of the debate was in public. From 1968 onwards, the debate has taken the form of a successive series of related issues, each with its own specialist participants and with some general participants in all or most of the issue areas. The result of this has been that the debate has taken place at a consistently high temperature for most of this period.

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3. For example, the theme of LADACAN's case at the 1970 public inquiry was, "expansion by stealth". Interview with J. Williams (Honorary Solicitor, LADACAN), 27th. June 1971.

4. Interview with K. Coleman (Executive Secretary, LADACAN), 8th. August 1971.

5. Ibid.

6. See Chapter 18.

7. D. Braybrooke and C.E. Lindblom. "A Strategy of Decision". Free Press of Glencoe. New York, 1963. Pages 81-110.

For nearly four years, aspects of the policy-making process continued to make local news with great regularity, such that the future of the Airport was never out of the local press for any significant period during this time.<sup>9</sup> Just as the process of incrementalism appears to have made matters more difficult for the Airport's opponents, so this process of compartmentalisation appears to have made matters much more difficult for both Luton Council and Central Government. This is because both have been under extensive pressure on a variety of related issues and have been permanently and publicly on the defensive. The Airport's opponents, on the other hand, have been able to concentrate on their particular issue areas without having to worry about possible damage to their particular causes if the general issue of the future of the Airport faded from prominence. It has almost literally been a case of different participants queuing up to attack either the Council or the Government on different matters related to the Airport, and then consolidating their positions whilst others take their turn. There is no evidence to suggest that this was a deliberately organised process;<sup>10</sup> on the contrary, many of the opposition interests refused to ally with others. Nevertheless, it has been a significant feature of the process since 1968.

To summarise, then, an historical appraisal of the Luton Airport policy-making process has revealed the following features:-

- (1) participation in the process has changed along with the changes in the nature of the system, but Luton Council and latterly Central Government have continued to be the foci of policy-making activities;
- (2) the greater involvement of Central Government in the process was representative of the move upwards towards the national level of policy-making of activities in relation to Luton Airport, but this was not reflected in any extensive involvement on the parts of the regional planning agencies;
- (3) a process of adjustment to pressure on the part of the two foci appears to have taken place, and there are signs that a complementary form of "adjustment by default" is likely to occur;
- (4) the activities of Luton Council and Central Government in relation to Airport policy-making have been characterised by "disjointed incrementalism"; and,

8. Ibid, pages 37-57. C.E. Lindblom. "The Science of Muddling Through". Public Administration Review. Volume 19. Spring 1959. Pages 79-88.  
 A. C. Hirschman and C. E. Lindblom. "Economic Development, Research and Development, Policy-making: Some Converging Views. Behavioural Science. Volume 7. 1962. Pages 211-222. E. Needham. "Concrete Problems, not Abstract Goals". Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Volume 57, number 7 July/August 1971. Pages 317-319.

(6) the process has tended to be compartmentalised as a successive series of related issues, each with its own specialist participants as well as with overlapping participants, such that the overall issue of the future of Luton Airport has remained constantly in the public eye.

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9. See Chapter 14.

10. Although some Luton Council members appeared to believe that it was. Notable in this context is J. Carleton (Labour shadow Chairman of the Airport Committee), interviewed on 30th. July 1971.

Part 4. The Case Study: Organisational Perspectives.

Connective Summary.

Parts 2 and 3 have been concerned respectively with the environment within which the Luton Airport policy-making process has been set and with the historical development of its many facets. Part 4 attempts to complement these perspectives by concentrating attention upon the organisations involved within the process as active participants. Its particular concern is with the major features of and constraints upon the involvement of the various classes of organisations which have been distinguished, each of which is regarded as forming a sub-system of the system under examination. There are five such sub-systems; Local Government, general interest groups, special interest groups, regional planning agencies and Central Government.

The Local Government sub-system is examined in two separate Chapters, in part because of its intensive and extensive involvement within the process and in part because it contains the one organisation which, more than any other, has been at the centre of the process -- Luton County Borough Council. The Council's involvement is the subject of Chapter 11, and Chapter 12 deals with the other organisations within this particular sub-system. Chapter 11 examines the parts played by the Council's members and by its officers in the Airport policy-making activities of the Council, and lays a particular stress upon the relationship between the Chairman of the Airport Committee and his chief officers and upon the ability of the Chairman to retain the confidence of the majority group on the Council. Both the Labour and the Conservative groups are seen as having modified their positions on Airport policy in the late 1960s, but not as a result of any inter-party differences. Rather, this appears to have resulted from a complex amalgam of pressure upon the Council from many organisations and changes in the composition of the Council as a result of violent swings of electoral opinion. These did not result from the dissatisfaction of Luton's electorate with the Council's handling of Airport expansion (and an extensive examination of the evidence reveals no clear picture as to the feelings, if any, of Luton's electorate upon the issue), but from the national tide of opinion against the Labour Government in the period 1967 - 1969 inclusive. Chapter 12 charts the inability of the other local authorities involved in the process to prevent Airport expansion, although the activities of Hertfordshire County Council, principally through the County's M.P.'s and through improved information deriving from the work of its officers, are seen as having had an important ameliorating effect.

Of the general interest groups examined in Chapter 13, only LADACAN could be said to have played a major part in the process. It concentrated its activities upon pressure at the political level, working through local authority members and the local M.P.'s to attempt to persuade the Government of the day to play a more active part in controlling Airport expansion and to ensure that the anti-expansionist pressure of the surrounding local authorities remained a constant factor in the process. LADACAN was able to exert a significant influence upon the third London Airport lobby, and it was this in particular which contributed greatly to the pressure upon the Government to control the expansion of Luton Airport. LADACAN's activities are seen as being complementary to those of Hertfordshire County Council, and the two, without being allies in any formal sense of the term, have borne the brunt of the anti-Airport campaign. LADACAN's chief resource in this respect has been the size of its membership, which has been large enough to ensure that its claim to represent the interests of the public in the area affected by aircraft noise has been taken seriously. None of the special interest groups reviewed in Chapter 14 played a part as extensive as that of LADACAN, although several in their own ways (and particularly the airline operators and Vauxhall Motors) appear to have affected the process significantly.

Regional planning agencies have been notable by their absence from the process, and Chapter 15 argues that the major explanatory factor has been their congenital inability to deal with areas of severe conflict. This pattern is repeated consistently in the case of each of the organisations subsumed within this sub-system. The Central Government sub-system (the subject of Chapter 16) has also been somewhat reluctant to become involved in the process any more than has been absolutely necessary, although a gradual drift towards a greater degree of control can be discerned as a result of the interaction of several factors.

Part 4 closes with a short Chapter (Chapter 17) which summarises the perspectives gained from Chapters 11-16 inclusive. Chapter 17 complements Chapter 10 (Part 3) in this respect, and the two form the main streams feeding into Chapter 19 (Part 5) which details the major features of the Luton Airport policy-making process as they have emerged during the study.

Chapter 11. The Local Government Sub-System -- Luton County Borough Council.

Introduction.

The Local Government sub-system includes several participant organisations which have been extensively involved in the Luton Airport policy-making process. Of these, by virtue of its position as owner and operator of the Airport, Luton County Borough Council has played a central part, and in consequence it merits special attention. The function of this Chapter, therefore, is to examine in some detail the workings of Luton Council, its attitudes and the attitudes of its electorate to the Luton Airport issue and its relationships with other participant organisations in the Airport policy-making process.

Political Organisation.

Luton Council is run on party political lines. The Labour and Conservative parties each contest every seat at local elections, and no other parties have won any seats since 1945. The Liberal and Communist parties usually contest some seats, but rarely come close to winning them and appear to have little effect upon local politics. Independents often stand, but usually finish at the bottom of the poll. To all intents and purposes, party politics in relation to Luton Council deals with the work of the Labour and Conservative parties.

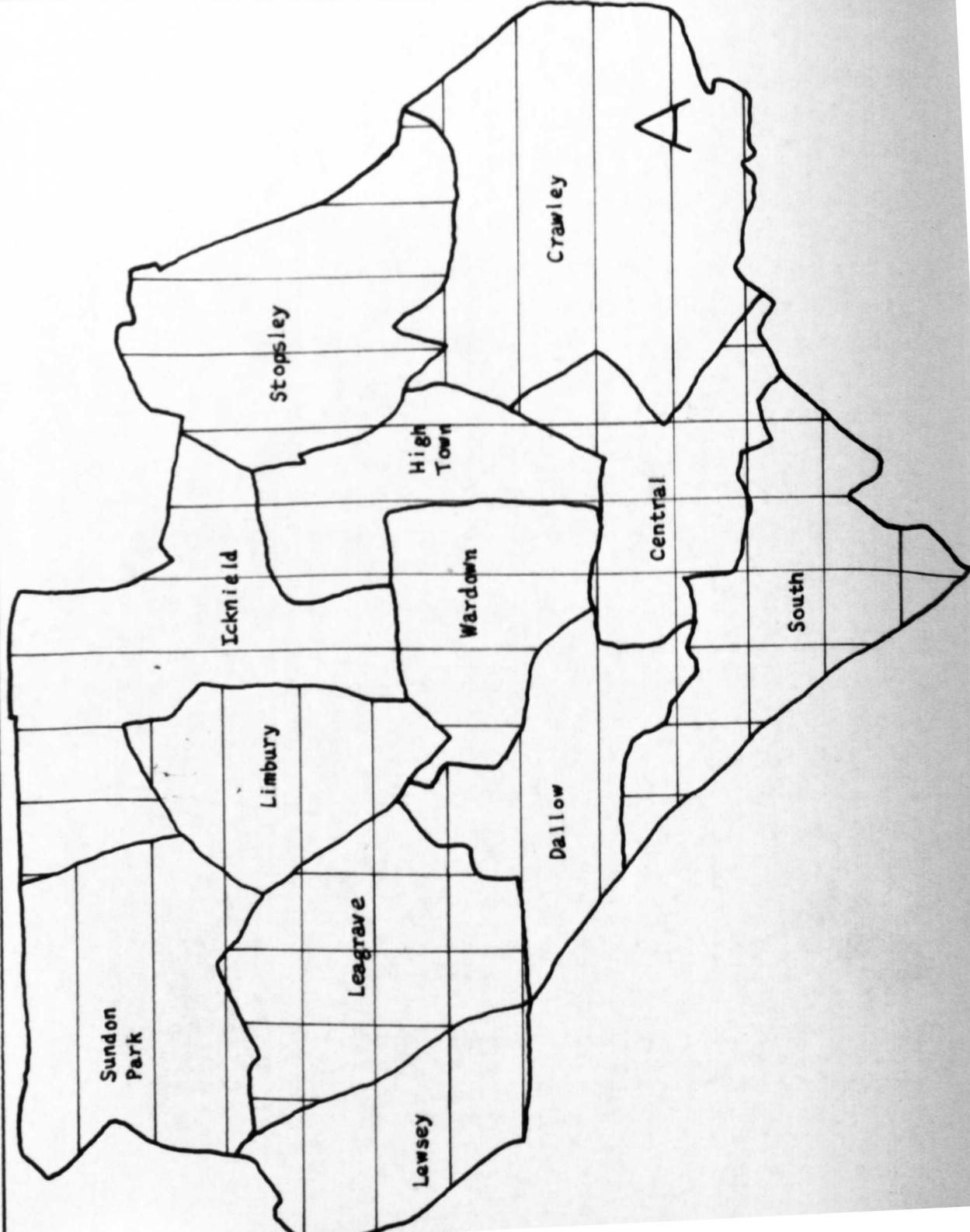
The Council is usually fairly finely balanced between the two parties. There were six changes of control of the Council between 1945 and 1971, with the Conservative party being <sup>in</sup> power for sixteen of those years and the Labour party for ten, and a seventh change took place in 1972 when the Labour party regained control.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the twelve individual wards, under "normal" circumstances the Labour party would expect to win five, the Conservative party to win four and the remaining three would tend to be variable. The concept of a "normal" year is difficult to apply and is advanced tentatively, since it is clear that extreme displeasure with the Government at national level tends to make itself felt in local elections. Nevertheless, certain common features do emerge when local election results are examined over a period of time, and

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1. Source: Town Clerk's Department, Luton County Borough Council. This section is based upon the interviews with the nine members or former members of the Council and the nine Council officers listed in Appendix 1.

2. For example the Conservative party won 35 out of the 36 seats at stake in the Council elections in Luton between 1967 and 1969, a result unanimously attributed by members of both parties to discontent with the Labour Government. The effect of this on the Council and on both parties will be examined later in this Chapter in more detail.

DIAGRAM 10. NORMAL VOTING PATTERNS, LUTON COUNCIL ELECTIONS.



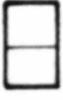
Notation.



Area of Luton County Borough Council, showing ward boundaries.



Wards normally Labour.



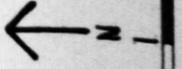
Wards normally Conservative.



Wards variable.



Luton Airport (symbolic).



these can be used to describe the "normal" situation (see Diagram 10).

Table 2]. Probable Electoral Behaviour by Wards for Luton Council Elections.

<u>Normally Labour.</u>	<u>Normally Conservative.</u>
Crawley.	High Town.
Dallow.	Ickniel.
Lewsey.	Stopsley.
Limbury.	Wardown.
Sundon Park.	
	<u>Variable.</u>
	Leagrave.
	South.
	Central.

Note. Three new wards (Ickniel, Lewsey and Sundon Park) were either added or created through boundary changes in 1964 when Luton obtained County Borough status, and so strict comparability between wards only exists since the 1965 municipal elections. With the aid of the Town Clerk's Department, Luton County Borough Council, the effects of these changes upon electoral behaviour were examined, and they were found to make little difference when comparing the nine pre-1964 wards with their present counterparts. Boundary changes within wards tended to be very slight. The main impact of the changes resulting from County Borough status was that two Labour wards and one Conservative ward were brought in, perhaps tipping the "normal" balance of power away from the Conservative party and towards the Labour party. "Normal" in the sense used in the Table means having passed two tests;

(1) the party has won the seat on at least eight occasions out of the twelve possible between 1960 and 1971 inclusive. The figure of eight was chosen to allow for the three "abnormal" years 1967-1969 when the Conservative party virtually swept the board; and

(2) the party has won the seat on at least three of the four occasions possible in 1965, 1966, 1970 and 1971. The three "abnormal" years 1967-1969 were excluded for this purpose.

Both tests had to be passed for a seat to be regarded as being normally won by one party. Seats which did not pass both tests were regarded as being "variable". With regard to the three wards contested for the first time in 1965, only the second test was applied. This typology was shown to Council members of both parties, and was generally accepted as being a realistic appraisal of the situation.

The competitive nature of local electoral politics appears to be a factor in the importance of party politics in the work of the Council.<sup>3</sup> Issues are of

3. It also appears to be related to the propensity to vote in elections. Of the 157 administrative areas examined by Moser and Scott, Luton ranked 7th. and 8th. highest respectively in terms of the size of its polls at the 1951 and 1955 general elections and 34th. highest in terms of polls at local elections between 1956 and 1958. C.A. Moser and W. Scott. "British Towns." Oliver and Boyd. Edinburgh. 1961

political importance in part because the balance of power between the two groups is relatively fine and might be tipped by the performance of the groups on particular issues. In general, this appears to be one of the reasons why the two party groups virtually always took party lines on particular issues, although the lines of the parties were not necessarily opposed to each other. This was certainly the case with the issue of Luton Airport. Each party took a line on Airport matters, and members who persistently opposed that line were liable to lose their party whips,<sup>4</sup> but the party lines usually coincided and never varied to the extent that one party could be described as pro-Airport and the other as anti-Airport.

The activities of the party groups have already been alluded to, and they will be described here in more detail. There are differences between the Labour and the Conservative parties in this respect, but they are far outweighed by the similarities. The following analysis will concentrate on the common features, before describing the important differences.

The majority group on the Council takes all the Committee Chairmanships, and the minority group appoints shadow members for each of these positions. Positions on Committees are filled in proportion to the party strengths on the Council, so that the Committees are essentially microcosms of the Council. The position of Mayor is very largely ceremonial, although he does also have the task of taking the chair at Council meetings; it goes to each party in rotation and by seniority of service, except that this was broken by the Conservative party for 1969-70 and 1970-71 because of the size of its majority at the time. The twelve Aldermanic seats are usually held in proportion to party strengths on the Council, and are again allocated on the basis of seniority of service within the party.

Between 1966 and 1971, a seven-man Policy Advisory Committee existed. This was to all intents and purposes a "Cabinet" of the majority party, since it was the only Committee of the Council on which no members of the opposition

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Pages 112 and 113. Between 1956 and 1958, 42% of the electorate voted in local elections. The average turnout for the period 1967-1971 was 41%, which was very little different from that for 1956-58.

4. In this context, the experiences of Councillors Letham and Aldridge have already been cited. See Chapter 8.

sat and was composed of the leadership of the majority party. It received advice from a committee of the majority group; this group committee, however, had basically the same membership as the Policy Advisory Committee plus one elected "backbencher" and one lady member. In effect, the overlap of membership was so large that for all practical purposes they were one and the same committee. In theory, the group committee gave advice on matters concerned with the political standing of the party to the Policy Advisory Committee, which was one of the Standing Committees of the Council with the task of co-ordinating policy between the other Standing Committees and giving them advice on confidential matters. In practice, the party leadership in one role gave advice to itself in another role, and it is clear that the Policy Advisory Committee actually vetted policy from the viewpoint of the standing of the party.

Policy-making was first and foremost the function of individual Standing Committees, and in practice a Committee Chairman (who was often, although not always, a member of the Policy Advisory Committee) was responsible to the Policy Advisory Committee (the party leadership) for the activities of his Committee. He was given a fairly free hand with policy-making provided that he could retain the support of the group for his policies, but if the majority of the group in the Council was in danger the Policy Advisory Committee would intervene.<sup>5</sup>

The mechanism of the Policy Advisory Committee was abandoned by the Conservative party following the 1971 municipal elections, on the ground that it had eroded the ultimate responsibility of the group as a whole for the policy-making activities of the party.<sup>6</sup> Its co-ordinating and advisory functions were given to the General Purposes Committee, which was renamed General Purposes and Policy and which tended to include the leading members of both parties. The mechanism had caused some disquiet amongst backbench Councillors of both parties, and the decision to revert to a group policy committee of party leaders plus backbench representation as the organ of the party which took an overview of the activities of Chairmen was widely welcomed. Nevertheless, the mechanism of a Policy

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5. A good example of this lies in the activities of the Policy Advisory Committee in relation to Alderman Lester's resignation as Chairman of the Airport Committee, described in some detail in Chapter 8.

6. Interview with Councillor Dunington, 29th. July 1971.

Advisory Committee was extant during nearly all of the time covered by the case study when Luton Airport's future was a controversial issue.

The party group meets before each Council meeting to go through the agenda. Chairmen (or shadow Chairmen) present their proposals (or counter-proposals) to the meeting, which discusses them and votes on them. The majority vote then becomes "the party line", and is nearly always the subject of a whip. Regular disobedience of the whip by voting against the party line renders a member liable to expulsion. The party leader is elected annually by the group as a whole, as are his deputy, the group secretary, the whip and the backbench representation on the group's policy committee. The party leader then appoints the remainder of "the leadership" (those members who, by virtue of their widely-recognised ability and/or their seniority, fill the senior posts on the group's policy committee). In turn, the leadership asks for and expects the loyalty of group members, and is able to obtain this by its control of patronage (it appoints Committee Chairmen, Aldermen and honorary positions, as well as deciding finally on the allocations to Committee places). The group approves these appointments, but this is nearly always a formality. In theory, then, the group as a whole makes policy; in practice, it tends to be made by Committee Chairmen under licence from the leadership, which in turn oversees, co-ordinates and interferes with the activities of specific Chairmen where this is deemed expedient. Intervention tends to occur when there is conflict between two or more Chairmen or when there is a danger that the group as a whole may not support a particular Chairman. Thus, open backbench revolts are rare, but the ability to demonstrate that one can be organised successfully is sometimes enough to persuade the leadership to interfere.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, group control can be a meaningful concept, but for many practical reasons (not the least of which are the relative lack of knowledge on specific issues of backbenchers when compared with Chairmen, and the possible damaging effects upon promotion possibilities of an unsuccessful revolt) control over the group by the leadership is the more normal situation.

The allocation of individual Councillors to individual Committees is done by the group leadership on a seniority basis, taking account as far as possible of the expressed preferences of individuals. Clearly, all Committees are not of equal standing within the Council, although there was relatively little agreement amongst Council members and officers when asked as to the relative importance of particular Committees.<sup>8</sup> The average seniority of the membership

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7. This appears to be what happened with Alderman Lester and Airport policy in the summer of 1969. See Chapter 8.

of Committees can probably be used to give a rough approximation of their relative importance, although this is probably less accurate at the bottom end of the scale because of the possible distorting effect upon the average of the presence of one or two relatively senior Council members.

Table 22. Average Seniority of Committee Memberships, Luton County Borough Council, 1971-72.

General Purposes and Policy.	14.5 years.
Education.	9.7.
Public Works.	8.8.
Finance.	7.5.
Planning.	6.6.
Airport.	5.5.
Health.	5.1.
Housing.	4.0.
Leisure Activities.	3.8.
Public Safety.	3.0.
Social Services.	2.7.
Administration.	2.3.

Source: calculated from information given in the Luton County Borough Council Municipal Diary and Year Book. 1971-72.

Table 22 suggests a tentative division of the twelve Committees into three groups based upon membership seniority. The first group consists of the major regulatory (General Purposes and Policy, Finance) and spending (Education, Public Works) Committees. The second group consists of other important functions performed by the Council, and the Airport Committee ranks with this group as does the Planning Committee. The Housing Committee, in terms of its average membership score, ought probably to be included in the third group, but its average

8. The pre-eminence of the Policy Advisory Committee during its existence was noted, however, and there was widespread agreement that the General Purposes, Education, Finance and Public Works Committees ranked amongst the most important. Different interviewees varied the order of importance of these Committees, and often emphasised those in which they had a particular interest. Blondel and Hall in their study of Council members in Colchester and Maldon, found a similar lack of agreement on a "pecking order" of Committees. J. Blondel and R. Hall. "Conflict, Decision-Making and the Perceptions of Local Councillors." Political Studies. Volume 15, number 3. 1967. Pages 329 and 350.

membership score would probably be higher under a Labour administration because of the importance attached by the Labour party to housing issues. It seemed reasonable, therefore, to include it in the second group. The third group consists of relatively junior functions (such as Leisure Activities) which do not spend a great deal of money. This Table is probably generally indicative of the relative importance of the Standing Committees of the Council, although the ability of an individual Chairman may well be an overriding consideration on particular issues, as might his standing within the group.<sup>9</sup>

Two significant differences appear to exist between the Conservative and the Labour groups on Luton Council. First, relationships between the Borough Labour Party and the Labour group on Luton Council are relatively cordial, with the Party being allowed to send a fraternal delegate to group meetings. From time to time this relationship is strained as a result of specific issues or the actions of specific personalities, but in general terms the relationship is cordial and formalised, such that the constituent organisations of the Borough Labour Party have direct access to the Labour group on the Council through the mechanism of the fraternal delegate. In addition, the leaders of the Labour group and the office-holders in the Borough Party are often the same people, which again increases the access to group leaders of constituent Party organisations. This is not so with the Conservative Party group. The group is jealous of its autonomy and tries to prevent the Party as an organisation from influencing group decisions. Alderman Hillier, leader of the Conservative group, described the relations between the two as "armed neutrality", and the separate nature of the two bodies was deliberately stressed.<sup>10</sup> This difference in the autonomy of the two groups appears to affect their methods of making decisions, with the Labour group indulging in wider consultations through the Party mechanisms than its Conservative counterpart.

The second difference relates to the fact that the Labour group abandoned its formal organisational structure following the 1969 local elections, when its size had dropped to six from 29 in 1965 and was reduced still further to three following the Aldermanic elections of 1969. This was because it did not have

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9. Alderman Lester's standing within the Conservative group was almost certainly greater than that of his two successors as Chairman of the Airport Committee (Councillors White and Dunington), and this probably enabled him to operate with greater freedom from intervention by the party leadership. Alderman Lester is Chairman of the Education Committee for 1971/72.

enough members to require such a structure. Instead, it operated as a loosely-organised group of intimates, and did not retain the fiction of an opposition in each Committee but chose to concentrate on a few areas of importance to it. These did not include the Airport Committee. Labour representation increased during 1970/71 and the group went back to forming an opposition in each Committee although the full mechanisms of party discipline were not restored until just before the 1971 municipal elections, when it had become clear from by-election victories during the year and from a national swing of opinion against the Conservative Government that the Labour party could expect to win a substantial number of the seats.<sup>11</sup> The importance of this is that for nearly two of the years in which the future of Luton Airport was a controversial issue, the Labour group was not organised in its usual manner as a formal opposition with shadow Committee Chairmen and a strong whip system.

Luton County Borough Council appears to correspond very closely with Bulpitt's typology of a "primary-mature" party political system, which is one in which party politics plays an extensive and continuous part in the workings of the Council and **where** the rules of the political game between the parties have been settled already and are adhered to.<sup>12</sup> Bulpitt argues that primary-mature systems typify many large County Boroughs,<sup>13</sup> and from published evidence Luton appears to be very similar in this sense to Wolverhampton,<sup>14</sup> Sheffield,<sup>15</sup> Bristol,<sup>16</sup> Leeds,<sup>17</sup> Southampton,<sup>18</sup> and West Hartlepool<sup>19</sup> (now The Hartlepool). Despite the central place of party politics in the life of Luton Council, the issue of the future of Luton Airport has never become an issue between the parties. From time to time it has been an issue within the parties, and they have used party discipline either to bring recalcitrant members into line or to expel them from the group, but the official policies of the two parties have never diverged significantly on the Airport issue. The reasons why this has happened and its implications will be examined in more detail after this appraisal of the organisation of the Council has been completed by a discussion of the other major participants within the Council's structure -- the officers.

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10. Interview. 5th. March 1971.

11. In fact, the strength of the Labour party on the Council rose to 19 out of 48 following the 1971 elections and to 26 in May, 1972, giving the party a majority of four prior to the aldermanic elections.

12. J.G. Bulpitt. "Party Politics in English Local Government". Longmans. London. 1967. Page 130.

13. Ibid. Page 128.

14. G. W. Jones. "Borough Politics". Macmillan. London. 1969.

15. W. Hampton. "Democracy and Community". Oxford University Press. London. 1970. Pages 49-76.

### The Permanent Officials.

The traditional theory of local government is that policy-formulation is the province of the Council member and its implementation the responsibility of officers.<sup>20</sup> In practice, the difficulty of distinguishing between what constitutes policy and what is administrative detail has been recognised.<sup>21</sup> The distinction has proved impossible to utilise when examining the parts played by officers in the work of Luton Council. Indeed, whilst it was possible to describe the main features of the party political organisation of the Council with some precision, this is not so when attempting to examine the place of officers in the system.

It is clear that the chief officers of the Council played a major part in policy-making with regard to Luton Airport. The Management Group of Chief Officers ( Chief Executive Officer and Town Clerk, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Solicitor to the Corporation, Borough Treasurer and Borough Engineer) made recommendations directly to the Policy Advisory Committee on confidential matters of policy-making. Many of the negotiations between the airline operators and the Council were carried out by the leaders of both parties and by the chief officers (Town Clerk, Borough Treasurer, Borough Engineer, Airport Director), and, indeed, it has already been pointed out that these officers were much more involved in Airport policy-making throughout much of the 1960s than were the majority of the backbench members of both parties.<sup>22</sup> The Town Clerk in particular (and the other chief officers to a lesser extent) is often used by the leaderships of both parties to give advance warning of backbench disaffection on particular issues.<sup>23</sup> In addition, of course, chief officers often have a very close working relationship with Committee Chairmen in the formulation of policy within their own areas of concern.

In terms of the overall significance of officers, this last point is probably of the greatest importance simply because a very great deal of policy is made at Committee level and is largely the responsibility of the Chairman. It has already been shown that the parties tend to allow Chairmen a fairly free hand in policy-making, until such time as the policies either come into conflict with those of another Chairman or may no longer command the full support of the

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16. L. Sharpe (ed.). "Voting in Cities." MacMillan. London. 1967. Pages 44-46.
  17. Ibid. Pages 144-154. H.V. Wiseman. "Local Government at Work: a Case Study of a County Borough." Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. 1967. Pages 72-103.
  18. Ibid. Pages 191-194.
  19. Ibid. Pages 238-240.
  20. Committee on the Management of Local Government. "Management of Local Government. Volume 1. Report of the Committee." H.M.S.O. London. 1967. Page 27.

party group. In turn, Chairmen obviously rely a great deal on chief officers for advice and information, and this relationship is clearly a reciprocal one since "his" Chairman is the main point of access to the party decision-making system for most chief officers. At its best, this relationship is a fairly harmonious partnership, with the Chairman and the chief officer regarding each other's functions as being complementary to their own. But in practice the nature of this relationship tends to vary a good deal, depending to a considerable extent upon the personalities of the Chairman and chief officer concerned. If the relationship between the two is proving difficult, the Town Clerk will inform the party leaders who, if they consider the Chairman to be at fault, may remove him from the position and either re-appoint him elsewhere or return him to the backbenches.<sup>24</sup>

It appears that there is a political system at officer level which is in many ways parallel to that at member level. Its basis is not party politics, however, but departmental politics. To describe the officers as a team working towards common and agreed goals for the town would be to over-simplify, for many reasons. Although the Council's management structure would be regarded as being relatively modern,<sup>25</sup> it has not managed to overcome the effects of departmental empire-building and professional sensitivities to the extent that conflict at officer level over who does what is not a significant feature of its policy-making process. Committees and Chairmen tend not to be given conflicting advice, however, and so matters sometimes remain at officer level until they have been resolved. The strengths of certain Departments and the weaknesses of others are often important in conflict-resolution at officer level. Such strengths and weaknesses thereby affect the kind and quality of advice given to Committees and Chairmen. For example, the major Departments which deal with Luton Airport are the Airport Director's Department (day-to-day running), Borough Engineer's (technical services), Borough Treasurer's (financial services) and Town Clerk's (legal services). All of these Departments are basically expansionist in terms of their attitudes to the Airport from the viewpoint of

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21. Ibid. Page 30.

22. See Chapter 8.

23. This appears to have been how the Conservative leadership realised that Alderman Lester's Airport policies were losing the support of a growing number of Conservative backbenchers during 1969, and it led the party leadership to insist on a cutback of night jet movements for the 1970 summer season. See Chapter 8.

24. This paragraph is basically a summary of information provided on a confidential basis by the Luton Council members and officers listed in Appendix 1.

25. Luton is described as being one of the first towns to elevate its Town Clerk to the position of Chief Executive. D. Feschek. "Town Hall Management". New Society 2nd. June, 1966. Pages 19 and 20.

their particular functions. The one Department which might have been expected to be far less enthusiastic from the viewpoint of its functions is the Planning Department, but until very recently<sup>26</sup> this has existed not as an entity in its own right but as a relatively junior wing of the Borough Engineer's Department.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, planning advice has been given by the Borough Engineer, who has played down the planning considerations and has managed to keep the issue away from the Planning Committee (with a concern for planning in the County Borough as a whole), and in the hands of the Airport Committee (with a functional concern for the Airport). The Airport Committee Chairman would be unlikely to want to devalue the importance of his own Committee anyway, but any advice which might have had this effect was not forthcoming because its likely source was a junior wing of a Department which was basically expansionist. This perhaps explains why Luton County Borough Council has not offered spatial planning evidence to the public inquiries examining planning applications concerned with Airport policy, although it is a planning authority in its own right. Such evidence might tend to be less favourable to expansion than other considerations, and in this sense it would be somewhat inconvenient, but in addition the relatively junior status of the planning function within the authority's staff structure would militate against the emergence of such considerations from the political process at officer level.

This has been an untidy protrait, because the impact of officers upon policy-making is not neat and tidy. Its main features, however, appear to be a close link between the chief officers who form the Management Group and the party leaderships, a close relationship between particular chief officers and particular Committee Chairmen, the existence of a system of departmental politics with the Chief Executive Officer and Town Clerk at its apex and the use of the Town Clerk's position as a link between the party political and the departmental political systems. The influence of officers on policy-making is clearly extensive, but it is not consistently so. In particular circumstances, personalities are likely to play a significant part in determining the strength of this influence, but the officers hold one important trump-card -- their expertise and control of information. Because this is vital to Committee Chairmen (in particular) and party leaders, they are often likely to be guided by officers' advice. Because officials need to retain the ears of Committee Chairmen (in particular) and party leaders in order to exert real influence on

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26. There is now a separate Planning Department, although its activities are overseen by the Director of Technical Services -- himself an engineer.

27. This is still the most common organisational arrangement for the planning function in County Boroughs in England and Wales. Of the 83 County Boroughs

policy-making, they may often give the kind of advice they think the recipient would like to hear. This may be another reason why anti-expansionist views on Luton Airport have tended not to be forthcoming from chief officers. At times during the 1960s, policy-making on Luton Airport tended to be in the hands of the senior officers and party leaders. These have tended to be times when a consensus on policy existed. At other times, notably during Councillor White's tenure as Chairman <sup>28</sup> (September 1969- May 1971), the Chairman has had to bear a great deal of responsibility himself. These have tended to be times when policy has been in a state of flux, although once a settled line has begun to emerge officers have played a large part in developing that line. Certainly, a distinction between policy- ~~formulation~~ and policy-implementation in terms of the roles of Council members and officers has not been apparent in the case of policy-making on the Luton Airport issue. <sup>29</sup>

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in 1971, 21 had separate Planning Departments, 13 had a Borough Architect and Planning Officer and the remainder (59%) had either a Borough Engineer or a Director of Technical Services responsible for planning. Source. "Municipal Year Book and Public Utilities Directory." London. 1971.

28. See Chapters 8 and 9.

29. Green found similar difficulties in assessing the parts played collectively and individually by Council officers in his study of community decision-making in Georgian City (Bath). B.S.R. Green. "Community Decision-Making in Georgian City." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Bath University of Technology. 1968.

Attitudes to the Future of Luton Airport - the Council.

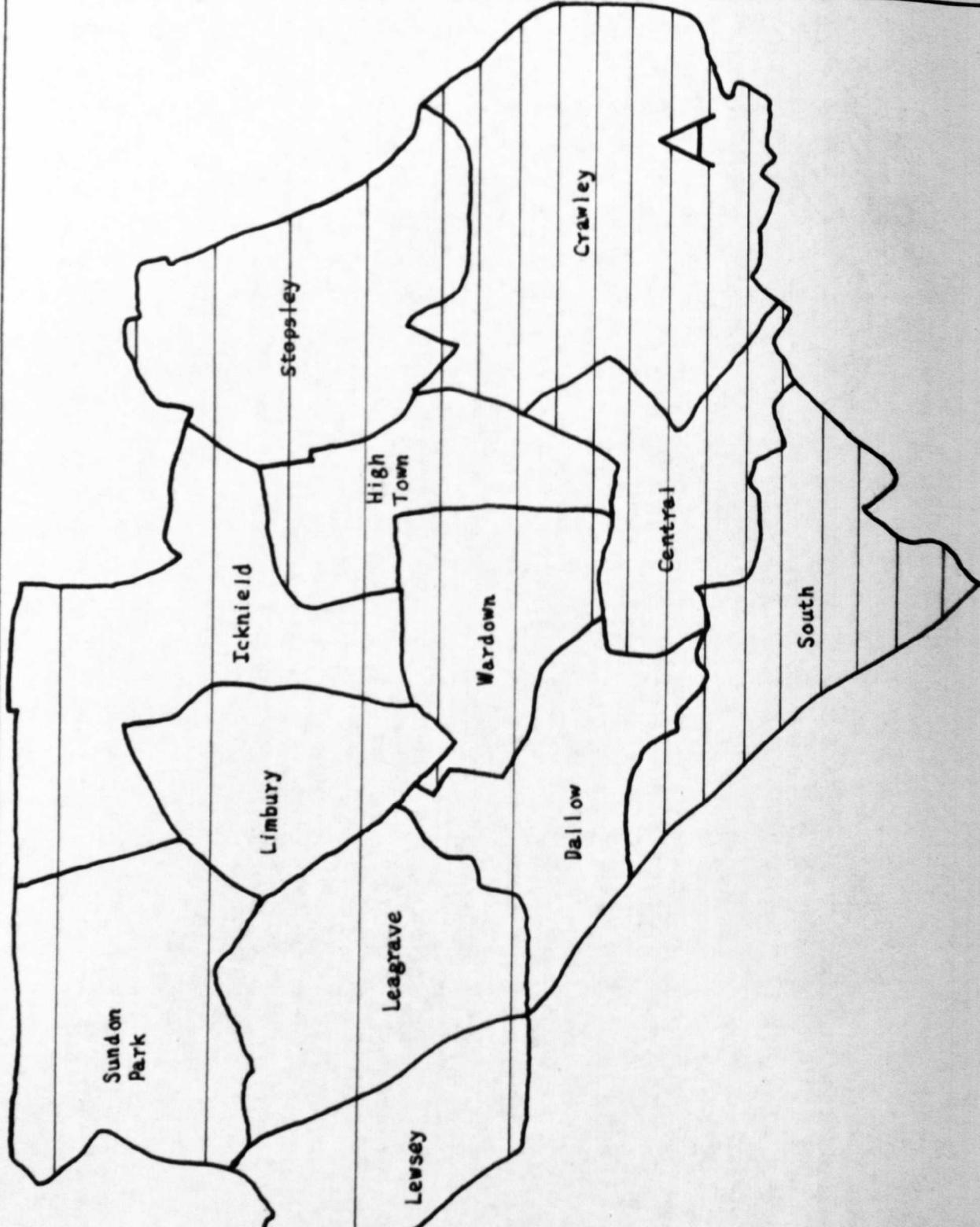
During successive periods as majority group on the Council, both the Labour and the Conservative parties have retrenched their positions as being in favour of Airport expansion. This process has been bolstered by the expansionist views of most of the Council's chief officers during this time, and has probably given added support to the officers in expressing such views. It is clear that the cumulative effects of such a process have played a major part in bringing about the present situation, whereby the two parties, whilst disagreeing on most things, agree and indeed collaborate on the issue of Airport expansion.

A major aspect of this process has been inertia, and to a considerable extent this has been a function of the longevity of tenure of some of the Council's membership. Until the major upsets of the late 1960s, when the Labour party was decimated and the Conservative party gained a large number of young and relatively independent Councillors, many of whom never expected to be elected and certainly did not expect re-election three years later, both parties had a relatively stable core of "old hands". Up to and including the 1968 Aldermanic elections, twelve members of the Council (25%) had been members for at least fifteen years, and they were evenly divided between the Conservative and the Labour groups. These people tended to number amongst themselves most of the leaders of the parties, by virtue of their seniority, and they tended to be personally associated with and committed to policies which derived from the earlier days of the Airport's existence. In those days, a municipal airport was widely regarded as being a necessity for the town's development, and in addition it meshed into the ideology of both parties. The Labour party favoured municipal enterprise and the creation of extra employment, and the Conservative party favoured efficiency in the enterprises operated by the municipality and the creation of conditions which benefitted local business. A profitable Airport would satisfy both. The vastly changed circumstances of civil aviation in the 1960s and 1970s called for a reappraisal of these somewhat caricatured positions, however, and this was not forthcoming from the leaders of the parties, who tended rather to stress continuity with past policies.<sup>30</sup>

The other major reason why the Airport did not become an issue between the parties appears to have been that the electorate of Luton did not regard it as a basis for choosing between them. In part this was because the parties had always agreed and continued to agree on Airport policy matters, so that even if the electorate had wished to express a choice between them on Airport policy

30. Councillor Dunington, Chairman of the Airport Committee in 1971/72 and one of the Conservative Councillors returned for the first time in the late 1960s, was still using this "ideological" argument as a major reason why the Airport had not become a party political issue by 1971. Interview, 29th. July 1971.

DIAGRAM II. AIRCRAFT NOISE NUISANCE PATTERN, LUTON.



Notation.



Area of Luton County Borough Council, showing ward boundaries.



Wards severely affected by noise nuisance.



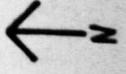
Wards significantly affected by noise nuisance.



Wards hardly affected by noise nuisance.

A

Luton Airport (symbolic).



it would not have been possible. The evidence of the views of the electorate of Luton on Airport expansion is fragmentary and equivocal,<sup>31</sup> but it does not point to any great desire to have Airport policy as a central feature of local elections. The notion that there were no votes that could either be won or lost on the Airport issue had disappeared by the late 1960s, however, although before that time it appears to have been a feature of the electoral calculations of both parties.<sup>32</sup> Since that date, the parties have been careful to neutralise the issue in the wards where it might tell against them.

It is possible to categorise the wards in Luton on the basis of their exposure to aircraft noise (see Diagram 11) and to compare this categorisation with probable electoral behaviour in those wards.

Table 23. Aircraft Noise Nuisance as it Affects Wards in Luton.

A. Fairly severe over much of the ward.

Central.	V
Crawley.	L
South.	V

B. Significant over part of the ward.

High Town.	C.
Stopsley.	C.
Wardown.	C.

C. Not very significant.

Dallow.	L.
Icknield.	C.
Leagrave.	V.
Lewsey.	L.
Limbury.	L.
Sundon Park.	L.

Note: this Table derives essentially from the judgement of the author, since techniques for describing aircraft noise nuisance are not so refined as to be able to differentiate reliably between wards in a town. This judgement is based upon personal observation and experience, conversations with people living in the wards and comments from Council officers and

32. Interviews with Aldermen Hillier (5th. March 1971) and Bowles (8th. July 1971).

31. The evidence is reviewed in the next section of this Chapter.

members, who accepted it as being a reasonable representation of reality. Information as to the probable electoral behaviour of the wards has been transposed from Table 21:--

- L. normally Labour.
- C. normally Conservative.
- V. variable.

It is clear from Table 23 that half of the wards in the town suffer at times from aircraft noise, although only three of these are liable to be exposed to severe annoyance. There is no strong correlation between aircraft noise annoyance and probable electoral behaviour, and two of the three wards seriously affected are electorally variable. Thus, neither of the parties has an inbuilt antipathy to aircraft noise nuisance in terms of the distribution of party support, but both parties are potentially vulnerable to electoral disapproval on the issue at times when they dominate the Council. In other words, the Airport issue might be capable of causing sufficient disaffection to erode the majority of whichever party is in power. This possibility was brought home to the parties by the 1968 election in Crawley ward, where an independent candidate, campaigning solely on the issue of jet noise and in a restricted and amateurish manner, recorded 13% of the poll and knocked the Liberals out of third place, relegating the Communist candidate to last place.<sup>33</sup> This was the best performance by any independent candidate at a local election in Luton during the 1960s, and it was treated as a warning by both of the two major parties. Since that time, they have put up candidates broadly sympathetic to the complaints of local residents in the three wards seriously affected by aircraft noise. The apotheosis of this approach was the selection of K. Eaton as Conservative candidate for South ward in 1969. At that time, he was a member of LADACAN's executive, and his death shortly after his election to the Council removed for LADACAN a very useful contact. The only significant departure from this tactic has been the election of Councillor Carleton, the subsequent Labour shadow Chairman of the Airport Committee, in Crawley ward, but his pro-Airport views were played down during his campaign in 1970. In general, however, both parties have attempted to neutralise the Airport issue by careful selection of candidates in wards badly affected by aircraft noise.

Although the Airport has not become a party political issue for the reasons adduced, it has become an issue within the parties. This appears to be related to the activities of LADACAN, which coincided with a period of extensive change

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33. Saturday Telegraph, 11th. May 1968. In interviews several Council members mentioned that this particular result had caused them to wonder what the electoral impact of the Airport issue might be in future.

in the composition of the party groups on the Council. LADACAN set out quite specifically to be non-party, and attacked both parties equally for their records over Luton Airport. At the same time, there was a very heavy anti-Labour swing nationally, and this resulted in the Conservative party winning 35 out of the 36 Council seats at stake between 1967 and 1969 (inclusive). The effect of this was to introduce several new and often fairly young Conservative Councillors, who had no personal commitment to Airport policies forged in another era and who were aware of the discontent over jet noise upon which LADACAN grew. The factors initially advanced as favouring Airport expansion--providing a service for local businesses, bringing new industry to the town, putting Luton "on the map" -- had become of little significance, and the main argument in favour of expansion was the potential profit to the Council. The pursuance of this goal without regard to those who suffered from aircraft noise was unacceptable to many of these new Conservative Councillors, and it was their expressed desire to see this policy modified which led to the defeat and resignation of Alderman Lester in September 1969.<sup>34</sup> LADACAN's importance in this process lay in its ability to keep the issue of aircraft noise on the "public agenda", so that as the Conservative party went from one election success to another more and more of its new Councillors were affected by this noise lobby.

A similar process was happening within the Labour group. Its defeat at the polls (following the 1966 election there were 20 Labour Councillors, but after the 1969 election there was only one) led to a reduction in the number of Labour Aldermen (cut from seven in 1966 to two in 1969), amongst whom there had been several Airport expansionists. When the party started to recoup its losses from the 1970 election onwards, it also acquired several fairly young Councillors who were serving a first term and who were sensitive to the amount of pressure that LADACAN was able to generate. Indeed, for a time it looked as if within the Labour party there would be a fight for the leadership over the Airport issue, although eventually this did not materialise.<sup>35</sup>

For both parties, then, the electoral upheavals of the late 1960s had a rejuvenating effect, unwelcome though some of the manifestations of this (such as the demand for more serious attempts to mitigate the impact of aircraft noise annoyance) may have been to the party leaderships. It would be a simplification

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34. See Chapter 8.

35. Between Alderman Hedley Lawrence and Councillor Gwilym Roberts. See Chapter

to caricature the clashes within the parties over Airport policy as being simply differences between generations, although this was undoubtedly a major factor.<sup>36</sup> In addition, however, there appears to have been a different approach to local politics in operation, which was not prepared to accept unquestioningly the rigidities of party discipline, which was not committed to policies which had remained essentially unchanged for years and which was prepared to acknowledge the validity of the grievances LADACAN was representing. This greater "openness"<sup>37</sup> made a major contribution to the Council's attempts to adjust its policies to the pressures it was facing, which represented a substantial change in attitude from the previous policy of ignoring such pressures.

At the same time, the prospect of very large Airport profits and perhaps (for the Labour party, at any rate) the increasing size of the Airport's pool of labour put bounds to the extent of this process of adjustment. Neither party is prepared to see its asset in these terms disappear, and, since most of the opposition to expansion is attempting to obtain severe restrictions upon the Airport's activities, this if anything is likely to ensure that the parties remain essentially united against such strong pressure. There is no evidence to support the view that, as a whole, the electorate of Luton is unhappy with the present balance, although the evidence of the feelings of the electorate on the issue is at best fragmentary.

#### Attitudes to the Future of Luton Airport -- the Luton Electorate.

So far, it has been argued that the parties in Luton have made it difficult for the town's voters to express any views on the future of the Airport by not taking up identifiably different positions and by moving quickly to neutralise the possible damaging effects of anti-noise votes in badly-affected wards. As a result, explicit tests of feeling on the Airport issue have been rare, and only two elections in the town can be interpreted as having fulfilled this function to any significant extent. The first, the town poll of January 1969,<sup>38</sup> related to the town as a whole, whereas the second, Councillor White's attempt in May 1971 to gain re-election in Central ward on the basis of his record as Chairman of the Airport Committee,<sup>39</sup> related to one of the three badly-affected

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36. For example, after the 1971 municipal elections the 36 Councillors had an average of 3.2 years service on the Council, whereas the 12 Alderman had served for an average of 16.4 years. This reflects accurately the difference in the average ages of the two groups.

37. Hampton notes that the decision-making processes of Sheffield County Borough Council also started to become more open in similar ways from about the middle-1960s. W. Hampton. op. cit. Pages 75 and 76. It is possible that this was a general phenomenon related to changes in the patterns of recruitment by local political parties at about that time, although this would need to be tested by reference to many more examples.

wards. These two will be examined in turn.

Ostensibly, the town poll was held over the issue of the provisions of a relatively obscure money Bill. In fact, it was treated by LADACAN, by the local press and in the end by Luton Council as a test of public opinion in Luton on the matter of Airport expansion, although the Council's campaign was based initially upon the viewpoint that it was not Airport policy that was in question but an approved method of raising money at slightly lower rates of interest than normal. That the Council (by way of a circular in the joint names of the leaders of the Labour and Conservative groups to all the voters in the town) departed from this stance and attempted to defend its record on Airport policy is indicative of the extent to which it was prepared to take LADACAN's campaign seriously and to try to counter-balance it, and the campaigning activities of both sides were given extensive coverage by the local press. Thus, the voters of Luton would have been aware, for the most part, that they had been given an opportunity to vote against the Council's Airport policy. At the same time, to interpret the vote as a straight test of approval in this manner is probably an over-simplification for at least two reasons. First, at least some of the voters may have interpreted the town poll simply in terms of the original money Bill, and may have regarded the Airport issue as being irrelevant to this question. Second, there were some side-issues. In particular, the Luton branch of N.A.L.G.O. (the local government officers' union) advised its members to exercise their votes in favour of the Bill, since it contained a clause the provisions of which would have had a beneficial effect upon their superannuation fund. The extent to which this affected the result cannot be known, although in all probability it swelled the number of votes in favour of the Bill. Thus, the town poll was not simply a test of opinion over Airport expansion in Luton, although this was clearly the predominant element. The analysis which follows is based upon the assumption that the town poll results can be made to reveal something as to local opinions on Airport expansion, although the data are treated with considerable caution because of the caveats entered above.

In fact, useful data on the town poll were difficult to come by.<sup>40</sup> The overall result was a victory for the Council by 3,673 votes (57%) to 2,767 (43%).

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38. See Chapter 8.

39. See Chapter 9.

40. See Appendix 10 for a description of these difficulties and of the methods used to derive Table 24.

The overall turnout, at 6.4%, was undoubtedly very low, although it is impossible to say how low this is relative to performances in town polls in general.<sup>41</sup> Prior to this, the last town poll held in Luton was on 16th. February 1946, on the issue of whether cinemas in the town should be opened on Sundays, and this attracted a turnout of approximately 30%.<sup>42</sup> There appear to be grave doubts about the comparability of the two situations, however, in part because of the lapse of time between them and in part because of the differences between the issues (the Churches in Luton fought very hard against the Sunday opening of cinemas, and probably wielded a good deal more influence in 1946 than in the perhaps more secular times of the late 1960s). The most notable town poll reported in the national press during the period of the study was over the issue of a civic lottery in Manchester, which attracted a poll of 3.6%.<sup>43</sup> Again, however, the situations may not be directly comparable, although the use of the Manchester figure as a yardstick might put Luton's town poll of 1969 in better perspective than the use of the figure from the 1946 poll.

There appears to be some correlation between the size of the turnout for the 1969 town poll in individual wards and the effect of aircraft noise upon those wards.

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41. The Association of Municipal Corporations was approached with a view to finding out whether the Association either kept or knew of records of turnouts at town polls, but the information does not appear to be kept in any centralised form. Letter to the author from J.C. Swaffield (Secretary, Association of Municipal Corporations), 10th. December 1971.

42. Pictorial, 19th. February 1946.

43. The Times, 9th. January 1971.

Table 24. Town Poll, 1969.

Ward.	Turnout at Town Poll.	Effect of Aircraft Noise.	Rank Order of average turnout at municipal elections 1965-1971.	Change in turnout rank orders, municipal elections to town poll.
1. Crawley.	10.5%	A	6=	+5
2. South.	9.5%	A	8	+6
Icknield.	9.5%	C	5	+3
4. Stopsley.	9.4%	B	2	-2
5. High Town.	7.5%	B	3	-2
6. Wardown.	5.5%	B	11	+5
7. Sundon Park.	5.3%	C	1	-6
8. Leagrave.	4.9%	C	10	+2
Limbury.	4.9%	C	9	+1
10. Central.	4.6%	A	12	+2
11. Dallow.	3.3%	C	4	-7
12. Lewsey.	2.8%	C	6=	-6

Note: the classification of the effect of aircraft noise has been taken from Table 23.

- A - fairly severe over much of the ward.
- B - significant over part of the ward.
- C - not very significant.

Ward type.	Average turnout at town poll.	Average change in turnout rank order, municipal elections to town poll.
A	8.2%	+ 4.3
B	7.5%	+ 0.3
C	5.1%	- 2.2

Of the top six wards in terms of turnout at the town poll, five were in categories A and B, whereas five of the bottom six were in category C. Category A wards had the highest average turnout whereas category C wards had the lowest. It seems clear from the summary table appended to Table 24 that the turnout at the town poll was not simply a reflection of normal turnout patterns at municipal elections, since category A wards improved their turnout rank order from municipal elections to the town poll quite substantially,

category B wards improved marginally and category C wards experienced a significant decline.

The analysis so far has assumed that category A and B wards would tend to vote against the Airport and that category C wards would tend to vote for it. If the 6,449 votes actually cast were redistributed in this manner, the result would have been 2,504 pro-Airport and 3,945 anti-Airport votes. In fact, the situation was almost exactly the reverse of this, and at least 1,169 of the votes cast in the six category A and B wards must have been pro-Airport (actual pro-Airport votes minus expected pro-Airport votes on the basis of the above assumptions). Thus, at least 30% of the voters in the wards affected by aircraft noise must have registered a pro-Airport vote, and even this assumes that all the votes in areas not significantly affected by aircraft noise were also pro-Airport. If all of these were not pro-Airport votes, the share of such votes in the wards affected by noise would rise still further. It may well be that a significant proportion of the pro-Airport vote in the areas affected by aircraft noise was formed by people whose livelihood was dependent upon the Airport, although this would be a very difficult hypothesis to test. At all events, whilst it appears that propensity to vote in the town poll was affected by the impact of aircraft noise on a particular ward, this did not necessarily result in the casting of an anti-Airport vote although the general tendency was in that direction.

Perhaps the most reasonable interpretation of the town poll result is as follows. The fact that 93.6% of the electorate did not bother to vote probably signifies a substantial degree of apathy towards the Airport issue, and even in those areas where aircraft noise was a significant problem and the degree of apathy was reduced, there was still a substantial minority of those who bothered to vote who recorded pro-Airport opinions. The pro-Airport nature of the result was probably a compound of a high rate of pro-Airport voting in wards not affected by aircraft noise and a substantial minority of pro-Airport voting in badly-affected wards, plus the N.A.L.G.O. - generated vote, which was sufficient to outweigh the majority feeling in the wards closest to the Airport.

Councillor White's defeat in Central ward in May 1971 may have been attributable at least in part to his position as Chairman of the Airport Committee, even though he was the first such Chairman to embark upon a policy of seeking to control Airport expansion. His ward is one of three normally regarded as being electorally variable, although he was defending it at a time when the swing both nationally and in Luton was away from the Conservative party and towards Labour. He had won it in 1968, when the Conservative party had benefitted from the very large swings against the Labour Government at that time, and

conceded that he did not expect to retain his seat against the trends.<sup>44</sup>

Table 25. Swings from Conservative to Labour in Wards in Luton, 1968-1971.

Ward.	Swing.	Normal electoral behaviour.
Limbury.	32.3%	L
Lewsey.	30.1%	L
Central.	29.6%	V
Leagrave.	29.3%	V
Crawley.	27.6%	L
South.	26.7%	V
Dallow.	25.0%	L
Stopsley.	24.8%	C
Icknield.	22.1%	C
Wardown.	19.8%	C
High Town.	18.9%	C
Sundon Park.	17.1%	L

Note: following Sharpe (op. cit., page 322), swings have been calculated as the changes in the ratios of Conservative and Labour votes to each other. The classification of normal electoral behaviour has been taken from Table 21.

- L. normally Labour.
- C. normally Conservative.
- V. variable.

Even though the swing against Councillor White in Central ward was one of the largest recorded, it fell within the pattern of swings as a whole, which was that the largest swings were in the wards which were normally Labour or variable. From the analysis of the town poll results, it was concluded that there was probably a relationship between turnout and anti-Airport feelings on that occasion, and the same might have been expected in Central ward with Councillor White as Conservative candidate. In fact, the turnout against him did not increase, and Central ward retained its usual position as the ward with the lowest turnout at municipal elections. The swing in Central ward was higher than those recorded in Crawley and South wards, the other two wards where aircraft noise was a major problem, and this might indicate a movement

44. Interview with Councillor White, 2nd. April 1971.

against Councillor White. The evidence is inconclusive, however. Whilst the Airport issue possibly told more against Councillor White than against other Conservative candidates, it is doubtful whether its impact was sufficient to make any real difference to the result.

The only conclusion that appears to be warranted from this survey of the electorate of Luton's voting behaviour on the Airport issue is that there is very little evidence which would support the view that the issue has been significant in local electoral politics. Its existence as a potential source of lost votes appears to have been noted by the parties, who have been careful to put up candidates in favour of improving the controls over expansion in the wards most affected by aircraft noise. There is little evidence to support the view that the electorate as a whole has wanted to use the mechanism of local elections to express a decisive view on the Airport issue, and as a result pressure on the majority Conservative group to change its policy to one of controlled expansion came not from the electorate of Luton but largely from some young and newly-elected Conservative backbenchers who had been made aware of the nature of the problem and of its potential electoral significance at some unspecified future date by LADACAN's campaigns. The electorate of Luton as a body has thus played little direct part in the Luton Airport policy-making process, and, if the town poll can be taken as a reasonable guide, it has not wanted to do so. This situation has been promoted and recognised by the party leaderships, who take care not to upset it by neutralising the possibility of their candidates in the wards most affected by aircraft noise taking up conflicting positions over Airport expansion policies.

#### Relationships with Other Organisations.

Because of its position as both Airport owner and operator and local planning authority, Luton Council finds it necessary or expedient to attempt to influence other organisations much less than other organisations seek to influence it. Indeed, none of the participant agencies identified in this study have not attempted from time to time to influence the Council in some way, as will become clear from the following Chapters. Luton Council's position is in many ways parallel with that of Central Government as a whole -- its position in the process is central because of the direct controls over Airport expansion that it possesses. These are the only two agencies which have been more acted upon than acting upon others in the Airport issue, and this marks them out from the others. The cumulative effects of all this pressure upon the Council have already been detailed. The process of adaptation which took place derived in large measure from the sum total of the pressures as they were felt by many

newly-elected members of the Conservative group on the Council, and the following Chapters will attempt to disentangle and then examine this body of pressure. The present Chapter is concerned only with the attempts of the Council to influence other agencies insofar as policy on the future of Luton Airport is concerned. In this context, the major targets for the Council have been the airlines and their associated tour operators and Central Government. On the face of it, the Council might also have been expected to attempt to influence the Luton Airport Consultative Committee, but for reasons which will be made clear in Chapter 12 this has not happened. Other agencies (such as Bedfordshire County Council) have from time to time been the objects of similar pressures, but these have tended to be neither important nor sustained. They relate either to the period before the Airport was in any sense a major facility (such as the relationship with Bedfordshire County Council, which as planning authority had some sanctions over Airport expansion which tended to be blunted by the complications deriving from the County Borough status issue) or to ad hoc problems or opportunities (such as the arguments before the Commission on the Third London Airport about the role of Luton Airport in the region's airports system). As such, their impact upon the process under examination has been relatively slight, and this section will be concerned only with the Council's attempts to influence the airlines and the tour operators and Central Government.

The Council's relationships with the airlines and their associated tour operators changed during the 1960s, although the change that took place was more apparent than real. At the start of the decade, the Council's problem was to obtain operators who were prepared to base themselves at and make use of the Airport once the concrete runway had been opened. In this, it was competing with several other municipal airports, but it had the major advantage of accessibility, improved still further by the concurrent opening of the M1 motorway and the concrete runway. Although it was not known at the time, a further advantage was to be its location close enough to London for the inclusive tour tariffs from the capital city's airports to apply. Contact with potential operators was made and pursued by the then Airport Director, and any who appeared interested and came to see the Airport's facilities were wooed diligently. The Council offered purpose-built hangars at low rents, discounts on landing charges and promises to match Airport expansion policy with the needs of the airlines. In addition, the Council was prepared to allow airlines to default on payments for a while, since the inclusive tour and charter businesses in those days were built upon unsteady foundations.

Discussions were conducted by the senior officials and party leaders (on

the Council's side) and by the senior executives and directors (on the operator's side). It is doubtful whether this small group exceeded twenty in number, and for all intents and purposes Airport policy was made by these people. There is no evidence that they ever met as a formal group or committee of this size, although it is possible that this happened. Certainly, sub-groups on each side and including members of both sides met frequently, and so co-ordination would not have been difficult. In any event, this was not a real problem, since there was harmony over what measures of Airport expansion were required. This harmony only began to be disturbed following the introduction of jets in 1968 and the consequent growth of political pressure over the aircraft noise issue. Even then, the Council's leaders were reluctant to upset the personal and informal nature of their relationship with the operators, and virtually eighteen months of mounting pressure passed before any concessions to it were granted. Even then, elaborate negotiations with the operators were set in train,<sup>45</sup> and the cutbacks which were imposed ultimately were cutbacks on what the operators had demanded for the following summer season rather than on what had been experienced and had caused the complaint.

This experience set the pattern for future negotiations. The operators had always been given what they wanted, and the first time that this apparent right was challenged they threatened to leave the Airport. Without its operators, the Airport could not make a profit, and the fear of the operator's threat being implemented was clearly a conditioning feature of the eventual decision taken by the Council. The operators did not leave, and although the threat was repeated on subsequent occasions it appears to have had successively less impact upon the Council's negotiators. A process tantamount to bargaining replaced the previous process of tacit agreement. The Council still wished to expand the Airport, and this required the co-operation of the operators, but it also had to pay some attention (and, indeed, an increasing amount) to the political pressures it was facing over the side-effects of expansion. The operators, whilst recognising that the Council faced such pressures, took the view that it was the Council's job to balance these conflicting pressures, and were concerned to obtain the best deal that they could. As a consequence, the operators tended to request more summer night jet flights than they could possibly use, so that this figure could be used as a basis for

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45. See Chapter 8.

negotiation, and the Council tended to cut this number back to a level which was still higher than that allowed for the previous season. The levels which were allowed for the 1970 and 1971 summer seasons were not attained by the operators anyway, and the suspicion remained that the cutback from the agreed 1972 level late in 1971 simply represented the likelihood that the operators would probably not attain that level either.<sup>46</sup> This perhaps indicates the extent to which the Council was still prepared not to compromise the business situations of the operators by the imposition of onerous conditions, but it presented the Council with a very difficult problem of representing the cutbacks on desired operating levels as real concessions to the pressures it faced.

It would be realistic to regard the Council and the operators as business partners in the development of Luton Airport. The relationship between them was essentially symbiotic in its nature, and in essence this remained constant throughout the period under examination. The Council needed the operators and the operators needed the Airport, and it was better for both that they should work in tandem towards the achievement of agreed ends. The partnership was not as close at the end of the 1960s as it had been at the beginning of the decade, in part because (on the Council's side) many of the personalities had been replaced and in part because the level of business being undertaken imposed many more stresses than had perviously been the case and led ultimately to the imposition of cutbacks on the desires of the operators. A process more like bargaining had replaced a process of tacit agreement, although the bargains that were struck did not seriously inconvenience the operators. In addition, prior consultation and if possible prior agreement with the operators remained the norm, so that trade-offs vital to the interests of both sides were reduced to a minimum. The Council concentrated upon attempting to maximise the significance of what had been done whilst minimising its impact upon the operators. The operators were prepared to see themselves presented as being heavily constrained by the decisions of the Council, provided that this did not actually happen. Even so, it would be easy to under-estimate the importance of the change in the Council's attitude to the operators. The critical feature of this change was an acceptance of the need to impose any controls at all upon the actions of the operators, and this change in attitude led directly to Airport expansion proposals explicitly designed to improve the noise efficiency of the Airport as well as to provide for the anticipated future requirements of the operators.

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46. See Chapters 6 and 9.

By and large, Central Government (whether under Conservative or Labour control) has taken the view that policy-making in relation to the future of Luton Airport is the function of Luton Council.<sup>47</sup> The Civil Aviation Authority set up as a result of the Civil Aviation Act, 1971, will oversee the activities of the Council in this respect, although it is not clear to what extent it will intervene in policy-making.<sup>48</sup> In the period under consideration, however, Central Government affected Airport policy-making largely by attempting to put pressure on the Council as a result of the pressures being put on it, and by its ability to give or withhold consents in certain areas. The former activity will not be discussed in this Chapter,<sup>49</sup> except insofar as it affected Luton Council's attempts to influence the Government.

The main areas within which the Government has been able to influence Airport policy directly have been air traffic control procedures, loan sanctions and planning permissions. Such controls as those over licensing of the Airport, certain of its facilities (such as its firefighting facilities) and its Director have not been used, nor would licences be likely to be removed unless minimum standards are not adhered to. Further more general powers, such as control over inclusive tour tariffs, could have a significant effect upon Airport policy, but they could not be applied specifically to Luton Airport and would almost certainly be used as a result of much wider considerations. The three areas of control which have been used have all been intermittent. A permanent supervision of air traffic control procedures is maintained, although flight paths are only changed occasionally (normally as a result of a high level of complaint from an area about aircraft noise). Loan sanctions are only necessary in relation to fairly substantial items of development, and this control has tended to be used less often in recent years and is being restricted still further<sup>50</sup> (although loan sanction difficulties delayed the construction of the concrete runway for virtually six years during the 1950s).<sup>51</sup> Since the Government decided to call in all planning applications relating to Luton Airport, two public local inquiries have been held, but other developments have taken place during this time without an inquiry being ordered. Each of these items is individually the subject of fairly irregular consultations between the relevant Ministries and Departments of Luton Council, although cumulatively this amounts to a considerable degree of interaction between the two. Nearly all of this, nevertheless, is at the level of technical detail, and the increments involved tend to be very small. Luton Council puts its case for the granting of the particular permission or the changing of the particular direction, which is then considered on its merits by the Government. The Council

has had little difficulty with these increments in most cases, and only very rarely (as in the case of obtaining loan sanction for the concrete runway)<sup>52</sup> has it been necessary to argue the issue at Ministerial level. When this has happened, the normal method has been via a deputation of majority party leaders and senior officials to see the Minister, usually arranged by the M.P. for Luton. In addition, the Member will often raise the matter in the House. By and large, however, the Government's controls have related to non-contentious matters, and have been exercised as a result of agreements made at official level between staff of the Council and the Ministry concerned.

At the same time, in recent years the volume of complaint received by the Government about jet noise emanating from activities at Luton Airport has been substantial, and has been channelled back to the Council in the form of requests for more measures to control the noise nuisance to be taken. This has been one of the important sources of pressure which in total have contributed to the change of attitude on the part of the Council which has already been remarked upon. General pressure of this nature contrasts with the detailed requests by the Council for specific permissions from or administrative actions by the Government, and the two appear to have been relatively separate processes. The former provided the background to the latter, although its main impact upon the latter appears to have been a greater willingness on the part of the Department of Trade and Industry to change the flight paths in an attempt to ameliorate the noise nuisance in certain areas (with consequent changes in air traffic control procedures), and perhaps a greater readiness on the part of the Department of the Environment to order a public local inquiry on specific items requiring planning permission. But because of the essentially intermittent nature of these areas of control and of the incremental manner in which specific matters within them are handled, Central Government's sanctions over Airport policy-making have been relatively slight. Potentially the most effective form of control might be through the giving or withholding of planning permissions, but even here the Government's powers to control the number of movements which could be handled without any further developments taking place have never been tested and

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and 1360. Volume 780, 17th. March 1969, Columns 169 and 170. Volume 800, 27th. April 1970, Columns 1018 and 1019. Volume 804, 22nd. July 1970, Columns 525 and 526.

48. See Chapter 3.

49. See Chapter 16.

50. Interview with J. Pacey. Section CA3/2 (A) (Loan Sanctions), Department of Trade and Industry, 7th. July 1971.

51. See Chapter 7.

52. Ibid.

are probably fairly limited. As a result, Luton Council, whilst watching the activities of Central Government warily, has not found it necessary to keep up a barrage of pressure and publicity designed to secure the support of the Government for Airport expansion. It has been enough that the Government has not stepped in and attempted to dictate Airport policy, and has treated specific applications for permissions on their individual merits without regard to a specifically-formulated policy for the long-term development of the Airport.

### Conclusions.

As the owner and operator of Luton Airport, Luton Council is inevitably the recipient of a great deal of pressure from organisations with some stakes in the Airport policy-making process. Relatively few of these organisations have any sanctions which can be brought to bear directly upon this process, however, and so the Council finds it neither necessary nor expedient to attempt to influence them. Its efforts are concentrated upon the operators, with whom the Council is effectively in partnership as far as Airport development is concerned, and the Government, which has certain controls over Airport development which it can use, and which might take more if it is dissatisfied with the policies of the Council. Without the agreement of the operators, any proposals might eventually founder because Airport profits depend upon the growth of the operators' businesses. Without the consent of the Government (or, less positively, as long as dissent is not forthcoming), many of the proposals would never materialise. Provided that the operators' support has been obtained and that the Government does not intervene, policy-making on Airport matters lies within the ambit of the Council.

For a long time, the Council faced virtually no outside pressures as far as Airport policy-making was concerned, and a small group of airline operators and Council members and officers was able to agree policy with little interference. After the introduction of jets, this situation changed completely. The growing noise nuisance problem, especially that caused by night operations, generated a great deal of pressure, and this began to have an impact upon several newly-elected Conservative Councillors. To preserve group stability, a cutback on the airline s' summer night jet movements desired for 1970 was instituted, and from then on the Council was committed to maintaining some sort of balance between the operators' desires and the amount of noise that would be generated. The Council has attempted not to interfere with the growth prospects of the

operators, but to present its activities as involving real concessions to the pressures nevertheless. In the period of flux before it became clear that this was to be the policy line pursued by the Council, many of the Council's dealings with the operators polarised around one man -- the Chairman of the Airport Committee. As policy stabilised again, more and more of the detailed discussions and negotiations were left to the officers, but policy-making depended very largely upon the interaction between the Chairman of the Committee and his chief officers. This in turn was constrained by what the operators would accept, what the party group would agree to and what the Government would not interfere with.

As far as Luton Council is concerned, the important feature of all the pressure it has faced has been its cumulative nature, eroding the willingness of the party group to approve the Chairman of the Airport Committee's policies and forcing the party leadership to intervene in the interests of party unity. The ability of officers to give and to withhold advice, and to gain the ear of the Town Clerk at the apex of the official structure of the Council for subsequent transmission to the party leaderships, appears to be an important feature of this process, although the critical policy decisions have remained with the Chairman of the Airport Committee and (by virtue of its power to intervene) the leadership of the majority party.

The electorate of Luton appears to have played an indirect part in this process. It has never issued any firm directives via the ballot box to the parties as far as Airport policy is concerned, and there is no evidence which would indicate a particular desire to do so. The parties have attempted to neutralise any anti-noise reaction in wards seriously affected by putting up candidates in sympathy with the institution of controls over Airport activity, and this has consolidated and perhaps speeded up the movement towards greater controls. This movement came about as an indirect result of the massive electoral swings in Luton in the late 1960s, which brought in many young Conservative Councillors in sympathy with such controls and removed many older Labour members personally committed to long-standing policies. The younger Labour members who were subsequently returned had also taken note of the same pressures, and so gradually both parties moved towards a policy of controlled expansion. In this sense, the electorate can be said to have affected Airport policy, but there are no indications that this was anything but an unanticipated consequence of a swing promoted by disaffection with the national policies of the Labour Government.

Subsequent Chapters will attempt to assess the workings of the many organisations seeking to influence both Luton Council and the Government on Airport policy-making, and will attempt to determine which of these pressures have been significant.

Chapter 12. The Local Government Sub-System -- other Local Authorities.

Introduction.

The previous Chapter dealt in some detail with Luton County Borough Council, as owner and operator of Luton Airport. The present Chapter concerns itself in somewhat less detail with the other local authorities in the area which involved themselves in the Luton Airport policy-making process. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils, as first-tier authorities, bore much of the political pressure generated by opponents of Airport expansion, and the Chapter is concerned with their activities to a considerable extent. Buckinghamshire County Council did not participate in the process until late in 1971 (after the direct observation study had been completed), although overtures had been made by LADACAN before then, and so it will not be discussed here. The County District Councils are examined very briefly as a group, since their activities involve certain common features and very little opportunity for independent initiatives. In addition, Luton Airport Consultative Committee is included within this Chapter, since it is seen as an ad hoc body firmly rooted in local government and concerned very largely to infuse information into the local government sub-system.

Bedfordshire County Council.

In a notional if not in an actual sense, the involvement of Bedfordshire County Council in the Luton Airport policy-making process dates from the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, which gave the County Council powers as a local planning authority over physical developments within the Municipal Borough of Luton. The relationship between the County Council and the Municipal Borough Council was a complex and difficult one, but many of the arguments polarised around the fight for County Borough status on the part of Luton which lasted for nearly twenty years.<sup>1</sup> This added greatly to the tensions which would be expected to exist in any event in a situation where one authority has certain powers and controls over another, but it is not possible to understand the part of Bedfordshire County Council in the Airport policy-making process without an appreciation of the nature of this general and over-riding relationship between the two authorities.

Luton Council's claim to County Borough status was based upon its rapid

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1. See Chapters 7 and 8.

population growth and industrialisation, and upon the feeling that it was a viable unit in both functional and financial terms for the organisation and provision of the whole range of local authority services. Bedfordshire's case against County Borough status was largely on the basis that the County as a whole would be impoverished as a result of the loss of the Municipal Borough's rateable value, and also on a feeling that Luton was not a viable unit for the provision of some local government services. Between 1950 and 1955, the Municipal Borough Council promoted five Private Bills to obtain County Borough status, each of which was either defeated or withdrawn pending negotiations, before approval was finally gained in 1964.<sup>2</sup> This automatically put the two authorities in opposition to each other, and the normal interactions between a County Council and a Municipal Borough Council (over such issues as education and planning, for both of which the County Council retained an overview) presented several opportunities for each side to take up its position and be retrenched in its view. Political differences between the two authorities appear to have added still further to these difficulties. The previous Chapter examined in some detail the operations of Luton Council, and it is clear that Bedfordshire County Council was in many ways very different. For the purposes of this study it is not necessary for a detailed examination of the workings of the County Council to be attempted, although the following short sketch will enable the main differences when compared with Luton Council to emerge.

Bedfordshire County Council is not organised on a party basis. Whilst party labels exist, the parties do not meet as formal groups to make decisions and issue whips, nor is there any concept of a majority group and a minority group. Indeed, the party labels exist mainly for electoral purposes, and in these terms the Council has a permanent Conservative majority. The main fora for decision-making are the Committees and the meetings of the full Council. Committee membership is worked out on the basis of expressed preferences, and the Committees themselves select their own Chairmen normally on the basis of seniority and merit. The Chairman of the Committee and the chief officers concerned with his particular function appear to work in close accord, and the infrequency of Committee meetings gives officers a great deal of day-to-day power of which the Chairman retains an oversight. The Council does not have a leader as such, but the Chairman of the County Council performs co-ordinating functions between Committees as well as having a casting vote in Council meetings if a tie has resulted. The Chairman of the Council is chosen by free vote in open Council, again on the basis of seniority and merit, although apparently

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2. Dyer, Stygall and Dony, op. cit. Pages 216-218.

he normally "emerges" without a great deal of argument. The party tends to be replaced as the focus of individual loyalty by the Committee, and politics within the Council relate not to the party system but to relationships between Committees, with the Chairman of the County Council performing a major task in bringing Committee Chairmen together to resolve differences if this has not already been done at officer level. When differences cannot be resolved in this manner, or when Chairmen cannot persuade their Committees to accept the negotiated compromise, the matter is decided by a free debate and vote in the meeting of the full Council.<sup>3</sup>

At both member and officer levels, the large differences in methods of day-to-day operation led to real difficulties in communication between Bedfordshire and Luton Councils. Luton Council members, used to operating in a strongly party political atmosphere, found it difficult to relate to members of Bedfordshire Council who were not concerned with the party labels that their counterparts wore and who did not operate in such an atmosphere.<sup>4</sup> At officer level, Luton's officers were used to having to fit their work into a party political system and had developed a parallel system of departmental politics, whereas the departmental political system of the County Council's officers was not related to any party political system. In addition, of course, the standpoints of both sets on particular issues tended to be different. An issue related to Luton when seen from County Hall in Bedford in the context of the County as a whole looked different from that which appeared when viewing from the Town Hall in Luton.

It appears that the tensions between the two authorities because of all these factors lessened somewhat in the late 1950s, when the County Council realised that County Borough status was inevitable and was concerned more to create an amicable working relationship with the new authority than to resist the upgrading.<sup>5</sup> This coincided with the County Council's first actual involvement in the Airport policy-making process, over the preparation of the County Development Plan. The County had been prepared to accept without demur the

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3. This paragraph is based upon interviews with the four members and officers of Bedfordshire County Council listed in Appendix 1.

4. This appears to be part of the explanation of the difficulties that ex-County Alderman Aldridge had with Luton's Labour group when he joined Luton County Borough Council in 1964. See Chapter 8. As a member of the Labour party (he had been Parliamentary Labour candidate for Bedford in the 1955 general election), he had been Chairman of the County Planning Committee in a County Council nominally (that is, for electoral purposes only) under Conservative control, and Luton's Labour group accused him of having collaborated with the Conservatives. They were, of course, applying a set of political values appropriate to Luton Council which were not appropriate to Bedfordshire County Council.

laying of a concrete runway at the Airport, since this was a sine qua non of operating an airport in the 1960s. To have objected to this would have been to provoke another very lengthy fight with Luton Council at a time when the County Council was anxious to avoid this. The County Development Plan inevitably involved at least the fixing of a minimal policy for the use of the Airport land, but it avoided any difficulties with Luton Council by performing just this minimal function. The area of the Airport was defined, and Luton Council's long-standing projects (soon to be superceded) of extending the existing runway and creating another perpendicular concrete runway were incorporated, but apart from this nothing was said about longer-term trends, noise, generated population and employment, the control of development and any of the other potentially contentious matters related to Airport policy.<sup>6</sup> This was because the County Council did not want to exacerbate its already very difficult relationship with Luton Council by broaching new areas of conflict, but it set the pattern of non-involvement in Airport policy-making which was to typify the County Council's behaviour until just before the 1972 public inquiry.

The County Council's hands were tied for several years as a result of the process outlined above. It would have been completely inconsistent for the County Council to have repudiated Airport expansion in April, 1964 (when Luton obtained County Borough status) when its own Development Plan (approved in November, 1963) had included certain expansion measures. Nevertheless, the County Planning Committee was uncertain about the proposals which later formed the subject of the 1964 public inquiry, and was happy to request the Minister of Housing and Local Government to determine the application and to concentrate upon persuading Luton Council to employ a noise consultant (Dr. Richards), the costs of whom were to be shared between the two authorities.<sup>7</sup> The County Council remained neutral at the 1964 public inquiry (although it gave Luton Rural District Council some help in preparing its case in opposition), as it did at the public inquiry held in March 1970. By January, 1972, sufficient time had elapsed and circumstances had changed sufficiently for it to begin to climb down from the fence it had erected for itself, although it was still clearly embarrassed by the fact that the approved Development Plan exhibited at the 1972 inquiry was still the same one which had tied its hands previously.

Other factors were also at work. By and large, the County area suffered relatively little from aircraft noise, although parts of Luton Rural District were badly affected. This was the part of the County most remote from Bedford, and a part which was in some ways different from the remainder of the County, having seen very heavy urbanisation largely as a result of the establishment and growth of the motor industry in the area.<sup>8</sup> Whether the fact that

5. Dyer, Stygall and Dony, op. cit. Pages 217 and 218.

6. See Chapter 8. Pages 121-124.

the area affected by aircraft noise was both remote and different from Bedford and the rest of the County affected the Council's attitude is difficult to say. What is clearly true is that officers and members of Luton Rural District Council and to a lesser extent County Councillors representing the affected areas feel that this argument goes some way towards explaining the County Council's inactivity,<sup>9</sup> and to this extent at least the argument has been a factor in the process.

A major factor militating against the involvement of the County Council in the process once aircraft noise nuisance had started to become significant and widespread was the very difficult position of the Chairman of the County Council, Alderman L.S. Bowles. He had been a former leader of the Conservative group on Luton Council and a confirmed "expansionist", and had also been in the uneasy position of being a member of Bedfordshire County Council since 1958. He had risen to the position of Deputy Chairman of the County Council by 1968, and decided then that it was impossible for him to remain a member of both Councils. His decision to retire from Luton Council was followed swiftly by his election as Chairman of the County Council in 1969.<sup>10</sup> The important position of the Chairman of the County Council as a broker between Committee Chairmen when disagreements arise has already been outlined, and for him to be able to perform this essential and sometimes delicate task requires a degree of deference to him. For the County Council to have become explicitly anti-expansionist at a time when he had only very recently been a leading expansionist member of Luton Council might have embarrassed him very considerably and perhaps compromised him in the position to which he had recently been elected. There was not enough anti-expansionist feeling to risk placing in some jeopardy the Chairman's position, and instead the issue was avoided.

One final reason for the County Council's position appears to be relevant. Bedfordshire was faced with the prospect of a possible third London Airport at Thurleigh within the County, as well as other short-listed possibilities at Cublington and at Nuthampstead close to the County. The existence and continued growth of Luton Airport was useful as a supporting argument against these possibilities. **The argument should not be taken too far, since the case against these third London Airport possibilities tended to apply with**

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7. Ibid. Interview with ex-County Alderman Aldridge, 7th. April 1971.

8. See Chapter 5.

9. Interviews with P. Green (Clerk to Luton Rural District Council), 2nd. April 1971, Dr. A. Brewer (Chairman, Estates Committee, Luton Rural District Council), 25th. June 1971, and L.S. Baxter (County Councillor for the Caddington area), 27th July 1971.

equal force to an expanded Luton Airport, but it was useful as a subsidiary point and was used by the County Council as such.<sup>11</sup> During the life of the Roskill Commission, at any rate, the County Council was more concerned to prevent the arrival of a third London Airport on its doorstep than to worry about the future of Luton Airport, and this was an added factor in the County Council's deliberate non-involvement in the Airport policy-making process.

The County Council's stance was modified late in 1971, just before the public inquiry of January, 1972. Ostensibly, the reason for this appears to have been the proposal to divert more aircraft to the north of Luton and over the County, which would have increased the noise nuisance in that area quite considerably. This proposal (the so-called "north-west passage") presented the County Council with an opportunity to modify its position, although more complex factors were also at work. The Council had been under some pressure from both Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAE as well as from Luton Rural District Council to oppose Airport expansion, and the cumulative impact of this pressure upon individual members was probably significant (especially in a Council which did not use the party mechanism to retain commitment to proposals). The position of the Chairman of the Council was more secure after nearly three years' tenure, and he could with justice argue that his commitment to particular sets of proposals advanced by Luton Council had diminished as his period as a leading member of that Council receded into the past. Circumstances had changed, and the County Council was less open to the charge of inconsistency in opposing proposals in 1972 when it had not resisted very different proposals in 1964. In addition, of course, the existence and growth of Luton Airport was no longer needed as an argument against a possible third London Airport in or near the County, since the Government had already decided in favour of Foulness. All these reasons, in addition to the extra noise which would be generated if the proposed flight paths were adopted, were probably factors in the Council's decision to join the ranks of the objectors.

Even then, its opposition was cautious. It joined forces to present a case with Hertfordshire County Council at the public inquiry of January, 1972, although no evidence was given by any of Bedfordshire's officers and the evidence

10. Interview with Alderman Bowles, 8th. July 1971.

11. Evidence of J. Hubbard (Chief Planner, Bedfordshire County Council) to Stage V of the Commission on the Third London Airport. Subject F ("Environment and Planning"). Day 14. 20th. July 1970. Verbatim Transcript. Pages 65 and 66.

of Hertfordshire's officers said very little about the problems of Bedfordshire. The reason for this caution appears, again, to be the County Council's relationship with Luton County Borough Council. The two authorities had to work together until at least 1974, when they would be amalgamated to form a new County Council. After that, it was quite possible that control of the Airport would revert to the new County Council. Once again, therefore, the circumstances which the County Council faced dictated only a mild departure from its traditional and relatively safe policy of neutrality, a policy still very largely predicated by the difficulties of its relationship with Luton Council.

#### Hertfordshire County Council.

The involvement of Hertfordshire County Council in the Airport policy-making process has been relatively recent and intensive. In this, it contrasts strongly with Bedfordshire, which has been involved in the process by virtue of its relationship with Luton Council for many years but which has deliberately minimised its participation. Hertfordshire's position was in no way compromised by a long-standing and overriding relationship with Luton Council; although they are contiguous authorities, contact between them on other than Airport matters has been infrequent.<sup>12</sup> The main reason for Hertfordshire Council's involvement has been that its area has borne the brunt of the noise nuisance without obtaining any advantages from the existence of the Airport by way of compensation, and so there has been nothing but opposition to Airport expansion on the part of the County Council. It is this factor which has played the critical part in involving Hertfordshire County Council in the process, and the County Council's activities in this sphere date from the spring of 1968, shortly after the introduction of jets at Luton Airport.<sup>13</sup>

As was the case with Bedfordshire County Council, it is not necessary for the purposes of this study to attempt a detailed examination of the operations of the County Council, but the following brief sketch should make clear the great differences between the County Council and Luton Council. These differences, as was suggested as being the case with Bedfordshire, go some way towards explaining the difficulties that members and officers of each side, starting from different premises and working in different political environments at different levels, had in communicating with each other.

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12. Interview with County Alderman Major A.J. Hughes (Chairman of the County Planning Committee, Hertfordshire County Council), 25th. May 1971.

Hertfordshire County Council has a very loosely organised party political system. The Labour party is somewhat more tightly organised than the Conservative party, which has a majority which the Labour party has never been able to erode. In fact, both parties attempt to keep party politics out of the workings of the Council, although they meet as groups before Council meetings, and the use of the party whip is very rare. Chairmanships of Committees do not always go to the Conservative party, members of the Labour party also being rewarded in this manner for seniority and merit. The main focus of the Council's activities is its Committees, and it is clear that the relationship between Committee Chairmen and chief officers is critical. Committees meet relatively infrequently, and officers are given a great deal of power on a day-to-day basis, referring to the Chairman in the event of difficulties and to the Committee for the approval of their actions and for policy guidelines. Where disagreements have not been resolved at officer level and become disagreements between Committees, the party leaderships attempt to sort them out between themselves. This is aided by the existence of the Chairmen's Committee, which is a Committee of the Chairmen of all the other Committees (who tend to be the leaders of both parties) and which is responsible for deciding some major policy items. If this still does not result in a decision, the matter may well go to the Council for an open debate or, much less frequently, party whips will be used. The position of Chairman of the County Council usually goes to the leader of the Conservative party, and it is in this party sense that the position is an important one. Aside from his party duties, the Chairman of the Council's task tends to be ceremonial. The role of broker between Committees when disagreements arise is performed by the party leaderships, and the Chairman of the Council's place in this is dependent upon his status as a party leader.<sup>14</sup>

Hertfordshire County Council is much closer to Bedfordshire County Council than to Luton County Borough Council in terms of organisation. The two County Councils are animals of the same species, although differences exist between them (such as, for example the place of party politics in their operations), whereas Luton County Borough Council is an animal of a different species. This may simply reflect the differences of duties and level of functioning between County Councils and County Borough Councils, but it has added to the difficulties

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13. Ibid.

14. This paragraph is based upon the interviews with the seven members and officers of Hertfordshire County Council listed in Appendix 1.

of communication between the County Councils and the County Borough. Unfortunately, very little work appears to have been done on the operational characteristics of County Councils, and no typology appears to exist which could be used to relate Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire to similar authorities.<sup>15</sup> The only rigorous study which appears to have been undertaken is Lee's study of Cheshire County Council,<sup>16</sup> and it is clear that significant differences exist between Cheshire (with a party system developed to the point of making regular use of whips,<sup>17</sup> and the governing party leaders and chief officers described as "...a kind of ministerialist party" and the other members as a "...permanent 'country party' or group of anti-ministerialists"<sup>18</sup>) and the two County Councils which are the focus of this study.

Lee's concept of "social leaders" as persons of social standing who once dominated County government by virtue of that standing, and "public persons" as the chief officers and leading members who now dominate County government and obtain social standing by virtue of this domination,<sup>19</sup> is probably more appropriate to Hertfordshire than to Bedfordshire, if only because the existence of a once-controlling group of social leaders in the former was remarked upon several times in interviews.<sup>20</sup> In both cases, County Council work now requires a considerable amount of time during the day for Committee and Council meetings, and this tends to restrict membership of the Council to people with such time (such as self-employed businessmen, farmers, housewives and retired people). This marks another difference with Luton Council, where the Council and its Committees meet in the evening (which, presumably, does not place such a restriction upon membership), and it is possible that communication difficulties between the County Borough Council and the two County Councils have been exacerbated by the different kinds of "public persons" involved.<sup>21</sup> Hard evidence cannot be presented

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16. J.F. Lee. "Social Leaders and Public Persons". Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1963. For a general introduction see, J. Stanyer. "County Government in England and Wales." Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. 1967.

17. Ibid, pages 172-176. 15. Unlike Bulpitt's typology of urban authorities, which was used in the previous Chapter to argue that

18. Ibid, page 214. Luton County Borough is similar in these senses to many other County Borough Councils.

19. Ibid, pages 5-7.

20. Both Hertfordshire County Aldermen Hughes (interview, 25th. May 1971) and Ireton (interview, 29th. March 1971) said that social leadership had once been important in the government of the County, but that those days have long since disappeared. Both of them pointed to Lady Bowes-Lyon, an archetypal social leader (she is the Queen's aunt) but a backbench member of the Council, as an example of the fact that social leadership no longer automatically brings with it a leading position on the Council. Chapter 5 has already pointed to the fact that employment in domestic offices or services was 50% higher pro rata in Hertfordshire than in Bedfordshire in 1901, and this might be additional evidence of the existence of a relatively larger group of social leaders (persons who would presumably provide such employment) in Hertfordshire at that time.

on this, however; it is merely an impression emerging from several interviews.<sup>22</sup>

Hertfordshire County Council appears to have become involved in the Airport policy-making process as a result of the complaints of several County Councillors about aircraft noise in the spring of 1968. These complaints, in turn, appear to have been generated largely by the activities of individual LADACAN members, who prompted their County Councillors to raise their concern at Council meetings. The continuous prompting of individual Councillors by LADACAN members has been a feature of Hertfordshire's involvement since that date, and has made sure that the Council's efforts to mitigate the disturbance have not slackened. As Diagram 5, Chapter 6, illustrated, a large part of the County has been affected by aircraft noise since 1968, and so the Council has found it easy to retain momentum on the issue. At the same time, the Council has been careful to stress its "responsible" nature as a public authority, and it has refused to unite in any formal way in opposition to Airport expansion with organisations not based upon the local authority sub-system (such as LADACAN). Indeed, it has not felt it proper as a planning authority to refuse permission for navigational and safety aids for Luton Airport within its area, despite being requested to do so by LADACAN as one very effective means of curtailing Airport expansion.<sup>23</sup> Another aspect of the County Council's "responsible" approach has been its recognition that Luton Airport does take some of the strain off the existing London Airports and, as a result, it has sought to control the expansion of the Airport and to seek the preparation of a national policy towards airport expansion within which Luton's proper contribution could be assessed rather than to campaign for the Airport's closure. This took a specific form at the public inquiry of January, 1972, when one of the County Council's witnesses stated that a ceiling of approximately 30,000 commercial

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21. R.A.W. Rhodes has demonstrated that fundamental differences exist between the decision-making processes of Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City (County Borough) Council, but, unfortunately, he makes no attempt to assess whether these differences affected the working relationships between the two authorities either at officer or at member level. Oxford City Council is in many ways similar to Luton County Borough Council, although party politics does not play such an extensive and continuous part in the operations of the former. Oxfordshire County Council appears to be different from both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils, in that it has retained its traditional pattern of deference to "County Society". R.A.W. Rhodes. "A Comparative Study of the Decision-Making Processes within Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils, 1963-1968". Unpublished D. Phil. dissertation. University of Oxford. 1971. Pages 204-235, 248.

22. The sample survey undertaken for the Committee on the Management of Local Government provides some evidence in support of this possibility, provided it is assumed that Luton Council is typical of County Borough Councils in general and that Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire are typical of County Councils. 68% of

air transport movements per annum at Luton until the opening of Foulness would be acceptable to the County Council.<sup>24</sup> This represented a much greater degree of "coming to terms with reality" than LADAGAN was prepared to accept, and is illustrative of the different orientations to the issue of the two.

The County Council's initial attempts to influence Airport policy-making were two-pronged, both by approaching Luton Council and requesting consultation and representation facilities and by approaching Central Government with a request that controls be extended. The first of these two methods has diminished in importance because it was not felt to be productive, and the only regular point of contact between the two authorities now is via the Luton Airport Consultative Committee (see below). More and more, Hertfordshire County Council has concentrated upon attempting to influence Central Government. The main method is via the County's M.P.s, who meet as a cross-party group and make representations on behalf of the Council. Hertfordshire has had M.P.s in both the Labour and the Conservative Governments (Mrs. Shirley Williams and Lord Balniel, respectively), and this has given the senior members of the Council direct access to Ministers which they have not hesitated to use. This has been supplemented by the attempt to build close working relations at the technical level between the Council's officers (particularly in the County Clerk's and Planning Departments) and civil servants in the principal Ministries concerned (particularly the Departments of Trade and Industry and Environment). Indeed, an "airports secretariat" has been created within the County Planning Department to deal with Luton and Stansted Airports and general testing and military aviation, and the growth of expertise at officer level which this has engendered has been put to good effect when giving evidence to bodies such as the Roskill Commission and the Edwards Committee as well as to the public inquiries on Luton Airport of March, 1970 and January, 1972.<sup>25</sup> The decisions to hold the two Airport inquiries were themselves contributed to by the County Council's activities at the more explicitly political level. The work done and evidence collected at officer level has been restricted very largely to an assessment of the impact of aircraft noise upon communities within the County. Chapter 6 has already noted that Hertfordshire County Council has not used arguments about the extra amount of population to be accommodated in the general area of the Airport as a result of its expansion. Chapter 5 has already hinted at the main reason

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County Borough Councillors in the sample worked over 30 hours per week, whereas only 46% of County Councillors worked for such a period. 16% of County Borough Councillors were retired, but the figure for County Councillors was more than double this (34%). 35% of County Borough Councillors were employers, managers, professional workers and farmers, whereas 54% of County Councillors were in the same categories, although the difference is almost wholly accounted for by the representation of farmers on County Councils. Committee on the Management of Local Government. "Management

for this, by summarising County Planning policy as being concerned to concentrate population growth at a small number of locations (principally its four new towns) and to extend green belt cover to the rest of the County. It is not that Hertfordshire County Council does not recognise that an expanded Airport will generate extra accommodation requirements, but it feels that there would be very little likelihood of these people being housed in any large numbers within the County. The only possibilities in these terms would be the new towns, which are poorly located in relation to access to the Airport and which are more concerned to attract people to live and work in the town than to commute from it. Consequently, the County Council regards any urbanisation generated by the expansion of Luton Airport as being a problem for Luton Council Borough and Bedfordshire County Councils, the other two planning authorities in the area, and as being something towards the solution of which it has no intention of contributing.

More recently, the County Council has also attempted to persuade Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils to join the opposition to Airport expansion, and this appears to have been done mainly through the normal process of officers of contiguous Counties meeting each other and discussing common problems. Similar pressures at member level were being exerted by LADACAN, and the combined effect of the pressures of both appears to have had some impact since both County Councils appeared at the 1972 inquiry in opposition to the proposals then under examination. It is very difficult to disentangle the relative importance of Hertfordshire and LADACAN in this respect, and it is clear that factors internal to the two County Councils played a considerable part in their decisions to oppose (notably in the case of Bedfordshire, as has already been discussed), but it is likely that Hertfordshire's officers played a significant part in persuading Bedfordshire to take part in the inquiry. Officers from the two Councils met frequently to discuss common problems, since they shared a long boundary, and Luton Airport was a common topic of conversation. Meetings with Buckinghamshire County Council's officers were much less frequent, however, since

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of Local Government. Volume 2. The Local Government Councillor". H.M.S.O. London. 1967. Pages 19-23.

23. Interview with County Alderman Major Hughes, op. cit.

24. A. D. Raby, in cross-examination.

25. Members of LADACAN, Luton Council and Bedfordshire County Council in interviews all complimented Hertfordshire County Council on the quality of its cases to the Roskill Commission, the Edwards Committee and the Luton Airport inquiry of 1970.

the two share only a short common boundary, and so less opportunities were presented for broaching the issue.<sup>26</sup>

It is clear that the cumulative effects of all the pressure exerted by Hertfordshire County Council have been a major feature of the increasing involvement of Central Government in the Luton Airport policy-making process, both in terms of taking more powers and of requesting Luton Council to do more to mitigate the noise problem. As a large and powerful authority in its own right,<sup>27</sup> Hertfordshire County Council is likely to be listened to attentively by Central Government. As the authority responsible for an area represented in Parliament by leading M.P.s of both parties, it has direct access to the Government whichever party is in power, and it organises its M.P.s to good effect. As a result, by using these channels consistently for over three years and by backing up this pressure with a great deal of technical information and contact at officer-civil service level, it cannot have failed to have made a substantial impression upon Central Government. It has been content to operate in this manner, since it became clear quite quickly that this was much more likely to be effective than more direct attempts to influence Luton Council. LADACAN's pressure upon Central Government was supporting but separate and distinct, and the combined effect of the two has been largely responsible for the growing involvement in the process of Central Government.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, the activities of Hertfordshire and of LADACAN were essentially complementary, with LADACAN providing the spur to Hertfordshire's activities by its ability to keep prodding individual County Councillors, concentrating on "public opinion" and developing a wide range of political contacts within many of the organisations involved in the policy-making process, and Hertfordshire stressing its "responsible" nature, concentrating on formal and semi-formal channels of communication with Central Government and improving information at the technical level. This complementarity was not organised, but it appeared to work, and that was sufficient justification for both organisations being prepared to continue along the same lines. Certainly, Hertfordshire County Council was not prepared to compromise its appearance of "responsibility" by being in league with LADACAN or by being thought to be so, and as a result contact between the two tended to be limited to formal exchanges of information by letter and common attendance at certain functions (such as meetings of the

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26. Interview with A.D. Raby (Assistant County Planning Officer, Hertfordshire County Council, and officer in charge of the "airports secretariat"), 18th. November 1970.

27. See Chapter 5.

28. See Chapters 13 and 16.

Consultative Committee and public inquiries). Sufficient LADACAN members were also members of Hertfordshire County Council, however, for the two to be kept informed of each other's activities without more extended formal contact being necessary. LADACAN, for its part, was well suited to covering areas which the County Council chose not to cover, and the County Council's choice in this respect was at least in part because LADACAN was already active in such areas.<sup>29</sup> In combination, their activities appeared to be productive, and so both were content to continue to operate in this manner.

### County District Councils.

Very little needs to be said about the involvement of the County District Councils. Their main task was in relation to their parent County Councils, either to make sure that they remained active (as in the case of Hertfordshire County Council) or to attempt to persuade them to become active (as in the case of Bedfordshire County Council). In both cases, they provided an important point of access for LADACAN to the County Councils, since many County District Councillors were prominent LADACAN members. Another side-effect of this was that certain of the Councils made contributions to LADACAN's public inquiry fund, especially in January, 1972, when five District Councils voted sums of money in this manner and Stevenage Urban District Council went as far as to associate itself publicly with LADACAN's case. For the reasons already advanced, Bedfordshire County Council did not accede to the wishes of Luton Rural District Council, although it appears likely that the County Council helped the District Council to prepare its case for the 1964 public inquiry. The County Council was officially neutral at the inquiry, but it appears to have used the District Council as a vehicle for expressing its doubts about Airport expansion. There was no reciprocity, however; despite the continuous requests of the District Council, the County Council did not formally oppose Airport expansion until the 1972 public inquiry. The Hertfordshire District Councils entered the process in 1968 following the introduction of jets, and only needed to watch the activities of the County Council to make sure that its efforts did not flag. So much of the County was affected by aircraft noise that there was no question of the County Council not involving itself in the process in some manner.

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29. See Chapter 13.

To summarise, then, the individual District Councils have not played a significant part in the Airport policy-making process, but the combined effect of their activities has been to contribute to the pressures upon the County Councils.<sup>30</sup> They have made individual representations to Luton Council but have tended to give this method up as being unproductive. In Bedfordshire, the pressures of Luton Rural District Council (the only local authority area significantly affected by aircraft noise) have had little effect; in Hertfordshire, the pressures of the County District Councils have been largely unnecessary.

#### Luton Airport Consultative Committee.

The importance of the Consultative Committee in the process under examination lies largely in the fact that it provided one of the few formal mechanisms of interaction between many of the participants. Consultative committees existed at airports operated by the British Airports Authority,<sup>31</sup> but the move to extend them to local authority airports<sup>32</sup> came very largely as a result of experiences in connection with Luton Airport, and the amendment to the Act which permitted this stood in the name of Will Howie, M.P. for Luton.<sup>33</sup> This permitted the Minister responsible to designate airports at which consultation facilities had to be provided, and Luton was in the first such batch in June, 1969. This has since become a common arrangement at airports, and by July, 1970 thirty-three had been designated for the purposes of the Act.<sup>34</sup>

In the certainty that Luton Airport would be designated, Luton Council decided to institute an interim Consultative Committee, which met for the first time on 14th. January 1969 and five times in all, before the full Committee met for the first time on 22nd. August 1969. This appears to have been a genuine attempt by the Council to create a forum for the channelling of complaints and information, although it was in addition a piece of good public relations since it was designed to give the impression that the Council was doing more than it was required to do. The interim Committee was very firmly grounded in local government, with all thirteen members at its first meeting being from Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Bedfordshire County Council

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30. This is similar to the finding of R.A.W. Rhodes, that the County District Councils of Oxfordshire did not have a great impact upon the County Council's decision-making activities, and that each could be regarded as being just one amongst the many pressure groups with which the County Council was in contact. R.A.W. Rhodes, op. cit. Page 231. The general lack of influence of the District Councils upon the County Councils in the Luton Airport situation might also be attributable at least in part to the tensions which exist from time to time between the two tiers. J. Stanyer, op. cit. Page 54.

31. Under section 2 of the Airports Authority Act, 1965.

32. Under section 8 of the Civil Aviation Act, 1968.

33. Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 768, columns 1839-1846. 19th. July 1966.

and the County District Councils.<sup>35</sup> Prior to designation, LADACAN and the airline operators were each allowed one member, bringing the strength of the Committee to fifteen, and after designation five more members were added from outside local government to bring its strength to twenty. Further extensions of membership have since been resisted both by Luton Council (which under the Act makes the final decisions about membership) and by the County Councils, largely on the grounds that the Committee is both large enough and representative enough.<sup>36</sup> This has meant that membership is still dominated by the local authorities, with thirteen out of twenty members (65%; see Table 26 below), and local authority members normally form a slightly higher proportion of the actual attendance (see Table 27 below). This may also be a factor in the unwillingness of the local authorities to countenance membership increases, which in equity would have to redress the balance to some extent at least in favour of non-local authority members.

Table 26. Membership of Luton Airport Consultative Committee after Designation.

Luton County Borough Council.	3.
Hertfordshire County Council.	3.
Bedfordshire County Council.	3.
Hertfordshire County District Councils.	2.
Bedfordshire County District Councils.	2.
Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (LADACAN).	1.
Airline Operators.	1.
Stevenage Development Corporation.	1.
Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce.	1.
Luton and District Chamber of Trade.	1.
Luton and District Trades Council.	1.
Association of British Travel Agents.	1.
Total	20

Source: minutes of Luton Airport Consultative Committee.

34. Board of Trade. "Action Against Aircraft Noise." H.M.S.O. London. 1969 (updated 1970).

35. Minutes of the Luton Airport Consultative Committee meeting of 14th. January 1969.

36. Interviews with Hertfordshire County Alderman Hughes (Chairman of the Luton Airport Consultative Committee), 25th. May 1971, and P. Green (Secretary to the Committee and Clerk to Luton Rural District Council), 2nd. April 1971.

By and large, the criterion for membership is a clear stake in the issue, with the three Chambers being involved as representatives of substantial segments of organised opinion. There are, of course, other ways of looking at the membership of the Committee. Formally, LADACAN had only one member, but four of the Committee's members were also prominent LADACAN members. Formally, PLANE (the Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's Natural Expansion) had no members despite repeated requests, but up to five of the Committee's members have also been members of PLANE. A more useful way to look at membership is to compare actual attendance patterns with the pro-or anti-expansionist feelings of members.

Table 27. Average Attendance of Members at Luton Airport Consultative Committee  
by Organisation.

LADACAN.	100%.
Airline Operators.	94%.
Hertfordshire County District Councils.	92%.
Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce.	92%.
Hertfordshire County Council.	91%.
Luton County Borough Council.	80%.
Bedfordshire County District Councils.	80%.
<u>Average attendance.</u>	<u>73%.</u>
Stevenage Development Corporation.	62%.
Bedfordshire County Council.	49%.
Luton and District Trades Council.	38%.
Association of British Travel Agents.	31%.
Luton and District Chamber of Trade.	15%.

Source: calculated from the minutes of Luton Airport Consultative Committee. The figures refer to the 18 meetings held between 14th. January 1969 and 6th. July 1971, and represent the proportion of actual to possible attendance recorded for the meetings at which the particular organisation was a member of the Committee.

The average attendance at meetings has been 73% (15 out of 20), which on the basis of the evidence of Table 27 would "normally" be made up of Hertfordshire County Council (3), Hertfordshire County District Councils (2), Luton County Borough Council (2), Bedfordshire County District Councils (2), LADACAN (1), airline operators (1), Chamber of Commerce (1), Stevenage Development Corporation (1), Bedfordshire County Council (1) and one other. In other words, local authority members (and with one exception they are all members of their

of their Councils rather than officers, although the latter attend to advise their members) "normally" constitute at least two-thirds of the actual attendance and quite possibly more, and only LADACAN, the airline operators, the Chamber of Commerce (which has a full-time secretariat) and Stevenage Development Corporation, outside the local authority sector would be likely to be represented at a "normal" meeting. Table 27 provides further evidence of the relative lack of concern with the issue on the part of Bedfordshire County Council, with an average attendance little more than half that of Hertfordshire County Council and considerably less than its own District Councils. In fact, Bedfordshire County Council is the only member from the local authority sector with a below-average level of attendance. The low level of attendance of the Chambers other than the Chamber of Commerce reflects their lack of full-time staff and difficulties in attending daytime meetings as well as a lack of concern with the issue. The low level of attendance of the Association of British Travel Agents is somewhat misleading, since A.B.T.A.'s representative has often been the reserve member for the Chamber of Commerce, and he has been recorded as representing the Chamber when its normal member has been absent.

Table 28. Positions of Luton Airport Consultative Committee Members over the Expansion of Luton Airport.

Anti	Neutral	Pro
Hertfordshire County Council 3.	Bedfordshire County Council 3.	Luton County Borough Council 3.
Hertfordshire District Councils 2.	Chamber of Trade 1.	Bedfordshire District Councils 1.
Bedfordshire District Councils 1.		Chamber of Commerce 1.
LADACAN 1.		Trades Council 1.
Stevenage Development Corporation 1.		Airline operators 1. Travel Agents (A.B.T.A.) 1.
8	4	8

Source: compiled from interviews with representatives of each organisation, and checked with P. Green (Secretary to the Committee) in an interview, 2nd April 1971.

Table 28 indicates that the Committee is finely balanced, and so it would be given a full attendance. In fact, it can be seen from Table 27 that the average attendance of the "anti" members is higher than that of the "pro" members, the

weighted average attendances being 87% and 72% respectively. In addition, the "neutral" members tend to look at each issue on its merits, and normally the majority of them present would tend to be "anti".<sup>37</sup> Too much should not be made of this last point, however, since the weighted average attendance of these members is only 41%. It can be seen from the above analysis that the Committee would normally tend to record "anti" opinions, although not by large margins, and this expectation corresponds with the voting record, where a pro-Airport resolution has only been recorded once.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Table 28 contains further evidence of the difficulties of the Bedfordshire members, with the County Council's representatives tending to remain neutral and the District Councils' representatives split between "pro" and "anti" views.

In the spring of 1971, a small sample survey was undertaken of consultative committee arrangements at various local authority airports.<sup>39</sup> In comparison with this sample, Luton Airport Consultative Committee was notable principally for the much greater frequency of its meetings, which might reflect the relatively greater amount of controversy surrounding policy-making in respect of Luton Airport. In most other structural dimensions, it resembled many of the other Committees; its size and membership structure were not exceptional, its terms of reference were similar and the tendency towards an anti-expansionist majority was common.

The Committee's terms of reference are;

1. To consider any question in connection with Luton Airport which affects the communities represented.
2. To advise the Corporation (that is, Luton Council) on any matters relating to the existing operations and proposed developments which are referred to the Consultative body by the Corporation, and which are likely to affect the residents in the area surrounding the Airport.
3. To stimulate the interest of the local population and business community in the facilities provided at the Airport." 40

It is clear from these terms of reference that the Committee is extremely limited in its powers. It can consider any question that it wishes, but it has no power to forward the results of these considerations to any organisation other than Luton Council (and then, in theory, only when requested to do so).

37. Interview with P. Green, 2nd. April 1971.

38. Ibid. Recorded votes are rarely taken, however, the minutes either recording the size of the majority or merely and more commonly that a resolution was accepted or rejected.

39. See Appendix II for details.

40. Source: Luton Airport Consultative Committee Minute Book, page 1.

It has no executive powers of any sort, and it cannot compel Luton Council to furnish any information that the Council, for one reason or another, does not wish to provide. It is clear that the individual members of the Committee pass on to their parent organisations and make use of in their own propaganda any resolutions that the Committee has passed, but as a body it is unable to do this until and unless requested to do so by Luton Council. Year by year it has recorded its opposition to the increase in traffic, and particularly to the increase in summer night jet movements, and year by year Luton Council's Airport Committee has noted this opposition and implemented the planned increase. Occasionally (and less frequently in later years), the Council has already received and approved the proposals of the Airport Committee before they have been sent to the Consultative Committee for its observations, and this has added to the feeling of impotence on the part of the Airport's opponents. Hertfordshire County Alderman Ireton summarised the views of many opponents when he described the Consultative Committee as "...one of the least effective committees I have ever sat on."<sup>41</sup>

Because of the impotence of the Committee, its Chairman has pursued a strategy of avoiding contentious votes unless they are inevitable and of concentrating upon areas in which concrete if small achievements are possible.<sup>42</sup> The Committee has managed to agree on such matters as the location of noise monitoring points and measures to improve safety, and Luton Council has accepted its advice in these respects. In addition, the Committee agreed to join with the Council to request the amendment of the tariff regulations which promote night inclusive tour flights. The Chairman has resisted requests by individual members that the Consultative Committee should admit the local press and should give evidence at the March, 1970 and January, 1972 public local inquiries, on the grounds that Luton Council would be driven to consulting the Committee less and less and would clearly dissociate itself from formal anti-Airport evidence even if this could be considered to be within the Committee's terms of reference. He took the view that the Committee could not be regarded as having any corporate identity, but was merely a meeting-place for the exchange of information, comments and ideas.<sup>43</sup> Individual members of the Committee have not always approved of the Chairman's action and views in these respects, but the general feeling of Committee members interviewed<sup>44</sup> was that the Chairman's actions have been instrumental in keeping the Committee in existence and meeting fairly

41. Interview, 29th. March 1971. He first started in local government in 1937 as a member of Stevenage Urban District Council (continuously until 1970) and has been a member of both Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Development Corporation since 1946. His experience of committee work in the public-sector is thus extensive.

42. Interview with Hertfordshire County Council Alderman Major Hughes, op. cit.

frequently. Without the approach he has adopted, meetings probably would have degenerated into perpetual wrangles involving people between whom there is very little common ground, and attendances in all probability would have dwindled away. At least the Committee has continued in existence, despite the feelings of many of its members that it is largely a pointless exercise.<sup>45</sup>

The main reason for participation in the Committee has been that it has enabled organisations to obtain information about Luton Council's Airport policies. Prior to the existence of the Committee, the main source of such information tended to be the disclosures of the Evening Post,<sup>46</sup> a situation as unsatisfactory for Luton Council as it was for the other organisations affected. If for no other reason, membership of the Consultative Committee was valued because it gave first-hand access to information Luton Council was prepared to release. Its actual impact upon the process under examination has been as a channel of communication between Luton Council and many of the other organisations involved in the process, with information flowing outwards from the Council and reactions flowing back towards it. Its existence may have contributed to the ability of organisations such as Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAN to bring pressure to bear upon Luton Council, but since they chose to make relatively little use of it in this manner its contribution can only be considered to have been marginal. It may be that the fact that it provided a forum for face-to-face contact between many of the organisations involved contributed to a lowering of tension between proponents, although very few of its members who were interviewed believed this to be significant. In short, the Committee was prevented from playing any significant part in the process other than in smoothing the flow of information by its nature and structure. With a normal preponderance of anti-Airport views, and no powers to do anything other than to make recommendations to Luton Council (which was not likely to listen to opposition views), it was hamstrung. Similar consultative arrangements might have had more impact in a much less antagonistic situation, but they were unlikely to work in that pertaining to Luton Airport.

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43. Ibid.

44. The eighteen such are listed in Appendix 1.

45. Although not to the same extent, members of the Consultative Committees for Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Prestwick Airports appeared somewhat dissatisfied about consultative arrangements when giving evidence to the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries. Select Committee on Nationalised Industries. Final Report. Session 1970-71. British Airports Authority. H.M.S.O. London, 1971. Pages 270-304, 332-340.

46. See Chapters 9 and 14.

Conclusions.

The local authorities (other than Luton County Borough Council) in the area affected by noise emanating from the activities at Luton Airport have been in the difficult position of having had no option other than to react to Airport expansion as and when individual proposals have reached them, a process which has increased the noise burden over their areas whilst bringing them no compensating benefits and which they have had virtually no powers to control. Not surprisingly, they have tended to be anti-expansionist, although the position of Bedfordshire County Council has been greatly complicated by a long-standing and very difficult relationship with Luton Council and by several other factors. The County Council deemed it expedient to remain studiously neutral so far as the future of Luton Airport was concerned, and only moved from this position when many of the factors previously constraining it had changed. Consequently, much of the burden of opposition has fallen on Hertfordshire County Council, which has been untrammelled by any considerations as to the nature of its relationship with Luton Council. The County Council has concentrated upon attempting to restrict Airport expansion by persuading Government to take a more active part, and in this its actions have been complementary to those of LADACAN (which are discussed in the following Chapter). The County District Councils have been able to do little except pressure their County Councils, and this has been unrewarding (in the case of Bedfordshire) and largely unnecessary (in the case of Hertfordshire). Finally, the Luton Airport Consultative Committee, dominated by local authority membership and (largely as a consequence) tending to be anti-Airport in its views, has been in the unique position of being a forum for frequent meetings between several of the major participants in the process, but it has been unable to play any significant part in this process because of its nature and because of its very limiting terms of reference. Its place in the process has been seen very largely in terms of helping to smooth the flow of information between Luton Council and the other member organisations.

Of all the organisations which formed the subject of this Chapter, the one which had most impact upon the process as a whole was Hertfordshire County Council. The complementarity of its actions and those of LADACAN, which has been remarked upon already in this Chapter and which will be developed in that which follows, has exerted a great deal of pressure upon both Central Government (which has tended to channel much of this pressure on to Luton Council) and Luton Council, and the adjustments in policy which have taken place can be attributed very largely to the pressure which the two in combination have mounted. LADACAN's proddings have been instrumental in keeping Hertfordshire County Council "up to the mark", and this process will also be examined in more

detail in the following Chapter. The importance of the pressure which the two have exerted lies in its complementarity and its indivisibility; it is impossible to say which successes can be attributed to Hertfordshire and which to LADACAN, since progress tended to result from their cumulative and mutually-reinforcing efforts.

## Chapter 13. General Interest Group.

### Introduction.

The distinction between general and special interest groups is based very largely upon the breadth of their concern with the issues and their ease of access for membership purposes. The general interest groups make membership available very widely, with very few if any tests or qualifications being required, and cover a wide spectrum of views within a general position of opposition to or favourableness towards Airport expansion. The special interest groups have a fairly tightly-defined and narrow concern with the issue and a relatively exclusive membership defined in relation to this concern. This distinction is a preliminary, analytical one, designed to aid in the primary sorting of organisations without imposing an artificial order upon them. In fact, certain common behavioural features appear to provide an empirical justification for this differentiation, as this and the subsequent Chapter will demonstrate.

The general interest groups can be sub-divided according to whether they are ad hoc or continuous. For reasons which will become clear, the ad hoc groups have played an important part in the process whereas the part played by the continuous groups has been slight. Both sets have found certain advantages in this situation, and this Chapter will illustrate and explain these. Inevitably, because of its importance within the system under examination, a great deal of this Chapter is taken up with a study of LADACAN, since it is the position of LADACAN which in many ways has determined the operating characteristics of the two sets of general interest groups. The Chapter commences with a brief examination of the two continuous groups, before moving on to the four ad hoc groups which have played a part in the system.

### Continuous Groups.

Two groups will be considered under this heading -- the South Bedfordshire Preservation Society and the Luton and District Ratepayers Association.

The Preservation Society has been in existence since 1950, and concerns itself with urban intrusion into the countryside, with ancient monuments and with footpaths. In general terms, therefore, it is concerned with the "countryside amenity" lobby. Its membership stands at a little less than one thousand and remains fairly constant at that level. It tends to work by building up and maintaining good relations with local authorities, N.P.s, nationalised industries and others the actions of which might have an adverse

effect upon the countryside, and in particular it watches the uses made by local authorities of their planning powers. The aim of the Society is to be regarded by these organisations (and particularly the local authorities) as an authoritative spokesman for the interest of the general public in the preservation of South Bedfordshire's countryside and, as such, it values its largely informal relationships with both officers and members of the organisations with which it deals. The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport has caused the Society some concern, but it has preferred to leave the issue in the hands of LADACAN. This is because it is afraid that active opposition to Airport expansion will place in jeopardy its long-standing and cherished relationship with Luton Council, which it sees as regarding all opponents of Airport expansion as opponents of the Council ipso facto. Whilst the Preservation Society has never formally affiliated to LADACAN, because it does not wish to be associated publicly, it has indicated its general support. As a body, the Society was represented at the 1970 public inquiry by one of its members, who made a statement about the effects upon Someries Castle (an ancient monument situated about a quarter of a mile to the south of the runway) of vibration resulting from increased activities at the Airport.<sup>1</sup> Evidence on wider matters was left to LADACAN. Since the 1970 public inquiry, the Preservation Society has added the effects of aircraft noise to its terms of reference, to reserve its position in the event of any decline on the part of LADACAN, but this has not led to any change in the pattern of its activities. The Society is thus content to see that its opposition to Airport expansion in terms of its effect upon the countryside of South Bedfordshire is noted, but it is not prepared to campaign publicly against Airport expansion for fear of damaging its relationship with Luton Council, which is useful to the Society over a broad span of issues. The fact of LADACAN's existence and activity means that the Society, at present, need have no fear that Airport expansion will occur in default of any opposition, and has found it necessary to do no more than to alter its terms of reference to take account of the possibility of a decline in the activities of LADACAN at some future date.<sup>2</sup>

The Ratepayers Association was formed in 1936, and concerns itself with what it regards as being the interests of ratepayers in Luton and the surrounding area (not precisely defined). Its membership is slightly less than one thousand, although this tends to fluctuate somewhat from year to year. By its constitution it is non-party, and it finds this an advantage in a town such as Luton where the Council is dominated by party politics. Just after the Second World War it attempted to put up Independent Ratepayer candidates for Luton Council elections, but they were heavily defeated and were accused by

1. Statement of D.H.R.W. Kennett to the public inquiry, 12th. March 1970.

both the Labour and the Conservative parties of having helped the other side. The experiment has not been repeated, since the Association feels that independent candidates would have little chance of election, would be given little scope as Council members and would inevitably be used as tools in party political strife. Instead, the Association concentrates on attempting to build up and maintain good relations with the local authorities within its area, both by cultivating certain Council members and by formal and constructive correspondence with officers, with the aim of being regarded as the authoritative spokesman for the interests of ratepayers in the area. Its interest in the Airport issue extends back to the late 1940s, when the Airport was making small annual losses, and for nearly twenty years the Association held a watching brief to see that the operating deficit charged to the rates remained small. As the noise issue began to grow, it replaced financial viability as the main concern, and the Association clashed publicly with Luton Council over the decision to build Stockwood School less than half a mile from the end of the runway along its extended centre line.<sup>3</sup> As far as possible, the Ratepayers Association attempted to avoid such clashes, however, and took the view that it would be in favour of profitable Airport expansion with more scheduled services provided that the noise nuisance could be controlled. Its opposition is now solely on the ground of noise and it has affiliated to LADACAN on this basis. As a body, it has regarded its affiliation to LADACAN as being sufficient indication of its position on Airport matters. It does not attempt to exert any pressure on the issue for fear of damaging its relationship with Luton Council, nor does it attempt to push LADACAN in any particular directions. As a constituent member of LADACAN, it has been represented at the March, 1970 and January, 1972 public inquiries, although none of its officers or members have given evidence. As a result of their activities on behalf of LADACAN in the Luton area, two people have also become officers of the Ratepayers Association at its invitation, and this method of recruitment (which the Ratepayers Association uses quite often) acts as another means of underlying where it stands without needing to fight the Council on the issue.<sup>4</sup>

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2. Interview with Mrs. P. Ball (Hon. Secretary, South Bedfordshire Preservation Society), 16th. March 1971.

3. Following the decision of the Planning Sub-Committee of the Highways and Town Planning Committee to grant planning permission for the school, on 29th. July 1965. Professor Richards (the Council's noise consultant) had been cross-examined at the Airport public inquiry of 1964 about the school site, and had agreed that the site of school was bad and that the building would require insulation. The Council's case was that a school was needed in that part of the town, and that no other site was available. Source: Planning Department, Luton County Borough Council.

The Preservation Society has several features in common with the Ratepayers Association in terms of involvement in the Luton Airport policy-making process. Both have existed for some time as representatives of wide-ranging sets of interests, within which the Airport is one of many. Both anticipate continuing to exist after the demise of the Airport issue, and feel that their relationship with Luton Council in terms of these longer-range interests is too valuable to put at risk by open and public conflict with the Council over Airport policy. Both have relatively small and static memberships, which are not large enough in themselves to be a source of substantial political power. As a result, both have found it necessary to cultivate the local authorities as carefully as possible, in attempts to persuade the authorities to regard them as authoritative spokesmen of the interests of the public within their particular areas of concern. For both of them, the existence and activities of LADACAN have solved what might otherwise have been a delicate political problem. Since pressure through their normal channels of communication with Luton Council would be unlikely to produce any results over an issue on which the Council is deeply committed, it might have been necessary to have adopted a more overt form of pressure which might, in turn, have endangered the retention of the normal channels of communication with the Council. In other words, they might have been forced to trade off their feelings on the Luton Airport issue against the risk of endangering their relationship with the Council by pressing the issue. This was avoided by indicating support for LADACAN either informally (as in the case of the Preservation Society) or by affiliating formally (as in the case of the Ratepayers Association), and then by allowing LADACAN to press the issue. Luton Council knew where they stood without regarding them as opponents wishing to make political capital out of the issue, and thus their interest in the issue was registered whilst minimising the damage of this to their ongoing relationship.

Ad Hoc Groups -- LADACAN, FLAG, KASARAN.

This section is concerned with three groups -- Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (LADACAN), Four London Airports Group (FLAG) and Knebworth and Surrounding Areas Reduction of Aircraft Nuisance Campaign (KASARAN). The Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's

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4. Interview with Mrs. M. E. Bird (Hon. Secretary, Luton and District Ratepayers Association), 9th. March 1971.

Natural Expansion (PLANE) will be discussed in a separate section. In terms of the process under examination as a whole, by far the most significant of these has been LADACAN. Its activities can be divided into five partially overlapping phases, and each of these will be examined in turn;

- 1) getting going,
- 2) moving out into the countryside,
- 3) the 1970 public inquiry,
- 4) involvement in the work of the Roskill Commission, and
- 5) attempts at clarifying Luton Council's position once the decision to establish the third London Airport at Foulness had been taken.

LADACAN was founded formally on 19th. April 1968, one month after commercial jet operations had been introduced from Luton Airport.<sup>5</sup> Lord Hill of Luton appears to have been the moving spirit behind the creation of the organisation, in the sense that he pulled together at least three disparate strands by inviting representatives of each to a specially-convened public meeting. One strand consisted of several individuals in the area who had written letters of complaint about aircraft noise to the local press. Another was the remnants of the South Luton Airport Objection Association, which had been formed to fight the 1964 public inquiry and which had been disbanded subsequently, although some individuals who had been prominent in the Association still lived in the area.<sup>6</sup> The third was the newly-formed Breachwood Green Campaign for the Control of Aircraft Noise (BREOCAN), which had been started in the village of Breachwood Green in Hertfordshire, slightly less than two miles from the eastern end of the runway, by the simple expedient of a small number of villagers knocking on residents' doors. These three existed in relative isolation from each other. Lord Hill's contribution (as someone living within a quarter of a mile of the runway and widely-respected within the locality) was to contact them all and to bring them all together at a public meeting along with a representative of the British Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (BACAN). The meeting decided to create a formal organisation and to appoint an interim committee to run it, the post of Chairman of which was offered to H.J. Aldridge as a prominent figure in local politics (an ex-member of Bedfordshire County and Luton County Borough Councils) and as an opponent of Airport expansion for some years.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Evidence of N.S.C. Reid (then Hon. Secretary. LADACAN) to the public inquiry on Luton Airport expansion proposals, 12th. March 1970.

6. See Chapter 8.

7. Information on the beginnings of LADACAN has been obtained principally from interviews with H.J. Aldridge (former Chairman), 7th. April 1971, Dr. T.D.

The original Committee of twelve was oriented towards Luton, eight of its members being resident in the town, and its energies were channelled principally towards influencing Luton Council as well as attempting to increase membership. In part, the selection of Luton Council as the principal target was obvious, since it owned and operated the Airport, but in part it reflected Mr. Aldridge's personal preference. As a former member of the Council, who had lost the labour party whip one year before his term of office expired in part because of his disagreement with the Council's Airport policies,<sup>8</sup> he appears to have attempted to use LADACAN as a means of settling some personal scores, and this soured Luton Council - LADACAN relationships immediately. At best, this relationship inevitably would have been difficult; as it was, meetings between LADACAN and the Airport Committee of the Council were characterised by displays of personal animosity from both sides.<sup>9</sup> No confrontations of this nature have been held since 1968.

LADACAN was much more successful, however, in persuading individual Councillors, both through personal contact and as a result of the barrage of publicity that its activities received. Contacts with Councillors came naturally as a result of the social contacts of many of the members of LADACAN's steering committee, some of whom (such as Lord Hill and Sir Harold Wernher, Chairman of Luton Conservative party and owner of a large estate adjacent to the Airport) were widely respected in local public life. If anything, the decision not to put up LADACAN candidates at local elections but to attempt to work through the candidates of the major parties probably helped in this process, since the possibility of direct confrontation was replaced by the possibility of endorsement of Council candidates of either party, and the previous Chapter has already shown that the response of the parties to this in wards badly affected by aircraft noise was to select candidates with views broadly sympathetic to those of LADACAN. This meant that a "controlled growth" lobby started to grow in strength on the Council, and its growth was undoubtedly aided by the spectacular increase in LADACAN's membership during the first year of its existence.

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Williams (Press Secretary), 3rd. May 1971, Lord Hill of Luton, 27th. May 1971, Mrs. A. Haward (Secretary of BRECCAN), 9th. June 1971 and Dr. H. Jarvis (former Secretary), 11th. August 1971.

8. See Chapter 8.

9. Several members and officers of the Council testified to this, including Alderman F. S. Lester (former Chairman of the Airport Committee), 27th. July 1971, and J. V. Cowan (Town Clerk), 10th. March 1971, as well as Dr. Williams (interview, op. cit.) and Dr. Jarvis (interview op. cit.) on behalf of LADACAN.

If Mr. Aldridge's past associations with Luton Council hindered the prospect of any fruitful agreements resulting from meetings between LADACAN and the Council ("front door" methods) and forced LADACAN to concentrate upon attempting to alter the composition of the Council's views on Airport expansion by persuading individual Councillors ("back door" methods), his long experience in local politics was a great asset in terms of increasing membership. This was particularly true in relation to the towns and villages (mostly in Hertfordshire) surrounding the Airport. The standard procedure was for a public meeting to be arranged in the town or village and for a member of the interim committee (usually Mr. Aldridge) to address it about Airport expansion plans and the work of LADACAN. The formation of a local branch would be urged, and in addition the audience was pressed to contact local Councillors (both County and District) to ensure that the local authorities were left in no doubt about feelings on the matter. This has been a constant feature of LADACAN's activities; local branches, affiliates or individual members have ensured that their Councillors have been diligent in reminding their Councils about the opposition of residents to Airport expansion on the ground of noise, and this process appears to have triggered off the involvement of Hertfordshire County Council in the spring of 1968. In terms of growing membership, this process was very successful; from a handful of members in April, 1968, LADACAN claimed 10,000 paid-up members within a radius of ten miles of the Airport by the beginning of October in the same year.<sup>10</sup> This was a visible manifestation of the success of the organisation, and was important in convincing Councillors outwith Luton of the popularity of opposition to Airport expansion and in contributing to the growing doubts of some members and potential members of Luton Council about Airport policy.

But it also brought problems. The majority of LADACAN's members lived in Hertfordshire, but the interim committee was dominated by Luton residents with a Luton-oriented strategy. This strategy was causing LADACAN certain problems. It had got itself into some legal difficulties by insinuating that there was something improper about the appointment of A.D. Harvey (former Town Clerk of Luton) to the board of Autair (Court Line) on his retirement from the Council's service,<sup>11</sup> and the matter had to be glossed over eventually by the protagonists'

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10. Evening Post, 5th. October 1968.

11. See Chapter 8.

solicitors and involved a form of apology on LADACAN's part.<sup>12</sup> Shortly after this came the Town Poll of January, 1969, which not only resulted in a defeat for LADACAN but also tended to indicate by the small turnout a great lack of interest within Luton as far as Airport policy was concerned.<sup>13</sup> More Hertfordshire members were becoming actively involved in LADACAN, and the (to them) debacle of the Town Poll convinced some of them that LADACAN's strategy would have to change.

The second phase of LADACAN's activities (moving out into the countryside) had already begun during 1968, and indeed was responsible for much of the spectacular rise in membership during that year. Following the Town Poll, which appeared to indicate that the residents of Luton could not be relied upon to convert their Council, and the failure of direct attempts to influence Luton Council in part because of the position of Mr. Aldridge, LADACAN's committee accepted that it would have to alter its strategy. More and more it concentrated upon its following in the areas surrounding the Airport as a means of maintaining its pressure upon the local authorities, and increasingly it attempted to bring pressure to bear upon Central Government both through the local M.P.s and through letters to the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The hope was that the combined weight of Hertfordshire County Council's and LADACAN's pressure upon Central Government would induce it to take more powers to control policy-making for Luton Airport. As this strategy grew in importance, a Luton oriented and Luton-dominated interim committee became less relevant to the situation as well as less representative of the membership as a whole. Pressure from within the committee to review the workings of LADACAN in the light of the changed circumstances caused the institution in 1969 of a five-man committee under the chairmanship of Sir Reginald Pearson (former Deputy Chairman of Vauxhall Motors, and another person widely-respected in public life in the area) to examine LADACAN's constitution and structure. This Committee recommended the creation of a five-man Executive to run the Association, and a Council with one representative from each branch or major affiliated body<sup>14</sup> to meet at least twice per annum and to which the Executive would report. As a manoeuvre to remove Mr. Aldridge (who had personalised the organisation too much by focussing attention on his grudge against Luton Council

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12. Interview with J. H. Williams (Honorary Solicitor, LADACAN), 27th. June 1971.

13. See Chapters 8 and 11.

the Vice-Chairman of LADACAN would be Chairman of the Executive and the Chairman of LADACAN would have the titular post of Chairman of the Council. In other words, Mr. Aldridge was "promoted upstairs", and he subsequently resigned as Chairman.<sup>15</sup> The basis of LADACAN's organisation has remained substantially unaltered since then. Overall strategy has been in the hands of the Executive which reports infrequently to the Council, a meeting of all LADACAN's constituent branches and affiliates. Individual branches have been left very largely to their own devices as to local tactics within the broad strategic framework laid down by the Executive and confirmed by the Council. This has been a source both of strength and of weakness, as will be discussed below.

Thus the second phase of LADACAN's activities was concerned with a necessary change of strategy and, more particularly, with the creation of organisational arrangements to fit the changed circumstances. In addition, of course, the membership of the organisation was continuing to grow, albeit more slowly than in the period of initial impetus in 1968. The new organisational arrangements were soon tested, since in December, 1969 it was announced that a public inquiry would take place early in 1970 on £145,000 worth of construction work at the Airport, on the understanding that this was to be related to the wider questions of Airport expansion.<sup>16</sup> LADACAN's pressure had contributed to the decision to hold this inquiry, which was designed largely to enable the issues to be ventilated, since it was widely agreed that the proposals themselves were relatively unimportant. The Executive set about the tasks of raising money to present a case, preparing that case, attempting to persuade other organisations to take part in the inquiry and attempting to get the date of opening of the inquiry postponed in order to allow more time for the other three jobs to be completed satisfactorily.

In all four tasks LADACAN was successful, although to different degrees. Raising money proved to be little trouble. As the largest local landowner, Sir Thomas Pilkington was approached and agreed to chair a fundraising committee. In just over two months, this committee raised about £10,500, much by individual donation or by covenant (and, in fact, only about 50% of the covenanted money was called in) and some as a result of the proceeds of local events such as dance coffee mornings, raffles and bring-and-buy sales.<sup>17</sup> The inquiry case actually cost LADACAN about £7,000, and so the fundraising activities were able to put the organisation on a relatively sound financial footing.<sup>18</sup> The preparation of

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14. The difference between a branch and an affiliate is that the former is a specially-constituted arm of LADACAN to which individuals pay a membership subscription, whereas the latter is an organisation which is already in existence and which joins LADACAN en bloc by paying a fee in proportion to the size of its membership.

a case for the inquiry was facilitated by the existence of a considerable amount of professional expertise within the ranks of the organisation. In particular, J. Williams (whose regular job involved the preparation of public inquiry cases for Rio Tinto Zinc) proved invaluable in this respect, because his public inquiry experience was extensive and gave him access to both potential Counsel and witnesses, and the burden of preparing the case fell largely upon him and upon the Executive. He was also valuable in acting as one of the links between LADACAN and the National Farmers Union in persuading the N.F.U. to take part in the inquiry (the other being N.S.C. Reid, of the Hertfordshire branch of the N.F.U.), because in his capacity as a legal officer for Rio Tinto Zinc he had been in opposition to the N.F.U. at several public inquiries and as a consequence was on good personal terms with Mr. N. Wallace, head of its Land Use and Transport Department.<sup>19</sup> In addition, LADACAN was able to secure the postponement of the inquiry for one month from February to March 1970, and this assisted greatly in the tasks of obtaining funds and preparing a case. Apart from the success with the N.F.U. it did not help in bringing other combatants into the field, although LADACAN was given more time to try and in particular to concentrate (without success) upon Bedfordshire County Council.

At the time of the inquiry, LADACAN's membership stood at 12,825,<sup>20</sup> or virtually 30% higher than it had been in October 1968. This represented a significant rate of growth, although (hardly surprisingly) it was one which could not match the rate of growth achieved in the early days of the organisation. In March, 1970, LADACAN had fourteen branches, twelve affiliates and two Parish Councils of affiliate status, and covered nearly all of the area affected by aircraft noise. One area which was not covered, however, was that surrounding the town of Knebworth, which as a result of a set of circumstances detailed below generated its own organisation -- KASARAN. The failure to bring KASARAN into the fold was to be symptomatic of some of the organisational difficulties which LADACAN was later to face, although during and in the period immediately after the 1970 public inquiry they had not started to emerge in any discernible manner.

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15. Details from an interview with N.S.C. Reid (vice-Chairman), 8th. April 1971.

16. See Chapter 8.

17. Interview with N.S.C. Reid, *op. cit.*

18. Interview with J. Williams, *op. cit.*

19. *Ibid.* Interview with Mr. Wallace, 18th. June 1971. The good personal relationships between Mr. Williams and Mr. Wallace, although representative of two organisations which have fought each other strongly at several public inquiries, are in marked contrast with the very poor personal relations between Luton Council and LADACAN representatives.

Once the inquiry was over, IADACAN was free to move into the fourth phase of its activities, its involvement in the work of the Roskill Commission. The Commission had already been sitting for nearly two years,<sup>21</sup> and Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Development Corporation had already given evidence about the place of Luton Airport within the third London Airport decision. Once the Research Team's cost-benefit study had been published to act as one of the major foci of discussion at the Commission's stage V inquiry, it became clear that the future of Luton Airport would play an important part at that inquiry, since the Research Team had argued that the noise costs of Foulness plus an expanded Luton exceeded those of Cublington and thus neutralised the presumed advantage to Foulness in this respect.<sup>22</sup> The near-coincidence of this and the termination of work on the 1970 public inquiry brought IADACAN into the ambit of the Roskill Commission.

A small part of this work involved giving evidence to the Commission's stage V inquiry.<sup>23</sup> A much larger part of the work involved behind-the-scenes lobbying, which intensified during the first part of 1971 between the announcements of the Commission's recommendation and the Government's decision. This can be seen as being in many ways a natural extension of IADACAN's previous linkages with M.P.s for the area affected by Luton-generated noise, since the important participants in the lobby included the "Hastings Committee", a cross-party Committee in the House named after its Chairman (Mr. Stephen Hastings, M.P.) in support of the selection of a coastal site for the third London Airport. The Committee existed in an embryonic form in the spring of 1969, when it had fifteen members,<sup>24</sup> but its real growth took place during 1970, when it had become clear from the cost-benefit analysis published by the Commission on the Third London Airport that a recommendation in favour of Cublington was likely. By April 1971 (just before the Government announced its decision in favour of Foulness), 218 M.P.s supported the Hastings Committee, which became the Parliamentary wing of a Foulness lobby including the Thames Estuary Development Company (TEDCO), the Thames Aeroport Group (TAG) and the Four London Airports Group (FLAG).<sup>25</sup>

This is not the place to analyse the Foulness lobby; the interest here is in IADACAN's part within it, in particular as an integral member of FLAG. FLAG was an umbrella group linking together the secretariats of the anti-noise

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20. Source: K. Coleman (Secretary), letter to the author dated 29th. October 1971. In addition, Codicote and Pitstone Parish Councils had given IADACAN their formal support, and if the 2,340 adults living in the two parishes are included IADACAN's membership at the time of the inquiry was 15,165.

21. The work of the Commission is described in Chapter 16.

associations around Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton Airports. It was concerned to ensure that the third London Airport decision was seen as a means of alleviating the nuisance around existing airports, and had reached the view that Foulness was the best choice on noise grounds provided that other airports (and particularly Luton) were not expanded as a consequence of this choice. This caused LADACAN some difficulty, since the choice of any of the short-listed inland sites would have resulted in either the closure of or the curtailment of activities at Luton Airport whereas the choice of Foulness involved no such constraints. TEDCC and TAG (although rivals in the sense that each wished to do contract work on the project and had spent money on research to demonstrate its feasibility) saw the Foulness proposal as a business proposition, linked to the development of a seaport, and were concerned to keep the lobby together to maximise the chance of a favourable choice. LADACAN, as a member of FLAG, was able to obtain two significant concessions as the price of joining the lobby. First, the Hastings Committee should continue to pressure the Government for a policy statement in respect of the existing inland airports in the region after the third London Airport decision had been announced, and second, on no account must the Wing Airport Resistance Association (WARA) be regarded as a member of the lobby. This latter point emerged because WARA, as the local body opposing the possibility of the choice of Cublington, had requested the Commission to work on the basis of a five-fold increase in Luton's traffic.<sup>26</sup> LADACAN took the view that it could not associate with a body which was prepared to see the third London Airport anywhere except at Cublington, and was prepared to use any argument to this end. On the same basis, LADACAN could have argued in favour of Cublington as a means of ensuring the closure of Luton Airport, and threatened to do so (and thus to destroy the unity of the lobby) unless its conditions were met. "After a hard fight",<sup>27</sup> these conditions were agreed to, and, after the decision in favour of Foulness, the Government's policy statement on the inland airports of 27th. July 1971 in reply to a question by Mr. Hastings<sup>28</sup> and his subsequent appearance at the Luton Airport public inquiry of January 1972<sup>29</sup> can both be considered to constitute repayments of these political debts.<sup>3</sup>

22. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Papers and Proceedings. Volume VII. Part 2. Results of Research Team's Assessment". H.M.S.O. London, 1970.

23. Evidence of W.A. Allen on behalf of LADACAN and Mrs. A. Haward on behalf of BRECCAN to stage V of the Commission on the Third London Airport. Summer 1970.

24. Source: files of Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P.

25. The Times, 5th. April 1971.

26. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report". H.M.S.O. London, 1971.

The fifth phase of LADACAN's activities dovetailed with the fourth, since it was concerned with attempting to gain some clarification of Luton Council's attitude to Airport expansion following the Foulness decision. The problem was that Foulness Airport would be unlikely to commence operations until 1980 at the earliest, which would allow at least nine seasons' traffic growth at Luton Airport. The Government's policy statement of 27th. July 1971 did not help greatly in LADACAN's desire to control this interim growth, which was to be catered for (subject to planning permission being given by the Secretary of State for the Environment) by the package of proposals which became the subject of the public inquiry in January, 1972. The fifth phase was markedly similar to the third, both being concerned with the clarification of attitudes during the run-up to a public inquiry, but LADACAN was able to draw <sup>on</sup> its previous experience and methodology to prepare for the inquiry, and found this less onerous than on the previous occasion as <sup>a</sup> consequence.

Very little information exists on LADACAN's membership. Mr. Aldridge described it as, "...very much a technical and middle class organisation, and it has basically stayed that way",<sup>31</sup> and Mrs. Haward described it as, "...a middle and upper class organisation, being the people who tend to have most to defend."<sup>32</sup> Other than this, however, interviewees were not prepared to comment on the kinds of people who were members. The Executive has been composed entirely of professional people; of the seven people who were members of the Executive during the period from its formation late in 1969 to the public inquiry of January, 1972, two were engineers, two were members of the legal profession, one was an estate manager, one a research biologist and one the Deputy Education Officer of Hertfordshire County Council. Of course, they may well not be a microcosm of the membership of LADACAN as a whole, but effectively they were the people who ran it. In addition, the organisation from time to time made use of eminent local people such as Lord Hill of Luton, Sir Harold Wernher, Sir Thomas Pilkington and Sir Reginald Pearson, and the comments of Mr. Aldridge and Mrs. Haward quoted above are certainly appropriate to the people who have held influential positions within LADACAN.

27. Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P. (Vice-Chairman of the Hastings Committee). Interview, 4th. August 1971.

28. Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 822. Written answers. Columns 73-75. 27th. July 1971.

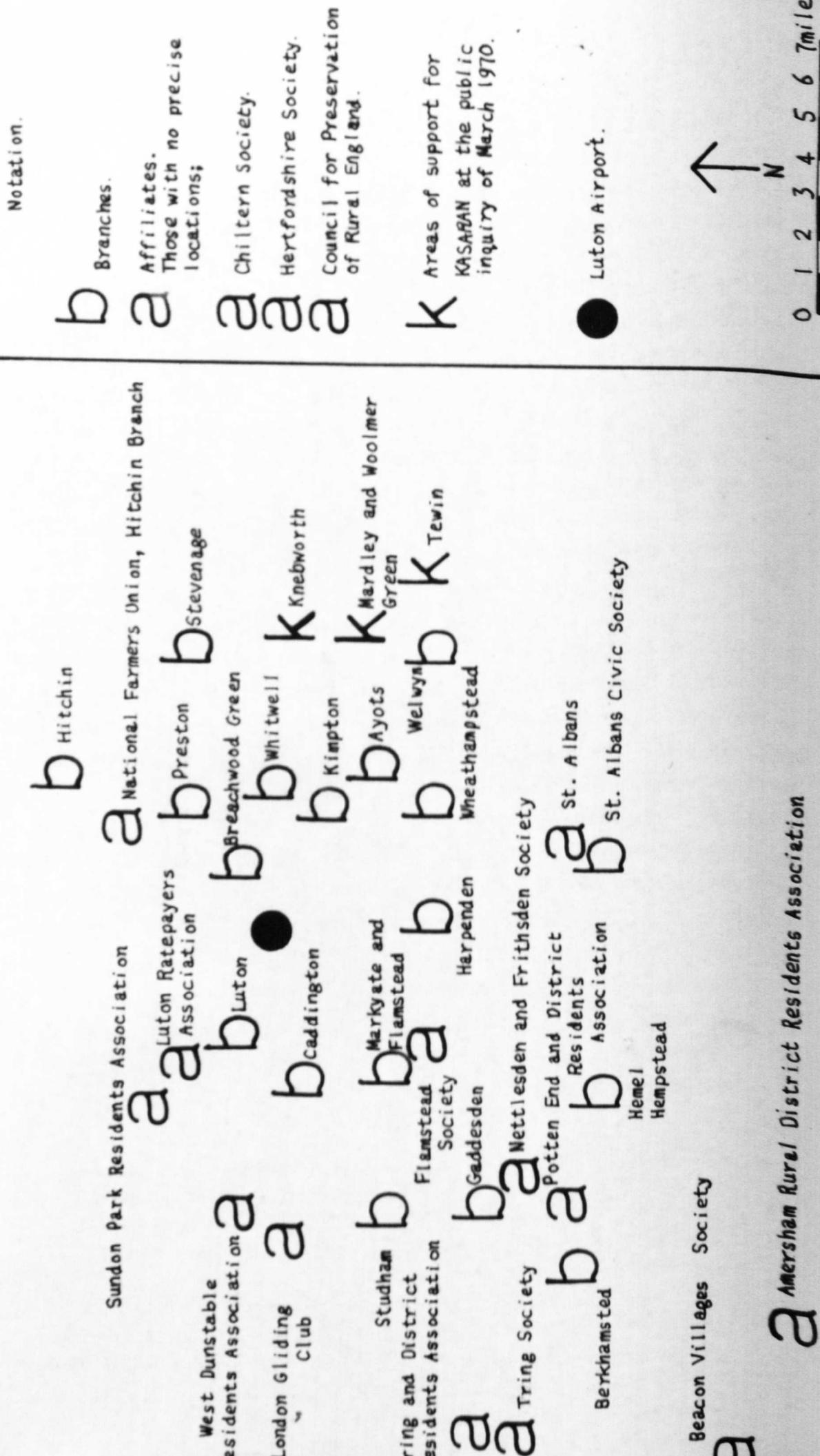
29. As M.P. for mid-Bedfordshire, his constituency is not affected significantly by noise generated as a result of Luton Airport's activities.

30. This paragraph is based upon interviews with N.S.C. Reid (op. cit.) and Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P. (op. cit.).

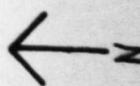
31. Interview, op. cit.

32. Interview, op. cit.

DIAGRAM 12. BRANCHES AND AFFILIATES OF LADACAN, JANUARY 1972.



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 miles



The distribution of membership can be examined in more detail, since precise figures were prepared by LADACAN for the public inquiries of March, 1970 and January, 1972.<sup>33</sup> Although membership grew during that period, the growth was largely attributable to the formation of new branches and affiliates in areas affected by aircraft noise for the first time as a result of changes in flight paths. LADACAN gained four branches, four affiliates and eighteen supporting local authorities in this manner. Indeed, changes in flight paths, by transferring the noise nuisance from one settlement to another, have performed a function for LADACAN in promoting membership in newly-affected areas. In the branches already existing in March, 1970, there was virtually no growth at all between then and January, 1972, although the affiliates performed slightly better in this respect despite one which showed an absolute decline in membership. Even so, in both cases overall growth was largely a function of the formation of new branches and affiliates rather than of the expansion of existing bodies of this nature. This could either be because membership in those areas had reached some kind of saturation point, or because a tendency towards internal decay had already started. Evidence to be reviewed below indicates that the latter alternative is a more probable explanation. The distribution of branches and affiliates at January, 1972 can be mapped, and this is shown in Diagram 12. This area compares quite closely with that shown in Diagram 5, Chapter 6, which is based upon the mapping of noise complaints, but much less closely with that shown in Diagram 4, Chapter 6, the N.M.I. contours for 1971. This is further evidence of the lack of validity of the N.M.I. concept as a means of representing aircraft noise annoyance, since the formation of a branch or affiliate is a response to a noise nuisance already being experienced and should bear some relation, therefore, to the represented area of annoyance.<sup>34</sup>

When it started, LADACAN had very few resources with which to attempt to influence opinion other than the standing in the locality of many of its helpers. This resource was very valuable in its early days, since it ensured that what LADACAN said had at least a veneer of respectability because of many of the names who were associated with it. It was clear, however, that this resource could not be traded upon for very long, and many of the "local notables" receded into the background as the strength of the organisation grew. They were replaced by the notion of LADACAN as representing the "public interest", and were only used

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33. See Appendix 12 for details.

for special purposes such as fund-raising.

A key feature of its activities has been its ability to present itself as spokesman of the interest of the people in the wide area affected by aircraft noise, although this is a difficult claim to analyse. This area, which crossed local authority boundaries and responsibilities, has widened since 1968, and corresponds with the Airport sub-region as defined in Chapter 5. The benefits of Airport activities are gained by only a small proportion of the population of this area. Some of these people can be considered to benefit from the existence of the Airport by virtue of the fact that they fly from it, and this figure might be as high as 120,000 per annum.<sup>35</sup> Luton's ratepayers benefit in terms of the ability of Airport profits to reduce their rates burden, although some also suffer from noise nuisance.<sup>36</sup> In addition, there are a small number of people who benefit from the existence of the Airport in terms of job opportunities and the total population dependent upon these people was of the order of 14,500 in 1971.<sup>37</sup> There is clearly some overlap between these three categories; for example, a man could work at the Airport, fly from it on his annual holiday and live in Luton, in which case he would be counted in all three categories. The maximum number of people who could benefit (in those terms) would be when none of the categories overlap, and this would produce a maximum figure of approximately 294,500. This represents virtually 25% of the population of the Airport sub-region as the maximum number within it who benefit from the Airport's existence. Many of these will benefit in one of the senses outlined above, but will also suffer noise annoyance. Even if it is assumed that none of these people are potential joiners of LADACAN (and this is patently unrealistic, since LADACAN's second biggest branch is in Luton,<sup>38</sup> and the Luton and District Ratepayers Association is an affiliate as is the Sundon Park Residents Association), the minimum target for the organisation is the remaining three-quarters of the population of the Airport sub-region who obtain no benefits from the Airport and suffer at least intermittently from aircraft noise annoyance, or approximately 880,000 people.

Judged in these terms, LADACAN's claim to represent the interest of this particular public is not an impressive one, with an actual membership of something of the order of only 2% of this potential. But the claim is not judged by participants in the process in these relative terms. Instead, it appears to be judged in terms of the absolute numbers involved. M.P.s interviewed all stressed that a pressure group with something like 20,000 members (and its actual size at the

34. See Chapter 6.

35. From evidence given by P.H.A. Linnett (Deputy Managing Director, Clarksons)

time of the interviews was unknown, this figure being the accepted estimate) was something that they could not afford to ignore.<sup>39</sup> In this sense, LADACAN's claim to represent "the public interest" is much more impressive, and it has proved difficult to challenge. Over the area as a whole, no other organisation has been able to mobilise support which could match that of LADACAN in terms of absolute numbers, and this amount of support has become more and more its chief resource. This has been used to persuade M.P.s and local Council members of the rightness of LADACAN's cause, and as a latent electoral threat,<sup>40</sup> and has been a potent tool in keeping together the relatively loose condition that is LADACAN.

In many ways, the extensive and largely sympathetic press coverage that LADACAN's activities received during 1968 and 1969 was a boon in its attempts to present the image of a body representing the interest of the public of a wide area against the parochial and obscurantist activities of one Council. The growth of LADACAN followed shortly after the launching of the Evening Post in the area, and the paper latched on to what was clearly a local issue with a considerable potential to sell newspapers.<sup>41</sup> The extent and sympathy of this coverage, and the extent to which Luton Council was pilloried as being both selfish and grasping, were very useful to the organisation at a time when it was striving to present itself as being much more than a few "local notables" with a personal interest in the issue. Conversely, the national communications media took virtually no notice of the issue.<sup>42</sup> In part, this was because it was overshadowed in dramatic quality by the problem of the location of the third London Airport, which was seen as being a national issue whereas the expansion of Luton Airport was not. In part, LADACAN was not geared up in terms of its organisation to make regular statements that were sufficiently newsworthy to the wider audience of the national media. The same comments apply to radio and television, with the addition that contact with the British Broadcasting Corporation was pre-empted by the position of Lord Hill as Chairman of its Board of Governors, since he made

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to the public inquiry of January 1972, approximately 8.6% of the population living within twenty miles radius of Luton Airport will make use of Luton flights in 1972. This is an area somewhat larger than the Airport sub-region defined in Chapter 5, which had a population of 1,171,695 in 1971, although there is no reason to believe that the proportions of the populations making use of the Airport will be significantly different. Rounding up to 10% of 1.2 million people as Airport users, however, produces a figure of 120,000 from the Airport sub-region.

36. The population of the town is approximately 160,000.

37. See Appendix 7.

38. See Appendix 12.

39. Interviews with Charles Simeons (M.P. for Luton), 5th. March 1971, Victor Goodhew (M.P. for St. Albans), 5th. July 1971, James Allason (M.P. for Hemel Hempstead), 4th. August 1971 and Mrs. Shirley Williams (M.P. for Hitchin), op. cit.

it a condition of his involvement in LADACAN that neither himself nor the D.L.C. should be embarrassed by his local activities.<sup>43</sup> The net effect of all these factors was that the national press, radio and television very largely ignored the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport, and this means that one potential source of pressure upon the Government was hardly utilised.

As well as the sheer numerical pressure generated by a large membership, LADACAN has maintained its pressure on local Councils through a significant degree of cross-membership. Hard data on this are difficult to come by, since no precise information was available on the membership of LADACAN, but certain examples can be given. Amongst its members on Hertfordshire County Council were the Chairmen of its Hitchin<sup>44</sup> and Gaddesden<sup>45</sup> branches. Other prominent LADACAN members in local government include Dr. Brewer, Chairman of the Estates Committee of Luton Rural District Council and Chairman of the Caddington branch;<sup>46</sup> Mr. Samson, formerly a prominent member of Harpenden Urban District Council (on behalf of which he gave evidence at the public inquiry of March, 1970), and retained as one of the representatives of the Hertfordshire County District Councils on the Airport Consultative Committee after he had left his Council because of pressure of work, who is Chairman of the Harpenden branch;<sup>47</sup> and Councillor Bilsborough of St. Albans Municipal Borough Council and Chairman of the St. Albans branch. In addition, Councillor Fenneally of Luton County Borough Council, whilst not formally being a member of LADACAN, was sufficiently sympathetic to work with the organisation on several occasions.<sup>48</sup> These do not represent the full range of LADACAN's cross-membership linkages with local authorities, but the examples given are sufficient to indicate that this was a valuable method of ensuring that the organisations stayed broadly in line with each other and continued to inform each other of their activities. In addition, of course, LADACAN branches have been assiduous in cultivating contacts with members of local Councils to ensure that the Councils have not flagged in their enthusiasm, and (especially in the vill ages and small towns) the threat of being accused of not having worked with LADACAN has been a powerful check on the activities of individual Council members. This was probably as much as LADACAN could hope for, since by and large the local authorities in the area have taken the view that formal affiliation with LADACAN would place their position as publicly-accountable bodies in jeopardy in some manner. Parish Councils felt freer in this respect, as the membership figures in Appendix 12 indicate, but as authorities have accrued more functions as a result of higher rank they have felt more constrained.

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40. James Allason, M.P. (interview op. cit.), believed that his activity on Luton Airport matters had contributed to his increased majority in Hemel Hempstead.

LADACAN's links with Central Government have been largely through the local M.P.s. Unlike Hertfordshire County Council, it has been unable to develop any relationships with Ministries at technical officer level simply because it does not possess such resources, although the correspondence of individuals with particular Ministries is a form of contact in this respect. LADACAN's links with the M.P.s have been through the provision of information for use in debates, through the framing of questions to elicit further information, through personal contacts (largely with the Executive) and especially through the Hastings Committee and the third London Airport lobby. Detailed working relationships involving the exchange of upwards of twenty letters per annum (and a maximum of forty-five with James Allason in 1970) were established with eleven M.P.s, two of whom were replacements for M.P.s with which LADACAN had worked prior to their defeat in 1970.<sup>49</sup> Three of these were or had been at one time members of LADACAN; the one who resigned his membership did so on joining the Government. Of the eleven, nine were Conservatives and two were Labour members, which gave the organisation access to both parties although much better access to the Conservatives. Ten of the eleven represented constituencies in the locality, and the eleventh (P. Crowder, M.P. for Ruislip (Northwood)) happened to live in the area.<sup>50</sup> In terms of access to the Hastings Committee, this was a useful group to be working with, and it is almost certainly part of the reason why LADACAN was able to influence the third London Airport lobby.

It would be an over-simplification to present LADACAN as an organisation pulling the strings of Airport opposition and making others move, but it would contain at least a grain of truth. LADACAN has played an important part in keeping the other opposition groups and especially the local authorities "up to the mark". The local authorities might well have opposed Airport expansion anyway, since their areas gained no benefits and suffered noise annoyance, but at least some of their vigour in opposition can be attributed to LADACAN's vigilance in monitoring their activities. LADACAN's strengths were the apparent

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at the 1970 general election, and that Will Howie (former M.P. for Luton) had lost his marginal seat in part because of his refusal to take up a firm position either way on the issue.

41. See Chapter 14 for a detailed appraisal of the position of the local press in the process.
42. With the significant and illuminating exception of the activities of the British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA). See Chapter 14.
43. Interview with Lord Hill of Luton, op. cit.
44. County Councillor Edwards, interview 6th. August 1971.
45. County Councillor Lewis, interview 12th. August 1971.
46. Interview, 25th. June 1971.
47. Interview, 13th. August 1971.
48. Interview, 8th. April 1971.

validity of its claim to represent the interest of the public in the wide area affected by aircraft noise and the local eminence of some of its founder members, and these were useful in building up a network of political contacts amongst both local authorities and M.P.s. In this sense, its activities were complementary to those of Hertfordshire County Council (as the previous Chapter has argued), and this complementarity has resulted in Airport expansion being attacked along a broad front. The County Council was able to use the "front door" methods of direct representation to Central Government of its views and informational contacts at official level, whereas LADACAN was able to concentrate on "back door" methods such as the third London Airport lobby and cross-membership with and the prompting of many other organisations. At the same time, this brought with it many problems, which might in future result in substantial decay within the organisation.

One problem has been the difficulty of retaining momentum. An organisation like LADACAN is best able to retain and expand its membership by being able to point to tangible results from its activities. Throughout the four years of its existence (at the time of writing), LADACAN has been facing a process of incremental growth which probably has been much more difficult to combat than one major proposal for the future (as bodies such as NARA faced in the Cublington proposal).<sup>51</sup> Year after year, Airport traffic has grown and the noise problem has increased, despite LADACAN's activities. Shifts in Central Government and Luton Council policies and attitudes have taken place, and some of the credit for this belongs to LADACAN's activities, but the effect of these changes has been to reduce the amount of growth that might otherwise have taken place. In absolute terms, the problem has continued to worsen, and it has been difficult for LADACAN to present itself to its supporters as having achieved anything substantial. The five phases of LADACAN's activities distinguished previously helped to retain some of the initial impetus by transferring the focus of activities from one sphere to another, but the cumulative impact of an apparent as distinct from a real lack of effect on LADACAN's part has been that its momentum has slowed. In addition, an incremental process of this nature made it difficult for LADACAN to fix any firm objectives for itself, since it was facing a problem that was constantly changing. It became clear that it was impracticable to press for

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49. Interview with N.S.C. Reid, 8th. April 1971.

50. Ibid.

51. See Chapter 10.

the closure of the Airport, since Luton Council would not agree and since the capacity of the Airport was required at least until the third London Airport became operational, and so LADACAN was forced to press for some form of curtailment. The actual form that these requests took tended to be dictated by the circumstances of the time, but this pragmatic approach made it even more difficult for members to discover what LADACAN's objectives actually were.

A related problem has been the gulf which has opened up between the Executive, the branch Committees and the ordinary membership. It has been in the nature of the work of the Executive in seeking to build up a network of political contacts that much of the effort has been "behind the scenes". Even though this activity may be beneficial to the organisation, it does not give the impression to the ordinary member that anything at all is being done. This is, of course, a very different kind of activity from the early days of LADACAN, when branches were being organised and exhorted to take what action they could to show their feelings. The sense of involvement in a fight on the part of each individual has disappeared (perhaps inevitably), and has been replaced by a feeling that the only function of individual membership is to add to the sum total of members which LADACAN uses as its authority to claim to represent the public interest. This has created a problem for the individual branch, in that it is no longer sure of what contribution it is capable of making, and for the Executive in that it can see a gulf opening up between itself and the rest of the organisation. Thus, the different levels at which the organisation operates are tending to drift apart, and this has added to the communication problem between the levels.

A third problem has been in the nature of LADACAN's coalition. It came into existence to oppose the extension of the aircraft noise problem, but this is merely one factor in the whole question of Airport policy, to which LADACAN has been forced to address itself by virtue of the inter-relatedness of the many factors. Indeed, LADACAN has become omnipresent in the process, voicing an opinion on virtually every issue that has emerged. As its concerns have become wider and wider (including giving spatial planning evidence at the public inquiry of January, 1972 in default of the local planning authorities doing the same), so the number and scope of the areas over which partners in the coalition can disagree have increased. This has shown itself particularly in issues such as the location of flight paths. LADACAN takes the view that the system of flight paths should be so arranged as to minimise the total noise disturbance in the area as a whole. Not surprisingly, individual branches tend to be in favour of flight path proposals which reduce the noise problem in their particular areas, and from time to time this has resulted in disagreements between individual

branches. Indeed, there is a feeling within LADACAN that Luton Council deliberately makes flight path proposals (which have to be approved by the Department of Trade and Industry) to set LADACAN's branches against each other and so to weaken the organisation.<sup>52</sup> The affiliated Lenton Gliding Club is equally involved in flight path difficulties, and if flight paths could be kept away from its airspace it would have no other argument against or concern with airport expansion.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, if the noise problem could be contained the Luton Ratepayers Association might well be in favour of airport expansion because of the rates relief that this would bring from operating profits.<sup>54</sup> A coalition of this nature is built upon foundations which are not as firm as is at first apparent, and this has already caused the structure of the organisation to creak somewhat ominously.

Many of these difficulties are illustrated by the story of LADACAN's relationships with KASARAN, the area of concern of which has already been illustrated in Diagram 12.<sup>55</sup> To describe KASARAN as group is to use a misnomer, although for the purposes of the public inquiry of March, 1970 it claimed itself to be one. It did not have a formal organisational structure with a membership and with a subscription scheme; instead, its supporters (who were described as "campaigners") were deemed to be people who had replied to a detailed survey which was carried out. It was much more an exercise in individual initiative, and its main impact upon the process under examination was in terms of this detailed piece of information about patterns of complaint in relation to aircraft noise within a small area. This survey was organised, analysed and reported upon by one man, Mr. Handscomb, a resident of the small Hertfordshire town of Knebworth.<sup>56</sup> A copy of the report of his survey was sent to the newly-created LADACAN Executive (amongst others) late in 1969. Not surprisingly, the survey recommended that the noise problem faced by the Knebworth area (approximately nine miles from the eastern end of the runway along the flight path) would be alleviated if aircraft climbed much more quickly so that they were at a greater height over the town and if the flight paths were changed. Instead of recognising this as a natural recommendation emerging from a small community concerned with its own problems and regarding the evidence of the report as a valuable addition to evidence already accumulated, the LADACAN Executive described the report as being typified by a "...rather parochial outlook" which it could not accept.<sup>57</sup>

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52. Interview with D. Samson, op. cit.

53. See Chapter 14.

54. Interview with Mrs. M. Bird, op. cit.

55. This paragraph is based upon interviews with N.S.C. Reid, op. cit., and J. Handscomb (organiser, KASARAN), 19th. June, 1971.

56. See Appendix 4 for details of the survey.

To ask that the two join together "... to present a united front with a common policy"<sup>58</sup> after and in spite of this previous remark was insensitive, to say the least, and the request was ignored. Instead, an independent KASARAN case based upon Mr. Handscomb's survey was prepared for the public inquiry of March, 1970. The damage has never really been repaired, since the Knebworth area is notable as being one of the few urban areas affected by aircraft noise without a LADACAN branch, although KASARAN ceased to exist in any form following the public inquiry. The value of the survey was belatedly recognised by LADACAN and used in its case for the public inquiry of January, 1972,<sup>59</sup> but the patronising attitude of the Executive's letter had undermined the real possibility of building a Knebworth branch on the foundation of Mr. Handscomb's initiative. There may have been personality difficulties involved, but the real problem was the inability of the Executive to see how matters were viewed from the local level as distinct from the strategic level which was its main concern. This early failure was to be repeated several times in a slightly different form, and by the time of the public inquiry of January, 1972 an hiatus had developed between the Executive and many of the branches.

#### PLANE

The Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's Natural Expansion was founded in the summer of 1969. The spur appears to have been the difficulties that Alderman Lester was having at that time in persuading the Conservative group on Luton Council to accept his Airport policy,<sup>60</sup> and indeed the notions of "natural expansion" and what came to be called "the Lester line" were synonymous with a policy of continuing to provide whatever facilities the airline operators wanted without any interference in what was considered to be this "natural" operation of market forces. The real reason for the formation of PLANE was that a small group of local travel agents saw LADACAN's activities as beginning to make inroads into Luton Council's policies, and the organisation was actually formed by five travel agents. It was essentially an anti-LADACAN organisation rather than anything else, and its main motivating force was its attempts to counter the successes that LADACAN was regarded as having achieved. The five original travel agents co-opted seven ordinary members of the public to the Committee which ran the organisation, to give the impression that it was not

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57. Letter from N.S.C. Reid to J. Handscomb, 5th. November 1969.

58. Ibid.

59. Evidence of N.S.C. Reid.

just a front for the travel agents, but the three main officers (Chairman, Treasurer and Press Secretary) were all travel agents and donations were received from airlines resident at the Airport. PLANE has never been able to break free from this appearance of vested interest, even though the travel agents have denied strongly that their businesses are affected by the existence of Luton Airport and have argued that local people would take inclusive tour holidays in any case from other airports.<sup>61</sup>

This appearance of vested interest has been only one of PLANE's problems, although it has been of major importance in explaining the lack of impact of the organisation upon the process as a whole, and was the major reason why it was unsuccessful in obtaining local press publicity and was reduced to buying advertising space (hence the donations from the airlines). Another problem has been its apparent extremism. At a time when Luton Council was in the process of moving from a policy of "natural expansion" to one of "controlled expansion" because of the noise problem, PLANE was requesting the retention and development of the policy which had created that problem. This blighted PLANE's relationship with Luton Council, because the requests of the former ran counter to the necessary but rather unwilling drift of the latter's policies. In addition, PLANE has had up to three members of Luton Council amongst its members, but they have all been dissidents from Airport policy as it has been at that particular time and, if anything, this has contributed to PLANE's isolation from the Council. Other organisations have largely ignored it. By and large, LADACAN has refused to engage in any kind of battle with PLANE, since it was felt that this could only give publicity to the latter without bringing any consequent benefits to the former. All the travel agents in Luton were members of the Association of British Travel Agents as well as of PLANE, and so ABTA's seat on the Luton Airport Consultative Committee was a de facto PLANE seat, although the organisation was bitter about the Council's refusal to grant a seat to PLANE per se.<sup>61A</sup> In addition, PLANE's members were represented on the Air Transport Committee of the Chamber of Commerce,<sup>62</sup> and financial links developed between the organisation and the airlines. Apart from these "natural" allies, however, the organisation has been singularly unsuccessful in developing the kind of political contacts that LADACAN managed to develop, and this has contributed to its failure.

A fourth factor in PLANE's failure to have any significant impact upon the process has been the limitations of its potential membership. It has been argued

60. See Chapter 8.

61. The information used in this section is based upon interviews with the four members of PLANE listed in Appendix 1.

61A. See Chapter 12.

above that at most some 294,500 of the 1.17 million people within the Airport sub-region obtain any tangible benefits from the existence of the Airport, and that some of these also suffer from noise. Immediately, this reduces PLANE's potential membership to approximately one third of that of LADACAN. There are many people from outside the Airport sub-region who benefit from the existence of the Airport by virtue of the fact that they make use of it, but this does not make them potential members of PLANE. They do not live in the area and (presumably) the fact that it is Luton Airport from whence they fly is largely irrelevant to them, provided that the cost of their holiday is minimised and that whichever airport is used is not inaccessible. In addition, of course, this group changes personnel all the time. The effect of these arguments is that a relatively small proportion of the population of the Airport sub-region are potential members of PLANE, and a relatively small proportion of the users of the Airport are also potential members. As a result, PLANE cannot sustain its claim to represent the views of those who benefit from the Airport in some manner.<sup>63</sup>

A further problem with PLANE's membership has been that it is concerned to support something that already exists rather than to oppose something, and in terms of public enthusiasm it is probably much more difficult to organise a group around the former notion than around the latter.<sup>64</sup> This is especially true since, during the period in question, Luton Airport has continued to expand its business, and many potential members as a result may have regarded PLANE as being unnecessary.

The effect of all these difficulties has been that PLANE has never functioned effectively. Its claims to represent "the public interest" (albeit a different one) have never been able to compete with those of LADACAN. Its public has been more nebulous and its ability to attract support has been less. In absolute terms, PLANE's maximum of 1000 paid-up members<sup>65</sup> does not compare with LADACAN's 20,000 or so. Even in relative terms, PLANE suffers badly by comparison, with much less than 1% of its potential membership within the Airport sub-region as against LADACAN's 2%. In addition, its apparently clear vested interest militated against the development of the kind of political linkages which LADACAN was able to use. By the time of the public inquiry of January, 1972, its Chairman admitted that it was "non-existent".<sup>66</sup> Thus it had lasted for less than two and a half years, during much of which time it was dormant, and could claim no achievements to

62. See Chapter 14.

63. The difficulties of PLANE in this respect are analogous to the well-known problem in planning new towns of wishing to obtain the views of future residents without even being able to identify who they might be. The majority of Airport users cannot be identified, and those Airport users living within the Airport sub-region form only a tiny minority of its population.

its name as a result of the activities of its travel agent members other than one petition in support of Airport expansion collected largely at the Airport open day in 1969 and used in support of PLANE's statement at the public inquiry of Farch, 1970.

### Conclusions.

General interest groups were defined on the basis of the breadth of their concern and of the ease of access to them for membership purposes. They also have other common behavioural features which support the validity of distinguishing them from the special interest groups considered in the next Chapter. None of them have any inherent resources other than the standing of individual members in the local community. As a result, each attempts to be regarded by public authorities as an authoritative interpreter of the interest of a particular public, and this can be done either by attracting a membership which is so large that of itself it is an important resource, or by cultivating a particular authority and stressing a particular kind of expertise which is of value to that authority. The first of these two methods was typified by the ad hoc groups and in particular by LADACAN, and the second by the continuing groups (the Ratepayers Association and the Preservation Society), although these are not polar concepts and it is clear that elements of both are involved in the activities of such groups.

The groups all attempted to make the maximum use of political contacts and/or more formal alliances. The continuing groups have developed a network of political contacts over the years which is more important to them than any single issue falling within their ambit. This acted as a constraint upon their involvement in the Luton Airport issue, since they wished to state their opposition to expansion without endangering their linkages with Luton Council. As a consequence, they either stopped short of joining LADACAN (as in the case of the Preservation Society) or joined it as a means of making public their opposition to Airport expansion whilst remaining on the periphery of its activities (as in the case of the Ratepayers Association). The ad hoc groups, on the other hand, had no group resources of any longer-term consequence than the life of the issue to conserve, since the issue was their *raison d'être*. This placed no significant constraints upon their activities, and they (and particularly LADACAN) were able to

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64. J.C. Davies. "Neighbourhood Groups and Urban Renewal". Columbia University Press. New York. 1966. Page 209.

65. Interview with J.H.S. Baggott (Chairman of PLANE), 2nd. June 1971.

66. J.H.S. Baggott (witness for the Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce) under cross-examination at the inquiry.

play an important part in the process. The development of political contacts ("back door" methods) was an important feature of the involvement of these groups, although the continuing groups sought to protect them whereas the ad hoc groups sought to make use of them.

LADACAN was able to succeed where PLANE had failed in building up a network of political contacts and a mass movement. The two are inter-related, since the ability to demonstrate solid support for the movement was a key factor in building up political contacts, and the existence and use of such contacts was one method of attempting to achieve the successes which the membership required. In this sense, the "back door" activities of LADACAN dovetailed with the "front door" activities of Hertfordshire County Council, which relied much less upon a lobby and much more upon formal interaction with Central Government and upon the power of improved information. The activities of the two, in tandem, were in large measure responsible for the shift of policy on the part of Luton Council and the increasing involvement in the process of Central Government. At the same time, these were not successes which were apparent to the membership of LADACAN, since the noise problem continued to worsen, and this contributed to the growing strains within the organisation.

These behavioural characteristics are in many ways significantly different from those of the special interest groups which will be considered in the following Chapter. Two differences are worthy of note at this point. First, there were very many more special interest groups involved in the process (twelve as against six general interest groups when BASARAN and FLAG are included, although the former was not strictly a group and the latter was strictly an extension of LADACAN in terms of the Luton Airport policy-making process), although their activities did not cover the full range of issues raised in the process. Second, alliances between general and special interest groups were rare, not because the former (and especially LADACAN) did not attempt to create such alliances but because they appeared to have few advantages to offer the special interest groups. Even the few exceptions to this observation are atypical cases, which tend to confirm the validity of the statement when their peculiarities are examined. These points will be returned to in more detail in the following Chapter.

## Chapter 14. Special Interest Groups.

### Introduction.

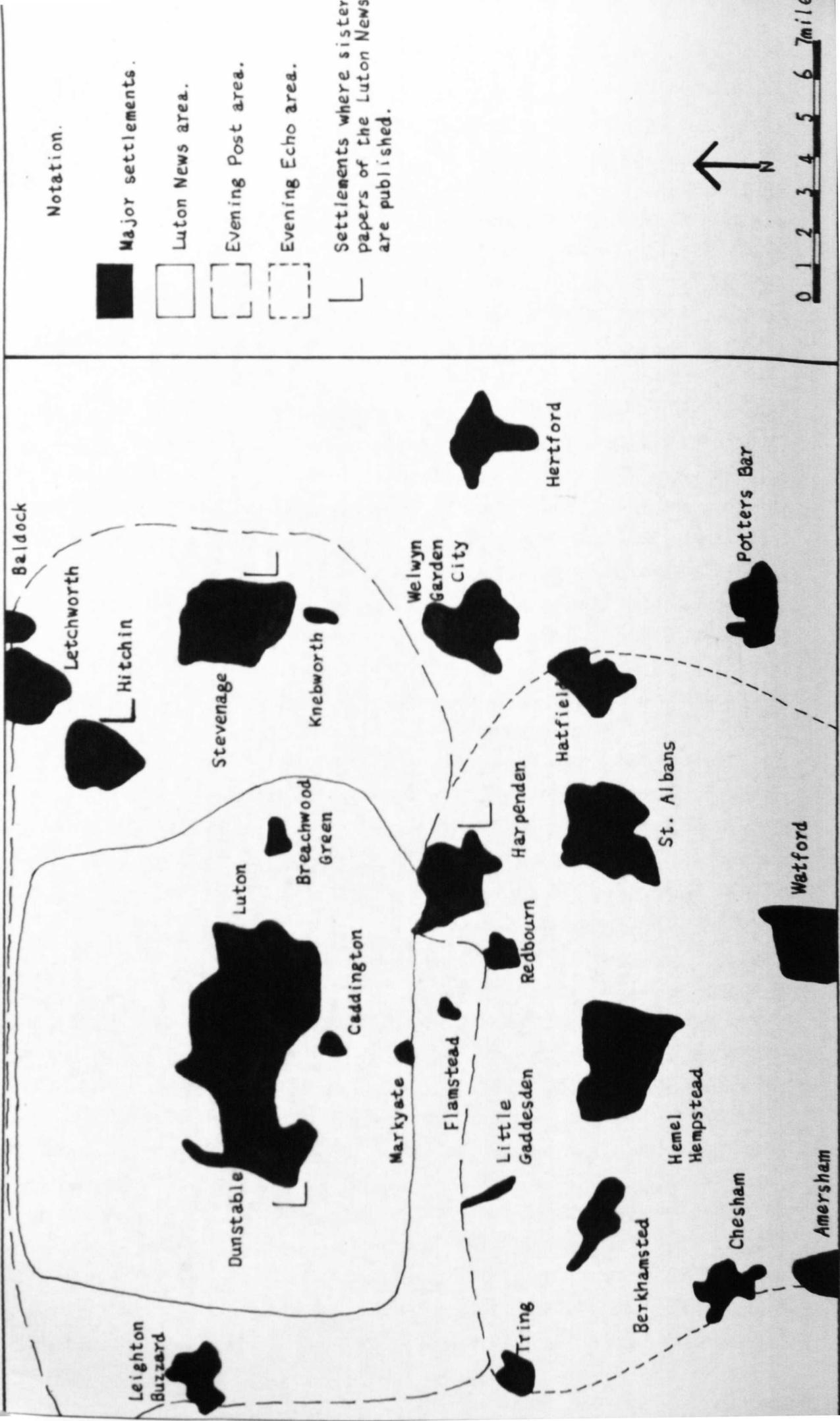
The recognition of a category of special interest groups separate and distinct from the general interest groups examined in the previous Chapter is based upon differences in the nature and type of membership of the groups and the breadth of their involvement in the Airport policy-making process. The special interest groups have a relatively narrow interest within this process. By and large, their concern is not with the process as a whole and with the ultimate decision to expand or not to expand the Airport, but with the conservation of their own positions. Possible resolutions of aspects of the Airport issue are seen as threats to their positions or as sources of advancement in one form or another, and their involvement in the process is in relation to this particular interest. They each have developed a form of expertise in relation to their particularised interests, and this expertise is a political resource in its own right. It also serves to mark them off from the other participants in the system and gives them a highly distinctive membership. For example, anyone can join LADACAN simply by paying a small fee; membership of the British Airline Pilots Association is restricted to those who are bona fide commercial pilots and who pay a relatively large membership fee.

The special interest groups are much more difficult to classify than were the general interest groups. The local press can be singled out because of its particular function within the process. Equally, the local Chambers can be examined as a set because they possess several common features. The remainder have to be treated individually, however, and this mirrors their discrete involvement in the process as a whole.

### The Local Press.

Traditionally, the local press in the Airport sub-region has been dominated by the weekly papers produced by the North Home Counties Newspapers group. As well as maintaining small weekly papers in several of the surrounding towns, the Luton News (Thursday), the Pictorial (Tuesday) and the Saturday Telegraph were produced in the Luton area. In effect, therefore, the Company produced a paper every two days, which meant that its coverage of news was reasonably up-to-date. Nevertheless, the Company was catering very largely to a captive market, in terms both of advertisers and of readers, and a steady circulation led it to be somewhat unenterprising both in its presentation of material (the Luton News was a two-part broadsheet which did not tend to be particularly eye-catching) and in its distribution (the Luton News was sold in neighbouring towns in competition with

DIAGRAM 13. CIRCULATION AREAS, LOCAL PRESS.



sister papers produced specifically for those towns).

The advent of the Evening Post and its sister paper the Evening Echo late in 1967 changed the situation completely. The circulation areas of the evening papers are very similar to those of the weeklies (see Diagram 13), and direct competition between the two has resulted. The Evening Post (which circulates in the Luton area) is produced by the Thomson Organisation, which adopted the approach to evening papers which it had previously pioneered in the Reading area via delivery boys and girls employed directly by the Company (thus cutting out the traditional newsagent and thereby reducing the selling price of the paper) and by making use of a method of photographic reproduction which improves the quality of print and especially of pictures.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Evening Post was not only challenging the Luton News in terms of the area of its circulation, but also by its greater frequency (six papers per week, when compared with three from North Home Counties Newspapers) and therefore fresher news, by its relative cheapness and by its better quality production.

The impact of the Evening Post upon the sales of the Luton News is illustrated in Table 29.

Table 29. Average Circulation Figures, Local Press.

Year	Luton News (weekly)	Evening Post (daily)
1964/65	45,313	---
1965/66	48,803	---
1966/67	45,251	---
1967/68	38,074	36,157
1968/69	30,006	48,473
1969/70	31,116	53,590
1970/71 (pre-audit estimate)	33,500	50,500

Source: Interviews with P.E. Lambourne (Advertising Manager, Luton News), 22nd. June 1971, and G. Seaward (Circulation Manager, Evening Post), 23rd. June 1971.

Note: All years refer to the period from the beginning of July until the end of the following June, except that 1967/68 for the Evening Post refers only to the period from January to June inclusive.

1. Interview with G. Seaward (Circulation Manager, Evening Post), 23rd. June 1971.

It can be seen from Table 29 that the effect of the introduction of the Evening Post late in 1967 upon the sales of the Luton News was substantial. Sales dropped from around 45,000 per week in the mid-1960s to little above 30,000 by the end of the decade. Not all of this decline can be attributed directly to the Evening Post, however, since North Home Counties Newspapers took the decision to cut the circulation area of the Luton News to stop competition with its sister papers, and to concentrate upon its household coverage in the Luton area into which the Evening Post was making inroads.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the impact of the Evening Post has been very large; the Fictional was dropped in 1968, the Saturday evening sports edition of the Saturday Telegraph was dropped in 1970 (and a special edition of the Evening Post stepped into the gap) and late in 1971 the Saturday Telegraph itself was dropped. By the end of 1971, therefore, all the Company's resources had been consolidated into the Luton News, which had been modified by the infusion of staff from the Company's group in South Essex (who brought with them a much more dramatic style of reporting) and by a change to a much more eye-catching tabloid size.<sup>3</sup> Intense competition between the two papers has been an important feature of their existence over the past few years, and this has extended to their reporting styles. A degree of complementarity might have been achieved by the Evening Post concentrating on up-to-the-minute reporting and by the Luton News, as a weekly, concentrating upon analysis in depth of issues, but this has not happened. Instead, the Luton News has responded to the challenge of the Evening Post by attempting to out-scoop and out-sensationalise it on important local issues. The reporting of matters concerned with the future of Luton Airport has followed this pattern.

The introduction of commercial jet operations from Luton Airport followed closely after the launching of the Evening Post, at a time when it was still building up its circulation. Its marketing policy was to aim at the woman of the house; and it was felt that she would be more interested in aircraft noise than in any other aspect of the issue.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the Evening Post concentrated upon noise, and in this sense it was congruent with the activities of LADACAN. As the most significant local issue to emerge since the launching of the Evening Post, the presentation of the issue of the expansion of Luton Airport was a means of attracting and retaining readership, and at that time (with

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2. Interview with P. E. Lambourne (Advertising Manager, Luton News), 22nd. June 1971.

3. Ibid.

LADACAN (growing very rapidly) there appeared to be a much greater market sympathetic to noise nuisance than to any of the other issues. LADACAN and the Evening Post appear to have contributed to each other's growth,<sup>5</sup> the former by demonstrating that there was a great deal of public protest against the growing noise nuisance and the latter by presenting a barrage of information about this problem. In terms of the process as a whole, the Evening Post made public a great deal of information about Luton Council's activities which otherwise would have been merely rumour, and 1968 in particular was marked by a series of sensational scoops about Airport matters in the paper. In particular, the publication of the Council's Management Group's report on possible alternative runway configurations under the banner headline "Airport Confidential" on 10th. July 1968 indicated the scale of the Council's thinking at that time to other interested organisations.<sup>6</sup>

The Luton News was losing readers, and the coverage given by the Evening Post to the Airport issue was a major factor in this process. The Luton News, in turn, began to cover the issue more extensively, and also angled its coverage quite strongly towards the noise lobby.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the Luton News began to counter-attack on the same ground as the Evening Post had chosen, and this has been a constant feature of their competition. The Luton News has tended to follow the Evening Post, but has often attempted to make its coverage look different by putting a different slant to the same story or by emphasising an aspect which the Evening Post has played down. In terms of publication dates, the Luton News is at a great disadvantage, since it is printed on a Wednesday afternoon for sale on a Thursday morning and is often pre-empted by Wednesday's Evening Post. This has been particularly unfortunate in relation to Luton Council's Airport Committee, which meets on a Tuesday evening, because the Evening Post reporters have been diligent in attempting to find out what happened in the confidential part of the meeting (that part from which the press is excluded) in time for Wednesday evening's paper and in advance of the availability of the Luton News. This disadvantage has never been overcome by the Luton News, and has added to the impression that the paper has always followed the lead of the Evening Post.

Both papers have moved away from concentration upon the noise issue towards an attempt to present the range of issues in a fairly neutral manner. Again,

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4. Interview with B. Bird (Municipal Reporter, Evening Post), 22nd. June 1971.

5. Ibid.

6. See Chapter 8, which examines possible means by which the Evening Post obtained such information.

7. Interview with Mrs. M. Sumpter (local Government Reporter, Luton News), 21st. June 1971.

the Luton News has followed the Evening Post in this respect, and the Evening Post's gradual change appears to have been a combination of five factors:-

- 1) the paper had become established, and had less need to play up noise issues in order to attract a target group of readers who had already been largely captured;
- 2) the emergence of a degree of support for Airport expansion in the area indicated that another target group of readers existed who, originally, had not been pursued;
- 3) since the replacement of Alderman Lester as Chairman of Luton's Airport Committee in September 1969, his successors (Councillors White and Dunnington) have been much more willing to talk to the local press, to supply comments on the understanding that they will not be attributed to them and to work to ensure as good a local press as they can;<sup>8</sup>
- 4) staff turnover within the Evening Post has resulted in people dealing with Airport issues who are less personally identified with the coverage of 1968 and who are seeking to present a more balanced coverage; and,
- 5) the Evening Post and Britannia Airways are both subsidiary companies within the Thomson Organisation, and the Organisation instructed the paper to tone down its coverage in case the interests of the airline were damaged by the adverse publicity and in case such a degree of involvement damaged the paper's potential circulation.<sup>9</sup>

Even so, both papers continued to give Airport matters extensive coverage, and the scope of this during the period of the direct observation study (June 1970 - August 1971) can be measured with some accuracy as an indication of the degree of this involvement.

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8. Interviews with Councillors White (2nd. April 1971) and Dunnington (29th. July 1971).

9. Interview with B. Bird, op. cit.

Table 30. Local Press Coverage of the Luton Airport Issue. 22nd. June 1970-20th. August 1971 (inclusive).

Type of Coverage.	North Home Counties Newspapers.				Evening Post.	
	Luton News.		Saturday Telegraph.		Number of items.	Column inches.
	Number of items.	Column inches.	Number of items.	Column inches.	Number of items.	Column inches.
Front Page main story.	4	137	2	62	26	882
Major news story.	40	841	5	70	40	690
Minor news story.	24	177	8	68	79	604
Editorial/comment.	6	67	0	0	2	15
Feature.	3	432	0	0	4	301
Letters to the Editor.	8	83	0	0	11	101
Cartoon.	0	0	0	0	1	35
Totals.	85	1,737	15	200	163	2,628
Number of issues during this period.	61			60		362
Average column inches per issue.	28.5			3.5		7
Average column inches per week.	28.5			3.5		43

Note: the difference between a major and a minor news story was judged according to its length, position and importance on the page and heaviness of type, and the number of column inches includes headline space. Routine stories about such matters as emergency procedures on the part of the fire service when an aircraft reported difficulties have been excluded, and the Table concentrates on matters related to Airport policy. The Table is an adaptation of a similar attempt in S. Greer. "Metropolitics". John Wiley and Sons. New York. 1963. Pages 67-71.

During the fourteen months of the direct observation study, the local press devoted over 4,500 column inches to Luton Airport policy. This was in a period when the reporting of Airport matters by the local press had diminished when compared with 1968 and 1969, for reasons discussed above, but the gross amount of coverage during this time was an equivalent (that is, not separating out head-

lines) of some 180,000 words.<sup>10</sup> To put this into a perspective, the local press during the period in question wrote an equivalent of something approaching double the length of this study in stories on Airport policy. Quite a bit of this took the form of duplication by the Luton News and the Evening Post, which would tend to reduce the gross amount of information imparted but to reinforce that of which use was made.

There are some significant differences in the involvement of the local press. The Saturday Telegraph, appearing as often as the Luton News, hardly covered the issue at all, and the paper was withdrawn shortly after the finish of the direct observation study. The Evening Post did not devote as much space per issue to Airport matters as did the Luton News, but it appeared much more frequently. In fact, in terms of coverage per week, the Evening Post exceeded the Luton News, although the fact that some of the latter's stories took the form of a weekly summary of items dealt with individually in the former probably indicates that their gross coverages were roughly comparable. In terms of types of coverage, the Evening Post is notable for the number of occasions on which Airport policy was the subject of its front page main story. Although the Luton News appears to be comparable in these terms (with one Airport front page main story per fifteen issues as compared with one per fourteen issues for the Evening Post), many of the individual items which the Evening Post made into front page main stories became major news stories in the other pages of the Luton News. This was because they had lost some of their freshness by virtue of the Evening Post's coverage, and because the Luton News did not wish to be seen as merely following the Evening Post's lead. The Luton News is notable for the number of major news stories devoted to Airport policy, which exceeds front page main stories and minor news stories combined, whereas the Evening Post's combination of front page main stories and minor news stories greatly exceeds its major news stories.

Another feature of the local press coverage has been the small number of letters to the Editor which have been published. In the founding days of LADACAN, this was one important means by which protestors were made aware of each other's existence,<sup>11</sup> but by the time of the direct observation study it had ceased to be an important feature of the process. It might be related to the lack of editorial and comment space devoted to Airport matters, since such articles form one method of provoking letters to the Editor. Neither of the papers has devoted much space to saying what Airport policy should be or to assessing what

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10. A column inch of newsprint in the Luton News and the Evening Post averages about 40 words.

11. See Chapter 13.

the interest of the public is within their circulation areas. Both have seen the Airport issue as a means of selling papers, and have adopted their reporting styles and coverages to what they think their readership wants. The swing to a relatively neutral style of reporting after the initial dramatisation of the noise issue is evidence of this, since it had become clear that a large number of divergent interests had stakes in Airport policy-making as well as LADACAN. Thus, the impact of the local press has been in terms of the transmission of information, which it has attempted on a large scale. It has not attempted to persuade people to take up particular viewpoints, but rather it has geared what it says and its method of reporting issues to the presumed viewpoints of its readership. It has not seen itself as the interpreter of the public interest on Airport matters; instead, Airport matters have been a major feature of the competition between the local papers, and the issues have been reported in a manner calculated to improve the competitive position of the newspaper in question.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Chambers.

The three Chambers involved (Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce, Luton and District Chamber of Trade, Luton and District Trades Council) each represent different constituencies. The Chamber of Commerce is concerned with local industry, and the Trades Council with trades unions. Each has been involved in the Luton Airport policy-making process through having a seat on the Luton Airport Consultative Committee, and in addition the Chamber of Commerce and the Trades Council regard themselves as having a wider interest in the issue. Their seats on the Consultative Committee derive from their position as spokesmen for wide, organised sectors of local life, and from the practice of Luton Council in using them in this capacity as sounding boards for various proposals.<sup>13</sup> Each of them will be examined in turn.

The Chamber of Commerce's involvement in Airport policy-making extends back to the earliest years of the project.<sup>14</sup> In those days, a municipal airport was regarded as being essential for the future needs of local industry, and the Chamber of Commerce supported the Council in the venture and joined with it in seeking to persuade Central Government to grant the necessary permissions. At that time, before the Labour party was an organised force in local politics,

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12. This is similar to Greer's conclusions about the part of the local press in the battles to obtain metropolitan reform in the Miami, Cleveland and St. Louis areas. S. Greer. "Metropolitica". John Wiley and Sons. New York. 1963. Pages 112-118.

13. Interview with J.V. Cowan (Town Clerk, Luton County Borough Council), 10th. March 1971.

there was a good deal of overlapping membership between the Chamber of Commerce and the Council,<sup>15</sup> and as a result the two organisations tended to work in harmony. The involvement of the Chamber of Commerce declined, however, when it became clear after World War II that local industry was not going to provide more than a fraction of the business required to run the Airport at a profit.<sup>16</sup>

Parallel with this development was the growth of the Labour party locally, and with the Council no longer being mainly composed of businessmen the general influence of the Chamber upon local politics declined. Nevertheless, the Chamber has retained an Air Transport Committee which wishes to promote Airport expansion, and the Council looks sufficiently favourably upon the Committee's activities to invite it to meet frequently in the Airport terminal building.

The Air Transport Committee is responsible to the Council of the Chamber, a body of some forty members drawn from the 540 member firms of the Chamber.<sup>17</sup> Several of the members of the Chamber's Council have expressed doubt about the noise problem, and as a consequence the Air Transport Committee's recommendations are not always accepted without question.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the Air Transport Committee sets the tone of the Chamber's involvement in the process. In August, 1971, the Committee had twenty-two members; eight came from the companies operating at the Airport, three came from Luton Council (two Conservative Alderman and the Airport Director, who is in practice an ex-officio member) and two others came from companies providing services to the airlines.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and at least three other members of the Committee were members of PLANE. In other words, the Committee had an inbuilt majority in favour of Airport expansion, although this did not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Chamber's members as a whole.<sup>20</sup>

The Chamber's influence with Luton Council depends to an extent upon which party is in control, since the three Council members who also sit on the Council of the Chamber are all Conservatives and the Chamber is strongly identified with the Conservative party in the locality (although by its constitution it is non-party). Even then, its influence with the Conservative group on Luton Council is probably not large, since that group in particular is jealous of its autonomy.<sup>21</sup> The doubts within Luton Council about Airport policy have been mirrored by doubts within the Council of the Chamber, and have begun to undermine the solidarity of the support which the latter traditionally has given to the former. The days when the views of the Chamber of Commerce as a spokesman for the collective interests of local business were a major factor in the Council's deliberations and when an alliance could be said to exist between them over Airport development

14. See Chapter 7.

15. Interview with H.H. Gore (Secretary, Chamber of Commerce), 7th. April 1971.

have long since disappeared. Now, the Chamber's main functions in the process are to demonstrate that a body of support for Luton Council's Airport policies does exist within the business community of Luton and to provide another vehicle by which the pressures of the operators might reach the Council.<sup>22</sup>

Very few of the Chamber of Trade's 700 members, the majority of whom are small shopkeepers, have any business connection with Luton Airport, and as a result the Chamber has not found it necessary to take up any position in public over Airport policy. A survey of its membership was undertaken in 1970, after the Chamber had been made a member of the Consultative Committee, and this indicated that the membership was split fairly evenly over Airport expansion. This encouraged the Chamber's representative in his attitude of neutrality at Consultative Committee meetings, from which he has not moved despite the efforts of both LADACAN and PLANE to attract his support. The question of influence over Luton Council does not really arise, since the Chamber has not entered the controversy over Airport policy, but it is a much smaller body than the Chamber of Commerce in terms of its income from subscriptions, it represents a much smaller sector of the local economy than does the Chamber of Commerce and it has never had the same degree of overlapping membership with Luton Council.

Consequently, should the Chamber of Trade choose to participate in the controversy in any sense wider than membership of the Consultative Committee at some future date, its influence would be expected to be less than that of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>23</sup>

The Trades Council played a part in the issue in 1968, largely through the activities of H. J. Aldridge. As a prominent local member of the Labour party, Mr. Aldridge had easy access to the Trades Council's officers (since the Trades Council is affiliated to the party), and in his capacity as Chairman of LADACAN he made use of this contact. Until September, 1969, the Trades Council remained in contact with LADACAN, and it looked as if it would add to the opposition strength on the Consultative Committee. As the number of jobs dependent upon Airport expansion grew, however, so did the pressure within the Trades Council to take no action which might place them in jeopardy. In September, 1969, just after it had been appointed to the Consultative Committee, the Trades Council changed its position over Airport policy because of the employment issue, and

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16. See Chapter 7.

17. Interview with H. H. Gore, *op. cit.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. Letter from R.N. Byrne (Chairman, Air Transport Committee) to the author, 8th. September 1971.

20. Mr. Gore (interview *op. cit.*) thought that there was still a small majority of the Chamber's members as a whole in favour of Airport expansion.

has remained pro-expansionist since then. Shortly after this change, the regularity of the representation of the Trades Council at Consultative Committee meetings declined, following a change of delegate to one who was sympathetic to the new view but who had difficulty in obtaining time off from work to attend meetings. Consequently, the Trades Council has not played a significant part in the process since its change of attitude, since its contact

with L.DACAN dropped away when it became clear that there was no real chance of the decision being reversed. This has not been replaced by any contact with PLANE or any of the other pro-expansion groups.

The claim of the Trades Council to represent the views of Airport workers would be strengthened if it could persuade the British Airline Pilots Association to affiliate, but so far BALPA, as a highly specialised craft union, has taken the view that it has nothing to gain from such an involvement. Even so, sufficient trades unions with members employed at the Airport have affiliated to ensure that employment considerations will remain uppermost in the Trades Council's deliberations on the issue. This is a source of some strength in its relations with the Labour group on Luton Council. The Trades Council represents approximately 80 union branches with 40,000 members, and this ability to present the combined views of a substantial group of workers in any industry or group of related industries is complemented by a degree of **cross-membership** with the Labour group. Following the elections of May, 1971, six members of the group were also members of the Trades Council. In terms of Luton Airport policy-making, however, both the group and the Trades Council are essentially expansionist in their views, and so it has not been necessary to attempt to exert any influence. The Conservative group on Luton Council tends to take very little notice of the Trades Council, although this has not affected the Airport policy-making process since their views have been congruent. To date, therefore, the involvement of the Trades Council in the process has been limited to its preliminary linkages with L.DACAN, its infrequent representation at meetings of the Airport Consultative Committee and its linkages with the Labour group on Luton Council. Should the Labour group appear likely to change its attitude to Airport expansion (as was possible for a while during 1971, although in the end

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21. See Chapter 11.

22. This section is based upon interviews with the five members of the Chamber of Commerce listed in Appendix 1.

23. Interview with N.J. Gurney (Secretary, Chamber of Trade), 24th. June 1971.

this did not materialise), the Trades Council, in its capacity as the group representing a high proportion of the people dependent upon the Airport for a job, would probably attempt to use its linkages with the Labour group to ensure that these jobs are not endangered. As yet, however, its ability to achieve an objective such as this has not been tested.<sup>24</sup>

In general, the Chambers exist to promote the welfare of their members by providing a vehicle for the resolution of disagreements between them, by supplying information and (more particularly) by representing to Luton Council their members' interests in matters of public concern. It has been in this last sense that the Chambers have played a part in the Airport policy-making process. This place has not been a major one, although in part this has been because they have tended not to differ markedly in what they have wanted from the policies that Luton Council has been pursuing. In this sense, the support for much of the time of the two largest Chambers (the Chamber of Commerce and the Trades Council) has been welcome to the Council, and perhaps has helped it to withstand some of the pressures to which it has been subjected over Airport policy. By virtue of their identification (either covertly or overtly) with the two parties on Luton Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Trades Council have related their potential influence over Airport policy to the party political situation on the Council, although whilst the Chambers and the parties remain in broad agreement over policy this is unlikely to be significant. In the event of disagreement, however, the ability of the Chamber of Commerce to influence the Conservative group is more doubtful than that of the Trades Council to influence the Labour group, although both would find it extremely difficult to influence the party other than the one with which they are identified.

#### The Operators.

The close relationship between the operators and Luton Council has already been dealt with at some length.<sup>25</sup> It was argued that this relationship could be regarded as being in effect a business partnership, which worked on close personal contacts and mutual understanding in the early 1960s and into which an element of bargaining was introduced in the late 1960s when the Conservative group found it politically necessary to impose a cutback on the night jet flying programme for the 1970 season. This strained the relationship but did not break it down, and it has remained essentially symbiotic. At the public inquiries of

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24. Interview with A. E. Llewellyn (Secretary, Trades Council), 3rd. July 1971.

25. See Chapters 8 and 10.

March, 1970 and January, 1972, witnesses for Luton Council's case were provided by both the airlines and the tour operators, and many of the negotiations between the Council and the airlines are carried out through the medium of a former Town Clerk of Luton who is a director of one of the airlines.<sup>26</sup> In addition, working linkages between the Council and the airlines have been established through committees to deal with scheduling and with noise complaints. This relationship between the Council and the operators is thus a strong and important one, and the operators have almost certainly influenced Luton Council over Airport policy much more than any other organisation examined in this study, although the situation of a fundamental disagreement between them over the general direction of policy has never existed to put their relationship to any severe test.

In addition to these direct contacts between the operators and Council members and officers, the operators have brought pressure to bear upon the Council through their support for PLANE<sup>27</sup> and through their representation on the Air Transport Committee of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>28</sup> On top of this, the tour operators have established their own pressure group, the Tour Operators Study Group. This tends to concern itself more with the organisation of the inclusive tour industry as a whole (and, in consequence, with putting pressure upon the Department of Trade and Industry, which has certain regulatory powers over the industry) than with the problems at particular airports, but it has played a direct part in the Airport policy-making process on one occasion. This was after the Council had decided to impose a tax on passengers using the Airport, and TOSG argued that this was unreasonable since it was an extra payment which passengers would have to meet and which had not been advertised in the tour operators' brochures.<sup>29</sup> Whilst the Council expressed sympathy with this viewpoint,<sup>30</sup> it considered that it was entitled to a form of revenue which is standard at international airports. TOSG remains another arm by which the operators can bring pressure to bear on Luton Council if necessary. That they have hardly needed to use it is probably indicative of a general satisfaction with the nature

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26. Interview with A. D. Harvey (Director, Court Line), 1st. July 1971.

27. See Chapter 13.

28. See above.

29. Evening Post, 12th. November 1970. Saturday Telegraph, 14th. November 1970. Luton News, 19th. November 1970.

30. Interview with D.G. MacQueen (former Secretary, Tour Operators Study Group), 9th. August 1971.

of their relationship with Luton Council.

#### Vauxhall Motors.

Relations between Vauxhall Motors and Luton Council are normally very close, since the economy of the town is dependent upon the motor vehicle industry. As well as a "high level of informal contact",<sup>31</sup> several Council members work for the Company<sup>32</sup> and, whilst it is Company policy not to involve itself in local politics, it is tacitly understood that these members will look after the Company's interests. No obstacles are put in their way in terms of taking time off work to attend Council functions.<sup>33</sup> In addition to this political significance, the Company contributes just over one-eighth of the rateable value of the County Borough of Luton.<sup>34</sup> It is perhaps hardly surprising that the Council tends to take a conciliatory attitude to the Company, which tends to find little difficulty in obtaining necessary permissions from the Council or in getting agreements for public works such as roads to be undertaken. For example, Mr. Frankish could remember no occasion on which Luton Council had ever refused his Company planning permission,<sup>35</sup> and at least one major permission in recent years has been <sup>given</sup> to the Company by the Planning Committee against the advice of the Council's planning staff.<sup>36</sup>

Vauxhall Motors' opposition to Airport expansion thus diverges from the normal pattern of Company-Council relations. The company's main factory is about a quarter of a mile from the runway, and its opposition is based upon fears about safety,<sup>37</sup> competition for labour, the effect of noise upon productivity and the congestion caused by the intermingling of Airport and Company traffic. The Company has taken the view that a greatly expanded Airport would interfere very considerably with its activities, and has made representations accordingly at the public inquiries of March, 1970 and January, 1972. In general, however, it has been satisfied with Luton Council's change from a policy of "natural expansion" to one of "controlled expansion", and has limited its activities to appearances at the public inquiries and to ensuring that the Council remains aware of its views.<sup>38</sup> Despite being approached, it has refused to ally itself with LADACAN, taking the view that the objectives of the two are very different and

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31. Interview with J.K. Frankish (Assistant Secretary, Vauxhall Motors), 8th. March, 1971.

32. After the 1971 local elections, this figure was five plus two retired members or 15% of the Council's membership.

33. Interview with J. K. Frankish, op. cit.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

that inevitably it would be dragged into local politics.<sup>39</sup>

From the Council's viewpoint, Airport expansion is useful as one method of diversifying the employment base of the County Borough, provided that this is not done at the expense of Vauxhall Motors. Consequently, the objections of the Company to major expansion, which might create problems of this nature, have been an important feature of the Council's adaptation of its Airport policy to the pressures it has faced. It is impossible to assess in any quantitative manner how significant the pressures of Vauxhall Motors have been in this respect when compared with other opponents of Airport expansion, but it is clear that representations on the part of the Company tend naturally to register with many Council members, and this effect is achieved without the extensive campaigning and lobbying which many other organisations have found necessary.

#### Luton Flying Club.

The Flying Club has been a long-standing user of Luton Airport, and until the late 1960s most of the total number of aircraft movements from the Airport took the form of Club flights. The growth of commercial air traffic in the 1960s did not affect the growth of Club traffic, which expanded from 4,700 hours' flying time (about 28,000 movements) in 1966 to about 5,500 hours (33,000 movements) in 1971.<sup>40</sup> As a user of the Airport's facilities, the Club is not against expansion provided that its position can be safeguarded. Constraints on the use of airspace have not been a major problem, since the Club has always operated in controlled airspace, although the growth of commercial jet movements has led the Club to look for other sites for ab initio flight training because of the danger of collision with commercial flights.<sup>41</sup> The Club's major work in future is likely to be in air taxis and light charters, and Airport expansion is likely to encourage such activities rather than to retard them.<sup>42</sup>

The major problem that the Club has faced has been in connection with the facilities which were the subject of the public inquiry of March, 1970. The proposals included the extension of car parking arrangements, which would involve the new facilities coming dangerously close to the Club's landing and take off area. Initial representations to the Council achieved no alterations to the proposals, and so the Club decided to give evidence at the public inquiry about the potential impact of increased car parking upon the Club's activities.<sup>43</sup>

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36. Interview with S. McArdle (Deputy Borough Planning Officer), 13th. January 1971.

37. The only crash at the Airport in recent years involved the pilot of a training aircraft losing control and crashing on the paint shop at Vauxhall Motors' factory, fortunately when it was empty over a holiday period. See Chapter 8.

This appeared to demonstrate to the Council that the Club regarded the difficulty as being serious, and an amendment to the car parking areas proposed was negotiated to enable light aircraft to use the Club's field (which is perpendicular to the concrete runway) without impediment.<sup>44</sup> Other than this, however, the Club has kept out of the Airport policy-making process. An approach from LADACAN once the Club had let it be known that it would appear at the 1970, public inquiry was rebuffed, and PLANE has been similarly unsuccessful in recruiting the Club. Sufficient action has been taken to safeguard the Club's position, but any wider involvement would have offered no significant gains whilst adding a complication to its relationship with its landlord, Luton Council.<sup>45</sup>

#### London Gliding Club.

The London Gliding Club has been involved in the Luton Airport policy-making process because of airspace problems. The Club's site, approximately six miles due west of Luton Airport on the Dunstable Downs, was specifically chosen in 1930 because of its geometrically near perfect slope for lift generation and because the west-facing slope of the Downs provides a barrier to the prevailing westerly winds and enables prolonged gliding to take place in the updraught in front of the Downs. The coincidence of these factors makes the site unique in Britain, and as a consequence the Club is the largest single civilian gliding club in Britain with over 500 members, and is regularly chosen as the venue of the British gliding championships.<sup>46</sup>

Airspace conflict with Luton Airport did not start until after the introduction of commercial jet operations in 1968. By 1969, however, the British Airline Pilots Association had started to lobby for controlled airspace around the Airport, and this could have placed severe restraints upon the Gliding Club's activities. The problem of airspace conflict could not be solved by vertical segregation, because the existence overhead of airlines used by

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38. Interview with J. K. Frankish, op. cit.

39. Ibid.

40. Interview with F. Pinchin (Managing Director, Luton Flying Club), 10th. June 1971.

41. Luton Council offered, and the Flying Club subsequently accepted, compensation of £15,000 for the loss of ab initio flying because of Airport expansion. Luton News, 5th. August 1971.

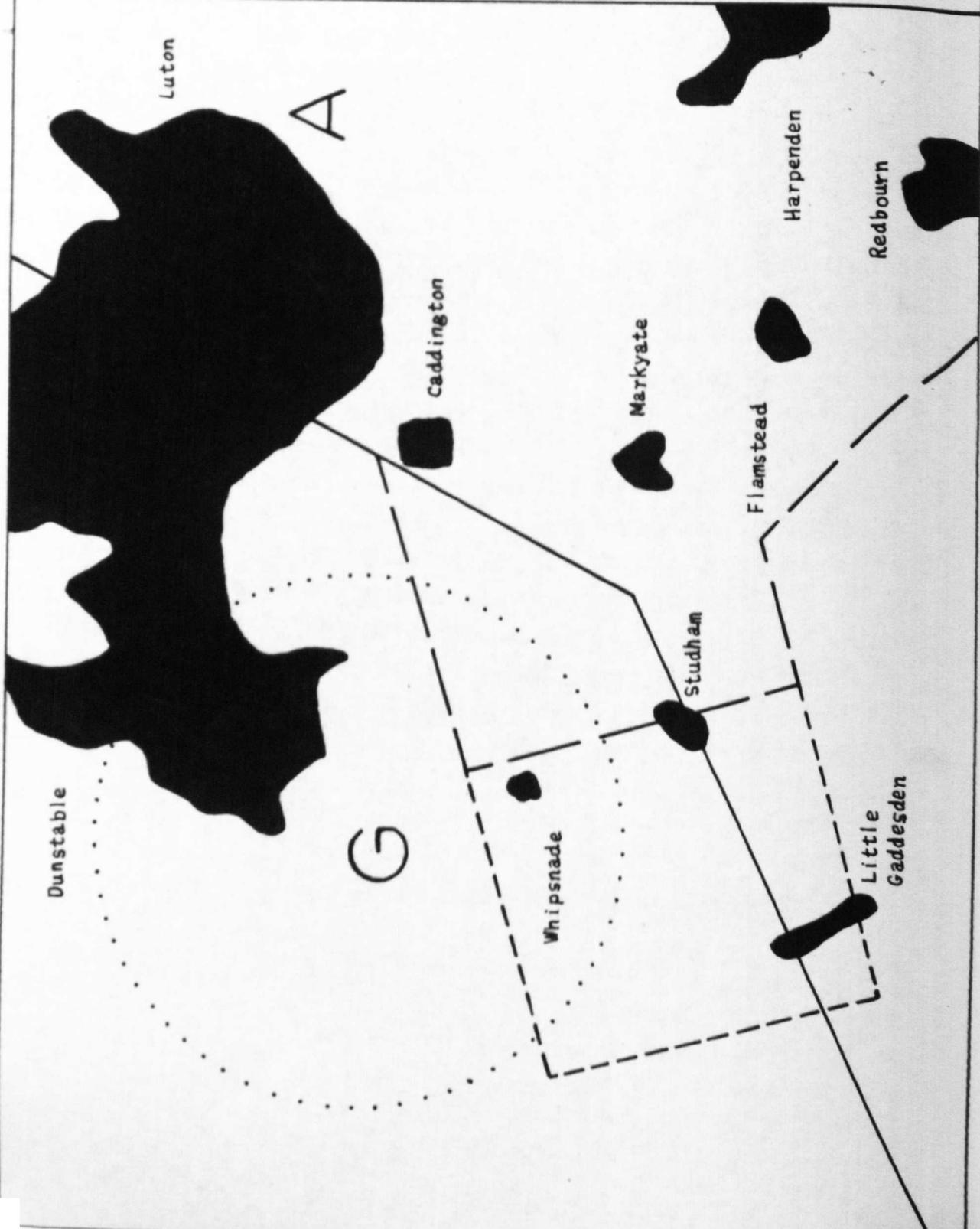
42. Interview with F. Pinchin, op. cit.

43. Evidence of F. Pinchin to the public local inquiry into Luton Airport expansion proposals, 12th. March 1970.

44. Interview with F. Pinchin, op. cit.

45. Ibid.

DIAGRAM 14. AIRSPACE ARRANGEMENTS, LUTON AIRPORT AND LONDON GLIDING CLUB.



Notation.

- Major settlements.
- Boundary of London Terminal Marshalling area (forms part of S.R.Z. boundary).
- Special Rules Zone.
- Special Rules Area.
- London Gliding Club Traffic Zone.
- A** Luton Airport (symbolic).
- G** London Gliding Club (symbolic).

Source: evidence of J. R. Jeffries on behalf of LADACAN, public inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, January 1972.



Heathrow traffic placed a ceiling of 3,000 feet above sea level upon aircraft operations in the area. The Board of Trade, in response to BALPA's request, prepared a draft control zone for Luton Airport in 1969, to which the Gliding Club objected strongly. Matters of this nature are dealt with by a process of consultation between the interested parties before the Minister is advised by the Civil Aircraft Control Advisory Committee (CACAC). The British Gliding Association, of which the Gliding Club is an important member, has a seat on CACAC as does BALPA, and the two disagreed strongly about the proposal. The Gliding Club found it expedient to join LADACAN, in particular to make use of its contacts with the local M.P.s, and it began to exert pressure at the political level as well as through CACAC. The Board of Trade was anxious that the public should not get the impression that in any sense Luton Airport was an unsafe airport, and so was anxious to be seen to be implementing some form of control. After negotiations lasting for virtually eight months, and after CACAC had found it necessary to set up an ad hoc study panel to deal with the problem, a compromise was eventually agreed which came into operation on 2nd. April 1970.<sup>47</sup> This involved the institution of a much smaller Special Rules Zone/Special Rules Area than had been proposed originally, into which a special Traffic Zone for the London Gliding Club was inserted. Only traffic wishing to land at Luton Airport could enter the Special Rules Zone, whereas London Gliding Club traffic could enter the Special Rules Area provided that visibility was good and that Luton Air Traffic Control had not indicated that the space would be required. The only traffic allowed in the Gliding Club's Zone was to be traffic wishing to land at its airfield, apart from that part of the Zone which overlapped with the Special Rules Zone/Special Rules Area, which was to be the subject of a special agreement between Luton Council and the Gliding Club.<sup>48</sup>

This complicated compromise (see Diagram 14) satisfied neither of the proponents, but the London Gliding Club had achieved something. It had become clear that the Board of Trade intended to institute some form of control, and so the Club's activities were oriented away from arguing that in principle this was unnecessary and towards attempting to reduce its extent. In this, the Club was successful. The original proposals were modified substantially to take account of the Club's activities, and a working agreement was drawn up between the Club and Luton

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46. Evidence of J.R. Jeffries (Manager/Chief Flying Instructor, London Gliding Club) to the public local inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, January 1972.

47. By NOLM 114/1970 and Aeronautical Information Circular 28/1970. Board of Trade, March 1970.

Council as to the area of overlap between the Special Rules Zone/Special Rules Area and the Club's Traffic Zone. The Club's position was that it could continue to operate reasonably freely with this degree of control, but that any extension of the control would greatly hinder its activities. Lobbying at the political level via the M.P.'s with which LADACAN worked and through the British Gliding Association's representation on CACAC had achieved this much, and the public inquiries of March, 1970 and January, 1972 were used to press home the point that any further Airport expansion which necessitated more stringent control would render the Club's position extremely precarious. Its relationships with BALPA worsened considerably as a result of the fight, however, and BALPA has been extremely successful in obtaining a sympathetic national press and in managing to portray the gliding fraternity as a small elite endangering the vast majority of the public (as potential airline passengers) by the refusal to accept controlled airspace.<sup>49</sup> BALPA has been pressing for the controls to be extended, and in this sense the Club sees itself as being under a permanent state of siege.<sup>50</sup>

The tactical decision to join and make use of LADACAN brought with it problems, particularly in connection with the Club's relationship with Luton Council. The Council stayed out of the airspace fight as far as possible (although as an air traffic control authority it was consulted), taking the view that this was essentially a national problem and that it should be resolved at that level. At the same time, it did not want to be portrayed as being responsible for the demise of one of the amenities of the area as a result of its Airport expansion policies, and so it favoured some form of compromise with the Club. By joining LADACAN the Club took the calculated risk that this action would not draw the Council into the airspace fight. At the same time, by joining LADACAN the Club associated itself with action in certain areas (such as night noise abatement, employment, spatial planning and many of the other issue areas into which LADACAN has been forced) in which it had no real interest, and over which, as a result, it was open to attack. The Club has been careful, therefore, to stress the limited extent of its alliance with LADACAN: for example:-

"It would be appropriate at this stage to state that in opposing Luton's application for those works which are the subject of this inquiry, that (sic) the concern of the London Gliding Club is quite simply to protect itself from any further airspace restrictions or problems imposed or caused directly or indirectly by such works. For this reason the objective of its opposition may not necessarily be in accord with some of those of LADACAN. LADACAN supports the London Gliding Club in so far as airspace restrictions represent, in their own way, a very real loss of public amenity." 51

Luton Council has made some attempts to prise apart the coalition between the Club and LADACAN by pointing out that no further increase in control should be

necessary.<sup>52</sup> Although, as yet, this has been unsuccessful, a more stable policy situation may render the Club's LADACAN contacts a nuisance rather than a benefit to it, and it is clear that the Club cannot be regarded in the same light as the other LADACAN affiliates. If its position could be safeguarded, it would have no need to oppose the expansion of Luton Airport, and thus no need of membership of LADACAN. The Club joined because it was expedient to do so, and would leave if it became no longer expedient to remain a member.<sup>53</sup>

#### British Airline Pilots Association.

The outlines of the process whereby controlled airspace was instituted in the area surrounding Luton Airport have been described above. BALPA's part in this was essentially instigatory and promotional. The rapid rate of traffic growth at Luton Airport had outstripped air traffic control measures in the area, and some of the 400 BALPA members who made regular use of Luton Airport started to express worries about air safety. The Board of Trade took very little notice of BALPA's initial representations, arguing that the Airport was not unsafe and that this was demonstrated by the lack of "air-miss" reports received in respect of Luton. BALPA immediately instigated a campaign to persuade members using the Airport to file "air-miss" reports whenever there was any justification, but again the Board of Trade took little notice. At that time (early 1969), BALPA was concentrating on air safety, and the fact that its Vice-Chairman happened to be a pilot with Britannia Airways and thus was personally acquainted with the problem around Luton Airport appears to have been a major factor in BALPA's decision to choose this as a test case.<sup>54</sup>

BALPA's method under such circumstances is usually to attempt to mount a campaign in the national press. In this, it is fortunate in having a Public Relations Officer who was formerly a staff reporter with the Daily Mail, and who as a matter of policy "wines and dines" the aviation correspondents of the major national newspapers at regular intervals.<sup>55</sup> This policy of providing information through informal personal contacts has proved to be extremely successful, and its success in relation to the Luton airspace controversy was enhanced by the fact that the release of information coincided with the summer holiday period, which is regarded by the national press as being a time when news is relatively scarce.<sup>56</sup> In addition, BALPA added to the controversy by issuing a directive

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49. See below.

50. Interview with J. R. Jeffries, op. cit.

51. Evidence of J. R. Jeffries, op. cit.

52. Ibid.

53. Interview with J. R. Jeffries, op. cit.

to its members that if pilots found it necessary for safety reasons to ignore noise abatement procedures at Luton, they would be supported by their union. This was an unnecessary directive, since air safety matters always take precedence over other factors, but it was issued with an eye to the national press.<sup>57</sup> In this, it was highly successful, and for several days in July and August, 1969 the story was given a great deal of space by the national press, and the coverage tended to be sympathetic to the pilots' views as being on the side of public safety.<sup>58</sup> The effect of all this publicity was that Anthony Crosland, then President of the Board of Trade, called BALPA's representatives to see him on 8th. August, 1969 and promised that controls would be imposed, provided that BALPA made it clear that its directive about ignoring noise abatement procedures did not promise carte blanche support for all such activities and hence a general increase in noise nuisance.<sup>59</sup> The Board of Trade was thus committed to imposing a degree of control, although the light aviation lobby rallied around the London Gliding Club through its representation on the Civil Aviation Control Advisory Committee, and the Board of Trade eventually produced a compromise control policy.

BALPA's activities were essentially particular to itself. Its press campaign (which even led to a leader article on the subject of air safety around Luton Airport in The Times, on 12th. August 1969) was instigated with a specific end in view, and no help was required for the purpose of running this campaign. BALPA's close and personal contacts with the national press led to the only significant coverage of the Luton Airport issue which there has been at that level, and this amount of publicity plus the implied threat that extra aircraft noise could be created at the discretion of individual pilots who would be supported by BALPA were very powerful weapons. BALPA was able to get the Board of Trade to commit itself to the principle of airspace control around Luton Airport, although it was not able to obtain the degree of control it had wanted. The activities of the London Gliding Club, supported by the light aviation lobby, led to a compromise between the two positions being worked out by the Board of Trade.

LADACAN approached BALPA with a view to the two organisations joining forces<sup>60</sup> but their objectives were clearly divergent. BALPA could not agree to any

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54. Interview with Captain J. Richardson (former Vice-Chairman, BALPA), 9th. June 1971.

55. Interview with G. Hurley (Public Relations Officer, BALPA), 18th. June 1971.

56. Ibid.

57. Interview with Captain J. Richardson, op. cit.

58. The Times, 28th. July 1969. Daily Telegraph, 29th. July 1969, Daily

action which would reduce the level of activity at Luton Airport and place its members' jobs in jeopardy, and an alliance with LADACAN had nothing to offer the pilots. Apart from BALPA's obvious contacts via its individual members with the airline operators who employ them, its linkages with other participants in the process have been limited to its ability to bring pressure to bear upon the Board of Trade (Department of Trade and Industry) by way of the national press, and its opposition to the light aviation lobby which has taken organisational form through their common membership of CACAC. The Gliding Club and BALPA watch each other's activities very carefully, and future airspace quarrels (if they arise) are likely to be fanned by their mutual animosity.

#### National Farmers Union.

As a body, N.F.U.'s main concern with the Luton Airport issue has been over the implications of expansion to the levels anticipated in the Snow Report.<sup>61</sup> In terms of the agricultural issues involved, the Union would not have appeared at the 1970 public inquiry without the feeling that it was important to register an objection in principle to development which might contribute to expansion to the scale anticipated in the Report. Its involvement even in this sense was promoted by the activities of LADACAN, both through personal contacts between J. Williams and N.S.C. Reid for LADACAN and N. Wallace for the N.F.U.,<sup>62</sup> and through LADACAN members pressing their County branches (the Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire and Hertfordshire branches) to press the Union to take part.<sup>63</sup> The N.F.U. appeared at the public inquiry, but only to make a statement about the agricultural implications of the specific proposals under consideration; by arrangement with LADACAN, it associated itself with LADACAN's wider and longer-term arguments, but did not develop them.<sup>64</sup> This was merely a working agreement, which emerged as a result of personal contacts, and which involved neither a contribution to LADACAN's inquiry expenses nor any form of affiliation. Similar attempts were made in relation to the public inquiry of January, 1972, but they fell down because constitutionally the Union could only involve itself in local issues at the request of one of its County branches, and this administrative necessity was not set in train until too late.<sup>65</sup> As a substitute,

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Express, 8th. August 1969, Guardian, 8th. August 1969, Sun, 8th. August 1969, The Times, 8th. August 1969, Daily Telegraph, 9th. August 1969, Guardian, 9th. August 1969, The Times, 9th. August 1969, The Times, 12th. August 1969.

59. Interview with G. Hurley, op. cit.

60. Interview with Captain Richardson, op. cit.

61. See Chapter 8.

62. See Chapter 13.

Mr. Reid registered the objection of the Hertfordshire branch of the N.F.U. in his evidence to the inquiry on behalf on LADACAN.

The involvement of the N.F.U., therefore, has been solely in relation to the public inquiries, and has been linked very closely to the activities of LADACAN. The objections of the local branches have been registered, but little else, and to the Union the issue was not one of any great significance requiring any more extensive action.<sup>66</sup>

#### Association of British Travel Agents.

All the travel agents in the Luton area have been members of PLANE, and it has been upon PLANE that their activities have been focussed.<sup>67</sup> Although ABTA has a seat on the Consultative Committee, this is best regarded as a de facto PLANE seat, and in no sense other than this purely formal one has ABTA played any part in the Airport policy-making process.

#### Conclusions.

Several of the special interest groups appear to have played an important part in the process. The airline and tour operators' position in Airport policy-making has been a critical one, and their symbiotic business relationship with Luton Council has withstood the many pressures that the Council has faced. By virtue of the importance of the Company in the local economy, Vauxhall Motors' worries about Airport expansion have registered with many Luton Council members and have contributed to their doubts about Airport policy. The local press, regarding the issue of Airport expansion as a field of competition for readership has contributed a flow of information which has remained extensive. Others have obtained successes which are not so significant in terms of the process as a whole but which have been important to them. Both BALPA and the London Gliding Club achieved some of their objectives in the airspace controversy, and the outcome of their efforts was a compromise between their views. The Luton Flying Club was able to get a proposal changed because of its potentially damaging effect upon its operations although, like the National Farmers Union and the Association of British Travel Agents, its involvement in the process as a whole has not been extensive. The Chamber of Commerce and the Trades Council achieved relatively

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63. Interview with N. Wallace (Head of the Land Use and Transport Department, N.F.U.), 18th. June 1971.

64. Ibid.

65. Interview with N.S.C. Reid (Executive Chairman, LADACAN, and member of the Hertfordshire branch of the N.F.U.), 3rd. January 1972.

66. Interview with N. Wallace, op. cit.

little, and in the case of the former its impact upon the Airport policy-making process has declined since the early 1950s. The support of such organised groups of opinion has been valuable to the Council, however, and in addition party political contacts enable their opinions to be channelled to and received by the Council on a systematic basis. The Chamber of Trade, with no significant interest at stake, remained neutral on the Consultative Committee and played no other part in the process.

Thus, the special interest groups involved in the Luton Airport policy-making process have been an heterogeneous collection, although they have tended to exhibit certain common behavioural features. By and large, they have tended to operate in relative isolation from one another and only to take positive action from time to time during the policy-making process when issues particularly affecting them have been prominent. They have tended not to become involved in coalitions, and in many cases they have resisted the attempts of organisations such as LADACAN and PLANE to enrol them. Even where they have joined (for example, in the case of the London Gliding Club's decision to join LADACAN), this has tended to be because of specific advantages which appeared likely to accrue at that time rather than in terms of a general commitment for or against Airport expansion, and it has been clear that they did not necessarily see themselves as permanent members of the coalition. Apart from the confrontation between the London Gliding Club and the British Airline Pilots Association, they have had very little contact with each other, and have not sought to develop such contacts. Instead, they have concentrated upon attempts to influence Central Government and Luton Council as being the two organisations with powers to affect their interests in the Airport policy-making process. These methods of working have led to a discrete pattern of special interest group involvement, oriented towards the business or employment situation of the organisation itself or of the people it represents. In this sense, whereas the general interest groups can be seen as being heavily committed to "amenity" issues, the special interest groups were involved in "economic" issues, and this concern with different kinds of issue areas is another factor in the relative lack of contact between the two.

The strength of the special interest groups, when they care to make use of it, lies in their concentrated nature. Their involvement in the process is limited to matters of direct concern to them, and their stakes in these matters are an important resource. They do not need to claim that their wishes are "in the public interest", since they have widely recognised stakes in certain issue

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67. Interview with R. Simmons (ABTA member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee, and Treasurer, PLANE), 28th. July 1971. See Chapter 13.

areas central to their existence, and as far as possible attempts are often made to conciliate them because of the intrinsic and accepted importance of these stakes. Their behaviour patterns tend to follow from this factor. There is no advantage to them in diffusing their efforts over a wide variety of issue areas in which they have no particular interest and to which their expertise resources are not particularly related, nor is there any advantage in placing in jeopardy their developed communication channels and relationships with Central and Local Government by ranging outside their accepted areas of interest. This is the major reason for the lack of formal and (to a lesser extent) informal relationships between the general and the special interest groups; apart from in specific instances, the latter would have too little to gain and too much to lose by such action.

## Chapter 15. Regional Planning Agencies.

### Introduction.

If it were not for the fact that the operations of regional planning agencies form a special sub-interest of this study, it would barely be necessary to examine their involvement in the Luton Airport policy-making process. They have been characterised by their absence from the process rather than by their presence, and this Chapter is concerned to identify the factors which have contributed to this situation.

The distinction between regional planning agencies and contributors to the regional planning process has been outlined in Chapter 1.<sup>1</sup> Basically, the former are agencies concerned to take a comprehensive overview of a developing regional or sub-regional situation, whereas the latter are agencies concerned with component parts of that situation. This Chapter deals only with the regional planning agencies extant within the Luton Airport policy-making process, and seven such organisations can be identified; Central Government in its capacity as a regional planning agency, the South-East Economic Planning Council and Board, the Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning, the South-East Joint Planning Team, the South Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Study and the Chilterns Standing Conference. Each of these is examined in turn.

### Central Government as a Regional Planning Agency.

In addition to the involvement of Central Government in the Luton Airport policy-making process in the several capacities which will be examined in Chapter 16, it has also been involved both as a regional planning agency per se and as the instigator of other such agencies. When Central Government acts as a regional planning agency, regional planning is carried out by and within the normal organs of Central Government (usually a Ministry or combination of Ministries) without the creation of separate organisations to undertake such tasks and in addition to its normal functions of national economic management. In other words, the tasks of managing the economy and the

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1. See Page 27.

environment of some or all of the regions within the country are superimposed upon the other functions of Central Government, and conflict-resolution between the regional and the national levels remains intra-rather than inter-Governmental. The French regional planning system appears to be a good example of a situation within which the involvement of Central Government as a regional planning agency is a key feature.<sup>2</sup> Nothing approaching a comparable degree of involvement in the Luton Airport policy-making process on the part of Central Government has occurred, although certain significant elements have been discernable.

In England, ever since the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, the task of evaluating local authority development plans against (amongst other things) the advisory regional plans which had been prepared has fallen to Central Government. The Ministry which has undertaken this task has changed its name several times, but whether it was called the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Department of the Environment or anything else the job remained essentially the same. Some sort of wider context was required for evaluating development plans, and in undertaking this function (perhaps with the help of an advisory regional plan) the Ministry was acting as a de facto regional planning agency. As the regional advisory plans became more out of date, the essential regional work devolved more and more upon the Ministry in default of it being done by any other organisation. By the early 1960s, it was clear in the South-East that the Abercrombie plans of 1943 and 1944 had been considerably out of date in many ways for some time, and an attempt was made to put together a more coherent regional context by the publication of the South-East Study.<sup>3</sup> Such an attempt was aimed not only at the ongoing process of development plan evaluation, although the extent to which the Abercrombie plans had become out of date was probably indicated at least in part by this process, but also at providing a context within which development within the region could be guided to appropriate locations and hence at improving plans submitted.

At the same time, a different Ministry had been undertaking another kind of regional planning activity. Industrial Development Certificates had been required since the Town and Country Planning Act, and in terms of the South-East they were granted sparingly. Industrial location policy, of which I.D.C.'s formed the "stick" part, was geared very largely to the needs of the peripheral regions, although its application was somewhat uneven.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, indus-

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2. J.R. Boudeville. "Problems of Regional Economic Planning". Edinburgh University Press. Edinburgh. 1968. S. S. Cohen. "Modern Capitalist Planning: the French Model." Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London. 1969. M.M. Hansen. "French Regional Planning." Edinburgh University Press. Edinburgh. 1968.

trial location policy was clearly an important aspect of regional planning activities, although it tended to be regarded as being something separate from the regional planning activities described in the previous paragraph and was administered by a different Ministry (the Board of Trade). Thus, a comprehensive overview of regional development policy was lacking.<sup>5</sup> One of the functions of the Department of Economic Affairs which was created by the new Labour Government shortly after it gained office in 1964 was to attempt to provide such an overview, and the Economic Planning Councils and Boards were created to help in this respect.<sup>6</sup> Thus, at least three Ministries in the mid-1960s were also acting in one form or another as regional planning agencies, and the activities of many of the others were also highly pertinent. The inter-Departmental difficulties to which this situation led contributed to the consolidation of several of the relevant Ministries into the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Planning (Labour Government) and the Department of the Environment (Conservative Government), although the industrial location functions still remained outside these empires.

In terms of the Luton Airport policy-making process, the regional officers of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Department of the Environment have played an important part in determining the wider context within which decisions about Airport policy have been taken. As well as making recommendations to the Minister about the Luton and Dunstable Town Map and about specific planning applications, they played a part in the South Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Study,<sup>7</sup> a major part in the South-East Joint Planning Team<sup>8</sup> and, through the newly-created South-East regional office of the Department of the Environment, appear to have retained the critical task of monitoring the region's development following the acceptance in principle of most of the Team's proposals.<sup>9</sup> In addition, they were represented on the South-East

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3. Ministry of Housing and Local Government. "The South-East Study, 1961-1981." H.M.S.O. London, 1964.

4. G. McCrone. "Regional Policy in Britain." George Allen and Unwin. London, 1969. Pages 106-166.

5. Ibid. Pages 223-247.

6. J. P. Mackintosh. "The Devolution of Power." Chatto and Windus, Charles Knight. London, 1968. Pages 83, 101 - 110.

7. See below.

8. See below.

9. Press Notice 233M. Department of the Environment, 12th. October 1971. Guardian, 26th. October 1971.

Economic Planning Board. On top of all this, the Department of the Environment has the job of advising the Government about planning matters in general, which means that it has to retain an overview of the work of the other regional planning agencies. In other words, the position of the Department of the Environment as a regional planning agency has been and remains a powerful one, probably more so than that of the other regional planning agencies which will be examined in this Chapter.

South-East Economic Planning Council/South-East Economic Planning Board.

The Planning Councils and Boards were set up with the task of giving regional advice, particularly to Central Government but also to other agencies such as Local Government and nationalised industries. The Councils consist of part-time members appointed from the region and apparently representative of several aspects of its life. The Boards, on the other hand, consist of senior civil servants from the several Departments with an interest in the development of the region, who meet as a co-ordinating committee from time to time to give advice to and to undertake work for the Councils.<sup>10</sup> The machinery has been heavily criticised because of its part-time nature and the tendency of both Council and Board members, as a result, to have prior loyalties elsewhere, because of its lack of any form of executive power, because of its lack of ability to deal with conflicts between Ministries and because of its relative distance from the mainstream of Governmental activities which has led both Central and Local Government to tend to ignore it.<sup>11</sup> In support of these criticisms, Smith has shown that the South-West Economic Planning Council's position became progressively more isolated as its advice became and more unpalatable for various Ministries,<sup>12</sup> and Painter has shown that the West Midlands Economic Planning Council was completely ignored in the construction of the most significant regional lobby in the area for some time, that which succeeded in bringing the National Exhibition Centre to the Birmingham area.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the Councils have sometimes managed to develop some regional consciousness and to provide some leadership from within the region,<sup>14</sup> and have led to an improvement in understanding of the problems of the regions.<sup>15</sup> The consensus of the literature on the subject is that this particular machinery is essentially transitional in nature, which will need to be developed quite considerably before it can make a real impact upon regional planning.<sup>16</sup>

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10. For details of the general organisation of the Councils and Boards, see G. McCrone, *op. cit.* Pages 228-237. A.W. Peterson. "Regional Economic Planning Councils and Boards." *Public Administration*. Volume 44, number 1. Spring 1966. Pages 29-41. P. Turnbull. "Regional Economic Councils and Boards." *Journal of the Town Planning Institute*. Volume 53, number 2. February 1967. Pages 41-49.

The membership of the South-East Economic Planning Council can be compared in outline with that of some of the other Councils, although this is a difficult comparison to make because of the substantial amount of unrecorded overlapping membership of various organisations which exists. In an effort to provide some comparative information on this subject, the Regional Studies Association attempted to mount studies to a common base of the economic planning machinery in the South-West, the North-West and the North of England and in Wales.<sup>17</sup> The attempt to provide a common basis to facilitate comparison was not altogether successful, although with some adaptation the data can be used comparatively with similar data collected for the situation in the South-East.

Table 31. Background of Membership of Economic Planning Councils.

Category	South-East. March 1971	South-West. July 1968	Wales, Feb- ruary 1965	North-West. April 1968	North 1966 (Unspeci- fied)
Local Government	35%	23%	28%	33%	27%
Other Public Sector Administration	19%	3%	12%	16%	22%
Private Business Interests	19%	34%	28%	27%	27%
Trades Unions	11%	18%	16%	13%	12%
Academic	11%	15%	8%	11%	6%
Farming	5%	7%	8%	0%	6%
Number of Members.	32	28	25	34	27

Sources: South-East. Interview with C. Curry (Senior Research Officer, South-East Economic Planning Council and Board), 31st. March 1971.  
South-West Clements, op. cit. Page 10. Clements gives alternative break-downs of membership, which have been combined to form a composite figure.  
Wales. Williams, op. cit. Page 13.  
North-West. Kavanagh, op. cit. Page 9. Kavanagh used a different classification system, and his figures have been related to the above

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11. See especially, D. Eversley. "The Trouble with Regional Planning." New Society, 10th. August 1967. Pages 188 and 189.
  12. B. C. Smith. "Advising Ministers." Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. 1969.
  13. C. Painter. "The Influence of the West Midlands Economic Planning Council." Unpublished mimeograph. University of Aston. Birmingham. 1970.
  14. See especially, T. D. Smith. "Dan Smith. An Autobiography." Criel Press. Newcastle-upon-Tyne. 1970. Pages 86-107.
  15. D. Eversley, op. cit. Pages 188-189. G. McCrone, op. cit. Pages 231, 236 and 237.

system by reference to the introduction to, North-West Economic Planning Council. "The North-West of the 70s." H.M.S.O. London. 1968. Northern. Storer and Townsend, op. cit. Page 6. Note: percentages relate not to the total number of members on the Councils but to the larger total of the number of associations recorded for each member.

With the reservation that although Table 31 has been prepared with as common a base as could be obtained it does not account fully for overlapping membership of agencies within any of the regions, the South-East Economic Planning Council's structure can be compared with that of the other Councils for which data are available. It is wide-ranging in its membership (as are all the Councils in the Table), with the major differences between it and the other Councils being its higher level of Local Government membership, its lower level of representation from private business and its slightly lower level of trades union membership. Indeed, if its membership from Local Government and from other forms of administration within the public sector are added together to create a composite figure for public sector representation, it is the only Council to exceed half (54%) in this respect, with both the North-West and the Northern Councils recording 49%, Wales recording 40% and the South-West only 26%.<sup>18</sup> Despite the fact that in terms of population it is by far the biggest of the regions, the South-East Council did not have the biggest membership but was second to the North-West in this respect. In terms of the inherent abilities of its members, the civil servants servicing the Council regard it as being one of the strongest of the Councils, but in terms of its influence upon decision-making within the region it is regarded as being one of the weakest.<sup>19</sup> This apparent paradox stems in part from the general weaknesses of the economic planning machinery outlined above, and in part from the rather special position of the South-East Economic Planning Board, and has been a major factor in the lack of influence upon the Luton Airport policy-making process of the Council and the Board.<sup>20</sup>

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16. Ibid. A. W. Peterson, op. cit. P. Turnbull, op. cit.

17. R. V. Clements. "Economic Planning Machinery in the South-West. 1965-1968." D. Lavanagh. "Economic Planning in the North-West." C. Storer and A. Townsend. "The Northern Economic Planning Council." G. Williams. "Economic Planning Machinery in Wales. 1965-1968." All published by the Regional Studies Association. London. 1971.

18. The low figure for the South-West is in part a function of the procedure used to combine Clements' alternative figures in Table 31. One of his two classification methods would yield 39% for the public sector, and the other 14%. Clements, op. cit. Pages 10 and 11. Even if his higher figure of 39% is taken, the South-West Council would still have the lowest public sector representation

The membership structure of the Economic Planning Boards appears to be fairly common to each region. Certain Ministries were identified by the four Regional Studies Association studies as being regularly represented at Board Meetings;

Department of Economic Affairs.	} functions performed in Wales } by the Welsh Office.
Ministry of Housing and Local Government.	
Board of Trade.	
Department of Employment and Productivity.	
Ministry of Transport.	
Ministry of Technology. <sup>21</sup>	

In all of the four regions, the Ministries which were "regulars" formed an "inner core" which met between meetings of the full Board and reported to it. Board meetings were attended by several other Ministries on a less regular basis.<sup>22</sup> Allowing for differences in time (since the information for the South-East relates to a period at least three years later than that for the other regions), the situation in the South-East is similar to the others. The following Ministries were represented on the Board at March, 1971;

- Department of the Environment.<sup>X</sup>
- Department of Trade and Industry.<sup>X</sup>
- Department of Employment.<sup>X</sup>
- Treasury.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
- Ministry of Defence.
- Department of Education and Science.
- Department of Health and Social Security.
- Central Office of Information.
- Ministry of Aviation Supply.<sup>23</sup>

The starred Departments in the above list are those which formed an inner "strategy committee", and those three Departments contain all the Ministries which were classed as "regulars" at Board meetings within the four sample regions of the late 1960s. In other words, in terms of both membership and

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of all the Councils. His two breakdowns were largely mutually exclusive, in that in each case he classified individuals by one background only, with an alternative background being used in the other case where this had been recorded. The method used in Table 31, by combining these two classification systems, is probably a more reasonable representation of the balance of membership on the Council.

19. Interviews with C. Curry, op. cit., and with F. Daniel (Deputy Chairman, South-East Economic Planning Board), 31st. March 1971.

20. Ibid.

organisations, the South-East Economic Planning Board was very similar to its counterparts in the other regions.

The major difference was in terms of its position vis-a-vis the civil service structure. In the other regions, Board meetings were attended by the most senior civil servants within the Department in the region. Thus, they were able to perform some kind of conflict-resolution function, and the four Regional Studies Association studies testify to the increase in inter-Departmental co-operation which had taken place as a result of the existence of the Board and despite several difficulties.<sup>24</sup> In the South-East, civil servants at the same hierarchical level as in the other regions attend Board meetings, but their position in their own Departments is a relatively junior one. In addition, although the senior civil servants in the region are not mainly concerned with the region but with the nation as a whole, they live and work in the region and their day-to-day knowledge of it is much greater than of the other regions, and they tend not to allow their South-East regional staff the same amount of latitude as in the other regions. As a result, the South-East Economic Planning Board has been completely unable to perform any kind of conflict-resolution function. Instead, it has been notable for the rigidity with which Departmental viewpoints have been adhered to.<sup>25</sup> When matters of conflict have arisen, the Board's reports to the Council have either glossed over the differences or have avoided them altogether. Conflict-resolution has taken place at a level of inter-Departmental communication above that of the Board, and as a result it has been unable to develop any kind of corporate identity within the civil service. This, in turn, has contributed further to the unwillingness of Departments to make use of the Board's machinery. The net effect of this has been to restrict greatly the kind of advice and information that the Council has received from the Board. The vast majority of papers that the Council has received have been at its own request, and there has been considerable unwillingness to refer matters to the Council ab initio or to face problem areas in papers prepared at the Council's request.<sup>26</sup> Issue areas such as the expansion of Luton Airport, which has been the subject of disagreement between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of the Environment, have been referred neither to the Council

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21. Clements, op. cit. Page 25. Williams, op. cit. Page 23. Kavanagh, op. cit. Pages 25 and 26. Storer and Townsend, op. cit. Page 12. For the purpose of the above list, Ministries have been classed as being regularly represented at Board meetings if at least three of the four studies identified them as such.

22. Ibid.

23. Interview with C. Curry, op. cit.

nor to the Board, and the awareness that conflict resolution in this kind of issue area takes place at a higher level than that of the economic planning machinery has prevented the Board and the Council from picking the matter up of their own accord.<sup>27</sup>

It appears, therefore, that the economic planning machinery in the South-East is more isolated from the centre of regional decision-making than its counterparts in the other sample regions. The members of the Council, aware of the limitations placed upon their actions by these operational circumstances, have been reluctant to pursue any disagreements. In particular, they have attempted to avoid the impression that any of the recommendations they have made have been motivated by any form of party political grouping. Table J1 indicated that the Council's membership included an above-average number with a Local Government background, and many of these people have firm party allegiances. Party political affiliations are often the basis of disagreements between members of the Council, but they are carefully suppressed to avoid giving the impression of making partisan recommendations, especially since the Conservative Government is doubtful about the role of the Councils anyway and might tend to regard recommendations which are apparently politically motivated as a further excuse for ignoring the Councils.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Council concentrates its energies upon issues where agreement can be reached and where its advice is likely to be acceptable to the Government. Neither Mr. Daniel nor Mr. Curry could think of any occasion on which the Council's influence in regional decision-making had been important, although several times the fact that the Council had given advice which had been congruent with the views of a Government Department had been used to reinforce and to legitimate the decision when it was announced.<sup>29</sup>

The avoidance of the Luton Airport issue fits within this pattern. At least three of the Council's members were also members of organisations closely involved with the issue; the leader of the Labour group on Luton Council,<sup>30</sup> the Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council<sup>31</sup> and the Chairman of Stevenage Development Corporation.<sup>32</sup> In addition, at least one other member of the Economic Planning Council (a member of Luton and District Trades Council)<sup>33</sup> could be expected to take a direct interest in the issue. Thus, the issue

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24. Clements, *op. cit.* Pages 25-33. Williams, *op. cit.* Page 27. Kavanagh, *op. cit.* Pages 26 and 27. Storer and Townsend, *op. cit.* Pages 11-15.

25. Interview with C. Curry, *op. cit.*

26. *Ibid.* Interview with P. Daniel, *op. cit.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

was not avoided because of a general lack of interest in it. It was avoided because it was the subject of inter-Departmental conflict (and hence was not raised at Board meetings and not reported on to the Council), because it was the subject of a great deal of inter-agency conflict in a part of the region and because it involved Council members of both the Labour and the Conservative parties who held opposing views on the matter. Mr. Curry and Mr. Daniel both felt that it had been on the verge of being brought up on several occasions, but that there had appeared to be a tacit understanding for the reasons enumerated not to embark upon such a discussion.<sup>34</sup>

The Council has published its own outline strategy for the region.<sup>35</sup> This was a highly generalised proposal for the pattern of population distribution in the region for the rest of the century and beyond, and it did not examine alternative possibilities or particular problems in any depth. Its existence, nevertheless, was one of the factors which led to the decision to set up the South-East Joint Planning Team.<sup>36</sup> On top of this, the Council has looked at certain regional problems in a similarly general manner, as for example in its evidence to the Commission on the Third London Airport, which mentioned that the future of Luton Airport was a related problem which would need to be examined but said nothing specific as an aid to that examination.<sup>37</sup> Again, therefore, the pattern of an inability to examine problems in any detail re-emerges in relation to the achievements which stand to the Council's name, and the only occasion on which it was allowed to study and report on a set of problems in any great detail was in the exceptional circumstances of South-East Kent. This was an area with special problems (related in part to the seasonal nature of the holiday industry) which neither Kent County Council nor Central Government knew how to solve, and a small inter-Departmental team was set up under the auspices of the Economic Planning Board to study the area. Even then, its report concentrated upon diagnosis rather than cure, because agreement could be obtained upon the former but was less likely upon the latter.<sup>38</sup> The same institutional difficulties which caused the economic planning machinery to become isolated and to concentrate upon consensus were present in the approaches to the problems of South-East Kent and in the avoidance of the issue of the future of Luton Airport. The difference was that a degree of consensus over the nature of the problems could be obtained with the former, but the

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29. Ibid.

30. Alderman H. Lawrence.

31. Alderman G. C. Barber.

32. Mrs. E. Denington.

33. A. G. Sjogren.

level at which any kind of consensus appeared attainable over the latter was so low that avoidance seemed to be the safest tactic.

Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning.

Very little material has been published on the local authority Standing Conferences, although in one form or another they exist in all the English regions.<sup>39</sup> They derived originally from attempts at advisory regional planning in the period before, during and just after World War II, although they were allowed to lapse during the 1950s, and formal reconstitution did not take place until the 1960s.

In the South-East, the Standing Conference mechanism operates at four levels. The Conference itself meets infrequently, normally only three or four times each year, to receive reports from the Administrative and Technical Panels. This is attended by Council members of the affiliated authorities, and is chaired by an independent Chairman. The Administrative Panel comprising the Clerks of member authorities, meets more frequently to handle the administration of the Conference's machinery, its political situation and to retain an overview of the activities of the Technical Panel. It is chaired by the Clerk of the Greater London Council. The Technical Panel, comprising the Planning Officers of member authorities, meets more frequently still to prepare advice on planning matters for the Conference as a body and for the member authorities in general, and it is chaired by the Planning Officer of the Greater London Council. To facilitate the completion of its tasks, the Technical Panel has set up several ad hoc sub-panels on particular subjects, which meet as and when required, appoint their own Chairmen in relation to expertise in particular fields and to sharing out the responsibilities between member authorities, and report to the Technical Panel. The mechanism is serviced by a small, full-time Secretariat, most of the time of which is spent preparing papers for the Technical Panel.<sup>40</sup>

The above description has mentioned the important position of the Greater London Council in providing the Chairmen for the Administrative and Technical Panels. The Conference's expenses are met pro rata according to the rateable values of member authorities, and as a result the G.L.C. contributes over half (56%) to the running expenses. The importance of the G.L.C. is enshrined

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34. Interviews, op. cit.

35. South-East Economic Planning Council. "A Strategy for the South-East". H.M.S.O. London 1967.

36. See below.

37. Interview with C. Curry, op: cit. Statement of the South-East Economic

in the name of the Conference; it is the Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning, not the Standing Conference on South-East Regional Planning. When the important position of London in the South-East is borne in mind this may not be an unreasonable situation, although it has produced as one of the main features of the Conference's behaviour a pattern of deference to the wishes of the G.L.C.<sup>41</sup> Another important feature is that the Conference is County-oriented, with the Counties (including the G.L.C.) contributing 92% of running expenses and the County Boroughs only 8%. Indeed, some idea of the relative involvement in and contribution to the workings of the Conference can be gauged from the distribution of responsibility for its running expenses between member authorities.<sup>42</sup>

Table 32. Approximate Contributions of South-East Local Planning Authorities to the Running Expenses of their Standing Conference.

Greater London Council.		56%.
Surrey County Council.	}	Each 5%.
Hertfordshire County Council.		
Kent County Council.		
Essex County Council.		
Hampshire County Council.		4%.
Buckinghamshire County Council.		3%.
West Sussex County Council.		2½%.
East Sussex County Council.	}	Each 2%.
Berkshire County Council.		
Bedfordshire County Council.		1½%.
Brighton County Borough Council.	}	Each ½%.
Southampton County Borough Council.		
Bournemouth County Borough Council.		
Luton County Borough Council.		
Oxfordshire County Council.		
Portsmouth County Borough Council.		
Southend-on-Sea County Borough Council.		
Reading County Borough Council.	}	Each ½%.
Oxford County Borough Council.		
Isle of Wight County Council.	}	Each ¼%.
Eastbourne County Borough Council.		
Hastings County Borough Council.		
Canterbury County Borough Council.		
<u>Totals:</u> County Councils 92½%, County Borough Councils 7½%.		

Source: rateable value information, Municipal Year Book and Public Utilities Directory, 1971.

Apart from the local planning authorities listed in Table 32, the London Boroughs Association is also a member of the Conference to represent the London Boroughs. The Conference exists to give advice to Central Government about regional planning matters and, more particularly, to provide a regional context for the planning work of member authorities. It is in no position to dictate to member authorities, nor would it wish to do so as it is presently constituted, since this might lead certain authorities to opt out of its structure.<sup>43</sup> As a result, votes on matters which arise are avoided at all levels of the Conference and formulae are found for glossing over differences between member authorities. Thus, in only one sense is it a conflict-resolution agency; in collating information from member authorities, it can contribute to increasing understanding of the nature of problems and perhaps to a change in perceptions of them, which in turn can sometimes lead to their resolution or disappearance. Its approach to regional planning is based upon this notion of improving the quality of information about the workings of the region. It sees regional planning as a continuous process of study within which, from time to time, general statements on the evolving regional situation need to be presented. The local authority development or structure plan plays an important part in this concept, since the notion of implementation at the regional level is restricted to fairly specific programmes of the type contained in such plans. Regional planning is seen as providing the evolving context for these kinds of decisions. This approach it sees as being very different from the concept of a "master regional plan" with an end-date and an implementation programme.<sup>44</sup> Within the planning profession, the approach adopted by the Conference would be received quite sympathetically,<sup>45</sup> but it contributed to the difficulties which the South-East Joint Planning Team faced because of

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Planning Council, February 1971 (Press notice, Central Office of Information, 21st. February 1971).

38. Ibid.

39. But see, B. Howell in C. Cooper, B. Howell and D. Lyddon, "Regional Planning and Implementation." Journal of the Town Planning Institute, Volume 56, number 8. September / October 1970. Pages 325-331. A. Macmillan "The Aims and Organisation of Sub-Regional Studies -- the Role of the Local Authority Standing Conference." Proceedings of the Nottingham Symposium on Sub-Regional Studies, 1968. East Midlands Group of the Regional Studies Association. Nottingham, 1968. Pages 11-15.

40. Interview with B. Howell (Technical Secretary, Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning). 21st. May 1971.

the master regional plan approach that the latter adopted.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the Conference's approach is by no means a full model of regional planning as a process; for example, it does not deal with the problem of conflict-resolution between neighbouring local planning authorities (the Luton Airport situation) because the Conference is not equipped by its very nature to deal with this kind of situation. Thus, whilst the approach adopted is intellectually respectable in its own right, it is also functional in the sense that it is tailored to the operational circumstances of the Conference.

The Conference cannot deal with major conflicts between member authorities because it has no executive powers and no sanctions. It exists and has influence to the extent that its member authorities allow it to do so. The prior loyalties of its members are to their own authorities, and their loyalties to the Conference exist to the extent that it is useful for their authorities. If any of its members choose to take no notice of it, there is nothing that it can do. In addition, if any member authorities were to take umbrage at anything the Conference said or did and opt out of membership, the ability of the Conference to provide a comprehensive informational coverage of the region would be diminished. This could impinge upon the Conference's major function, and this risk is not one which the member authorities are prepared to take. For them, the Standing Conference is much more important as a pool of information about the region than as a combined local Government voice to Central Government on regional planning matters.<sup>47</sup> In particular, this has meant that the Conference, dominated as it is by County Council-type authorities, has been careful about its treatment of the County Boroughs.<sup>48</sup> This has been another reason why the issue of the future of Luton Airport has not been faced by the Conference. Instead, it concentrates on areas where a

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning -- Technical Panel. "The South-East: a Framework for Regional Planning." Report to Conference. 17th. July 1968. LRP 1180.

45. For example, it meshes with the view of planning as a continuous process within which (but not limited to which) certain fairly specific plans are made, which is advocated by Chadwick amongst others. G. S. Chadwick. "A Systems View of Planning." Pergamon Press. Oxford. 1971. Pages 22-35.

46. See below.

47. Interview with B. Howell, op. cit. His impression was confirmed by interviews with officers of Luton, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Councils.

48. Ibid.

consensus already exists or can easily be created, such as the desire of the County Councils to adopt a region-wide approach to the problems of gravel extraction and electricity supply lines. Without such a regional context, the County Councils were being picked off one-by-one by the gravel companies and the Electricity Board, both of which used the argument that no alternatives other than the one proposed were available. Since the County Councils pooled their resources through the mechanism of the Technical Panel they have been much less susceptible to this particular argument, and a region-wide consensus as to the best approaches to such problems has begun to emerge.<sup>49</sup> However, in areas of conflict or potential conflict the Conference tends to limit itself to general statements about the kind of process to be adopted, rather than to advance more specific statements and concrete proposals about the problems themselves. In the issue of the location of the third London Airport, for example, all the member authorities were in favour of Foulness (with the exception of Kent County Council, which expressed certain reservations), and so the Conference's evidence to the Commission was oriented to this viewpoint, but it was unable to deal with many of the associated problems (such as the Luton Airport issue) about which there was no unanimity. As a result, the evidence tended to concentrate on the kinds of approaches that the Commission should adopt, with a recommendation in favour of Foulness fitting rather awkwardly into such a process-oriented discussion.<sup>50</sup>

As an integral member of the South-East Joint Planning Team, much of the Conference's work not related directly to that exercise was placed in abeyance whilst the Team was working.<sup>51</sup> Following the Team's report, however, the normal Conference mechanisms were resumed. One of the Technical Panel's sub-panels is concerned with general aviation in the region, and the lead in attempting to persuade this panel to recommend a policy towards airport development has been taken by Hertfordshire County Council, the area of which is affected by noise from both Luton and Stansted Airports.<sup>52</sup> The reaction of the sub-panel was to record its agreement that a policy ought to be formulated, and that it understood that the South-East Economic Planning Council was of the

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49. Ibid.

50. Technical Panel papers LRP 986 (29th. November 1967), LRP 1177 (17th. July 1968), LRP 1150 (October 1968), LRP 1275 (25th. June 1969). Evidence of B. Howell to Stage V, Commission on the Third London Airport. Reference number 5286, relating to Volume VII, Part 2, Chapter 26.

51. See below.

52. Technical Panel paper LRP 1911 (14th. February 1972).

same opinion, but to doubt whether it would be appropriate for the sub-panel itself to attempt to prepare such a policy. Instead, the sub-panel's function was seen as being to help improve the quality of information in this particular area.<sup>53</sup> As well as providing further evidence of the importance placed upon the need for such a policy and for improved information by Hertfordshire County Council,<sup>54</sup> this incident is typical of the Conference's approach. In an issue involving disagreement between some member authorities (even though only one is a County Borough, in opposition to at least three County Councils), the Standing Conference does not see its place as being to attempt to resolve this conflict directly, because it lacks the powers and sanctions to do so and because of the danger of one of its member authorities feeling that its territory is being impinged upon and deciding to opt out (and in so doing damaging the information provision function because the Conference's regional coverage would be incomplete). In addition, the ability of the Conference to present "the local Government viewpoint" to Central Government on regional planning matters would be diminished if not all of its members agreed with that viewpoint. Instead, it concentrates upon the provision of information, in the hope that this will enable others to resolve the conflict. Institutional factors connected with its own survival prevent it from playing a part which is more promotional in its nature.

#### South-East Joint Planning Team.

The decision to institute the Joint Planning Team arose out of two related sets of conflicts. The first was the plethora of differing documents about the region's development, with Central Government, the South-East Economic Planning Council and the Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning each publishing separate and unreconciled studies within a period of four years.<sup>55</sup> The second was a difference within Central Government between the Department of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government as to which should do regional planning. It was in the hope that these conflicts could be resolved by the production of an agreed regional plan

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53. Ibid.

54. See Chapter 12.

55. Ministry of Housing and Local Government, op. cit. (1964). South-East Economic Planning Council, op. cit. (1967). Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning -- Technical Panel, op. cit. (1968).

that the Team was constituted.<sup>56</sup> It lasted for almost exactly two years (May 1968-June 1970), although the first three months or so were spent in the administrative process of establishing the Team. It was to be jointly commissioned by the South-East Economic Planning Council, the Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning (representing local Government) and Central Government, and it was requested to start from the work of the Economic Planning Council, the Standing Conference and the policies of the Government and to prepare "a regional framework" for the planning responsibilities of local planning authorities and for the investment decisions and economic and social policies of the Government.<sup>57</sup>

The Team was responsible directly to a Steering Group of thirteen members, five from local Government (attributed to the Standing Conference), five from Central Government and three from the Economic Planning Board.<sup>58</sup> Since the prior loyalties of the Board's representatives were to their Central Government Departments,<sup>59</sup> a more useful way of looking at the membership of the Steering Group is that it comprised eight representatives from Central Government (of which the largest single representation came initially from the Department of Economic Affairs) and five from Local Government. This pattern was repeated in the membership of the Team itself; of the 74 staff it employed during its existence, 61 were from Central Government and 13 from Local Government.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the Team's structure was based upon Central Government. With the demise of the Department of Economic Affairs as a major Government Department early in the life of the Team, however, one of the initial conflicts which had contributed to its institution disappeared. The question as to which Central Government Department was to be responsible for regional planning was thus a factor in the Team's emergence but hardly at all in its operations.

The objective of the Steering Group was to obtain a regional strategy that would be agreed by each of the contracting parties in the study.<sup>61</sup> This

56. This section is based very largely upon the interviews with the four members of the South-East Joint Planning Team listed in Appendix 1, and upon interviews with several other local and Central Government officers listed in the Appendix who were not members of the Team but whose work was connected with it. In particular, five lengthy meetings with R.A. Bird (Department of the Environment, dealing with follow-up work to the Team's Report) were held during the period of the direct observation study, and these proved to be extremely useful.

57. South-East Joint Planning Team. "Strategic Plan for the South-East." H.M.S.O. London. 1970. Page 1.

58. Letter from B. Howell to the author, 8th. July 1971.

59. See above.

60. Letter from B. Howell, op. cit.

61. Interviews with P. Daniel (op. cit.) and B. Howell (op. cit.), both of whom were members of the Steering Group, and with R. A. Bird (op. cit.).

conflicted with the approach of the leaders of the Team, who interpreted their terms of reference as being to prepare "a regional plan" to which reference was to be made for conflict-resolution purposes.<sup>62</sup> The differences between the two were resolved to the extent that the Team's leaders accepted the necessity of attempting to conciliate the interests of the various contracting parties, although the extent to which they saw themselves as preparing a master plan was not significantly affected by this except that the document was accepted as having a conflict-resolution function at a much lower level than was originally anticipated. The difference in approaches between that of the Team and the much more organic approach advocated by the Standing Conference and incorporated into the intellectual equipment of some of the local planning officers<sup>63</sup> was papered over by an agreement that the Team's work could be regarded as one of the periodic statements as to the direction in which the region was evolving. Once this procedural difficulty had been negotiated, attention switched to the actual proposals that the Team was considering, and after the differences between the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Department of Economic Affairs had largely disappeared following the incorporation of the latter into the former, it became clear that if the report was to be acceptable to all parties the interests of the individual local planning authorities in particular would have to be satisfied.<sup>64</sup>

The "master plan" approach adopted by the Team led it to see its task as being mainly concerned with the allocation of the anticipated population growth to the region's constituent parts, and the content of its report leads to a set of "indicative populations" for thirty-three sub-divisions of the region (termed "planning areas") for 1991 and 2001.<sup>65</sup> It is possible to advance several criticisms of the Team's work as expressed in its report. First, the strategy it recommended ("1991C") was composed of parts of two strategies ("1991A" and "1991 B") each of which was tested in depth, but the recommended strategy was hardly tested at all as an entity. In other words, the validity of the whole of "1991C" was assumed to derive from the relative validity of those parts of "1991A" and "1991B" which were selected, which is counter to

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62. Ibid.

63. As distinct from being accepted by the other local authority planning officers as a functional necessity for the Standing Conference rather than with any personal commitment. Interview with B. Howell, op. cit. See above.

64. Interviews with P. Daniel (op. cit.), B. Howell (op. cit.) and R.A. Bird (op. cit.).

65. South-East Joint Planning Team, op. cit. Page 110.

the whole notion of testing strategies as entities to see how they hang together rather than as collections of discrete parts. Second, the testing process that was used was hardly sufficiently refined to enable fine judgements to be made between alternatives, since it was a compound of tests according to broad objectives and a much more detailed transportation model, the relationships between which were not specified and appear somewhat uneasy.<sup>66</sup> Third, only two strategies were tested at even this level of detail, and the mechanisms used to generate and reject others from the vast numbers of possibilities open were not spelled out.<sup>67</sup> Fourth, the Team assumed that the 1981 situation was essentially "given", because of commitments in local authority development plans, which presumes a very high degree of certainty about events over the period up to 1981. Fifth, it can also be doubted whether the output from a "regional plan" ought to be limited largely to the areal distribution of population. All these criticisms, and many more, can be advanced in relation to the Team's work, but if laboured too much they tend to obscure the fundamental point that the Strategic Plan is in large measure an elaborate, post hoc, technical rationalisation of an essentially political process.

It has already been argued that the critical interest to be conciliated was that of the local planning authorities, given that the major inter-Departmental conflicts at Central Government level as far as the Team's work was concerned had largely disappeared following the removal of the Department of Economic Affairs as an independent force, leaving simply a desire at that level to obtain a generally-acceptable plan. The South-East Economic Planning Council's interest was not an important one in this sense, because it had been isolated from the work of the Team (it received information via the Economic Planning Board and from occasional progress reports from the Team's leader) and because it would be advised by civil servants who had themselves been members of the Team. It was hardly likely that the Economic Planning Council would reject the Strategic Plan, therefore, although individual local planning authorities might well have done so had they

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66. The only reason why a detailed transportation model was chosen for evaluation purposes as distinct from any other form of model (or, indeed, why any form of model at all was chosen) appears to be that the Ministry of Transport had funds available which could be used for the preparation of such a model and wanted to see how it operated in practice. Interview with R.A. Bird, 1st. April 1971.

67. See the present author's, "The Generation and Coarse Evaluation of Alternatives in Regional Planning". Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Volume 58, number 1. January 1972. Pages 8-12. See also, W. Burns. "National and Regional Planning Policies -- England," Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Volume 57, number 7. July/August 1971. Pages 308-312.

been dissatisfied with its proposals for their areas. The decision to take the situation up to 1981 as being "given" was part of the process of conciliating the local planning authorities, because it meant that their approved development plans would not be upset as a result of the Team's proposals. The major aspect of the process of conciliation, however, was that the Team avoided most areas of conflict other than those on which agreement could be reached or which the local planning authorities were prepared to overlook. The conflict over methodology fell into the latter category; member authorities were prepared to overlook the methodological doubts of several of their planning staffs as expressed through the Technical Panel of the Standing Conference<sup>68</sup> provided that the Team's conclusions were broadly acceptable to them. This acceptability was ensured by attempting not to advance highly contentious proposals for population growth rates in the first place, and then by a trading-off process which took place at a weekend session towards the end of the Team's work attended by the Team's senior members and by the local authority Planning Officers. At this session, the population growth rates proposed for each of the Team's planning areas were discussed with the planning authorities concerned and agreements were negotiated where objections were raised, but many other planning conflicts over which agreements could not be reached were left alone. In essence, this elaborate structure of agreements became "the plan", and the Team's Report and five accompanying Studies Volumes form a technical justification of the proposals resulting from this essentially political process. Thus, a detailed methodological criticism of the Team's work is more a criticism of the quality of this rationalisation than of the process actually adopted.<sup>69</sup>

In terms of the objective of obtaining an agreed regional plan, the Team was extremely successful. Its work had been largely in the hands of Central Government officers, and once the conflict between the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Department of Economic Affairs had been resolved there was little likelihood of other Ministries finding the plan<sup>un</sup>acceptable. The South-East Economic Planning Council, as has already been argued, was hardly in a position to reject it. The wide degree of acceptance that the Report received from the local planning authorities within the region was hardly surprising,

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68. LRP 1180, op. cit.

69. The contents of this paragraph are based upon interviews with B. Howell, op. cit., R. A. Bird, op. cit., and Dr. E.A. Craven (member, South-East Joint Planning Team), 6th. May 1971.

bearing in mind the trading-off process which had already taken place and the deliberate avoidance of major conflicts on the part of the Team. In fact, all of the local planning authorities in the region except one accepted the Report<sup>70</sup> and, subject to a few minor modifications to take account of the detailed comments of individual authorities, it was adopted subsequently by the Government.<sup>71</sup> The idea that the region's growth needed to be monitored so that the plan could be updated was also accepted, and the Standing Conference, some of the Economic Planning Board staff and the Department of the Environment all wished to be allowed to operate the monitoring process.<sup>72</sup> The Standing Conference was in the process of attempting to get its own monitoring system started, but even so it did not have the influence as an organisation to compete with the Department of the Environment for such a facility, and if anything the Economic Planning Board was in a still worse position. Monitoring will be one of the tasks of the new regional office of the Department, which will be headed by the Department's Chief Planner who was also leader of the Team.<sup>73</sup> The Standing Conference and the Economic Planning Board will be consulted, but the pattern is likely to follow very closely that set by the Team. Any modification of the adopted plan is likely to be as a result of the interaction of Central Government and individual local planning authorities.

From the viewpoint of this study, it is interesting that the only planning authority which did not accept the Report was Luton County Borough Council, although it was unable to obtain any modification of the plan to take account of its views. The main reason for the Council's rejection of the Report was that it felt that Luton should have been included in the list of medium growth areas proposed, since exclusion from this list appeared to imply that mobile industry and offices would not be directed to the town. In recent years, the Council has been worried about the difficulties that restrictive Industrial Development Certificate and Office Development Permit policies have placed upon its traditional objective of attempting to lessen the dependence of the economy of the town upon the motor vehicle industry, and the exclusion of Luton from medium growth area status appeared to exacerbate this problem. The Team's reasons for excluding Luton are unclear from the Report, except that it feels that the employment that Luton might have attracted would serve a more valuable regional function by helping to

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70. Paper 1600, 25th. November 1970. Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning. Report of the Technical Panel.

71. Press notice 233M. Department of the Environment. 12th. October 1971.

72. Interview with C. Curry, op. cit.

73. Guardian, 26th. October 1971.

promote the growth of Milton Keynes.<sup>74</sup> On the basis of the Team's own stated criteria for defining medium growth areas, Luton Council's case was sound and was cogently argued.<sup>75</sup> One of the arguments advanced by the Council was that, if the growth generated by an expanded Luton Airport was to be taken into account, Luton would cross the population growth threshold adopted by the Team for the purpose of declining medium growth areas.<sup>76</sup> On the face of it, this appears to be true, but the threshold that the Team adopted was itself part of the post hoc rationalisation process described above. In other words, the threshold was not intended as a technical criterion to be applied in all circumstances, but as a means of providing some justification for judgements already made and accepted. It may be that this was the reason why Luton Council's apparently reasonable representations were ignored.

The fact that the Team did not take account of growth generated by the expansion of Luton Airport was a result of its deliberate avoidance of conflicts which could not be surmounted within its own mechanisms and through its linkages with the planning authorities. In this respect, the Team's position was complicated by the fact that it was due to report some six months before the Commission on the Third London Airport. This meant that the Team was able to justify its avoidance of the problems of airport development in the region by claiming that they were more properly the responsibility of the Commission.<sup>77</sup> It meant that the Team's strategy was deliberately open-ended in respect of areas which might be affected by airport development, but this in turn meant that the Commission was in real difficulty when it came to assessing the regional planning aspects of its task, as it conceded.<sup>78</sup> During the early stages of the Commission's work this difficulty was even greater since the Team had not then reported, and the Commission relied upon a statement by the Secretary of State for Local Government and Regional Planning that there was no "...fatal flaw from a broad regional planning point of view to any of the short-listed sites."<sup>79</sup> A negative statement of this nature, however, was of little help in aiding the Commission to assess the differences between the short-listed sites, and for the reasons described above the Team's approaches meant that its Report could not help greatly in this respect. Nevertheless, the Commission did not regard itself as being competent to prepare a regional planning framework, and accepted that it had no option other than to adopt the work of the Team despite

74. South-East Joint Planning Team, op. cit. Pages 86 and 91.

75. Report of the Borough Engineer and Planning Officer to the Planning Committee Luton County Borough Council, 7th. September 1970.

76. Ibid.

77. South-East Joint Planning Team, op. cit. Pages 54, 106-109.

its lack of definitive guidance.<sup>80</sup> In effect, therefore, the regional planning aspects of the issue of the location of the third London Airport fell between the Team and the Commission.<sup>81</sup> The Team did not want to broach them because of the area of intense conflict that it would have had to enter, and the Commission relied on the Team in default of any other agency being in a position to give the necessary advice.

Thus, the reluctance of the Team to face the conflicts surrounding the issue of the future of Luton Airport was enhanced by the involvement of that issue within the wider issue of the location of the third London Airport. The Team was careful to stress that its comments about growth in the Luton planning area did not take account of the future of Luton Airport, although it accepted that this was something which would be "particularly important" in structure planning in the area.<sup>82</sup> The Team's work, therefore, contributed very little to the process of policy-making with regard to Luton Airport.

#### South Bedfordshire Sub-Regional Study.

Strictly, the Study itself was not an agency at all, but an intellectual commitment on the parts of some members of the planning staffs of Bedfordshire County Council, Luton County Borough Council and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to the notion of sub-regional planning in the area. Several of the sub-regional studies of the late-1960s were carried out by specially-constituted teams,<sup>83</sup> but that for South Bedfordshire was carried out on a part-time basis by the respective staff members in their own authority or Ministry offices. The Study was overseen by a Steering Group and by a Technical Committee, which tended to involve the same personnel performing different functions in each case; in the former, they assessed overall progress on the Study, whereas in the latter they examined individual pieces of work. Apart from occasional meetings of the Group and the Committee, however, no other agencies were created for the Study.

It was set up in 1966, apparently at the instigation of the Ministry,<sup>84</sup> and its terms of reference match closely a model brief for sub-regional studies prepared by the Ministry.<sup>85</sup> One of the key features of the sub-regional studies which have been mounted to date at the instigation of the Ministry appears to be their concern with areas where County Borough Councils have disagreed with County Councils over planning policies, and the aim of the studies seems to have been to bring the parties together and to attempt to reach agreement.<sup>86</sup>

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78. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report." H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Page 10. For further information on the Commission's work see Chapter 16.

In the case of South Bedfordshire this does not appear to have succeeded. The Study was in existence for almost exactly four years (from 1966 to 1970), during the latter part of which it was placed in abeyance on the argument that the South-East Joint Planning Team was also at work and would be preparing a regional framework which the Study could extend later. In fact, the Study was never resuscitated following the publication of the Joint Planning Team's Report, and the two local planning authorities returned to the tasks of preparing their own structure plans, although co-ordination between them at officer level had improved as a result of experience on the Study.<sup>87</sup> The Study did lead to one gain at least, however; it is clear from an examination of the Sub-Regional Study files that the working relationships between the planning staffs of Luton and Bedfordshire Councils improved considerably during the Study. Specifically, both authorities were much more willing in 1970 to allow each other's staff access to confidential information than in 1966, and this was perhaps a first step in seeking to resolve the conflicts that existed between the two authorities. In addition, both authorities benefitted from the improvements in data that this brought about.

Apart from these gains, however, the Study made little headway. No attempt was made to specify any objectives for the development of the South Bedfordshire area, in part because the objectives of the two authorities were considered by each other to be very different. The part played by the Ministry staff was

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79. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Papers and Proceedings. Volume VII Part 1: Proposed Research Methodology. Part 2: Results of Research Team's Assessment." H.M.S.O. London. 1970. Page 444.

80. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report". op. cit. Page 40.

81. N. Lichfield. "Cost-Benefit Analysis in Planning: a Critique of the Roskil Commission." Regional Studies. Volume 5, number 3. September 1971. Pages 176-179.

82. South-East Joint Planning Team, op. cit. Pages 109 and 117.

83. Such as those for Leicester/Leicestershire, Notts./Derbys., Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire and South Hampshire. Each of these areas has a much larger population than South Bedfordshire, which might have been a factor in the decision not to constitute a special team in the latter case.

84. Letters from W. A. Wood (Ministry of Housing and Local Government) to the Clerks of the Bedfordshire and Luton Councils, 27th. April and 17th. May 1966.

85. Unpublished mimeograph, 17th. January 1966.

86. Interviews with U.A. Wannop (Team Leader, Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Sub-Regional Planning Study), 11th. March 1970, and G. C. Steeley (Deputy Team Leader, Notts./Derbys. Sub-Regional Study), 7th. May 1971.

87. Interviews with S. McArdle (Deputy Planning Officer, Luton County Borough Council), 25th. February 1971, and with J. Hubbard, (Chief Planner, Bedfordshire County Council), 13th. July 1972.

essentially that of an umpire; they convened and took the chair at meetings and pieced together summary working papers, but they were not prepared to involve themselves in attempts to resolve some of the differences between the two authorities. Consequently, the Study never got beyond the situation of "the County Borough proposes" and "the County Council proposes",<sup>88</sup> and its constituent authorities appear to have become disheartened. As they stood, the Study's mechanisms were incapable of conflict-resolution unless the Ministry was prepared to play a more promotional part. Whether an independent team would have been better able to bring the two authorities together is impossible to say, although at the very least it would have posed some of the questions which were the source of conflict between them. It was clear that the two authorities on their own were unprepared to sink at least some of their differences and attempt to make the mechanism work, however, and the Ministry refused to intervene even to the extent of becoming a catalyst. The effect of this was that major issues were never faced. For example, during the four years of its existence the Study never made any attempt to tackle the issue of the future of Luton Airport as a problem of significance at the sub-regional level; during at least half of this period, the issue was the single most contentious planning matter over an area somewhat wider than that covered by the Study. It appears to have been allowed to fall into neglect because none of the participants felt that it was worthwhile continuing with it, and the existence of the South-East Joint Planning Team was simply a convenient excuse for shelving it. The argument that this was not a particularly plausible excuse, and that other sub-regional studies had not been dropped upon the institution of a regional study,<sup>89</sup> was not advanced because none of the participants felt that the advantages that had accrued from the Study were sufficient to justify its continued existence.

#### Chilterns Standing Conference.

The Chilterns Standing Conference was formed in 1967 by Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire County Councils, and the Countryside Commission, the Forestry Commission, the Nature Conservancy and the

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88. Working paper T.C. 23. Ministry of Housing and Local Government. January 1969. This was the last Study summary paper to be produced.

89. For example, the South Hampshire Study and the Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire Study both continued whilst regional studies were being prepared.

National Trust are also members.<sup>90</sup> Luton County Borough Council is not a member, despite the fact that the foothills of the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extend into the town. This, of itself, is possibly indicative of the mutual antipathy which exists between the County Borough Council and the surrounding County Councils. The Conference can only work by agreement since it has no powers,<sup>91</sup> and the fact that Luton Council is not a member means that there is no point in raising the Luton Airport issue, because whilst the member authorities might agree that Airport expansion would affect the recreation potential of the Chilterns there is nothing they can do about it.<sup>92</sup> The only part that the Chilterns Standing Conference has played in the Luton Airport policy-making process (however unwittingly) is that it has provided one of the means whereby Hertfordshire County Council's officers have been able to talk informally to their counterparts with Buckinghamshire and to a lesser extent with Bedfordshire County Councils about the issue, which contributed to the decisions of those two authorities to take part in the Luton Airport public inquiry of January, 1972.<sup>93</sup>

#### Conclusions.

With the exception of Central Government acting in its capacity as a regional planning agency, all the organisations examined in this Chapter have been essentially ad hoc and powerless. To compensate for their lack of natural advantages in these respects, they have attempted to work by bringing about agreement where they can. This has involved them concentrating upon areas where consensus already exists or can easily be created, in the hope that successes in such areas might provide a basis for approaching areas of greater conflict at some future date. This might be a reasonable strategy, and it might bring about long-term improvements in their ability to handle conflict situations; equally, it can be argued that such a strategy is necessary if the agencies wish to survive. The effect of this strategy, however, has been that, for institutional reasons which differ in detail but derive in principle from their fundamental lack of power, the agencies have been unwilling and have felt unable to come to grips with current areas of conflict. To do so would be to risk the demise of the organisation, or at any rate its failure even in terms of its own limited objectives, and at present the risks appear to the organisations' members to outweigh considerably the chances of success.

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90. Chilterns Standing Conference. "A Plan for the Chilterns." Oxfordshire County Council. Oxford. 1971. Page 1.

91. Ibid.

92. Interview with A. D. Raby (Assistant County Planning Officer, Hertfordshire County Council), 18th. November 1970.

The issue of the future of Luton Airport is typified, as this study has demonstrated, by a high level of conflict. The regional economic planning machinery ignored it because of inter-Departmental disagreements about the issue and because of inherent disagreement amongst certain members of the Council. The Standing Conference ignored it because it was the subject of disagreement between constituent authorities, and it did not want to take the risk of damaging the information base that is its main value to its members by taking action which might cause one of them to withdraw. The Joint Planning Team ignored it because it was not an area where agreement appeared possible, and therefore anything it said might well be rejected by at least one of the planning authorities. Since the Team was set up to achieve agreement, this would have run counter to its basic purpose. It preferred, instead, to avoid the matter by expressing the view that the whole issue area of airport development was best left to the Commission on the Third London Airport, and ensured that its proposed strategy could take account of any of the Commission's recommendations. As a result, the Commission's work is notable for its lack of effective coverage of regional planning matters. The Sub-Regional Study ignored the Luton Airport issue because it was never able to overcome the antipathy to each other of Luton and Bedfordshire Councils and bring them together to start to work towards agreed objectives for the development of the area. The Chilterns Standing Conference had no option but to ignore the issue, since the only authority that could have taken any remedial action was not a member.

This catalogue explains why the regional planning agencies have been significant by their absence in the Luton Airport policy-making process. The only significant involvement has been on the part of the officers of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Department of the Environment who, as well as appearing in the Economic Planning Board, the Joint Planning Team and the Sub-Regional Study mechanisms (albeit not in particularly promotional capacities), have dealt with planning applications and with the Town Map and have attempted to provide a continuous if informal regional context within which such decisions could be made. Thus, an important part of the involvement of the regional planning agencies in the Luton Airport policy-making process has been by Central Government in its capacity as a regional planning agency, and with the creation of a regional office of the Department of the Environment which has retained for itself the function of monitoring the region's development this involvement is likely to continue. Even so, a gap between Central and Local Government

in terms of the assessment of and context for Luton Council's policy-making activities in respect of its Airport has been apparent, and the regional planning agencies have not succeeded in filling this gap.

The behavioural characteristics of the South-Eastern regional planning agencies observed in this Chapter are summarised aptly by Levin and Abend, who are actually writing about large-scale transportation studies in the United States of America;

"It seemed to those in charge that, if the studies were to function at all, they should avoid the sensitive, controversial issues....With no clear-cut national goals and priorities to guide them, the studies followed the traditional practice of regional planning agencies; they avoided controversial, divisive issues." 94

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94. M. R. Levin and N. A. Abend. "Bureaucrats in Collision: Case Studies in Area Transportation Planning." M.I.T. Press, Cambridge (Mass.). 1971. Pages 234 and 235.

Chapter 16. The Central Government Sub-System.Introduction.

Relatively little work has been done on the operational characteristics of British Central Government.<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the studies that have been undertaken, however, that a rational and hierarchical model of Central Government as a monolithic agency with the party in power taking policy decisions, all of which are made consistent with each other through the activities of a central co-ordinating committee (the Cabinet) and are then implemented by the civil service, is far from being accurate or adequate. Rather, it appears to be a congeries of often competing groups into which a degree of order is infused by the co-ordinating activities of the Cabinet but within which the roles of minister and civil servant as to which actually makes policy are often blurred.<sup>2</sup> In particular, a considerable degree of negotiation between Departments appears to take place at various levels of the civil service, such that the effective scope left for a minister might be quite small and perhaps might be as little as to say "yes" or "no" to a package of negotiated compromises, although the negotiations will have taken place in the light of expectations as to what the particular minister might be likely to accept.<sup>3</sup> This is a much less tidy picture than that of the rational and hierarchical model with which this paragraph began, but if the model was ever really accurate it has been overtaken in this century by the burgeoning responsibilities of Central Government.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this growth of responsibility, different Departments have developed particular ways of carrying out their special functions, and this had added to the difficulties of interaction between them.<sup>5</sup> The effect of all this appears to be that Central Government has a well-developed reluctance to interfere in areas where it does not

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1. But see, J. Blondel. "Voters, Parties and Leaders." Pelican Books. London. 1969. Pages 185-231. J. Bray. "Decision in Government." Collanz. London. 1970. Especially pages 57-81. R.G.S. Brown. "The Administrative Process in Britain." Methuen and Co. London. 1970.

2. Ibid.

3. Bray, op. cit. Pages 55, 66. Brown, op. cit. Pages 137-154.

4. Blondel, op. cit. Pages 205-231.

5. Roy Jenkins makes this point very forcefully by a comparison of the differing administrative styles of two Departments (the Home Office and the Treasury) with which he has been involved. Sunday Times (Review), 17th. January 1971.

already have responsibilities, and that this applies in particular to its controls over local authorities, although practice differs in detail from one Department to another.<sup>6</sup>

This general picture will be taken as the background to a more detailed study of the involvement of Central Government in the Luton Airport policy-making process. At first sight, it appears inconsistent to treat Central Government as an entity when it is clear from the above discussion that it is by no means monolithic. One of the major integrating features, however, is the formal control of the party in power, which tends to issue policies and decisions as being by "the Government" with a stress on its corporate identity. For example, the decisions which were made at Central Government level about the Luton Airport issue were presented as if they derived from a co-ordinated entity and were treated as such by the participants in the process, even if the reality of their origins was somewhat different. In addition, it is useful to regard Central Government as an entity to differentiate it from the other organisations which are involved in this sub-system. In this context, the M.P.s, the British Airports Authority, the Commission on the Third London Airport and Stevenage Development Corporation will all be examined in terms of their involvement in the Luton Airport policy-making process. Thus, the analytical device of presenting Central Government as a unit should not be taken to imply that it actually and always acts like one. In this sense, of course, it is similar to Luton County Borough Council, which was also examined as an entity but which revealed a degree of disharmony which, whilst probably not matching that of Central Government, was nevertheless significant.<sup>7</sup>

#### Central Government.

In 1968, when jets were first introduced from Luton Airport on a commercial basis, Central Government took the view that it should not be involved in the issue and that policy-making was the responsibility of the Airport authority. By 1971, Central Government had accepted that a degree of involvement in the process on its part was inevitable, and was concerned to identify the necessary minimum level of that involvement. Throughout this period, the Government gradually and grudgingly accepted that this level would have to

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6. J. A. G. Griffith. "Central Departments and Local Authorities." George Allen and Unwin. London. 1966. Pages 506 and 507, 533 and 534. B. Sharp. "The Ministry of Housing and Local Government." George Allen and Unwin. London. 1969. Pages 24-38.

7. See Chapter 11.

be raised, and this process has been charted previously in some detail.<sup>8</sup> In a nutshell, it was a process of gradual adjustment to a constantly-changing situation, both in terms of the parameters of the situation itself and of the degree of involvement that constituted the necessary minimum.

One of the causes of this gradual change was the substantial amount of pressure which the Airport's opponents (and particularly Hertfordshire County Council<sup>9</sup> and LADACAN<sup>10</sup>) were able to mount. Other bodies in favour of Airport expansion (such as Luton Council) also attempted to exert pressure upon the Government, but as this study has demonstrated the balance of this pressure was very much in favour of the opponents. Cumulatively, this pressure was impressive in its quantity, consistency and authority, and since no Government deliberately sets out to be unpopular in issue areas where it does not have firm policies based upon party doctrines, the weight of all this pressure must have played a considerable part in the Government's gradual change of attitude.<sup>11</sup> This does not appear to be the only reason for the change, however. The original argument advanced in favour of leaving policy-making to Luton Council was that it was best placed to find a balance between the various interests involved.<sup>12</sup> As has been pointed out in the Introduction to this Chapter, this argument equates with the traditional reluctance of Central Government to impinge upon the activities of local authorities. The initial reaction of Central Government to the pressures it was facing over the issue was to channel them back to Luton Council, with the implied threat that if the Council did not take some notice of them the Government would be forced to intervene more actively. Since the Council did not want the Government to impinge upon its Airport policy-making functions any more than was absolutely necessary, the pressures redirected and reinforced by Central Government must have contributed substantially to the gradual process of adjustment on the part of Luton Council.

As the process went on, however, it became clear that Luton Council was not best placed to balance the interests involved, since it operated the Airport and gained profits from it but only administered a fraction of the area affected by noise. The pressure of the Airport's opponents contributed to this growing understanding, but it was also fostered by an improvement in understanding of the nature of the problems themselves. This derived from a

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8. See Chapters 7-9.

9. See Chapter 12.

10. See Chapter 13.

11. See Blondel, *op. cit.* Pages 159-184.

12. Hansard. House of Commons. Volume 760, Columns 1359 and 1360. 13th. March 1968. J.P.W. Mallalieu (Minister of State, Board of Trade) in reply to a question from J. Allason (M.P. for Hemel Hempstead).

flow of factual information about them. The work of Hertfordshire County Council's officers was especially important in this respect,<sup>13</sup> but the quality of information and understanding was also improved through the activities of many of the other organisations involved and through evidence to the Edwards Committee, to the Roskill Commission and to the two public inquiries on expansion proposals for Luton Airport (March, 1970 and January, 1972). Part of this improvement in understanding occurred at the political level, although the relevant ministers had a great many other issues to deal with as well as the future of Luton Airport and could not be expected to devote a great deal of their time to increasing their appreciation of the many facets of the issue. By far the most important aspect of the improvement in understanding, therefore, came at the levels of the civil service which dealt with the matter on a day-to-day basis and which were responsible for preparing advice for their civil and political superiors.

Brown has identified how successive stages of filtering of information and advice take place as a matter ascends the Departmental hierarchy, and how the "selective perception" which takes place at one level whereby only certain of the relevant factors are perceived as such can become institutionalised through this process of filtering.<sup>14</sup> These factors underline the importance of the level at which matters are dealt with on a day-to-day basis, because it is at this level that the quality of understanding (in other words, the extent to which the perception is "selective") determines the boundaries to which the successive stages of filtering are likely to be applied. This appears to be what has happened in the Luton Airport situation.<sup>15</sup> The infusion of information into the civil service at the levels at which Luton Airport matters are normally dealt with has changed the perceptions of officers at those levels which, in turn, has led gradually to the diffusion of these changed perceptions throughout the Departments concerned. The Departments, in this manner, have learned about the problems and have changed their attitudes as this learning process has advanced. The importance of this factor, in addition to the cumulative effect of all the pressure, is underlined by the observation of both civil servants and M.P.s who were interviewed that the change of Government in June, 1970 had made no discernable difference to the involvement of

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13. See Chapter 12.

14. R.G.S. Brown, op. cit. Pages 137-154.

15. The assessments contained in this and in the next paragraph are based upon extended interviews with the six civil servants from the Departments of the Environment and of Trade and Industry listed in Appendix 1.

the Government in the Luton Airport policy-making process.<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, the continuity of the slow drift towards greater involvement was stressed, which tends to suggest that this was related to the continuity of the gradual changes in the advice given to both Governments.

Thus, the forces making for change were basically the pressures which both Governments faced and the changing perceptions of the problems on the part of their advisers. One of the factors tending towards inertia has already been described -- the unwillingness of Central Government to impinge further upon the responsibilities of Local Government. The other major factor which restricted the degree of change from the original policy of non-involvement in the general process of Airport policy-making was the amount of inter-Departmental disagreement over the issue. The major conflict was between the Board of Trade/Department of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Department of the Environment. In general, interviewees were unwilling to talk about inter-Departmental conflict at this level, except to state that it existed and that at different times it achieved differing degrees of potency. The orientation of the Department of Trade and Industry was towards airport operation and the airport system as a whole, amongst many other functions. For it, Luton Airport performed a valuable function in reducing the pressure on Heathrow and Gatwick Airports by handling a significant and growing proportion of the traffic of the inclusive tour industry. In addition to this, the Department had a growth orientation towards civil aviation in general, and these two factors combined meant that the Department tended to view the expansion of Luton Airport favourably, provided that certain technical problems (such as its air traffic control linkages with Heathrow) could be overcome. The Department of the Environment, on the other hand, was oriented much more towards the problem of noise as a planning matter, and tended to have doubts about the expansion of the Airport (and of other airports<sup>17</sup>) because of the noise nuisance this would generate. These orientations resulted from the functions of the Departments and were reinforced by contacts with the Departments' major client groups -- the civil aviation industry (including airport operators) in the case of the Department of Trade

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16. Of the six civil servants and five M.P.s interviewed (excluding Lord Hill of Luton, whose tenure as an M.P. finished in 1963), all were asked whether in their opinion the change of Government had made any difference to the involvement of Central Government and none dissented from the views expressed above.

17. For example, a planning application to extend the main runway at Leeds/Bradford Airport was refused after a public inquiry because of the extra amount of noise that would have been generated as a result of the extension. Guardian, 28th. October 1970.

airports but many more of which administered and Industry, and the local planning authorities (very few of which administered areas affected by aircraft noise) in the case of the Department of the Environment.

The differing views of the two major Departments about the future of Luton Airport were difficult to reconcile without one deferring to the other, which neither was prepared to do. Instead, a working compromise was reached. In the short-term, each Department consulted the other over matters which came before it, and an accommodation was worked out between them on the merits of the particular issue in question. In addition, they were able eventually to agree on long-term policy for the period after Foulness had been opened, because Luton Airport would no longer be needed as a base for the inclusive tour industry in terms of preventing the constriction of Heathrow and Gatwick and, indeed, its traffic could be used in the early 1980s to get Foulness started. In the long-term, therefore, the orientations of the two Departments towards the Luton Airport issue led to the same conclusion. The problem lay with the medium-term, the period until Foulness had become operational, and they could not agree a policy for this. Instead, they concentrated upon reacting in the short-term to Luton Council's Airport development proposals as and when they were received, in the hope that this would lead to the development of a medium-term policy or, at least, that it would forestall some of the difficulties that the development of such a policy appeared to entail.<sup>18</sup> This incremental approach had the advantage that it prevented major conflict between the two Departments from breaking out over the issue of the future of Luton Airport, which did not become something over which the Departments' prestige within the civil service was considered to be at stake.<sup>19</sup> Instead, accommodations were reached which gave something to both parties. The effect of this, however, was that the amount of strategic overview of the developing Luton Airport situation which the Government took was limited to a statement of long-term intent. Part of the strategy for the difficult ten-year period between 1971 and 1981 was left to emerge as a result of the same process of reaction to the proposals of Luton Council, in this case to the package of proposals designed to deal with this period which became the subject of the public inquiry of January, 1972.<sup>20</sup>

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18. Interview with J. Pacey (Civil Aviation Section, Department of Trade and Industry), 7th. July 1971.

19. Interview with R.A. Bird (Department of the Environment), 1st. April 1971.

20. At the time of writing the decision on this planning application is still awaited, but it is anticipated that the decision will have the effect of conditioning if not of formulating a full policy for this difficult period.

in the process proved impossible to obtain, it is clear that the multiple repetition (albeit on a smaller scale) of the process of incremental adjustment between Departments described in relation to the Departments of Trade and Industry and of the Environment produced, in sum, a powerful propulsion towards incremental change. The coincidence of attitudes in the long-term which produced the impression of a more promotional attitude towards policy-making did not obscure the real difficulties which existed in dealing with the period before the opening of Foulness made this coincidence possible.

Thus, the shift in Governmental attitude towards the issue of the future of Luton Airport from a position of non-involvement in 1968 to an acceptance by 1971 of a degree of involvement was an amalgam of at least four factors. The traditional reluctance of Central Government to take responsibility away from local authorities was a factor favouring inertia. The extent of the pressure which both Governments faced over the issue might have been a factor favouring radical change if policy-making had been simply a matter of counting heads and if there had been no inter-Departmental disagreements about policy in the period until Foulness was to become operational. As it was, the existence of this inter-Departmental conflict acted as a force promoting at best incremental change and acted as a brake upon the extent to which the Government could move in response to pressure. The fourth factor, the ability of the Departments to adapt to changing circumstances through improved learning about both the problems and their context, was also a force tending to promote incremental change. The constantly-changing nature of the interplay between these four factors produced the gradual increase charted in the degree of Governmental involvement in the process.

#### The M.P.s.

In the sense in which the term is used in this study, the M.P.s cannot be regarded as being an organisation, although they combined to form three very loose organisations of relevance to the Luton Airport policy-making process. The M.P.s of Hertfordshire met periodically, acted as a group on matters affecting the County and acted, in particular, as a mouthpiece for Hertfordshire County Council.<sup>24</sup> The M.P.'s working with LADACAN also formed part of the Hastings

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24. See Chapter 12.

Committee and were able to press for a policy statement on the future of Luton Airport in association with a decision in favour of Foulness.<sup>25</sup> The M.P.s who had been connected longest with the opposition to Luton Airport. (Mrs. Shirley Williams, James Allason and Victor Goodhew) also acted as a small cross-party group to ensure that the issue of the future of the Airport remained constantly in front of the Ministers concerned, and this group was augmented from time to time by others.<sup>26</sup> Their activities in these respects contributed to the pressure on the Government of the day, and merely in terms of Parliamentary time this was by no means insignificant. Between March 1968 and July 1970, before the issue of the future of Luton Airport became intertwined with the many other matters debated around the theme of the location of the third London Airport through the activities of the Hastings Committee, Luton Airport was the subject of five debates (one of which was purely procedural, on the third reading of the Luton Corporation Bill, 1969), four sets of questions at Question Time and eight written answers. In addition, one petition was laid on the Table of the House.<sup>27</sup> At the very least, the House and both Governments could not have remained unaware of the strength of local feeling about the matter, and this impact was underlined by a continuous process of letter-writing to the relevant Ministers on the part of the local M.P.s.

25. See Chapter 13.

26. Interviews with Mrs. Shirley Williams (4th. August 1971), James Allason (4th. August 1971) and Victor Goodhew (5th. July 1971).

27. Hansard. House of Commons.

<u>Debates.</u>	Volume 768.	Columns 1839-1844.	19th. July 1968.
	Volume 778.	Columns 841-849.	20th. February 1969.
	Volume 780.	Columns 160-174.	17th. March 1969.
	Volume 780.	Column 1239.	25th. March 1969.
	Volume 800.	Columns 1015-1022.	27th. April 1970.
<u>Question Time.</u>	Volume 760.	Columns 1359 and 1360.	13th. March 1968.
	Volume 775.	Columns 422 and 423.	11th. December 1968.
	Volume 803.	Columns 484 and 485.	7th. July 1970.
	Volume 804.	Columns 525 and 526.	22nd. July 1970.
<u>Written Answers.</u>	Volume 773.	Column 322.	21st. November 1968.
	Volume 781.	Column 253.	16th. April 1969.
	Volume 782.	Column 229.	30th. April 1969.
	Volume 784.	Columns 93 and 94.	21st. May 1969.
	Volume 792.	Columns 83 and 84.	26th. November 1969.
	Volume 796.	Columns 432 and 433.	27th. February 1970.
	Volume 797.	Columns 338 and 339.	11th. March 1970.
	Volume 800.	Columns 314 and 315.	29th. April 1970.
<u>Petition.</u>	Volume 790.	Columns 1151.	6th. November 1969.

Probably of greater importance than this, however, the M.P.s smoothed the channels of communication between the Government and its Departments and many of the other organisations involved in the process. The presence in the Labour Government as a Minister of Mrs. Shirley Williams and in the succeeding Conservative Government as a whip of Victor Goodhew helped greatly in this respect, since both were able to arrange direct access to senior Government ministers as and when necessary. A parallel with this was the ability of Charles Hill (now Lord Hill of Luton) whilst M.P. for Luton and a Cabinet Minister to expedite the process of obtaining loan sanction for the concrete runway in the late 1950s.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, membership of their respective Governments prevented both Mrs. Williams and Mr. Goodhew from speaking on the subject in the House,<sup>29</sup> which reduced the amount of pressure that could be brought to bear from this angle. This did not counterbalance fully the real advantages that the anti-Airport lobby obtained from having members of both Governments amongst their local M.P.s, however, because their ability to act as go-betweens from interested organisations to the Government was greatly increased by their membership of the latter. They oiled the wheels of the machinery of interaction, and in so doing they contributed to the learning processes undergone by both Governments by facilitating the exchange of information and opinion, as well as by virtue of the information transmitted through their pressurising activities.<sup>30</sup>

#### The British Airports Authority.

The Authority is a statutory undertaker responsible to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for the operation of certain airports.<sup>31</sup> On the appointed day, it was handed responsibility for the state-owned international airports of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted in the South-East and Prestwick in Scotland, and on 1st. April 1971 it also acquired Edinburgh (Turnhouse) Airport.<sup>32</sup> The Authority is required by its vesting Act to return an annual operating profit from its airports as a group,<sup>33</sup> and thus is reluctant to acquire unprofitable airports. Very few airports outside those already owned by the Authority prior to its acquisition of Turnhouse had demonstrated an ability to return an annual profit regularly, and it is clear that the Authority was most

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28. See Chapter 7.

29. Interviews, op. cit.

30. This is congruent with Blondel's view of the major tasks of the M.P. in relation to interest groups. J. Blondel, op. cit. Pages 205-222.

31. By the Airports Authority Act, 1965.

32. British Airports Authority. "Annual Report and Accounts, 1970-71." H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Page 38.

reluctant to acquire Turnhouse because it fell within this same category. In the end, it appears that the Authority was directed by the Government to take over Turnhouse against its own wishes,<sup>34</sup> and Robson cites this as one of several examples of the difficulties that the Authority has faced in obtaining clear policy directives in advance of the need to implement them from a Department which has taken a laissez-faire attitude towards airports planning.<sup>35</sup> Interviews with Airports Authority staff confirmed Robson's impressions of the relations between the Authority and the Department of Trade and Industry.<sup>36</sup>

The Authority's attitude towards Luton Airport has been ambivalent. On the one hand, the Airport can be seen as a competitor with Stansted and with Gatwick Airports for a large proportion of the inclusive tour market, although the rapid growth rate of civil aviation is such that the problem in the South-East is more one of fitting the passengers into the available airport capacity than of airports competing for scarce passengers.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, Luton Airport is one of the very small number of municipal airports which has demonstrated an ability to make a profit (with Manchester Airport being the other outstanding example), and thus is of interest to the Authority as one which it might wish to operate. It is clear that the prospect of the Authority taking over Luton Airport has been mooted with the Board of Trade/Department of Trade and Industry, and Goronwy Roberts (then Minister of State, Board of Trade) anticipated that the Authority might become an airport authority for the South-East, "...governing all the airports in South-East England where three of its four international airports now are, possibly taking over other airports in that region."<sup>38</sup> The Minister expected that the Civil Aviation Authority (subsequently set up under the Civil Aviation Act, 1971) would retain a strategic overview of the whole airports system, and that the British Airports Authority would become a regional body running the major airports in the South-East and in Scotland.<sup>39</sup> Luton and Glasgow (Abbotsinch) were the only major

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33. Airports Authority Act, 1965. Section 3.

34. Select Committee on Nationalised Industries. "First Report. Session 1970-71. British Airports Authority." H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Page 363.

35. W.A. Robson. "British Airports Authority." Political Quarterly. Volume 42, number 4. October-December 1971. Pages 423-428.

36. Interviews with T. J. Lovett (23rd. September 1970) and P.W. Le Blond (31st March 1971), Planning Department, British Airports Authority.

37. W. A. Robson, op. cit. Interview with P. W. LeBlond, op. cit.

38. Select Committee on Nationalised Industries, op. cit. Page 359.

39. Ibid. Pages 359-372.

airports in those two regions which were not owned or in the process of being acquired by the Authority at the time the Minister gave his evidence to the Select Committee. Since then, initial moves have been made for the Authority to acquire Abbotsinch from Glasgow Corporation.<sup>40</sup> At the time of writing, the administrative future of Luton Airport as a result of the disappearance of Luton County Borough Council consequent upon local government reorganisation remains undetermined, although a takeover by the British Airports Authority is seen as being a live possibility.<sup>41</sup> If the Minister was "thinking aloud" about the probable direction of policy in his evidence to the Select Committee, subsequent events have provided some vindication of what he said. Many of the other participants in the Luton Airport policy-making process take seriously the prospect of a B.A.A. takeover, and generally it is viewed with alarm by both sides in the controversy. It is felt that B.A.A.'s profit motivation would lead it to expand the Airport at a more rapid rate even than that of Luton Council and with even less regard for the feelings of local people,<sup>42</sup> and that the people of Luton would no longer benefit from the profits derived from local enterprise and thus would have nothing with which to offset the noise disadvantages of further expansion.<sup>43</sup>

It is difficult to go beyond the statement that the Authority has expressed an interest to the Board of Trade/Department of Trade and Industry about the future of Luton Airport, and that at least one Minister has taken this sufficiently seriously to suggest before a Select Committee that this is the likely course that events will follow. Some of the participants in the process have expressed the view that they would prefer to have Luton Council or an equivalent local body administer the Airport than the British Airports Authority,<sup>44</sup> and, if nothing else, this has probably contributed to a certain softening of attitudes towards Luton Council as an airport authority, especially on the part of Hertfordshire County Council.<sup>45</sup> Other than in the senses described above, however, the Airports Authority's participation in the Luton Airport policy-making process has been essentially instrumental, regarding the Airport as part of a wider system the totality of which has been the Authority's concern. In particular, this has taken the form of extensive evidence to the Commission on the Third London Airport, where the issue of the future of Luton Airport was seen as being one relatively minor aspect of the recommendation that the

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40. Glasgow Herald, 25th. November and 26th. November 1971. Guardian, 26th. November 1971.

41. See Chapter 18.

42. Interview with N.S.C. Reid (Executive Chairman, LADACAN), 8th. April 1971.

43. Councillor V. Dunington (Chairman, Airport Committee, Luton County Borough

Commission would have to make.<sup>46</sup> It is probable that the active participation of the Authority in the Luton Airport policy-making process in the terms examined above does not compare in magnitude with its instrumental participation via the work of the Commission on the Third London Airport, although the latter, if anything, will have underlined the Authority's case for a takeover of Luton Airport by virtue of the fact that it accepted and appeared to welcome Airport expansion.

Commission on the Third London Airport.

Neither the press nor independent research workers were allowed to interview members of the Commission or its staff as a result of a directive issued by its Chairman, Mr. Justice Roskill. The view was taken that, since the Commission was operating in a quasi-judicial capacity, all its deliberations would be made public, thus obviating the need for such interviews as well as saving time for the Commission.<sup>47</sup> In fact, this did not prove to be unduly restrictive, since the Commission's approaches to the issue of the future of Luton Airport are clear from the nine volumes of its Papers and Proceedings.<sup>48</sup>

The Commission was appointed by the Labour Government in May 1968, and reported its findings in outline to the Conservative Government in December 1970.<sup>49</sup> The seven members of the Commission included a judge, three professors (one of transport, one of aircraft design and one of economics), a consulting engineer, a businessman and a planning inspector from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Department of the Environment.<sup>50</sup> In addition, a Research Team was appointed to be responsible to the Commission and to undertake work at its behest, and a Secretariat was appointed to service both the Commission and its Research Team.<sup>51</sup> The work of the Commission was divided into five stages;

- Stage I. Preliminary investigations leading to the selection of a short-list of sites.
- Stage II. Public local hearings in respect of each of the four short-listed sites.
- Stage III. Submission of written evidence to assist in detailed site investigation and the cost/benefit analysis, and the commissioning of specific research studies.
- Stage IV. Discussions between "technical experts" to attempt to reach agreement and to define areas of disagreement over the research work undertaken.
- Stage V. Final series of public hearings.<sup>52</sup>

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Council). Evening Post, 1st. February 1972.

44. For example, interview with County Alderman Major Hughes (Chairman,

The Commission interpreted its terms of reference more narrowly than the Board of Trade had anticipated. The Board had hoped that the Commission would see its task as being to prepare, in effect, the South-Eastern part of a national airports plan, whereas the Commission decided to concentrate on selecting a site for the location of the third London Airport.<sup>53</sup> The effect of this choice upon the Commission's involvement in the Luton Airport policy-making process was profound, because it meant that its attitude to Luton Airport was essentially instrumental. Certain assumptions about the future of Luton Airport had to be made to guide the Commission in its tasks, but it did not see it as being its job to recommend a policy for the Airport. This, in turn, affected the orientation of evidence to the Commission on the part of participants in the Luton Airport policy-making process, and most of the evidence presented about Luton Airport at stages I and II and in the early part of stage III was also instrumental. The Airport was seen as something which was a factor to be taken into account by the Commission in its recommendation, but the Commission was not seen as being the body which would attempt to resolve the conflicts about the future of Luton Airport. This explains in part why LADACAN chose not to give evidence to the Commission in its early stages.<sup>54</sup>

The publication of the Research Team's cost/benefit analysis changed the situation completely.<sup>55</sup> The Team's exercise has been subjected to extensive attacks,<sup>56</sup> which are not the concern of this study. For present purposes, the important point is that the Research Team's assumptions about the future of Luton Airport were such that they generated a great deal of debate at the stage V hearings, which forced the Commission to reassess the assumptions made on its behalf. The Commission's orientation to this process remained instrumental, but its actions were regarded as being of direct significance for the Luton Airport policy-making process by many of the participants within it.

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Planning Committee, Hertfordshire County Council), 25th. May 1971.

45. See Chapter 12.

46. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Papers and Proceedings. Volume 1" H.M.S.O. London. 1969. Pages 1-71. "Papers and Proceedings. Volume 2." H.M.S.O. London. 1969. Pages 17-26. "Papers and Proceedings. Volume 9." H.M.S.O. London. 1970. Pages 15-23.

47. Interview with M. Coolican (Department of Trade and Industry), 7th. July 1971.

48. They are listed in full on page iii of the Commission's Report (H.M.S.O. London: 1971).

49. For the background to the Commission's appointment see, *ibid.* Pages 1-5.

50. *Ibid.* Page V.

51. *Ibid.* Page 163.

52. *Ibid.* Pages 13 - 17.

The Research Team assumed that if Foulness was to be the final choice of the Commission, Luton Airport would expand to the extent of having a new, re-aligned runway capable of handling 54,000 air transport movements per annum and of handling a total of over twelve million passengers.<sup>57</sup> In effect, therefore, the Research Team was assuming that most of the Snow Report's proposals would be implemented.<sup>58</sup> The amount of disagreement that this assumption provoked is summarised by the Commission itself;

"This suggestion (the Research Team's assumptions) attracted so much attention at the final series of public hearings that at times we devoted more attention to the future of Luton Airport than to the siting of the third London Airport." 59

The Commission's reaction to the evidence of Hertfordshire County Council, Stevenage Development Corporation, LADACAN, BRECCAN and the London Gliding Club on this point<sup>60</sup> was to amend downwards the Research Team's assumptions to a level of 30,000 movements per annum on the existing runway with an ultimate annual capacity of about eight million passengers if Foulness was to be recommended.<sup>61</sup> The assumption that Luton would either close or have its business curtailed so drastically that it would hardly be worthwhile operating the Airport if any of Cublington, Nuthampstead or Thurleigh (the inland short-listed sites) were to be chosen remained unaltered.<sup>62</sup> It is clear that the Commission was sufficiently impressed by the arguments against the expansion of Luton Airport to use them as one important factor in its rejection of Foulness.<sup>63</sup> This argument, with the implicit assumption that Luton would expand inevitably if Foulness was to be chosen, was attacked by Professor Buchanan in his minority report<sup>64</sup> and was taken up by the Hastings Committee in its demand for the choice of Foulness plus controls over Luton.<sup>65</sup> In this manner, the Commission became embroiled in the Luton Airport policy-making process. The importance of its involvement was that it had, in effect, accepted the arguments of the Airport's opponents, even if the conclusions that it proceeded to draw from these arguments (that they amounted to a case against Foulness) were unacceptable to most of those organisations.

The involvement of the Commission in the manner described above was significant in at least two senses. First, an independent body attempting to

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53. Select Committee on Nationalised Industries, op. cit. Page XV. Paragraph 36.

54. Interview with N.S.C. Reid, op. cit. See also Chapter 13.

55. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Papers and Proceedings. Volume VII. Part 1. Proposed Research Methodology. Part 2: Results of Research Team's Assessment." H.M.S.O. London. 1970.

56. For example see, P.J. Self. "Nonsense on Stilts: the Futility of Roskill." New Society. 2nd. July 1970. Pages 8-11.

sift a mass of evidence as objectively as it could had reached the conclusion that the case of the Airport's opponents was sound. The fact that an impartial body of this nature had reached such a conclusion was seen as being of itself a substantial reinforcement of that case. Second, an independent and expert assessment of the Luton Airport situation had been provided for the first time. Both of these factors contributed to the Central Government learning process described above; at the very least, they hastened the ability of the Departments of Trade and Industry and of the Environment to agree over long-term policy for Luton Airport.<sup>66</sup> In addition, a substantial amount of extra ammunition was provided by the Commission's Report for the Airport's opponents and was used at the public inquiry of January, 1972. For example, Hertfordshire County Council's suggestion at the inquiry of an upper limit of some 30,000 movements per annum at the Airport coincided with the limit contained within the Commission's modified assumptions about Luton Airport. Hertfordshire County Council's "responsibility" in the process has been stressed already,<sup>67</sup> and it could not be accused of acting <sup>with</sup> irresponsibility in pressing for this limit if it was merely adopting an assumption already made by the Commission. A similar limit was urged by Stevenage Development Corporation following the grant of a permission by the Secretary of State for the Environment which also mentioned the same limit.<sup>68</sup> Thus, whilst the Commission's attitude to Luton Airport remained instrumental, its involvement in the process was more than this. By the very nature of the Commission, it contributed powerfully to the input of information into the Luton Airport policy-making process, both in terms of the Research Team's work and its own assessments and in terms of the evidence that it generated from other organisations. In addition, the Commission's deliberations on the future of Luton Airport were used as further legitimations of the cases of the Airport's opponents. In these senses, therefore, the Commission became an active participant in the process, albeit against its own intentions.

#### Stevenage Development Corporation.

Under the New Towns Acts, Stevenage Development Corporation is appointed

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57. Commission on the Third London Airport. Volume VII, op. cit. Pages 49 and 50. Report, op. cit. Page 242.

58. See Chapter 8.

59. Report, op. cit. Page 61.

60. Ibid. Pages 30, 166 and 167.

61. Ibid. Pages 120, 242.

62. Ibid. Page 88.

by and responsible to the Secretary of State for the Environment. Thus, whilst its geographical area of responsibility is precisely defined (the designated area of Stevenage new town) and its functional responsibilities are equally closely prescribed (to build the new town) such that in operational terms it has many of the characteristics of a local authority, it is in fact part of the Central Government sub-system. On planning matters, for example, the Development Corporation consults with Hertfordshire County Council and with Stevenage Urban District Council, but neither of these organisations has any powers over the Development Corporation, which is responsible only to the Secretary of State in this respect. Both the County Council and the Urban District Council can and do make recommendations about planning matters within the new town to the Secretary of State, but the status of these is uncertain. In particular, the Urban District Council feels itself to be in an inferior position vis-a-vis the Development Corporation, with the former regarding the latter as interpreting too liberally its remit to build the new town and impinging upon the Council's functions as a provider of services within its area.<sup>63</sup> This tension between the two kinds of organisations appears to be common to new town situations,<sup>70</sup> and has been chronicled by Orlans in relation to the early years of Stevenage new town.<sup>71</sup> With the added complication of the sometimes strained relationship between both organisations and Hertfordshire County Council, this forms the background to the involvement of Stevenage Development Corporation in the Luton Airport policy-making process.

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63. Ibid. Pages 133 and 134.

64. Ibid. Page 158.

65. See Chapter 13.

66. See above. Page 319.

67. See Chapter 12.

68. See below. Page 332.

69. Interviews with County Alderman P. T. Ireton (a member of both the Development Corporation and the District Council between 1946 and 1970), 29th. March 1971, and L. G. Vincent (consultant planner, Stevenage Development Corporation), 23rd. June 1971.

70. M. W. Norris. "Problems of Function and Relationship between the Urban District Councils and New Town Corporations at Redditch and Corby." Unpublished M. Soc. Sc. dissertation, University of Birmingham. 1967.

71. H. Orlans. "Stevenage: a Sociological Study of a New Town." Routledge and Kegan Paul. London. 1952.

The Corporation itself consists of nine members, and the normal basis of appointment appears to have been five local people and four relatively prominent outsiders.<sup>72</sup> Its strength lies in its immediate access to the Secretary of State via the new towns division of the Department of the Environment, a section set up to promote new town development and tending to side with the Development Corporations in matters of planning conflict.<sup>73</sup> Stevenage town centre is approximately seven miles from the eastern end of the runway at Luton Airport, and is mainly affected by landing flights which line up on the runway glide path over the town centre. The noise problem is exacerbated in a new town because, through the deliberate application of such planning policies as pedestrian/vehicular segregation, the ambient noise levels in residential areas are lower than in older communities where the scope for the application of such policies is restricted. It has been estimated that the difference in ambient noise levels produced as a result of this factor is of the order of 5dBA both by day and by night, which is a significant difference and means that, relatively, the annoyance caused by aircraft over Stevenage is likely to be more severe than in most similarly-situated settlements.<sup>74</sup> The burden of the Development Corporation's argument, through the Department of the Environment, through Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P. for the Hitchin division which includes Stevenage,<sup>75</sup> and at the Roskill Commission and Luton Airport public inquiries, has been that there is an inconsistency between building a new town with an environment carefully designed to promote a low ambient noise level and allowing an Airport to expand to the point where aircraft noise nullifies this benefit.<sup>76</sup> Thus, Stevenage Development Corporation can be regarded as being another participant in the lobby against the expansion of Luton Airport, although with one important difference. The transverse runway proposed in the Snow Report would have the advantage for Stevenage of removing most of the traffic which at present overflies it to other nearby areas.<sup>77</sup> One logical conclusion of this observation might be that the Development Corporation should support expansion to this level. On the other hand, this would transfer the problem elsewhere (for example, to the new town of Hemel Hempstead, located about nine miles along the extended centre line from the south-western end of the new runway proposed in the Snow Report and being built by a sister

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72. Interviews with County Alderman P. Ireton, op. cit., and L. G. Vincent, op. cit.

73. Ibid.

74. L. G. Vincent. "Stevenage and Luton Airport Development." Stevenage Development Corporation. Stevenage 1971. Page 11. dBA is a measurement of the loudness of sounds using the logarithmic "A" scale, such that an increase of 10dB<sub>A</sub> represents a doubling of the loudness. R. Taylor "Noise". Pelican. London. 1970. Pages 59 and 60, 178 and 179.

Development Corporation<sup>78</sup>), and to support such action would be both un-neighbourly and inconsistent with the Corporation's previous arguments. This predicament, somewhat similar to that of LADACAN in relation to the effect upon Luton Airport of a recommendation in favour of Cublington as the location of the third London Airport,<sup>79</sup> appears to have been the main reason why the Development Corporation's involvement in the Luton Airport policy-making process has not been particularly extensive.<sup>80</sup>

The nature of this involvement can be illustrated by the example of the development of "sector 9" of the new town, disagreements over which took place during much of the direct observation study.<sup>81</sup> By the start of 1971, according to the approved master plan, sector 9 was the next part of the new town which was to be constructed, and the Development Corporation wished to proceed on this basis. Situated towards the north-west edge of the town, the sector was affected by aircraft noise but fell just outside the area contained by the 40 N.N.I. contour used by Hertfordshire County Council for the purposes of its development control policy.<sup>82</sup> The County Council wished to extend its policy outwards to the 35 N.N.I. contour, however, and recommended to the Department of the Environment that the implementation of sector 9 be deferred because of the aircraft noise problem. Stevenage Urban District Council wanted to develop the area itself for local authority housing, and recommended that it be allowed to do so rather than that the Development Corporation should build on it. Thus, the Department of the Environment received three conflicting recommendations; that the area should not be built on at all because of aircraft noise, that it should be used for local authority rather than for Development Corporation housing and that the approved master plan should be implemented as originally intended. The District Council's objection was not taken seriously by the Department of the Environment; it was merely another in a long series of such incidents between the Council and the Development Corporation. The County Council's objection was taken much more seriously, but in approving the Development Corporation's proposals the Secretary of State for the Environment argued that;

".....it now seems unlikely that air traffic movements at Luton Airport will increase beyond 30,000 per annum, i.e. approximately the present level ... (and as a result)... it seems safe to assume that airport (sic) noise over sector 9 is unlikely to reach a level which would make the development of the area for housing undesirable." 83

75. Interview, 4th. August 1971.

76. Interviews with County Alderman Ireton, op. cit., and L.G. Vincent, op. cit.

77. L.G. Vincent, op. cit. Pages 16, 31-33.

78. Ibid. Page 19.

79. See Chapter 13.

Thus, the Development Corporation was able to proceed, but the argument that the growing aircraft noise nuisance problem was capable of interfering with the Corporation in the performance of its functions had been registered. In turn, of course, the Corporation was able to use the Secretary of State's letter to argue that an increase in air transport movements much above an annual level of 30,000 would militate against the further development of the new town,<sup>84</sup> and this complemented Hertfordshire County Council's claim that a similar level of movements would form a reasonable ceiling to activities at Luton Airport.<sup>85</sup>

### Conclusions.

The Central Government sub-system has been difficult to examine because detailed information about the day-to-day workings of its component parts has not been available. It is at this level that attempts to piece together detailed case studies usually come across particular problems of reluctance on the part of interviewees to talk about their activities, and this is perhaps why there have been so few such studies. Nevertheless, it was possible to see at least four factors at work which, in combination, pushed the Central Government from a position of deliberate non-involvement in 1968 to a position

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80. Interviews with County Alderman Ireton, op. cit., Mrs. Shirley Williams, M.P., op. cit., and L.G. Vincent, op. cit.

81. This paragraph is based upon the interviews cited, *ibid.*

82. See Chapter 6.

83. Letter from the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Clerk of Hertfordshire County Council, 23rd. July 1971. The letter appears to refer to Luton Council's claim that the package of proposals designed to encourage the operation of TriStars from the Airport would led to no increase in movements, and does not appear to be a definitive statement of Government policy. The Secretary of State would have had Luton Council's proposals (into which he ordered the public inquiry of January, 1972) before him at the time of approving the Development Corporation's request to be allowed to proceed, and the basis of the Council's proposals was the above claim. Thus the Secretary of State appears to have accepted Luton Council's claim for the purpose of dealing with the particular problem at hand. The validity of the claim is examined in some detail in Chapter 6.

84. Evidence of L.G. Vincent to the public inquiry of January, 1972 on behalf of Stevenage Development Corporation.

85. See Chapter 12.

of agreement on long-term policy and movements towards medium-term policy by late 1971, and it was possible to see that the decision on the public inquiry of January 1972 would mark the extent to which the Government was prepared to declare policy in the medium-term. The change of Government during this period was not seen as being an important aspect of this process. The factors promoting change were the amount of pressure being advanced against Airport expansion and the increasing understanding of the nature of the problems on the part of civil servants in the Departments principally concerned. The factors restricting change were the unwillingness of the Government to interfere in an area considered to be the responsibility of a local authority and the extent of inter-Departmental conflict, principally between the Departments of Trade and Industry and of the Environment. It was argued that these factors had interacted in such a manner that both Governments had accepted that a degree of involvement was necessary but limited the extent of this involvement by concentrating on dealing in an incremental manner with specific proposals that came before them. Once Foulness had become operational many of these factors would change, and so a general policy for Luton Airport after that date could be adopted without too much difficulty. The problem remained in relation to the period until the opening of Foulness, and policy for this period was expected to emerge from a similar incremental process to that described above. The M.P.s contributed to the activities of the two Governments by increasing the pressure upon them and by oiling the machinery of interaction between them and other interested organisations.

The attitudes of both the British Airports Authority and the Commission on the Third London Airport towards the Luton Airport policy-making process were seen as being largely instrumental, although having important active dimensions in addition. The British Airports Authority contributed to the discussion over the future ownership and operation of the Airport via its direct links with the Department of Trade and Industry, and might acquire the Airport in conjunction with the impending disappearance of Luton County Borough Council as part of local government reorganisation. The Commission on the Third London Airport, by revising downwards the assumptions of its own Research Team about the future of Luton Airport, contributed a figure of 30,000 air transport movements per annum of which use was subsequently made by Hertfordshire County Council, Stevenage Urban District Council and the Secretary of State for the Environment in interpreting the proposals of Luton County Borough Council. Even if this was coincidental, the work of the Commission was used as a point of reference and legitimation in this respect. Stevenage Development Corporation played a part by identifying the effect of Airport expansion upon its

function as the builder of the new town. All three of these organisations, by using their direct links with Central Government to implant information about their particular concerns within the process, played important parts in the learning process undergone by Central Government between 1968 and 1971 which was identified as being a major feature of its change of attitude during that time.

Chapter 17. Some Further Perspectives.

The purpose of this Chapter is to draw together in summary form some of the major points which have emerged from looking at the Luton Airport policy-making process through an organisational perspective. The Chapter thus complements Chapter 10, which attempted the same task in relation to the historical perspective of Part 3.

The first and most obvious point to note is that the degrees of involvement on the parts of the various participants in the process have varied greatly. Certain participants stand out as having been involved extensively and as having exerted a considerable amount of influence, with several gradations occurring down to those organisations the involvement of which has been peripheral. As owner and operator of the Airport, Luton County Borough Council's stake in the process has been large and its involvement has extended across most of the issue areas which have emerged. As the major organisation able to operate some checks on the policy-making activities of the County Borough Council, the involvement of Central Government has also been important, although it has tended to take place within issue areas treated as discrete entities and with a reluctance to engage in a co-ordinated approach to policy-making. Hertfordshire County Council has been vigorous in its opposition to Airport expansion since 1968, and has made extensive use of the formal channels of communication with Central Government and of attempts to improve the quality of information about the nature of the problems. Outside the public sector, the airline and inclusive tour operators have played an important part in promoting Airport expansion both through their commercial activities and through their business relationship with the County Borough Council. LADACAN has played an important part in activating the issues within the political arena and in keeping up the pressure on the other organisations both to attempt to curtail Airport expansion and to continue and extend their opposition. The proddings of LADACAN appear to have been responsible for the entry into the process of several other organisations. These five organisations have dominated the process. Others from time to time have played important parts, but their impact upon the process does not appear to have matched that of the organisations listed. In particular, the regional planning agencies have been notable for their attempts to avoid the issues rather than for their degree of involvement in the policy-making process.

Second, the patterns of pressuring<sup>is</sup> activities altered during the process. For most of the time, very little pressure was necessary, and policy emerged from the close relationship between Luton Council and the operators, with occasional requests to Central Government for the granting of specific permissions. Once the issue of the future of the Airport had become controversial, opponents directed their attentions towards Luton Council, and towards Central Government in an attempt to persuade it to take more regulatory powers. Initially, Central Government channelled much of this pressure back to Luton Council, so that the Council was being pressurised both directly and via Central Government by the Airport's opponents. The Council concentrated upon its attempts to dissuade Central Government from taking more powers and upon its relationship with the operators, which was changing as the Council felt that it had to begin to adapt Airport policy to the changing political circumstances. The apparent ineffectiveness of direct pressure upon Luton Council caused the Airport's opponents to concentrate more of their energies upon Central Government, and in this the activities of Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAN were complementary, the former concentrating upon formal channels of communication and information and the latter upon attempts to build and to negotiate support at the political level. LADACAN was also able to ensure that the local authorities continued to be involved in the process by the dispersion of its membership throughout their ranks. Thus, the pattern of pressurising activities was fluid, with its focus shifting from Luton Council to Central Government but with several subsidiary foci upon organisations which LADACAN wished to influence.

Third, it is clear that a simple model of change as a function of accumulated pressure is an insufficient description of what occurred. The balance of the pressures exerted was heavily in opposition to Airport expansion such that, if pressure had been the only criterion of organisational change, the Airport's activities would have been severely curtailed. Whilst changes in the standpoints of most of the organisations involved can be detected during the later years of the process, these changes do not appear to have taken place in proportion to the pressures faced by them. In addition, other factors were at work conditioning the degree of change which took place. One constraint was imposed by the difficulties anticipated in coping with the flow of air passengers expected through the region's airports during the period before the third London Airport comes into operation, and these difficulties were recognised by and institutionalised through the Board of Trade/Department of Trade and Industry. On the other hand,

the need to cope with aircraft noise as an environmental problem of particular topical and political significance was recognised by and institutionalised through the Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Department of the Environment, and the conflict between these two organisations is but one of many examples of the constraints upon action imposed by institutional factors which have been noted throughout this study. Perhaps the single most important such category has been that of "dynamic conservatism", or the tendency of organisations to fight to retain the status quo in the face of a rapidly-changing situation.<sup>1</sup> Luton County Borough Council's reluctance to change its Airport policy despite the growing pressure to do so, and then its attempts to minimise the degree of change taking place in each instance, can be cited as one example of this phenomenon. Another was the unwillingness of Central Government to take powers imposing controls over municipal airport authorities and the reluctance with which such powers, once taken, were gradually extended. Both of these examples relate to important aspects of the behaviour of major participants in the process. Another example of an important institutional factor conditioning involvement was the lack of any powers which the regional planning agencies could wield and their choice, as a result, to concentrate upon areas of easily-attainable consensus. The issue of the expansion of Luton Airport dropped through a sieve as coarse as this, and the regional planning agencies preferred to leave the matter alone as a result.

The other major factor apart from pressure and institutional constraints which has to be taken into account in attempting to explain organisational change is the ability of institutions to learn. The processes of the infusion of knowledge into Luton Council and Central Government have been described in detail, but all of the organisations displayed an ability to learn more about their situation and to adapt themselves better to it as the process advanced. Thus, in an important sense the system under examination constituted a learning situation.<sup>2</sup> The rate of learning of the component parts of the system was different; for example, both Luton Council and

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1. D. A. Schon. "Beyond the Stable State". Temple Smith. London, 1971. Pages 31-60.
  2. G. S. Chadwick. "A Systems View of Planning". Pergamon Press. Oxford. 1971. Pages 317 and 318. A. Etzioni. "The Active Society". The Free Press. New York. 1968. Chapter 4. R. P. Mack. "Planning on Uncertainty". John Wiley and Sons. New York. 1971. Pages 172-174, 191 and 192. D. A. Schon, op. cit. Pages 115-179. M. P. Schutzenberger. "A Tentative Classification of Goal-Seeking Behaviours". Journal of Mental Science. Volume 100. 1954. Pages 97-102. G. Vickers. "The Art of Judgement: a Study of Policy-Making". Chapman and Hall. London. 1965. Pages 182-188.

Central Government appeared to learn and to adapt relatively slowly, whereas LADACAN, facing many fewer institutional constraints, appeared much more able to evolve, although tendencies towards internal decay were noted in gaps which appeared to be developing between its various levels. Thus, it is reasonable to describe the system as a learning system only in a special sense of the term. It does not imply that the system as a whole was capable of learning, but that its component parts learned and adapted at differential rates which conditioned their behaviour.

The impact of individuals upon organisational change appears to have been relatively slight, although it is possible that this conclusion derives in part from the concentration of the analysis upon the level of the organisation rather than of the individual. Within organisations, individual behaviour characteristics are of obvious importance, and since all organisations are staffed by individuals their particular behaviour patterns will affect to some extent the behaviour of the organisations. Nevertheless, these effects appear to have been marginal in terms of the trajectory of the system as a whole. The organisations involved in the process derived certain advantages and disadvantages from their situations within that process, and in addition exhibited attitudes towards changing their positions which were either conservative or more radical. Many of the individuals who have been mentioned as playing prominent parts in the process appear to have been thrown up by these forces rather than to have affected them significantly; for example, someone had to be Chairman of the Airport Committee of Luton County Borough Council or of the Executive of LADACAN and, whilst their styles in the performance of such duties might have made a difference to organisational interaction, there is no instance of a substantial change in organisational behaviour taking place as a result of a change in leadership. Rather, the former (or, more often, the recognition at some point that a degree of shift has already taken place and is likely to continue to do so) appears to have resulted in the latter. Of course, it is impossible to say what would have happened if different people had filled the prominent places within the various organisations, but on the evidence of what has happened it would be an inaccurate view of the process to describe it as the interaction of a few prominent individuals. By and large, their prominence arose

from the fact that they had been elevated within their organisations to the points at which important levels of interaction took place.

Two further points need to be noted. First, only one class of organisations claimed to represent "the public interest". This class, described as the general interest groups, each attempted to make such a claim on the basis of the size of their membership, and by far the largest was LADACAN. Even so, it tended to represent a particular cross-section of the local population (those suffering from aircraft noise), but argued that since such people were in a majority in the locality its viewpoint coincided with "the public interest". This claim was taken seriously by several participants, and the size of LADACAN'S membership was its most important means of obtaining political attention. PLANE claimed to represent the views of a majority of the public of a much larger area than the locality of the Airport, namely the area within which people made use of its facilities. This claim was taken far less seriously than that of LADACAN, in part because of the apparent vested interest of the travel agents and in part because PLANE'S membership on a head-counting basis could not match that of LADACAN. Nevertheless, both took a unitary view of "the public interest", believing in the existence of such a notion but quarrelling mainly over the spatial area within which it should be defined. The other classes of organisations appeared to take a pluralist view of the concept; they represented a public (usually defined fairly tightly, either by membership of the organisation or on an areal basis) with a set of related interests, and recognised that other organisations were doing the same. "The public interest" was something which was either left for decision at a higher level or was expected to emerge from the process of organisational interaction, but it was not a notion to which they attached a great deal of importance.

The other point is that the process of "participation" in policy-making during the period of controversy was essentially "organismic", rather than "mechanistic" as it had been previously.<sup>3</sup> That is, during most of the Airport's existence a stable pattern of policy-making existed with the rules of organisational involvement being implicitly understood by a regular set of participants, whereas during the period of controversy very few rules

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3. The terms are adapted from, T. Burns and G. M. Stalker. "The Management of Innovation". Tavistock Publications. London. 1966. Pages 5 and 6.

appeared to exist and organisations chose to involve themselves in a manner which appeared to be fitting and at a time when their interests appeared likely to be affected. This change was caused by a shift of the focus of policy-making from the administrative arena, where Luton County Borough Council could decide which organisations to consult and where Central Government was prepared to let it do so, to the political arena, where access to persons and to organisations with an interest in Airport policy-making was relatively unrestricted. Under these changed circumstances, the relatively unexpected was much more likely to happen than in the period when Luton County Borough Council in partnership with the operators had effectively controlled the process, and this placed a much greater premium on the ability to learn and to adapt than had previously been the case.

In summary, this organisational perspective of the Luton Airport policy-making process has revealed the following features:-

- 1) the degrees of involvement of participants varied greatly, but certain organisations (Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Central Government, LADACAN and the airline and inclusive tour operators) dominated the process;
- 2) the patterns of pressurising activities varied greatly during the process, with their focus shifting from Luton County Borough Council to Central Government and with subsidiary foci upon organisations LADACAN wished to influence;
- 3) accumulated pressure was not the only factor of significance in organisational change, and the existence of a variety of institutional constraints and the ability of organisations to learn and to adapt were also important conditioning features;
- 4) by and large, the impact of individuals upon the process was relatively small, and they tended to attain their prominence as a result of their positions within organisations rather than as a result of any personal process-wide significance;
- 5) most of the organisations took a pluralist rather than a unitary view of the concept of "the public interest", although the claim to represent the rather than a public interest was a powerful one if it could be supported by a large membership; and,
- 6) as the process changed from being one typified by non-contentious matters dealt with very largely at the administrative level to one typified by controversy within the political arena, the nature of "participation"

within it changed from being "mechanistic" to being "organismic".

## Part 5. Conclusions.

### Connective Summary.

Several important features which have conditioned the structure of the Luton Airport policy-making process have been derived from the environment within which it is set, and these formed the subject of Part 2. The process itself was examined in detail in Parts 3 and 4 from historical and organisational perspectives, and the major insights offered by these two approaches were summarised in Chapters 10 and 17 respectively. These form the major inputs into Part 5, which is concerned to draw conclusions about the nature of the Luton Airport policy-making process and about the implications of these findings for the theoretical framework outlined in Part 1.

These tasks are performed in two Chapters. Chapter 18 attempts to assess the impact upon the process of two important decisions which remain outstanding at the time of writing — the decision on the proposals which were the subject of the public inquiry of January, 1972 and the decision on the administrative future of the Airport. It is argued that these decisions are likely to contribute towards the acquisition by the process of a more stable state during the 1970's. Chapter 19 identifies the major features of the process and compares them with the model of planning as technical rationality developed in Chapter 1. The relevance of the latter to the former is seen as being relatively slight, especially during the period of controversy which was promoted by the introduction of jet operations from the Airport in 1968. This conclusion is confirmed by a test of the predictive validity of the model of planning as technical rationality, in which the model performs relatively poorly. Finally, the research implications which have been noted at various points throughout the study are summarised.

Chapter 18. The Impact of Some Anticipated Decisions.Introduction.

At the time of writing (early July, 1972), two matters which are capable of influencing the trajectory of the Luton Airport policy-making process to a considerable extent remain outstanding. The decisions on these matters will represent the next increments of a continuing process, and it is important to ensure that any conclusions about the nature of the system are sufficiently robust to be able to account for anticipated developments within the system. The decision on the public inquiry of January, 1972 will condition the extent to which the Government will be prepared to declare a medium-term policy for Luton Airport to cover the period until Foulness becomes operational, and certain pointers as to the likely nature of this decision can be detected. The decision on the future administrative responsibility for the Airport consequent upon the demise of Luton County Borough Council as part of local government reorganisation will condition the structure of the policy-making process in future. Each of these decisions is examined in turn.

The public inquiry of January 1972.

Compared with the inquiry of March, 1970, that of January, 1972 was longer, involved more parties and was dealing with a package of proposals which were of much more intrinsic importance to the future of the Airport.<sup>1</sup> Previous public inquiries dealing with Airport matters had all been resolved in Luton Council's favour, but there was a much stronger element of doubt expressed by participants on both sides on this occasion.<sup>2</sup> It seemed unlikely that the Council's proposals would be rejected altogether, since Luton Airport's capacity would be required until Foulness became operational unless (as LADACAN suggested) the date of opening of Foulness was to be advanced. In addition, rejection of the proposals would do nothing of itself to alleviate the noise problem because it would not affect the growth of traffic which could take place independent of the facilities under consideration, and by preventing the introduction of reputedly quieter aircraft such as the Tri-Star it might remove the prospect of even a marginal improvement taking place. Many other factors might also intrude. For example, if the Government reached the conclusion that the operators based at Luton would not buy TriStars

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1. See Appendix 8 for details of the public inquiries.

2. Source: several conversations with participants during the inquiry.

unless allowed to operate them from their base, Airport expansion might be seen as helping to promote the sale of the Rolls Royce RB 211 jet engines which power the aircraft, which has been Government policy since it took the Company over.

On the other hand, the grant of an unconditional planning permission to the Council (as happened following the inquiry of March, 1970) would appear to be as unlikely as an outright refusal, and Council officers themselves do not expect such an outcome.<sup>3</sup> The amount of political pressure that both Governments have been under to curb the growth of the problem of aircraft noise nuisance is such that any airport expansion projects are carefully weighed from this viewpoint, and as this study has demonstrated the experiences in connection with Luton Airport have been an important contributory factor to this situation. In addition, perceptions of the nature of the problem at civil service level have grown to the point where the seriousness of the problem and the need for a degree of control over it have been recognised. What appears likely, therefore, is that planning permission will be granted subject to conditions designed to ensure that the philosophy underpinning the application will become an actuality, that is that the gradual introduction of airbus equipment will allow the passenger throughput of the Airport to continue to rise whilst keeping the number of commercial aircraft movements static. One way in which this might be done would be by imposing a condition pegging the maximum number of commercial air transport movements to a fixed limit, so that the only way in which the number of passengers could be increased would be by increasing the size of the aircraft carrying them.<sup>4</sup> The figure which has occurred several times during this study as a point towards which many of the parties appear to be moving is 30,000 air transport movements per annum, and it is possible that a condition imposing such a limit and lasting (say) ten years to cover the period until Foulness is opened would satisfy many of the interests affected. In addition, this would have the advantage of promoting the sale of airbus-type

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3. Interview with S. McArdle (by then Borough Planning Officer, Luton County Borough Council), 4th. January 1972.

4. At the request of the Inspector, the Q.C.s representing Luton, Hertfordshire and LADACAN at the inquiry gave their opinions about the legality of such a condition attached to a planning permission. They agreed that the Secretary of State could limit the number of movements in such a manner, but that if he attempted to limit the types of aircraft he would be acting ultra vires.

equipment such as the TriStar, which would match another declared policy objective of the Government.<sup>5</sup>

A decision of this nature would form the cornerstone of an Airport policy for the decade of the 1970s. Apart from all the reasons advanced above for believing that this kind of a compromise is likely, it would have the advantage of limiting Luton Airport's scale of operations such that a transfer to Foulness once it opened would not be resisted too strongly by the airlines and tour operators, who would receive a greater degree of operational freedom at the new airport to compensate for its relative lack of accessibility. In all probability, it will be necessary for further planning applications dealing with ancillary facilities at Luton Airport (such as car parks and aircraft hardstandings) to be submitted during the 1970s, but provided that they did not impinge upon the policy framework outlined above they would be unlikely to cause a great deal of debate. In other words, the decision to be made by the Secretary of State might well establish an equilibrium position with regard to Airport policy, which could lead to a considerable cooling of the controversy which has been charted in this study. This, in turn, is yet another reason for believing that the decision is likely to be close to the path outlined.

#### The Future Administration of the Airport.

In 1974, Luton County Borough Council will cease to exist and its area will be administered jointly by a new Bedfordshire County Council and by a new district authority. The future administration of Luton Airport will be affected by these changes, and there appear to be four possibilities:-

- (1) the Airport will be owned and operated by the new Bedfordshire County Council;
- (2) the Airport will be owned and operated by the new District Council for the Luton area;
- (3) the Airport will be owned and operated on an ad hoc basis by a joint committee of local authorities; and,
- (4) the Airport will be owned and operated by the British Airports Authority.

In effect, option (1) would follow the logic of the white paper on local Government reorganisation, which assigned traffic and transport matters

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5. Further evidence that a compromise along these lines is likely comes from the decision of the Government to restrict night jet flights in the 1973 summer season at the Airport to 3,650, from a figure of 4,500 previously agreed between the Council and the operators (Evening Post, 8th. June 1972. Times, 27th. June 1972). An extra 340 flights have been granted for the same period for 1974, however, provided that they are taken up by reputedly quieter aircraft such as the TriStar (Evening Post, 30th. June 1972). A noise protection

(although airports were not specifically mentioned as falling within this category) to the County Councils.<sup>6</sup> In terms of the Airport's survival, its prospects would be much brighter under a new Bedfordshire County Council than under the unitary authority recommended for the area by the Redcliffe-Maud Commission,<sup>7</sup> which delineated an area very similar to that shown in Diagram 3 as being the area affected by aircraft noise. Option (2) would be the status quo position, except that the new district authority would have so few functions and hence would require so little revenue that Airport profits might exceed its needs.<sup>8</sup> Option (3) would represent a significant change from the present situation, although some airports (such as Castle Donington and Leeds/Bradford) are owned and operated by consortia of local authorities. The scale of operation at the Airports cited is much smaller than that at Luton Airport, however, and the members of the consortia take a broadly-agreed expansionist approach to their Airports which could not be expected from, say, Hertfordshire County Council with regard to Luton Airport. For these reasons, the choice of an ad hoc consortium of local authorities to own and operate Luton Airport would probably be an unfortunate one. Option (4), takeover by the British Airports Authority, would form the most radical departure from the present situation, although it has been argued already that this is a distinct possibility.<sup>9</sup>

Of the four options, takeover by the British Airports Authority would be the choice which in all probability most of the participants in the process would find least acceptable. Nevertheless, the Authority's scope would be limited by a restrictive planning permission deriving from the Secretary of State's decision following the public inquiry and by a commitment to the substantial scaling-down of Airport operations in the long-term. If policy-formulation follows the lines indicated, ownership of the Airport is likely to make little difference to the degree of expansion permitted.<sup>10</sup> If policy is

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condition was imposed upon the grant of planning permission for an extension of the runway at Gatwick Airport (Times, 11th. May 1972), and this might be a reasonable parallel to the Luton Airport situation.

6. Secretary of State for the Environment. "Local Government in England." Cmnd. 4584. H.M.S.O. London. 1971.

7. Royal Commission on Local Government in England. "Volume 1 - Report." Cmnd. 4040. H.M.S.O. London. 1969. Pages 286 and 287.

8. R.F. Waterfall (Borough Treasurer, Luton County Borough Council) in cross-examination at the public inquiry, January 1972.

9. See Chapter 16. Evening Post, 25th. May 1972.

10. This formed part of Luton Council's reasons for submitting the planning application which led to the inquiry. If the Council and its successor are not

not laid down as firmly as has been indicated, the administrative future of the Airport could be significant in terms of the degree of expansion, especially if the British Airports Authority with its resources and its profit-orientation takes over responsibility.

#### Conclusions.

This Chapter has indicated that a compromise medium-term policy for the future of Luton Airport appears to be emerging, and that, if this is so, the administrative future of the Airport is unlikely to make very much difference to its rate of growth. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the issue of the future of Luton Airport will re-enter a period of relative quiescence, with very few organisations being deeply involved in policy-making but with many others retaining a watching interest. The prospect of a reduction in the controversy is one which contributes to the likelihood of the compromise being reached. If this does not happen, however, the situation would probably remain more fluid, and further controversies could be sparked off by such matters as the future ownership of the Airport or further planning applications for facilities. If the long-term commitment to a substantial reduction in activity at the Airport once Foulness has been opened were to be abandoned, another cycle of intense activity would be probable. The existence of these probabilities under such circumstances reinforces the view that an acceptable compromise along the lines indicated is likely to be reached.

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to be allowed to retain control of the Airport, it wishes to make sure that firm policy guidelines have been laid down by the time it loses control, and one way of ensuring this is to submit a planning application that is of itself a major policy item. This argument applies particularly to the prospect of a takeover by the British Airports Authority. Interview with Councillor V. Dunnington (Chairman, Airport Committee, Luton County Borough Council), 29th. July 1971.

## Chapter 19. The Nature of the Luton Airport Policy-Making System.

### Introduction.

The study was seen as having five related tasks:-

- (1) to present a detailed case study of the operational aspects of the planning process;
- (2) to construct models of that process;
- (3) to examine the relationship between these models and the model of planning as technical rationality;
- (4) to answer certain questions about the operational characteristics of the planning agencies observed; and,
- (5) to concentrate upon the behaviour of the regional planning agencies involved.<sup>1</sup>

Task (1) has been the concern of the bulk of this study, and task (5) is completed in Chapter 15. This Chapter, therefore, is concerned with tasks (2), (3) and (4), and with the research implications identified both here and throughout the study.

### A Model of the Process.

Certain features emerged from the historical perspective of the process:-

- (1) it appears to have been cyclical, moving from a state of relative stability through a zone of considerable instability towards a state of relative stability again<sup>2</sup>;
- (2) participation in the process has changed along with the changes in the nature of the system, but Luton Council and latterly Central Government have continued to be the foci of decision-making activities;
- (3) the greater involvement of Central Government in the process was representative of the move upwards towards the national level of policy-making activities in relation to Luton Airport, but this was not reflected in any extensive involvement on the parts of the regional planning agencies;
- (4) a process of adjustment to pressure on the part of the two foci appears to have taken place, and there are signs that a complementary form of "adjustment by default" is likely to occur;
- (5) the activities of Luton Council and Central Government in relation to Airport policy-making have been characterised by "disjointed incrementalism"; and,

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1. See Chapter 1.

2. The analysis of Chapter 18 confirmed that a state of relative stability is likely to be attained during the 1970's.

(6) the process has tended to be compartmentalised as a successive series of related issues, each with its own specialist participants as well as with overlapping participants such that the overall issue of the future of Luton Airport has remained constantly in the public eye<sup>3</sup>.

This perspective was complemented by an organisational analysis which emphasised the following features:-

(7) the degrees of involvement of participants varied greatly, but certain organisations (Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Central Government, LADACAN and the airline and inclusive tour operators) dominated the process;

(8) the patterns of pressurising activities varied greatly during the process, with their focus shifting from Luton County Borough Council to Central Government and with subsidiary foci upon organisations LADACAN wished to influence;

(9) accumulated pressure was not the only factor of significance in organisational change, and the existence of a variety of institutional constraints and the ability of organisations to learn and to adapt were also important conditioning features;

(10) by and large, the impact of individuals upon the process was relatively small, and they tended to attain their prominence as a result of their positions within organisations rather than as a result of any personal process-wide significance;

(11) most of the organisations took a pluralist rather than a unitary view of the concept of "the public interest", although the claim to represent the rather than a public interest was a powerful one if it could be supported by a large membership; and,

(12) as the process changed from being one typified by non-contentious matters dealt with very largely at the administrative level to one typified by controversy within the political arena, the nature of "participation" within it changed from being "mechanistic" to being "organismic"<sup>4</sup>.

A model consisting of these features can be compared with the available models of policy-making processes. Etzioni has ranged them along a continuum from rationalist to incrementalist models, with three important

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3. See Chapter 10.

4. See Chapter 17.

positions. The model of rationality (which Etzioni terms "instrumental rationality") is at one extreme, with the model of "partisan mutual adjustment" at the other and the middle ground being occupied by his own "mixed scanning" model<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, Schon has identified three models of social change which stress the place of organisations in such a process; the centre-periphery model, the proliferation of centres model and the constellation model.<sup>6</sup> These two sets of models can be used to provide a framework against which the Luton Airport policy-making process can be examined.

Following Simon<sup>7</sup>, Etzioni sees a rational model as having the following characteristics:-

- (1) extensive information about alternative courses of action and their consequences;
- (2) calculation of the alternative outcomes in terms of the various values and combinations of means of the actors;
- (3) a set of agreed values as the basis for goal selection and for judging the alternative consequences of actions; and,
- (4) an exhaustive survey of all relevant alternatives.<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that the Luton Airport policy-making process did not satisfy characteristics (3) and (4). The process was notable for the degree of disagreement over the values which ought to be the basis for policy-making and (quite possibly as a consequence of this) no attempt was made to survey the relevant alternatives. Quite apart from all other considerations, such a survey would have required Luton Airport's future to be considered in relation to proposals for airport development in the country as a whole, since the two are intimately related, but Chapter 3 has indicated that system-wide policy-making of this nature has not taken place in Britain. Characteristic (2) was satisfied in part, since several of the participant organisations (for example, Hertfordshire County Council, Luton County Borough Council, PLANE and, to a lesser extent, LADACAN) did attempt to examine which possible policy outcomes would fall within their own areas of responsibility and did urge such outcomes within the process. Similarly, characteristic (1) was satisfied in part, since

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5. A. Etzioni. "The Active Society". The Free Press. New York. 1968 Chapters 11 and 12.  
 6. D. Schon. "Beyond the Stable State". Temple Smith. London. 1971. Pages 80-115.  
 7. H. A. Simon. "Administrative Behaviour". The Macmillan Company. New York. 1957. Page 67.  
 8. A. Etzioni, op. cit. Page 264. See also M. Meyerson and E. C. Banfield. "Politics, Planning and the Public Interest". Free Press of Glencoe. New York. 1964. Pages 314-322.

as the process advanced the amount of information about the consequences of possible courses of action increased quite considerably, and Chapter 6 testifies to this phenomenon. Thus, the model of rationality does not fit the Luton Airport policy-making process, although there is a degree of match between certain of the components of the two.

Several authors have argued that the model of rationality is not attainable in a real-world situation, but exists rather as a yardstick against which the degree of rationality attained can be assessed. They argue that as a model of what is capable of achievement it should be replaced by "bounded rationality"<sup>9</sup>. This has not yet been spelled out as a detailed model of policy-making processes, however, and certain important questions remain to be answered. For example, to what extent are the characteristics of a rational model capable of relaxation without destroying the essential rationality of the model? Are certain of the characteristics more expendable than others? Questions such as these require answers, and until they are supplied it is impossible to measure the degree of fit between such a model and the Luton Airport policy-making process. The degree of match between the full model and the process was relatively small, however, which would tend to indicate that a model of bounded rationality which was close to the model of full rationality would still be too demanding to fit the process analysed here.

At the other end of the continuum from the rational models is the model of partisan mutual adjustment. This model has been developed by Lindblom, via his work with Dahl on bargaining and with Braybrooke on disjointed incrementalism, and from the work of Simon on the concept of "satisficing" and March and Simon on the behaviour of administrators within organisations<sup>10</sup>. This model views policy-making as taking place without the formal co-ordination of organisations, without a dominant common purpose amongst the participating organisations and without rules that fully prescribe their relations to each other. Instead, policy emerges via the pursuance of self-interest in the political market place, with organisations

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9. H. A. Simon, op. cit. Pages XXIV-XXVII. A. Etzioni, op. cit. Pages 257-263. J. G. March and H. A. Simon. "Organisations". John Wiley and Sons. New York. 1958. Page 209. G. F. Chadwick. "A Systems View of Planning". Pages 118 and 119, 313, 323-325, 335 and 336.

10. C. E. Lindblom. "The Intelligence of Democracy". Free Press of Glencoe. New York. 1965. R.A. Dahl and C.E. Lindblom. "Politics, Economics and Welfare". Harper and Row. New York. 1953. Pages 324-365. D. Braybrooke and C.E. Lindblom. "A Strategy of Decision". Free Press of Glencoe. New York, 1963. H.A. Simon, op. cit. J.G. March and H.A. Simon, op. cit.

modifying their positions incrementally through a range of adaptive (through free choice) and manipulative (with at least an element of coercion) adjustment situations<sup>11</sup>. This model appears to relate much more closely to the Luton Airport policy-making process than did the model of rationality, at least during the period of controversy. Disjointed incrementalism typified the activities of both Luton County Borough Council and Central Government, and both changed their positions at least in part as a result of the pressures they faced. A large number of organisations involved themselves in the process on the basis of their self-interest, and some were successful in obtaining certain policy modifications. Nevertheless, in terms of its applicability to the Luton Airport policy-making process, this model under-stresses the importance of the ability of organisations to learn about their changing situation and to adapt themselves to it, and over-stresses the importance of pressure in the political market place. A "mechanistic" model based upon pressure appeared to be emerging from the historical perspective of Part 3 of this study, but the organisational perspective of Part 4 laid emphasis also upon the "organismic" ability of the system to operate as a learning system in the sense that its participant organisations each learned and adapted at differential rates. Thus, it seems clear that neither the rationality model nor the partisan mutual adjustment model is sufficiently homomorphic with the Luton Airport policy - making process to stand as a reasonable description of it, but that a model is required somewhere along the continuum but with a greater element of partisan mutual adjustment than of rationality in relation to the position since 1968.

The middle position along the continuum is occupied by Etzioni's mixed scanning model. This incorporates elements of both rationalist and incrementalist models by distinguishing between contextuating (or fundamental) and bit (or item) decisions. The former, whilst being relatively few in number, set the guidelines for the latter, and thus require a methodology approaching rationality, whereas bit decisions are much more common and can be taken incrementally provided that their cumulative effects are carefully monitored. It is argued that bit-incrementalism overcomes the unrealistic aspects of comprehensive rationalism by limiting approaches to it to major contextuating decisions, and that contextuating-rationalism helps to fight the conservative bias of incrementalism<sup>12</sup>. Of the three

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11. C. E. Lindblom, *op. cit.* Pages 35-84, 137-152.

12. A. Etzioni, *op. cit.* Pages 282-309.

models this is the least developed, since as yet it has not approached the difficult problem of the mix of rationalist and incrementalist inputs.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that the model of the Luton Airport policy-making process during the period of controversy is a form of mixed scanning model, towards the partisan mutual adjustment end of the continuum but with an important modifying element recognising the ability of the system to adapt through the differential learning potential of its participant organisations. This infusion of a learning element puts limits upon the applicability of the concept of partisan mutual adjustment.

During the lengthy period before controversy flared in 1968, the Luton Airport policy-making process was located more towards the rationality end of the continuum than the partisan mutual adjustment end. Very few organisations were involved, and those that were tended to agree on the broad lines that policy should take. As a result, little real adjustment needed to take place and there was relatively little difficulty in reconciling the values of those organisations with the range of policy outcomes that seemed realistic to them. Nevertheless, many of the organisations which were in future to be affected by the results of such policy deliberations were not involved in them because they did not at the time perceive such involvement to be necessary, and so several of the policy alternatives that they would have espoused had they been aware of the consequences of those under consideration were not taken into account within the relatively closed system which then existed. Thus, whilst the process approached rationality, a form of mixed scanning model would still be appropriate.

Of the three models of organisational involvement in social change identified by Schon, the centre-periphery model fits the process until the period of controversy began.<sup>14</sup> Luton Council was at the centre of the system, and had a relatively close relationship with first the Chamber of Commerce and then the airline and inclusive tour operators. Other organisations, such as Bedfordshire County Council, certain District Councils

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13. Chadwick's advocacy of a "mixed-programming" approach to planning is an adaptation of Etzioni's model, but it fails to deal with this problem of the mix of inputs. G. F. Chadwick, op. cit. Pages 346-375.

14. D. Schon, op. cit. Pages 81-84.

and Central Government were involved occasionally but peripherally. Such a situation lasted for in excess of thirty years whilst participation in the process was limited and whilst the system remained closed, but the situation changed following the introduction of jets in 1968. Schon's second model, the proliferation of centres or polynuclear model, appears to be appropriate to this new situation.<sup>15</sup> Here several important centres develop, a hierarchy of such centres may be visible and elements of organisational learning start to become important. In the case of the Luton Airport policy-making process, Luton Council and Central Government became the centres of decision-making activity, but the operators and Hertfordshire County Council respectively made extensive and at least partially successful attempts to influence them and all, in turn, were subject to the pressurising activities of LADACAN. The large number of other organisations examined throughout this study constituted the periphery. Schon's third model, a constellation model, does not appear to have been relevant to the Luton Airport policy-making process. This model posits a fluid, unstructured situation in which the learning element is paramount,<sup>16</sup> and there is no evidence (as yet, at any rate) that the system which has moved from a centre-periphery to a polynuclear situation is continuing to move towards a fit with the constellation model.

To summarise this discussion, the models of the Luton Airport policy-making process can be fitted into the literature on models of policy-making. The point of cleavage is seen as being 1968, when jet operations were introduced from the Airport on a regular basis. Although the pre-1968 and the 1968-onwards models are both seen as mixed scanning models, they are different varieties of this general form. Pre-1968, the system was a relatively closed centre-periphery system with limited rationality. From 1968, the system was an open, polynuclear learning system with limited partisan mutual adjustment. The fact that a system modification as extensive as this can still remain subsumed within the mixed scanning class indicates the amount of work which still needs to be done in terms both of refining the concept and of developing it in relation to the rationality-partisan mutual adjustment continuum.

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15 Ibid, pages, 84-90.

16 Ibid, pages 111-115.

### The Relevance of the Model of Planning as Technical Rationality.

As a sub-species of the genus rationality, already substantially rejected as a model applicable to the Luton Airport policy-making process, the model of planning as technical rationality would not be expected to be an homomorphic representation of the process. Nevertheless, it was indicated that certain features of the general model were more applicable than others, and so the degree to which the process approached rationality can be measured to some extent by examining in turn the relevance of the characteristics of the model of planning as technical rationality.

The model had seven features:-

- (1) planning is comprehensive;
- (2) planning is concerned with the public interest;
- (3) planning is best dealt with by technical expertise;
- (4) planning is rational;
- (5) planning involves public participation;
- (6) planning is socially motivated; and,
- (7) planning guards future possibilities.<sup>17</sup>

The notion of comprehensiveness is not really applicable to the planning activities within the Luton Airport policy-making process. A general and comprehensive overview of airports policy was not taken by Central Government, so that decision making in relation to individual airports tended to be on an ad hoc basis. At the same time, at least in South-East England, the regional planning mechanisms avoided the question of the relationship between airport development and the evolution of the region. The impact of the activities at Luton Airport was felt over an area much wider than that of the individual local planning authority, and the consultation mechanisms existing between such authorities were poor.

Thus, whilst from time to time attempts were made to examine Airport policy on a fairly long-term basis, the ramifications of such policy decisions were barely studied and, as a result, feedback from the latter to the former was very limited.

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17. See Chapter 1.

The concept of comprehensiveness, therefore, is not really applicable to the planning activities connected with the future of Luton Airport.

Similar difficulties exist in relation to the notion of the public interest. The local agencies with planning powers did not look for the public interest, but for the apparent balance of interests within the areas of their responsibilities. Thus, there were several publics each represented by a planning agency which attempted to define an interest for the populace of its concern. For most of the period under examination, Central Government deliberately attempted not to take up a position as arbiter of the public interest amongst the various conflicting interests, and only latterly and minimally did it begin to use its powers to search for an equilibrium position. The only organisations which took a unitary view of the concept were the general interest groups such as LADACAN and PLANE, but even they disagreed as to the area over which the concept should be applied. As a result, the concept cannot even be defined in relation to the Luton Airport policy-making process, unless it is asserted that whatever emerges from the process does so because it is in the public interest. There may be some validity in this claim, and it may indeed be the best that can be made of the concept, but it is nonetheless a circular definition if the assumption is made (as the model does) that a unitary public interest exists. In the period before 1968, an element of unitary public interest can be said to have existed by virtue of the substantial agreement upon policy of the participant organisations within the process, but this takes no account of the organisations which were to be affected by the developments under consideration and which, presumably, would have dissented from this unitary viewpoint had they been aware of it and its implications at the time.

The concept of technical expertise is more directly relevant. During the lengthy period prior to 1968, when the few participants in the process very largely agreed upon Airport policy, the position of technical expertise <sup>was an important one, although it was more civil aviation than planning expertise.</sup> This was still a limited form of expertise, however, since it was related solely to the goals of the active participants and hardly at all to the positions of those organisations which were not then involved in the process but which were affected by the decisions being taken. After the process moved into the open, political arena, the place of technical expertise was reduced. The twin elements of political pressure and organisational learning (as well the existence of a whole set of institutional

constraints) as factors in adaptation have been identified, and the concept of technical expertise relates closely to the learning elements. Thus, whilst there was broad agreement over policy the place of technical expertise concerned with the means of achieving such policies was important, but when the process was characterised by policy disagreements the importance of technical expertise was reduced and was limited largely to the learning elements of the process.

The concept of rationality has been examined already, and it was concluded that the process has never matched the requirements of a full model of rationality and that it tended to move further away from such a yardstick as controversy heightened.<sup>18</sup>

The notion of public participation is one which appears to have been satisfied fairly fully by the process, at least during the period of controversy. This was not in the sense of the concept as it appears to have been understood by the Skeffington Committee, however, that is in terms of an ordered sequence of involvement on the part of the general public related to stages in the process of plan-making.<sup>19</sup> The Skeffington Committee's model appears to be a mechanistic one, and as such it does not map very well onto an organismic policy-making process in which formal plan-making stages barely existed.<sup>20</sup> From 1968 onwards, a large number of organisations involved themselves in the process, representing a wide spectrum of interests concerned with Airport policy-making. Access to membership of many of these organisations was restricted by the application of certain tests, but membership of others was open to anyone who cared to join. Thus, public participation took place as a result of individual membership of organisations which were themselves involved in the political arena in an open-ended manner. It did not take place through individual members of the public involving themselves in pre-determined ways at pre-determined stages in a plan-making exercise. Before 1968, participation was restricted to a small number of organisations

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18. See above. Pages 351 and 352.

19. Committee on Public Participation in Planning (Skeffington Committee). "People and Planning" H.M.S.O. London. 1969.

20. The terms "mechanistic" and "organismic" are used as they were in Chapter 17, to refer to the difference between a system with a stable pattern of policy-making and understood ground rules amongst a regular set of participants and a system with very few ground rules and a fluid pattern of participation as part of a dynamic policy-making process.

which agreed on policy, and although this could not be termed "public" participation in the same sense that activities from 1968 onwards could be so described, it can be argued that it was open to the electorate of Luton (at any rate) to attempt to change Airport policy via the ballot box if it so desired. In fact, of course, its chances of doing this were limited by the agreement of both major parties about Airport policy and by the fact that the electorate was asked to decide on a package of policies bearing a party label of which Airport policy was just one relatively minor item. Thus, public participation can only be said to have existed to any significant extent from 1968 onwards, but it is at least open to argument that the form of public participation which then existed was truer to the concept than that proposed by the Skeffington Committee.

A degree of social motivation on the part of some of the planning agencies can be detected in those aspects of the process connected with learning. Most of the learning activities took place in relation to the impact of aircraft noise upon the population of a wide area surrounding Luton Airport, and some policy modifications occurred as a result of this improved understanding. Indeed, as understanding increased the degree of modification which took place also increased, to the point where a long-term policy anticipating the run-down of the Airport had been formulated. Most of this can be attributed to the activities of Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAN, seeking to bring into action the planning machinery (especially at Central Government level) to modify the output of a policy-making process which had until then existed very largely outside such machinery. As the process advanced, the balance between aircraft noise (concern over which was the major expression of social motivation) and civil aviation considerations began to swing towards the former, although the latter had been predominant for most of the time. Thus, the social motivation of planning agencies was a feature of the process, although its importance was significant only latterly and unevenly, with Luton County Borough Council's Planning Department having insufficient seniority of status to be allowed to play any part in Airport policy-making.

The concept of planning as the guardian of future possibilities can also be detected in the process in an embryonic form. For most of the period under examination, the concept of "future possibilities" related to the

chosen rate of Airport expansion rather than to the potential impact of differential rates upon the quality of life in the area. Latterly, such wider questions began to be examined by Hertfordshire County Council in particular and understandings gained were fed into the learning process, but the regional planning agencies limited the impact of such considerations by their failure to provide a longer-term context which faced up to such problems. Consequently, the ability of the planning agencies to feed understandings as to the implications of policy developments into current policy-making activities was sharply reduced. At the same time, the willingness to look ahead and to prepare long-term plans for Airport expansion had been reduced as a result of the failure of previous attempts and by the political difficulties that would have arisen out of controversies over such proposals. Whilst the willingness to look at future possibilities in terms of the impact of Airport expansion upon the area increased, therefore, the willingness to look at future possibilities in the narrower sense of the rate of Airport expansion decreased. Thus, one form of planning as the guardian of future possibilities tended to be replaced by another, the difference between the two being over the kinds of possibilities that were being guarded.

Of the features of the model of planning as technical rationality, the notions of the importance of technical expertise and of public participation were found to have been important features of the Luton Airport policy-making process, although the kind of expertise of relevance to the former was not always planning expertise and the concept of public participation occurred in a manner somewhat different from that in which it is normally formulated. In addition, some elements of the concept of planning as the guardian of future possibilities were found, and aspects of the concepts of the public interest, rationality and social motivation were present for a limited amount of the period under consideration. The concept of comprehensiveness could not be said to have been present at all. Thus, the model of planning as technical rationality is of some relevance to the Luton Airport policy-making process, but it is a long way from being a full and accurate model. A very crude method of estimating the degree of relevance of the model would be to give two points for a feature which has been directly pertinent, one for a feature which has been of some relevance and no points for a feature of very little relevance. Such a "scoresheet" would work out as follows;

	Pre-1968.	1968 onwards.
Comprehensiveness.	0	0
The public interest.	1	0
Technical expertise.	2	1
Rationality.	1	0
Public participation.	1	2
Social motivation.	0	1
Guardian of future possibilities.	$\frac{1}{6}$	$\frac{1}{5}$
Totals	$\frac{6}{6}$	$\frac{5}{5}$

With a measure as crude as this, no significance can be attached to the totals other than as a general index of the extent to which the model does not fit the process (since the maximum possible score indicating a complete fit would be 14), and as further evidence that the pre-1968 situation was closer to the model than that obtaining from 1968 onwards. In addition, a simple, visual image of the degree of difference between the two situations is given; although their total scores are similar, their scores on individual items only coincide on two out of the seven occasions.

The accuracy of predictions of features of the process that the model of planning as technical rationality could achieve would be expected, as a result, to be no better than medium. An opportunity to test this hypothesis is presented by the next part of this Chapter, which turns to a consideration of certain specific questions which an operational model of the planning process would be required to answer in relation to any particular situation.

#### Some Operational Characteristics of the Planning Agencies Observed.

Four particular questions were posed in this context:-

- (1) what kinds of operational circumstances do the planning agencies face?
- (2) to what extent are they able to overcome these constraints?
- (3) how do the planning agencies relate to the other organisations involved in the process?
- (4) what parts do professional planners play within the planning agencies?<sup>22</sup>

The main operational constraints faced by the planning agencies at the Local Government Level related to their status within their parent organisations. As a junior Department (and, indeed, as a section of the Borough Engineer's Department for virtually all of the period covered by this study), the Planning Department within Luton County Borough Council

22. See Chapter 1.

barely dealt with Airport policy at all. This was compounded by the relatively lowly standing of the Planning Committee, which was combined with the Housing or with the Transport Committees for most of the period under consideration and only recently acquired separate status. Both the Planning Department and the Planning Committee dealt with Airport policy simply in terms of the mechanical processing of planning applications for the creation of further facilities. The focus of policy-making was elsewhere within the Council, centred upon the Airport Committee, which viewed policy-making in terms of Airport operations and the profit to be derived from them for the Council. Only the Planning Department was equipped to attempt to assess in detail the wider ramifications of the Council's Airport policy and, since almost certainly this would have sounded a warning against the Council's original policy of natural expansion and even, in all probability, against the later policy of controlled expansion, the Department was not allowed to attempt to examine such considerations. The Planning Departments of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire County Councils did not have such problems. Both were relatively high status Departments serving relatively high status Planning Committees. Their problem was simply their lack of any powers. As the local planning authority prior to 1964, Bedfordshire County Council could have involved itself in the process but chose not to, in part because of the long-standing complications of its relationship with Luton Council over the County Borough status issue and in part because the degree of Airport expansion which was to take place subsequently was not appreciated at that time. Bedfordshire County Council's involvement remained constricted by its historical difficulties in relation to Luton Council and by its wish to appear to act with consistency. Hertfordshire County Council had no such difficulties other than its lack of powers, which it sought to circumvent by urging Central Government to exert tighter controls over Airport policy-making.

The difficulties of the regional planning agencies have been assessed in detail in Chapter 15. Briefly, they were all relatively fragile organisations beset with internal difficulties and with no powers, which deliberately pursued attainable consensus in preference to attempts at conflict-resolution. Because policy-making with regard to Luton Airport fell into

the latter category rather than the former, they preferred to ignore it. At Central Government level, one Ministry (the Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Department of the Environment) was responsible for planning and environmental matters and thus tended to see the Airport in terms of the noise nuisance problem and another Ministry (the Board of Trade/Department of Trade and Industry) was responsible for civil aviation matters and tended to take a promotional approach to Airport development. The conflict between these two limited the extent to which Central Government was able to infuse wider planning considerations into the process, and further limits were imposed by the unwillingness of Central Government to impinge upon traditional areas of Local Government activity and by the lack of a definitive regional strategy which attempted to face up to the kind of problems posed by Airport expansion.

The question as to the extent to which these difficulties were overcome can be answered quite simply; by and large, they were not. In many ways, the issue of the future of Luton Airport dropped through the existing planning mechanisms because of these operational difficulties. The policy modifications which occurred did not result from the application of planning controls but from concessions made to pressure and as a result of improved learning about the problems on the part of several of the organisations. The contribution of the planning agencies to the process was largely in terms of the learning system that was operating, and Hertfordshire County Council was particularly important in this respect. The activities of its Planning Department contributed greatly to the supply of information about the implications of Airport expansion, and the dissemination of this information fed the learning activities of the County Council, of Central Government and of Luton County Borough Council. The public inquiries of March, 1970 and of January, 1972 formed watersheds in the learning process because they represented specific events in relation to which a great deal of information was collected and then used. The difference between the activities of the Planning Departments of Luton Council and of Hertfordshire County Council is indicated by their respective involvement in the two inquiries; extensive evidence was given on both occasions by a senior member of the County Council's Planning Department, but no spatial planning evidence at all was given by the County Borough Council at either inquiry.<sup>23</sup> The learning system worked very

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23. Although Luton Council's Borough Engineer and Planning Officer appeared at the public inquiry of March, 1970 in his capacity as Borough Engineer.

largely as a result of the transmission of information from one professional to another and its subsequent absorption into the organisation, and the involvement of professional planners in the process has been very largely in these terms. In fact, this has tended to be one way (outwards from Hertfordshire County Council), and a peripheral benefit to the County Council of such activities was their part in persuading Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils to play a more active part in the process. Nevertheless, professional planners played very little part in the pressurising processes other than in terms of the supply of information to their political masters, and Luton County Borough Council's Planning Department was largely insulated even from this process. As a result, in their capacities as planning agencies organisations tended to relate very largely to other planning agencies via extensive professional contacts. The involvement of the parent organisations with each other was not so much in terms of their capacities as planning agencies but as organisations operating within the political sphere and having, amongst other things, certain planning powers which contributed to their stock of available tools.

The model of planning as technical rationality would tend to offer somewhat different answers to these questions. For example, the assertion of the importance of technical expertise would appear to reserve for professional planners a much more significant part in the process than the operation of a learning system, important though this was in terms of the process as a whole.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the model would appear to assume that Airport policy could be decided within a planning system without the need for intensive political activity, whereas policy actually emerged from a political process to which the activities of planning agencies were able to contribute and which they were able to modify to an extent. The model would appear to assume that none of the operational difficulties facing planning agencies would be so severe as to prevent many such agencies playing an effective part in the process, and the assertion that policy-making with regard to Luton Airport very largely dropped through the existing planning mechanisms would be anathema to the model.

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24. It is possible that the assertion of the important place of the professional planner is being modified by the emergence of corporate planning within local authorities, where planners form only one of several sets of professional officers contributing to policy-making processes. See, for example, J.D. Stewart and T. Eddison, "Structure Planning and Corporate Planning". *Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. Volume 57, number 8. September/October 1971. Pages 367-369.

All this adds further weight to the view that operational models of the planning process are needed to supplement and to place into context the inadequate operational implications of the model of planning as technical rationality. It is hoped that this study has made a contribution to such a process. It only remains in this Chapter to tie together the several research implications which have been noted both here and elsewhere.

#### Research Implications.

Areas in which further research is required have been noted at several levels throughout this study. Most importantly, the search for operational models of the planning process needs to advance via structured case studies. The importance of structure needs to be stressed, since the random accretion of studies is less likely to lead to the development of a set of working models than is a series of studies which relate to an ordered framework. The concepts used in this study could form a starting point in the search for such a framework.

Studies could usefully take place on cases chosen as a result of the alteration of one or more of the variables used in this study. For example, instead of concentrating upon policy emerging in the public sector, policy emanating from the private sector could be examined in terms of the ability of the planning machinery to deal with it. Instead of looking at one functional area of policy with ramifications across other functional areas, it would be possible to examine plan-making activities at the regional, structure, district or action area levels in terms of the political processes involved. Similar kinds of cases within different regions (or even nations) could be studied on a comparative basis, or different cases within the same region and involving broadly the same set of organisations could also be studied on a comparative basis. These are just some of the many methods which could be employed to build towards the creation of theories about the operational dimensions of the planning process, but the important point is that the various studies undertaken should have a degree of comparability one with another.

It seems likely that models will tend towards mixed scanning positions on the rationality-partisan mutual adjustment continuum, and it is essential

that the concept of mixed scanning should be developed further. Since it covers such a large portion of the continuum, different positions need to be developed in terms of the different mixes of rationality and incrementalism so that it is possible to relate the various case study models to each other through such a theory. In particular, the concept of bounded rationality needs to be developed in terms of its relationship with mixed scanning and its position on the continuum.

In terms of the local government context within which many planning operations take place, relatively little work appears to have been done on the County Councils when compared with the County Borough Councils. In particular, a typology of systems in terms of the place of party politics exists for the latter but not for the former. Since the County Borough Councils in England will disappear following local government reorganisation, to be replaced by County and Metropolitan authorities each with Districts, it is clear that it is not sufficient to rely upon work done in relation to the County Boroughs and that the County Councils merit extensive attention in terms of the different kinds of political systems and policy-making processes they have adopted. On a more mundane level, it was noted that very little work had been done on town polls. Although this proved to be a handicap in relation to the present study, it is doubtful whether it merits as high a research priority as the other matters discussed here.

In terms of airport planning, virtually no work at all has been done on the impact of a regional airport upon its surrounding area, considering both the noise problem and the job opportunities and population growth problems presented. Such airports are probably somewhat different in these senses from major international airports (such as the problems studied by the Commission on the Third London Airport), but understandings as to the main characteristics of regional airports would appear to be an important input to any form of national airports policy or plan. In particular, the scale of the growth rates discussed in relation to Luton Airport indicates that regional airports might have a part to play in the promotion of growth in lagging areas, and this could have major implications for airports policy

in general. The planning mechanisms have tended to see airports in a negative sense, in terms of their noise nuisance, but the experience of Luton Airport has suggested that airport growth could have a positive potential for bringing with it other kinds of growth to aid the development of selected areas. These possibilities need to be studied.

In relation to aircraft noise, the concept of the N.N.I. suffers badly from its basis upon Heathrow data. The validity of the concept needs to be tested in other situations. For example, the area around Luton Airport differs markedly from that around Heathrow, in that the former is an area of open countryside interspersed with villages and small and medium-sized towns whereas the latter is much more heavily urbanised. As a consequence (and this is only one of many relevant differences), ambient noise levels are very different in the two situations and thus the impact of aircraft noise is also different. A careful social survey in the Luton area, looking at reactions to aircraft and other kinds of noises in different sizes and types of settlement chosen in relation to their positions beneath the Airport's flight paths, could reveal a great deal of useful information which could act as a check upon and lead to a modification of the N.N.I. concept. Similar (and perhaps fairly small-scale) surveys around other airports would provide valuable comparative information which would strengthen the validity of this test of the concept. It was suggested also that much valuable information could be obtained from a study of aircraft noise complaint patterns, and the great need here is for further explorations of the relationship between propensity to complain and socio-economic status.

All these features have occurred at various points throughout the study as being matters on which further research is required. In addition the differences in the behaviour of regional planning agencies within and between the various regions need to be studied. Although this study has not provided sufficient evidence to permit any generalisations to be made on this matter other than that such differences exist, it may well be that a study which concentrates upon the major behavioural similarities and differences exhibited by regional planning agencies both within and between selected regions will be able to uncover some of the more significant variables which condition the nature of the regional planning process.

Appendix 1 Interviewees.(a) The Case Study (positions as at 20th August 1971).Luton County Borough Council.

- J. Hillier. - Conservative Leader of the Council.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- V. Dunington. - Conservative Chairman of Airport Committee.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- F. S. Lester. - Former Conservative Chairman, Airport Committee.  
Former member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.  
Member, Air Transport Committee, Luton, Dunstable and  
District Chamber of Commerce.  
Member, Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's  
Natural Expansion (PLANE).
- K. White. - Former Conservative Chairman, Airport Committee.  
Former member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- J. Carleton. - Labour shadow Chairman, Airport Committee.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- G. Roberts. - Labour member of Council.  
Chairman, Luton Borough Labour Party.  
Former M.P. for South Bedfordshire.  
Member, Luton and District Trades Council.
- T. Kenneally. - Labour member, Airport Committee.
- J. V. Cowan. - Chief Executive Officer and Town Clerk.
- J. C. Southwell. - Assistant Solicitor responsible for Airport matters.
- K. Seymour. - Former Borough Engineer and Planning Officer.
- S. McArdle. - Deputy Planning Officer.
- M. Drew. - Chief Assistant Planning Officer.
- A. Campbell. - Former Principal Planning Officer.
- J. Hannah. - Head of Airport section, Borough Engineer and Planning  
Officer's Department.
- H. S. J. Easterbrook. - Deputy Airport Director.
- I. Dav. - Operations Officer, Airport Director's Department.

Hertfordshire County Council.

- A. J. Hughes. - Conservative Chairman, County Planning Committee. Chairman, Luton Airport Consultative Committee. Hertfordshire representative, Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning.
- P. T. Ireton. - Labour member, County Planning Committee. Vice-Chairman, Luton Airport Consultative Committee. Member, Stevenage Development Corporation. Former member, Stevenage Urban District Council. Hertfordshire representative, Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning.
- J. Edwards. - Conservative member for Hitchin. Chairman, Hitchin and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (HADACAN, a branch of LADACAN).
- J. Lewis. - Conservative member for Gaddesden. Chairman, Gaddesden and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (GADDACAN, a branch of LADACAN).
- A. D. Raby. - Assistant County Planning Officer with special responsibility for airport problems.
- R. A. Hill. - Principal Officer, with special responsibility for airport problems, County Planning Department.

Bedfordshire County Council.

- L. Bowles. - Conservative Chairman of the County Council. Former Leader, Luton Borough Council.
- L. Baxter. - Conservative member for Caddington.
- J. Hubbard. - Chief Officer, with special responsibility for airport problems, County Planning Department.

Stevenage Development Corporation.

- L. G. Vincent. - Consultant planner to the Corporation.

Luton Airport Consultative Committee.

- P. Green. - Secretary to the Committee. Clerk, Luton Rural District Council.

Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (LADACAN).

- N.S.C. Reid. - Executive Chairman.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.  
Member, Four London Airports Group (FLAG).  
Member, Hertfordshire branch, National Farmers Union.
- Dr. T. Williams. - Press Secretary.  
President, Luton and District Ratepayers Association.
- K. Coleman. - Executive Secretary.
- J. Williams. - Honorary Solicitor.
- Dr. A. Brewer. - Chairman, Caddington branch.  
Member, Luton Rural District Council.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- D. Samson. - Chairman, Harpenden branch.  
Former member, Harpenden Urban District Council.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- Mrs. A. Haward. - Secretary, Breachwood Green Campaign against Aircraft Noise (BRECCAN, a branch of LADACAN).
- H. J. Aldridge. - Founder member and former Chairman.  
Former Labour Chairman, Bedfordshire County Planning Committee.  
Former Labour member, Luton County Borough Council.  
Former member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- Lord Hill of Luton. - Founder member.  
Former Conservative M.P. for Luton.  
Former Minister of Housing and Local Government.
- Dr. H. Jarvis. - Founder member and former Secretary.

Knebworth and Surrounding Areas Reduction of Aircraft Nuisance Campaign (KASARAN).

- J. A. Handscomb. - Organiser.

Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's Natural Expansion (PLANE).

- H. Baggott. - Chairman.  
Vice Chairman, Air Transport Committee, Luton,  
Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce.  
Member, Association of British Travel Agents.  
Former member, Luton Airport Consultative

- R. Simmons. - Treasurer.  
Member, Association of British Travel Agents.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- N. Byrne. - Press Secretary.  
Chairman, Air Transport Committee, Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce.  
Former publicity officer, Luton Borough Conservative party.

#### Operators.

- A. D. Harvey. - Director, Court Line Aviation.  
Former Town Clerk, Luton County Borough Council.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.
- J. Sauvage. - Managing Director, Britannia Airways.
- I. Hydon. - Assistant to the Commercial Director, Britannia Airways.
- M. Elgood. - Planning Executive, Monarch Airlines.
- D. MacQueen. - Aviation Director, Clarksons.  
Former Secretary, Tour Operators Study Group.

#### British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA).

- J. Richardson. - Former Vice-Chairman.  
Pilot, Britannia Airways.
- G. Hurley. - Public Relations Officer.

#### London Gliding Club.

- J. Jeffries. - Manager/Chief Flying Instructor.  
Member, LADACAN.

#### Luton Flying Club.

- F. Pinchin. - Managing Director.

#### Vauxhall Motors.

- J. Frankish. - Assistant Secretary (dealing with planning inquiries).

Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce.

- H. Gore. - Secretary.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.

Luton and District Chamber of Trade.

- N. Gurney. - Secretary.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.

Luton and District Trades Council.

- A. E. Llewellyn. - Secretary.  
Former member, Luton Airport Consultative  
Committee.

Luton Ratepayers Association.

- Mrs. M. Bird. - Secretary.

South Bedfordshire Preservation Society.

- Mrs. P. Ball. - Secretary.

National Farmers Union.

- N. Wallace. - Head, Land Use and Transport Department.

Local Press.

- B. Bird. - Municipal reporter, Evening Post.  
G. Seaward. - Circulation manager, Evening Post.  
Mrs. M. Sumpter. - Local Government reporter, Luton News.  
P. E. Lambourne. - Advertising Manager, Luton News.

British Airports Authority.

- T. Lovett. - Planning Department.  
P. LeBlond. - Planning Department.

Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning.

- B. Howell. - Technical Secretary.  
Member, South-East Joint Planning Team.

South-East Joint Planning Team.

- G. B. Treasure. - Team member (responsible for area studies).  
Assistant County Planning Officer, Hertfordshire  
County Council.
- Dr. E. Craven. - Team member (responsible for social studies).  
Member of planning staff, Department of the Environ-  
ment.

South-East Economic Planning Council and Board.

- P. Daniel. - Deputy Chairman, South-East Economic Planning  
Board.  
Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environ-  
ment.  
Member, South-East Joint Planning Team.
- C. Curry. - Research Officer, South-East Economic Planning  
Council and Board.  
Research Officer, Department of the Environ-  
ment.

Department of the Environment.

- R. A. Bird. - Member of planning staff (concerned with follow-  
up work to the report of the South-East Joint  
Planning Team).

Department of Trade and Industry.

- M. Coolican. - Aircraft noise section (municipal airports).
- J. Pacey. - Loan sanctions (municipal airports).

Members of Parliament.

- Mrs. S. Williams. - Labour M.P. for Hitchin.
- J. Allason. - Conservative M.P. for Hemel Hempstead.  
Member, LADACAN.
- V. Goodhead. - Conservative M.P. for St. Albans.  
Member, LADACAN.  
Former President, Luton, Dunstable and District  
Chamber of Commerce.



London Gliding Club.	1
Luton Flying Club.	1
Vauxhall Motors.	1
Luton and District Chamber of Trade.	1
South Bedfordshire Preservation Society.	1
Tour Operators Study Group.	1
1970 public inquiry (Assessor).	1

The following refused to be interviewed;

- Mrs. E. Denington. - Chairman, Stevenage Development Corporation.  
Member, South-East Economic Planning Council.
- B. Ewer. - Former Conservative Member, Airport Committee  
(Luton Council).  
Member, PLANE.
- J. Hawksworth. - Assistant Secretary, Department of the Environ-  
ment (responsible for planning matters in  
the area affected by noise as a result of  
activities at Luton Airport).
- H. Lawrence. - Leader, Labour Group, Luton Council.  
Former member, South-East Economic Planning  
Council.  
Former Chairman, Luton Borough Labour party.
- P. Wainwright. - Conservative member, Bedfordshire County  
Council.  
Conservative member, Dunstable Municipal Borough  
Council.  
Member, Luton Airport Consultative Committee.

(b) Participants in Regional Planning in the West Midlands (positions as  
at the time of interview).

- J. Stevenson. - Team Leader, West Midlands Regional Study.  
Former Head, Planning Division, Engineer's  
Department, Birmingham County Borough Council.
- A. L. Murray. - Research Officer, West Midlands Office, Department  
of the Environment.

- R. A. Bird. - Former planner, West Midlands Office, Ministry of Housing and Local Government.  
Former Chairman, Operational Group, West Midlands Conurbation Authorities.
- K. B. John. - Former section head, Planning Department, Wolverhampton County Borough Council.  
Former member, Operational Group, West Midlands Conurbation Authorities.
- U. A. Wannop. - Team Leader, Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Sub-Regional Planning Study.

(c) Participants in Regional Planning in Scotland (positions as at the time of interview).

- Professor Sir R. Grieve. - Former Chief Planner, Scottish Development Department.  
Former Chairman, Highlands and Islands Development Board.  
Member, West Central Scotland Plan Steering Committee.
- W. D. C. Lyddon. - Chief Planner, Scottish Development Department.
- A. B. Wylie. - Planner, Scottish Development Department.  
Director, West Central Scotland Planning Team.
- J. Ross. - Assistant Secretary, Scottish Development Department.
- T. Lister. - Assistant Secretary, Regional Development Division, Scottish Office.
- W. McKenzie. - Member, Regional Development Division, Scottish Office.
- Miss Lorimer. - Senior Research Officer, Scottish office of Department of Trade and Industry.
- C. Murdoch. - Depute Town Clerk, Glasgow City Council.  
Member, West Central Scotland Plan Steering Committee.
- D. Kirby. - Former General Manager, East Kilbride Development Corporation.  
General Manager, Irvine Development Corporation.

Appendix 2. The Municipal Airports League.

The major municipal airports in Britain can be seen as competing with each other for passengers and for the status that goes with increased business, and this competition can be expressed in the form of a league table (Table 33). Diagram 15 represents the fluctuations of the selected airports graphically. The airports selected are those listed in Table 1 (Chapter 2) as being of significance at the regional level, with the exception of those owned by the British Airports Authority (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Prestwick and Edinburgh), the off-shore island airports which do not compete for passengers with those on the mainland (Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man) and the Government-owned Aldergrove Airport (Belfast).

DIAGRAM 15. MUNICIPAL AIRPORTS LEAGUE.

Total  
Terminal  
Passengers  
(millions)

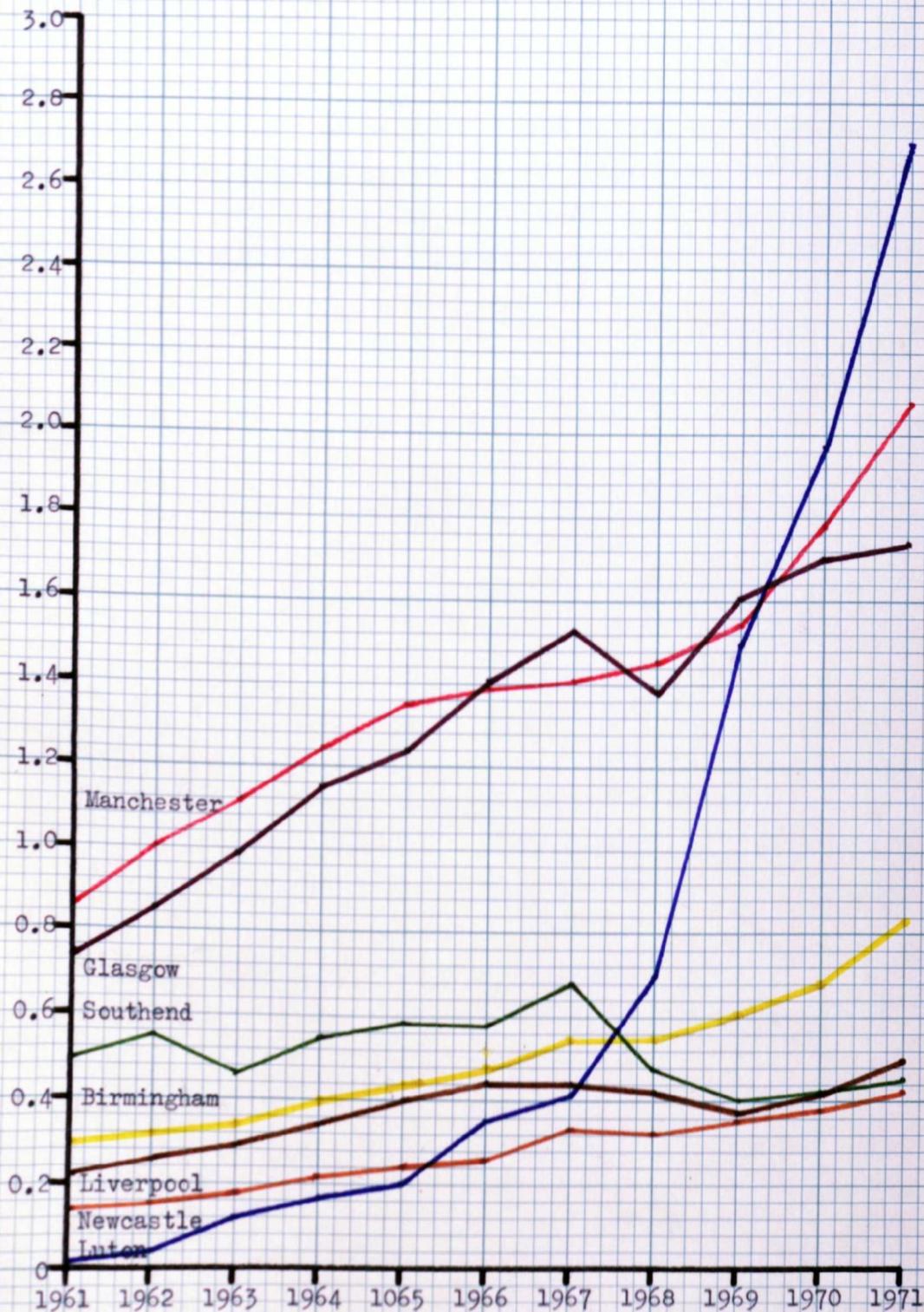


Table 33. Terminal Passengers at Major Municipal Airports

Airport	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Luton	5,305	42,186	123,892	171,091	206,856	357,109	412,938	690,610	1,487,685	1,963,510	2,703,392
Manchester	860,006	1,003,663	1,117,774	1,245,700	1,344,321	1,398,100	1,403,072	1,459,773	1,549,105	1,777,976	2,082,132
Glasgow	741,394	854,988	996,264	1,150,506	1,240,066	1,406,879	1,528,980	1,387,210	1,610,774	1,702,555	1,744,128
Birmingham	301,739	318,255	353,895	400,972	447,765	522,564	552,639	557,185	615,315	685,645	835,777
Liverpool	237,363	263,475	294,459	353,161	413,894	450,844	450,430	427,472	379,012	421,257	496,507
Southend	483,383	551,319	460,960	539,381	597,441	594,681	683,283	488,697	401,122	423,779	456,436
Newcastle	149,336	157,708	184,837	225,908	247,090	267,886	335,629	324,411	363,653	384,416	432,640

Source: Department of Trade and Industry. Business Monitor. Civil Aviation Series. CA2. Air Passengers. Yearly Summaries.

Appendix 3. The Calculation of Noise Complaint Rates.

The basis for the calculation of noise complaint rates for various settlements was the formula:-

$$\frac{\text{Complaints}}{\text{Population} \times 10^{-3}} \times \frac{1}{\text{Socio-economic ratio.}}$$

The formula was derived as a simple expression of the fact that the number of complaints from any settlement is a function of the population of that settlement and of the propensity of its inhabitants to complain. In addition, the location of the settlement in relation to aircraft flight paths is clearly an important factor in explaining the level of complaint recorded for a settlement, as Diagram 5 (Chapter 6) clearly illustrates. This is not a factor that needs to be built into the equation, however, since the function of the exercise is to start with a recorded number of complaints and to "correct" these for "distorting" factors such as gross population and the propensity of that population to complain, so as to arrive at a "true" pro rata complaint rate for each settlement.

Complaints information was obtained from the Airport Director's Department, Luton County Borough Council, and relates to the three-year period 1969-1971 inclusive. Only settlements or groups of contiguous settlements which had sustained at least 10 complaints during this period were considered. The choice of 10 as a threshold was largely arbitrary, it being a round-figure which appeared on inspection to represent a breaking point between settlements with a fairly consistent pattern of complaints and those where complaints were isolated and random.

Population information relates to the year 1970 (the mid-point of the period in question), and was obtained from Hertfordshire County Council, Bedfordshire County Council and Luton County Borough Council Planning Departments. The multiplication of the populations by a factor of  $10^{-3}$  is simply a device to enable the products of the equation to be expressed in terms of whole numbers and fractions of numbers rather than after several places of decimals. The population of Luton has been taken not as that of the County Borough as a whole but as that of the three

wards (Central, Crawley and South) badly affected by aircraft noise. This is because most of the complaints from Luton have come from this area, and thus to divide the total number of complaints by the population of the town as a whole would produce an unreasonably low pro rata complaint rate. This is the most acute example of a problem endemic to this analysis, namely that in large settlements only a proportion of the area might be affected by aircraft noise and thus to represent complaints in terms of the population as a whole is unrealistic. The further away the settlement is from the Airport, the more aircraft spread about their flightpaths and, as a consequence, the likelihood of the whole settlement being affected by noise from time to time increases. This is why it was considered to be necessary to make this correction in respect of Luton, but not of anywhere else. It is probable that this analysis under-represents the problem at Stevenage, nevertheless, and possibly at Welwyn Garden City, St Albans and Hemel Hempstead as a result of this factor.

Another problem was concerned with the best method of correcting for differential propensities to complain, given that this is directly related to socio-economic status. In other words, it was necessary to allow for the fact that people in higher socio-economic brackets are more likely to complain and are more able to complete the administrative process necessary to lodge a formal complaint than people in lower socio-economic brackets. The "managerial and professional" proportions of the populations of various local authority areas in 1966 (Table 9, Chapter 5) were chosen as the basis for this calculation, largely in default of anything else suitable. The best that could be done with settlements too small even to be of Urban District Council status was to apply the appropriate Rural District Council figures to them. For Luton, the figure was recalculated to relate to the three wards in question (8.3%), and this turned out to be the lowest figure recorded. As a result, the Luton figure was taken as being 1, and the other figures were recalculated in relation to the Luton figure. The reciprocal of this ratio was regarded as being the most appropriate correction factor to account for differential propensity to complain. This assumes that this characteristic is directly related to socio-economic structure, and further work needs to be done to establish whether this is in fact the case. As a check, the calculation

Table 34. Noise Complaint Rates for Selected Settlements.

Settlement	Complaints 1969-1971	1970 Population x 10 <sup>-3</sup>	Socio- economic ratio	Product
Harpenden/Kinsbourne Green	988	24.50	4.94	8.2
Luton (3 wards)	789	42.80	1.00	18.4
Berkhamsted	483	16.00	3.42	7.9
Breachwood Green	403	0.75	2.53	212.4
Little Gaddesden/Ashridge	341	1.00	4.31	79.1
Redbourn	232	4.85	2.88	16.2
Stevenage	183	67.00	1.88	1.5
Caddington/Slip End/Woodside	165	5.70	1.75	16.5
Markyate	160	2.60	2.93	21.0
Hemel Hempstead	131	71.00	2.08	0.9
Flamstead	95	1.20	2.93	27.0
Welwyn Garden City/Old Welwyn	80	40.00	2.61	0.8
St. Albans	64	58.50	2.60	0.4
Hitchin	59	29.00	2.31	0.9
Studham	54	1.15	1.75	26.8
Kimpton	49	1.35	2.53	14.4
Tring	48	10.50	2.45	1.9
Knebworth	42	3.45	2.53	4.8
Whitwell	41	0.85	2.53	19.1
Wheathampstead	27	4.50	2.88	2.1
St. Paul's Walden	24	0.10	2.53	94.9
Tewin	23	0.60	3.25	11.8
Potten End	19	1.40	4.31	3.1
Albury	18	0.85	4.31	4.9
East Hyde	13	0.10	1.75	74.3
Dunstable	12	31.80	2.02	0.2
Hertford	12	20.50	2.48	0.2
Kensworth	12	1.70	1.75	4.0
Letchworth/Weston	10	31.00	2.48	0.1

was repeated disregarding this correction factor altogether, using a correction factor only 50% of that advanced above and using the correction factor applied exponentially. The "best fit" with the aircraft noise situation in the area as it lies within the author's experience was given by the method adopted, although the differences between the four methods tended to be marginal apart from the settlements at the extreme ends of the socio-economic spectrum (Luton, Caddington/Slip End/Woodside, Aldbury and Harpenden). As a result, "goodness of fit" was judged on performance in relation to these four settlements. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 34.

When these products were mapped certain broad divisions emerged, and these can be regarded as being noise complaint zones (see Diagram 5, Chapter 6). The boundaries between zones were chosen on the basis that there was a clear division between the highest product in one zone and the lowest product in the next.

Table 35. Noise Complaint Zones.

Zone	Product range	Population in listed settlements
A	Above 20	6,900
B	10 - 20	56,150
C	1 - 10	129,900
D	Below 1	281,800

Diagram 5 represented the three badly-affected wards in Luton as being in zone B and (following Table 23, Chapter II) three other wards in Luton as being in zone C, since this appears to be an accurate representation of reality. For the purposes of the calculations of Table 35, however, this particular adjustment was ignored. A further zone (E) can be identified to the south and south-west of zones A-D as being an area from which some noise complaints have been received, but where complaints from individual settlements did not total 10 during the three-year period in question. Zones A-E represent the core of the Airport sub-region identified in Chapter 5 as being an area contained within a set of local authority areas with a combined population of 745,000. The listed settlements in zones A-D have a population of

474,750. The difference of virtually 270,000 between the two populations is accounted for by the population of the other nine wards within Luton not included in Tables 34 and 35 (approximately 120,000), by the rural areas of zones A-D and by zone E. The listed settlements in zones A-D accounted for a total of 3,597 complaints, or just over 76% of the total recorded for the three year period. The other 24% came from the rural areas of zones A-D and from zone E.

Appendix 4. Noise Complaints - the KASARAN Survey.

The survey related to the period 7th August-17th October, 1969, a total of 72 days. It was carried out as a result of the initiative of one man (Mr. J. A. Handscomb), with the help of members of his family and two friends, and aimed at giving an indication of the real degree of complaint about aircraft noise nuisance in the vicinity of Knebworth in Hertfordshire. The area in question is shown in relation to the distribution of LADACAN's branches and affiliates on Diagram 12, Chapter 13.

The survey method was a very simple one. Twelve shops in the area selling different kinds of commodities were asked to co-operate by making available space for a collecting box for complaint forms and by displaying a poster advertising the fact that forms were available. The forms read as follows;

"To Herts. County Council.

I wish to register a complaint in the strongest possible terms about the excessive noise from low flying aircraft from Luton Airport at .....a.m./p.m. on .....

Signed. Name..... "

Address.....

The collecting boxes were emptied regularly and the stocks of complaint forms replenished, such that anyone who wished to register a complaint about any particular incident had only to go to one of the shops, fill in a form and leave it in the box. Undoubtedly, this was a much easier method of registering a complaint than the normal method of having to write to or telephone the Airport Director's Department, and as a result people would not need to have been as strongly motivated to comply with the former as with the latter. In this sense, the survey prompted complaints that would otherwise have remained unrecorded, but this is not to say that such complaints were necessarily gratuitous. On the contrary, the results of the survey indicate a consistent and extensive pattern of complaint over and beyond that which would have been likely to emerge from the random filling-in of forms.

The survey recorded 1,671 complaints, 88 of which gave inadequate information as to time or date. The other 1,583 were distributed over the area as follows:

Knebworth	802	(8 shops used)
Mardley and Oaklands	367	(1 shop used)
Rabley and Potters Heath	129	
Old Welwyn	89	
Tewin	79	(1 shop used)
Woolmer Green	57	(1 shop used)
Datchworth	40	
Burnham and Harmer Green	20	(1 shop used)

The distribution of complaints over the period in question appears to relate quite closely to the pattern of aircraft activities at Luton Airport. In particular, week-ends appear to have been the periods of heaviest complaint, and these are also the busiest times for the inclusive tour industry. The volume of complaint also mounted when the prevailing winds were from the east, which promoted easterly take-offs (which affected the Knebworth area quite severely) rather than westerly take-offs (which caused relatively little disturbance in the Knebworth area). These two conditions coincided on several occasions, which were in fact the peak periods for complaints and which, in total, amounted to a very large proportion of the total number of complaints recorded.

Table 36. Peak Complaint Periods, KASARAN Survey.

Period (1969)	Number of week-ends	Number of days	Number of complaints	Number of complaints at night
8-14 August	1	7(1)	167	51
30 August-8 September	2	10(1)	782	157
16-20 September	1	5(1)	192	32
4 and 5 October	1	2(1)	97	9
11-13 October	1	3(0)	84	12
Totals	6	27(4)	1322	261

Note: the numbers in brackets in the "number of days" column refer to the number of days during the periods when take-offs would have been from the western end of the runway.

Thus, the periods covered in Table 36 represent 37.5% of the total time covered by the survey, but 60% of the total number of week-ends involved were contained within these periods, which also included 83.5% of the total number of complaints recorded in the survey. Of the total of 371 complaints recorded in the full survey at night-time (11 p.m. - 6 a.m.), 70.4% were during these peak periods. As a result, the survey results appear to conform with the pattern of aircraft movements over the area, which suggests that they are probably valid evidence as to complaint patterns.

Sources: interview with J. Handscomb (organiser, KASARAN), 19th June 1971. Evidence of J. Handscomb to the public local inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, 12th March 1970.

Appendix 5. Noise Complaints and the Third London Airport Issue.

Noise complaints data for the years 1968-1971 inclusive for Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton Airports contain the basic inconsistency that in all four cases the officially recorded number of complaints fell in 1971 when compared with 1970 whereas the number of potentially noisy movements rose. Complaints sent direct to the Department of Trade and Industry exhibit the same feature apart from the situation at Luton Airport, as Table 37 illustrates.

Table 37. Complaint Rates, Major South-East Airports.

Airport	1968	1969	1970	1971
<u>Complaints to the Airport authority</u>				
Heathrow	2,356	2,201	3,139	2,359
Gatwick	304	599	950	826
Stansted	432	439	512	468
Luton	787	1,004	2,038	1,681
<u>Complaints to the D.T.I.</u>				
Heathrow			951	465
Gatwick			115	49
Stansted			25	24
Luton			290	354

Sources: P. W. LeBlond, British Airports Authority. J. Day, Luton County Borough Council. M. Coolican, Department of Trade and Industry.

One possible explanation of this phenomenon is that it is not a function of the operation of any general features but of particular circumstances at each Airport situation. Whilst this might be true, the consistency of the fall from 1970 to 1971 tends to suggest that there might be common factors at work. If this is a reasonable assumption, then either 1970 can be regarded as being an "abnormal" year or 1971 can be similarly regarded. Evidence of the 1972 situation would be required to test these possibilities properly, but on the basis of present evidence the former hypothesis appears more likely to be valid than the latter. This is because 1970 was the year of peak activity in relation to the work of the Roskill Commission, and it is possible that the extensive publicity given to airport planning matters throughout the year contributed to the number of complaints recorded. Similarly, it could be

argued that the complaint level for 1971 was artificially low because press publicity in connection with airport planning died down following the widely-welcomed decision in favour of Foulness. These possibilities are by no means mutually exclusive, although the former appears to be more tenable than the latter.

Some evidence for this assertion is provided by the degree of consistency which exists between the Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton situations in respect of 1970. If it is accepted that the 1969 and 1971 complaint levels for the Airports were "normal" and the 1970 levels "abnormal", the hypothetical "normal" 1970 situation can be derived by regarding it as being the mid-point on the 1969-1971 line. This would produce the following hypothetical 1970 complaint levels;

Heathrow	2,280
Gatwick	705
Luton	1,340
Stansted	445

If the differences between the real and the hypothetical figures are expressed as percentages of the real figures, the following emerges;

Heathrow	27.3%
Gatwick	25.8%
Stansted	13.1%
Luton	34.3%

If these figures are then regarded as providing some measure of the "abnormality" of 1970, they can be compared with the degree of involvement in the third London Airport Lobbying activities of the various anti-noise groups around these Airports, and they appear to reflect it fairly closely. In other words, the Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton groups were all extensively involved, with the Luton groups being more so than the other two if only because the eventual decision was likely to have a greater impact upon operations at Luton Airport than at the other two Airports. The Stansted groups were much less involved, especially after it had become clear that Stansted

was not one of the Roskill Commission's short-listed sites. This argument is advanced tentatively as adding some support to the hypothesis that 1970 was an "abnormal" year in noise complaint terms, and that this was affected at least in part by the existence and activities of the third London Airport lobby.

Appendix 6. The Projection of Commercial Air Transport Movements at Luton Airport.

This particular calculation took place in two stages. The first involved the adoption and extension of projections of or statements about passenger activity at Luton Airport made in connection with the public inquiry of January, 1972 by Mr. Collins (the Airport Director), Mr. Linnett (the Deputy Managing Director of Clarksons) and Mr. Allen (the noise consultant to LADACAN). The second stage involved the conversion of these projections to commercial air transport movements via upper and lower assumptions as to the mix of aircraft operational at any particular time.

Mr. Collins, in his proof of evidence to the inquiry, posited an annual growth of 650,000 inclusive tour passengers at Luton Airport, and anticipated that the non-inclusive tour sector would retain a constant share of about 4% of the total number of passengers handled. In other words, the basis of his projection was an assumption that Luton Airport's inclusive tour activities would grow in a linear manner. The results of this assessment in terms of total passengers handled are as follows;

1972	3,375,000.
1973	4,050,000.
1974	4,725,000.
1975	5,400,000.
1976	6,075,000.
1977	6,750,000.
1978	7,425,000.
1979	8,100,000.
1980	8,775,000.
1981	9,450,000.

Mr. Linnett did not attempt a projection specifically related to Luton Airport in his proof of evidence, but he estimated that the inclusive tour holiday industry would continue to grow at 20% per annum throughout the 1970's. Mr. Collins, in his proof of evidence, estimated that Luton Airport's share of the inclusive tour market in 1971 was 42%, and his 1980 projection of inclusive tour passengers handled at Luton Airport is 42% of Mr. Linnett's figure of 20 million inclusive tour passengers nationally by that date. In

fact, Mr. Linnett's mathematics appear to be inaccurate, since a 20% per annum increase in the number of inclusive tour passengers from a 1971 figure of 6.19 million<sup>1</sup> should produce a figure of 37.35 millions in 1980. What appears to have happened is that a crude attempt has been made to match the figures of Mr. Linnett and Mr. Collins through the figure of a 42% share of the national cake for Luton Airport, which appears to have been regarded as a likely constant. Accepting, therefore, that Luton Airport's share of the total market will remain constant at 42%, and adding the same number of non-inclusive tour passengers as Mr Collins predicted, the projections attributed to Mr. Linnett on the basis of his assumption of a 20% annual growth in the inclusive tour industry are as follows;

1972	3,225,000.
1973	3,850,000.
1974	4,725,000.
1975	5,600,000.
1976	6,725,000.
1977	8,050,000.
1978	9,575,000.
1979	11,500,000.
1980	13,725,000.
1981	16,050,000.

Mr. Allen's projections were made on the basis of a regression curve fitted to the actual number of passengers handled at the Airport up to 1971. His proof of evidence contained the diagram he drew for this purpose, although he did not extract the necessary figures from it. Reading from his diagram, they are;

1972	3,600,000.
1973	4,700,000.
1974	5,800,000.
1975	7,000,000.
1976	8,000,000.
1977	9,000,000.
1978	10,100,000.

1. Subsequent indications have been to the effect that this figure is also too low, and that 6.7 millions is a more appropriate figure, in which case Luton Airport's share of the total would have been about 40% (see Table 4). The figures advanced by Mr. Linnett and Mr. Collins have been left unaltered for present purposes.

1979	11,100,000.
1980	12,000,000.
1981	12,900,000.

The proof of evidence of Mr. Sauvage (Managing Director, Britannia Airways) contained details of the total aircraft fleets expected at Luton Airport up to 1976, on the assumption that there would be no problem in introducing the Lockheed TriStar as and when the airlines wished to use it. He accepted that two Boeing 707's were roughly the equivalent of one TriStar in terms of carrying capacity, and that the minimum number of aircraft operations would be on the basis of unlimited use of TriStars and the maximum number on the basis of 707's rather than TriStars. He also assumed that 88% of aircraft seats would be occupied, and on this basis it is possible to calculate the average number of passengers who will be carried per aircraft from Luton Airport up to 1976 and (by extension of his fleet predictions on a linear basis) up to 1981. The figures of passengers actually carried per commercial air transport movement are as follows;

	with TriStar	without TriStar
1972	115	115
1973	135	126
1974	146	132
1975	168	139
1976	206	148
1977	234	158
1978	253	168
1979	268	178
1980	279	188
1981	289	198

Each of the three sets of passenger predictions can then be divided by these predictions of the number of passengers who will actually be carried per aircraft movement to produce, in each case, an upper and a lower projection of the number of commercial air transport movements. These figures are presented in Table 17, Chapter 6.

Sources: proofs of evidence of B. Collins, J. Sauvage and P. Linnett on behalf of Luton County Borough Council and W. Allen on behalf of LADACAN to the public inquiry into expansion proposals for Luton Airport, January, 1972.

Appendix 7. The Projection of Total Population Dependent upon Luton Airport.

The starting point for the projection of total dependent population was the predictions of the total number of passengers anticipated at Luton Airport in 1981 (see Appendix 6). These projections were converted into a total of on-site employees via passengers per employee ratios, and the total amount of employment generated was calculated from an assessment of the multiplier effect of Luton Airport. The last step was to convert the total employment generated into a figure for the total dependent population.

Table 12, Chapter 6 has already indicated the number of passengers handled per employee at Luton Airport from 1962 to 1971 inclusive. The figures were:

1962	240.
1963	354.
1964	342.
1965	328.
1966	397.
1967	330.
1968	419.
1969	595.
1970	655.
1971	675.

The general trend has been for the efficiency of the Airport in terms of the number of passengers handled per employee to rise, and there is no reason to expect this trend to alter in any particular manner. Its validity as a basis for projection is strengthened by the similarities between the Luton and the Gatwick Airport situations both in the past and possibly in the future. The trend lines for both Airports in terms of the passengers handled per employee dimension are virtually parallel, although the efficiency of each employee is lower at Gatwick than at Luton, presumably because the inclusive tour industry in which Luton Airport specialises has much higher seat utilisation rates than the scheduled services which form a substantial proportion of Gatwick's traffic. The appropriate figures for Gatwick are contained in Table 38.



Table 38. Passengers Per Employee, Gatwick Airport.

Year	Employees	Terminal Passengers	Passengers per Employee
1966	5,300	1,613,989	305
1969	6,400	2,993,969	468
1970	7,300	3,680,485	504
1972 upper	8,500	4,200,000	494
1974 upper	10,100	6,900,000	683
1976 upper	15,400	11,500,000	747
1978 upper	22,000	17,600,000	800
1980 upper	29,200	25,200,000	863
1972 lower	7,500	3,800,000	507
1974 lower	8,000	4,700,000	587
1976 lower	8,700	5,600,000	644
1978 lower	10,300	8,700,000	845
1980 lower	14,600	13,100,000	897

Source: E. J. Richards and E. G. Sibert. "London Gatwick Airport: an Environmental Study". Surrey County Council. Kingston-upon-Thames, 1970. Pages 6 and 35. In 1971, Gatwick Airport handled 4,650,255 terminal passengers, and so it is clear that even the 1972 upper estimate of passengers is likely to err on the conservative side. For the purpose of calculating the ratio of passengers handled per employee, however, this would only be significant if the employment estimates proved differentially inaccurate.

It can be seen from Diagram 16 that the Gatwick situation between 1966 and 1970 was nearly parallel with a "fit line" drawn for the Luton situation between 1962 and 1971, and that a "fit line" drawn between the upper and lower projections for Gatwick from 1972 to 1980 is nearly parallel with the "fit line" for Luton extended to 1981. Reading off from the extended "fit line" for Luton, the number of passengers handled per employee each year up to 1981 is expected to be as follows;

1972	720.
1973	765.
1974	815.
1975	860
1976	910
1977	960
1978	1010

1979	1060.
1980	1110.
1981	1155.

If 1155 passengers are handled per employee at Luton Airport by 1981, the total number of on-site employees at that time based upon the passenger predictions of Mr. Collins, Mr. Linnett and Mr. Allen are as follows:

Collins.	9,450,000 passengers.	8,200 employees.
Linnett.	16,050,000 passengers.	13,900 employees.
Allen.	12,900,000 passengers.	11,150 employees.

The calculation of the multiplier effect of an airport is an extensive and difficult task, constrained at the very least by the lack of appropriate data. Bearing in mind the resources available for the task and its function in the study as a whole, it was decided to attempt to make a general assessment of the employment multiplier insofar as it could be calculated from readily-available data, and this task was undertaken with the co-operation of Mr. Drew (Chief Assistant Planning Officer, Luton County Borough Council). The approach agreed with Mr. Drew was to attempt to calculate the off-site employment in the area dependent upon the Airport via an examination of planning permissions granted for certain uses involving certain categories of employment, and then to apply the local non-service:service jobs ratio both to on-site and to this directly dependent off-site employment to account for the services component.

As an airport devoted almost exclusively to the inclusive tour industry, Luton Airport generates relatively little off-site employment, and as far as could be ascertained the main such categories were hotels, travel agencies, coach operators and taxi companies. The best estimates that could be made of the maximum employment in these categories generated by the Airport in 1971 was as follows;

Hotels	525
Travel agencies and coach operators	100
Taxi companies	<u>100</u>
Total	<u>725</u>

Source: letter from S. McArdle (Acting Borough Planning Officer,

Luton County Borough Council), 21st. December 1971. Interview with M. Drew, 3rd. January 1972. The figures were calculated from information contained in Mr. McArdle's letter and were accepted by Mr. Drew as being reasonably likely estimates, but there can be no great accuracy attached to them because it is impossible to be precise about (for example) what proportion of the hotel jobs in the area are dependent upon the Airport.

The local non-service:service jobs ratio has been calculated as being approximately 2:1<sup>1</sup>. The basis of the employment multiplier calculation is the formula;

$$\frac{X + Y + ZX + ZY}{X},$$

where X = on-site jobs,

Y = directly dependent off-site jobs, and

Z = service jobs created per non-service job.

The maximum multiplier in 1971, therefore, was;

$$\frac{4,000 + 725 + \frac{1}{2} \times 4,000 + \frac{1}{2} \times 725}{4,000}, \text{ or approximately } 1.75.$$

The minimum multiplier would have occurred in the situation where there were no directly dependent off-site jobs, in which case the figure for 1971 would have been 1.5. Thus, the range within which the 1971 multiplier fell was 1.5 - 1.75. It was agreed with Mr. Drew that in all probability it would have lain towards the upper end of this range, and 1.67 was suggested and accepted as a reasonably likely figure.<sup>2</sup> In 1966, it was agreed that the multiplier would have been at the bottom end of this range, when there was very little directly dependent off-site employment and when the local non-service: service ratio would have been slightly more than 2:1 (since it has been improving in favour of service jobs in recent years), and it was agreed that 1.5 was a reasonable figure to accept as an appropriate multiplier for 1966.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the change from 1.5 in 1966 to 1.67 in 1971 presents a basis

1. K. Seymour and B. T. Rees. "Industry in Luton". Unpublished working document. Luton County Borough Council, Luton. 1968. Page 5. This figure is lower than that for the South-East as a whole, since the Luton area relies upon Greater London for the provision of many services.

2. Interview with M. Drew, op. cit.

3. Ibid.

for projection of the multiplier to 1981. Projecting against anticipated on-site employees would produce a multiplier of slightly less than 1.9 in 1981, and projecting against anticipated passengers (Mr. Collins' prediction) would produce a figure slightly in excess of 2.1 for that date. 2.0 was taken as an agreed round-figure which was the mean of these two projections<sup>4</sup>. Thus, it was accepted that, for the purpose of the present calculations, the employment multiplier attributable to Luton Airport was likely to grow from 1.5 in 1966 to 2.0 in 1981 unless deliberate policy decisions to restrict the growth of the Airport were taken.

The total employment figure was converted into a total generated population figure in two stages. The first was to attempt to assess the male: female job ratio, and the study by Seymour and Rees was valuable in this respect. It estimated that on-site employment in 1966 was approximately in the ratio of two male jobs for every female job, but that by 1981 this was likely to have changed to a ratio of 5:3. Off-site employment (both directly dependent and local service) was estimated as being in the approximate ratio of seven male jobs for every five female jobs in 1966, but that by 1981 this was likely to have changed to a ratio of 1:1<sup>5</sup>. The second stage was to calculate the actual population supported by each male job, and the ratio normally used for such a calculation is 1:3.42<sup>6</sup>.

Table 39 sets out all the stages of the calculations of the total population dependent upon Luton Airport.

Clearly, no great reliance can be placed upon the magnitudes of these figures, since every step in the calculation (and particularly the estimate of the multiplier) is fraught with possible sources of error. The value of the calculation is that it indicates the differences in terms of total urbanisation implicit in the three sets of passenger predictions made for 1981, and it gives an indication of the scale of growth implicit in possible levels of Airport expansion between 1966 and 1981. Its purpose is to fulfill these two tasks, and any more rigorous attempt to provide such a calculation as a basis for policy-making would have required the expenditure

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4. Ibid.

5. K. Seymour and B. T. Rees, op. cit. Page 50.

6. Commission on the Third London Airport. "Report". H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Page 201.

Table 39. Estimates of Total Population Dependent upon Luton Airport.

Stage	1966	1981-Collins	1981-Linnett	1981-Allen
On-site employment	900	8,200	13,900	11,150
On-site employment male: female	2:1	5:3	5:3	5:3
On-site male jobs	600	5,125	8,690	6,970
Multiplier	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
Off-site employment	450	8,200	13,900	11,150
Off-site employment male: female	7:5	1:1	1:1	1:1
Off-site male jobs	260	4,100	6,950	5,575
Total male jobs	860	9,225	15,640	12,545
Male jobs:actual population supported	1:3:42	1:3:42	1:3:42	1:3:42
Total dependent population	2,940	31,550	53,500	42,900

of resources out of scale with its function in terms of the study as a whole.

Appendix 8. Public Inquiries Concerned with Luton Airport.Town Map Public Inquiry, May 1961.

As part of the public inquiry into the draft Luton and Dunstable Town Map, the proposals to extend the existing concrete runway by a further 1,200 feet to 6,700 feet and to construct a second concrete runway perpendicular to the first and some 5,160 feet in length were examined. This part of the inquiry lasted for one day only, and attracted two objectors; Sir Harold Wether (a local landowner) and one of his tenant farmers. The proposals were not modified in the approved Town Map (decision letter dated 30th November, 1963).

Public Inquiry, November 1964.

An inquiry into a planning application by the former Luton Borough Council to extend the concrete runway to a length of some 7,000 feet and for ancillary works. In its capacity as a County Borough Council (and therefore as a planning authority), the Council had already commenced construction works designed to extend the runway to some 6,600 feet in length, and so the inquiry concerned itself largely with the extra 400 feet required. It lasted for three days, and appearances were made by Luton County Borough Council, Bedfordshire County Council, Luton Rural District Council, Stevenage Urban District Council, Caddington Parish Council, the South Luton Airport Objection Association and seven local residents. Luton Council called three of its chief officers and Professor Richards (noise consultant) as expert witnesses, but the only other expert witness called was an acoustics consultant (F. Ward) who appeared on behalf of the South Luton Airport Objection Association. Non-expert evidence was given by eighteen people. The Minister granted planning permission in a letter dated 26th April, 1965.

Public Inquiry, March 1970.

An inquiry into a planning application by Luton County Borough Council for permission to undertake a number of works ("the 1969 package") in the context of a policy for the period 1970-1975 ("the 1970 package"; this was subsequently replaced by "the 1971 package"). The inquiry lasted for ten days, and the Inspector was assisted by an Assessor (Professor J. B. Large).

Appearances were made by Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Luton Rural District Council, Hitchin Rural District Council, Harpenden Urban District Council, the Parish Councils of Caddington, Hyde, Kings Walden and Studham, the Association for the Promotion of Luton Airport's Natural Expansion (PLANE), the Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (LADACAN), the Knebworth and Surrounding Areas Reduction of Aircraft Nuisance campaign (KASARAN), the South Bedfordshire Archaeological Society/South Bedfordshire Preservation Society, the National Farmers Union, Vauxhall Motors, the Luton Flying Club, two M.P.'s and four individuals. Q.C.'s were employed by four of the parties — Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, LADACAN and KASARAN (although, in this last case, the Q.C. happened to live in the small town of Knebworth and gave his services free). Expert witnesses were employed by Luton County Borough Council on noise (Dr. Richards) and on air transport (Dr. Doganis), by Hertfordshire County Council on noise (Mr. Fleming) and on the planning of Stevenage new town in conjunction with Stevenage Development Corporation (Mr. Bennett) and by LADACAN on surveying and planning matters (Mr. Duncan) and on noise (Mr. Allen). Expert evidence was also given by officers for Luton County Borough Council (2) and for the Council in conjunction with the airline and tour operators (2), for Hertfordshire County Council (3), for LADACAN in conjunction with the London Gliding Club (1), for Vauxhall Motors (1) and for Luton Rural District Council (1). Non-expert evidence was given by 27 people. The Minister granted planning permission in a letter dated 2nd September, 1970.

Public Inquiry, January and February 1972.

An inquiry into a planning application by Luton County Borough Council to undertake a number of works ("the 1971 package"). The inquiry lasted for a total of twenty days, and the Inspector was assisted by an Assessor (Mr. A. Sharman). Appearances were made by Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council in association with Bedfordshire County Council and Stevenage Development Corporation and representing eight District Councils, Buckinghamshire County Council representing six District Councils, LADACAN in association with Stevenage and Harpenden Urban District Councils, the Defenders of Essex Association, the National Trust, the Luton, Dunstable and District Chamber of Commerce, Vauxhall Motors, five Members of Parliament and two individuals. Q.C.'s were employed by three of the parties —

Luton County Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and LADACAN. Expert witnesses were employed by Luton County Borough Council on noise (Mr. Waters), Hertfordshire County Council on noise (Mr. Fleming) and on the planning of Stevenage new town in conjunction with Stevenage Development Corporation (Mr. Vincent) and LADACAN on surveying and planning matters (Mr. Duncan) and on noise (Mr. Allen). Expert evidence was also given by officers for Luton County Borough Council (5) and for the Council in conjunction with the airline and inclusive tour operators (2), for Hertfordshire County Council (4), for Buckinghamshire County Council (1), for LADACAN in conjunction with the London Gliding Club (1), for the National Trust (1) and for Vauxhall Motors (1). Non-expert evidence was given by 19 people. At the time of writing the planning application remains undetermined.

The 1969 Package.

(the subject of the 1970 inquiry).

1. Provision of concrete hardstanding to accommodate additional aircraft parking spaces.
  2. Car parking (for summer use), 1,600 spaces.
  3. Car parking area, 3,000 spaces.
  4. Erection of bonded store of 5,000 square feet.
  5. Change of use of part of a hospital from an administrative block (disused) to offices to accommodate the Airport administration; total floor area, 6,590 square feet.
- Total cost: £144,500 (no details available of the costs of individual items).

The 1970 Package.

(the context for the 1970 inquiry).

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. New taxiway to eastern end of the runway.  | £300,000 |
| 2. Additional apronage (5 aircraft stands).   | £200,000 |
| 3. Terminal building extensions and separate arrivals building (approximately 60,000 square feet).      | £450,000 |
| 4. Bonded store extension (additional 7,000 square feet).   | £ 25,000 |
| 5. Road works.  | £ 15,000 |
| 6. Car park (additional 5,000 spaces on landing forming part of the existing north/south grass runway). | £ 50,000 |

7. Spectators' car park, toilet facilities and refreshment kiosk.	£ 10,000
8. Alternative grass runway.	<u>£105,000</u>
Total	<u>£1,155,000</u>

The 1971 Package.

(substituted for the 1970 package, it became the subject of the 1972 inquiry).

1. Additional apronage (5 stands)	£ 550,000
2. Turning circles at runway ends.	£ 50,000
3. Widening of taxiway.	£ 36,000
4. Strengthening of runway.	£ 400,000
5. Erection of new terminal building.	£1,300,000
6. Associated road works.	£ 110,000
7. Provision of extra car parks.	£ 75,000
8. Relocation of spectators' car park.	<u>£ 15,000</u>
Total	<u>£2,536,000</u>

Appendix 9. Terms of Reference Given to Sir Frederick Snow and Partners.

- 1.. To investigate and report upon the several factors which influence the planning of, and determine the need for, the future expansion of the airport.
2. The scope of the investigation shall include but not be limited to the following factors:-
  - a. aircraft and passenger movements.
  - b. cargo traffic.
  - c. general aviation.
  - d. aircraft maintenance.
  - e. surface access to the airport.
  - f. navigational and telecommunications aids.
  - g. meteorological conditions.
  - h. air traffic control and safety requirements.
3. To advise the Council on the requirements for topographical and obstructions surveys and soil investigations and to make arrangements for authorised surveys to be carried out.
4. To act on behalf of the Council in discussions with the appropriate Government Departments and other Authorities responsible for and concerned with aviation matters.
5. To consult with the utilities authorities concerning the capacity of the main electrical, water and soil water services.
6. To consult with Professor Richards, who will be appointed by the Council, on the problems associated with aircraft noise caused by the airport.
7. To appoint and employ, in agreement with the Council, such specialist consultants as may be necessary to assist the investigation.
8. To prepare an outline plan showing the future development of the airport and the method by which phased expansion could be achieved.
9. To prepare estimates of the cost of the work and economic analyses of the effect of the development of the airport.
10. To investigate the economic consequences of a possible decision to ban night flying between the hours of 11.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.

Source: Sir Frederick Snow and Partners. "Luton Airport Development". Luton County Borough Council. Luton, 1969, Page 1.

Appendix 10. The Luton Town Poll of January, 1969.

As distinct from the normal situation at municipal elections in Luton, where each of the twelve wards has several polling stations and where results are announced for each ward, only 33 polling stations were used throughout the County Borough for the town poll and the result was announced for the town as a whole. The situation whereby no ward had more than four polling stations, and in consequence many people would have had to make a much longer journey to vote than in municipal elections, might have contributed to the low turnout of 6.4% at the town poll. In addition, the deliberate restriction of the number of polling stations in order to minimise the costs of holding the town poll created certain limitations in respect of the availability of data, which it is the purpose of this Appendix to review.

The most critical limitation was that no detailed results for each polling station or each ward were available, so that it was impossible to compare voting patterns with the pattern of exposure to aircraft noise. When the polls had closed, the ballot boxes were taken to the Town Hall, the number of unspoilt papers returned at each polling station was checked and recorded and all these papers were then pooled and counted. Thus, the only information available was the overall result, the number of unspoilt papers at each polling station and the number of persons entitled to vote at each station. All that it was possible to calculate was the turnout at the town poll for each ward (and even this presented certain difficulties), which could then be compared with the pattern of exposure to aircraft noise and with the normal pattern of turnouts by wards at municipal elections.

The major difficulty with the calculation of turnout rates at the town poll was that six of the 33 polling stations were shared between two wards. Some method had to be found, therefore, for attributing the votes actually cast in those six instances to their appropriate wards. The method adopted was to calculate the ward turnouts in respect of polling stations wholly within one ward, to apply the two relevant turnout figures to the numbers of people from the two wards entitled to vote at a station shared between them, and to adjust this result pro rata to the control total of the numbers who actually voted at that station. The situation at polling station 23,

shared between Limbury and Ickniel wards, will serve as an example of this process. Polling stations 21, 22 and 24 were the sole preserve of Limbury ward, and the turnout at these three combined was 5.2% (363 out of 7,027). Polling stations 27 and 28 were the sole preserve of Ickniel ward, and the turnout at these two combined was 9.0% (464 out of 5,189). At polling station 23, 1,751 persons from Limbury ward and 2,392 persons from Ickniel ward were entitled to vote. At turnouts of 5.2% and 9.0% respectively, 91 persons from Limbury ward and 215 persons from Ickniel ward should have voted. This would have meant that Limbury ward would have been responsible for 29.7% and Ickniel ward for 70.3% of the poll at the station. In fact, 234 votes were cast (72 fewer than the number produced by the calculation), and these can be distributed between the two wards in the ratio Limbury:Ickniel of 29.7:70.3, giving respectively 69 and 165 votes to the two wards. This calculation was repeated for each of the six occasions on which a polling station was shared between two wards, and is responsible for an element of error in Table 24 since three wards (Crawley, High Town and Ickniel) are affected twice and six (Dallow, Legrave, Lewsey, Limbury, Stopsley and Wardown) are affected once. As a result, only three of the twelve turnout rates presented in Table 24 are unaffected by this calculation process. Nevertheless, the element of error is probably fairly small, since the example quoted above represents the largest difference (30%) between the vote attributed as a result of the calculation and the actual vote and since in each case the large majority of the total number of votes cast in the ward was at unshared polling stations and was not affected by the calculation. The existence of this element of error, however, has been a further factor in the caution with which the results are interpreted in Chapter II.

Appendix 11. Sample Survey of Municipal Airport Consultative Committee Arrangements.

The purpose of the survey was to collect some basic data about the structure of the Consultative Committees at the major municipal airports, which could be compared with the situation at Luton Airport and with those obtaining at the three British Airports Authority airports of Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted<sup>1</sup>. At the beginning of May, 1971, letters were sent to the Airport Directors of all the municipal airports listed in Table 1 except Luton Airport (for which the information requested had already been obtained) plus East Midlands and Leeds/Bradford Airports, the next two which would have been included in an extended Table 1. Thus, information was requested of the situations at the nine busiest municipal airports (including Luton), from a sample frame of thirty-three airports designated under the Civil Aviation Act, 1968, eighteen of which were operated by local authorities<sup>2</sup>. The sample was thus a 50% sample of designated municipal airports, but it utilised the busier half of such a frame rather than a half chosen randomly.

Information was received in all nine cases, although at two airports (Glasgow and Newcastle) Committees were not in operation at the time of the survey despite designation under the Act having taken place at least one year previously. The Airport Directors (who sometimes passed the letter on to the Secretary of the Consultative Committee for reply) were asked to supply the following information:-

- a) membership of the committee by organisations;
- b) meetings held per annum since the Committee's inception;
- c) availability of facilities for the press and public to attend meetings;
- d) a copy of the Committee's terms of reference; and,
- e) a copy of the most recent yearbook for the Airport.

Information for the British Airports Authority airports was only available under items a), c) and d), although this was of no great moment since the survey was principally concerned to gather data about membership.

Certain general categories of membership of organisations can be distinguished, and from these it is possible to begin to assess the extent to

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1. Information as to the membership of the Committees at the three B.A.A. airports was obtained from, British Airports Authority. "Annual Report and Accounts 1970-71". H.M.S.O. London. 1971. Pages 156 and 157. It refers to the position at the end of March, 1971, or virtually one month before the sample survey was undertaken.

2. Board of Trade. "Action Against Aircraft Noise". H.M.S.O. London. 1969 (updated 1970).

which the Committees would be expected to be pro- or anti- airport expansion. This was done simply by looking at the performance of such organisations within the Luton Airport context and by assuming that the situations at different airports are broadly comparable. A yardstick of this nature can make no pretence at precision<sup>3</sup>, but it provides a rough-and-ready index of the balance of interests within the Committees. The categories of membership distinguished were as follows, with their anticipated reactions to airport expansion appended;

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Independent Chairman.  | Neutral. |
| 2. Airport operating authorities.                                   | Pro.     |
| 3. Surrounding local authorities (including new towns).             | Anti.    |
| 4. Local business, commercial and trades union interests            | Pro.     |
| 5. Airline operators, travel agents and related aviation interests. | Pro.     |
| 6. Consumers representatives.                                       | Neutral. |
| 7. Ratepayers and general amenity bodies.                           | Neutral. |
| 8. Anti-noise organisations.  | Anti.    |

The predominant pattern of membership is that over half of the Committees' members sit as representatives of surrounding local authorities, and in every case this forms the largest single group. Other than this, local business, commercial and trades union interests are well represented, as are the airline operators, travel agents and related aviation interests. In the municipal airport situations, membership on the part of the airport operating authorities was common, in contrast with the situations at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted where B.A.A. is not represented. The three B.A.A. airport situations included the only attempts to provide representation for the general public as airport users by giving a place to the Consumers Association, and two of the three independent Chairmen were also appointed to B.A.A. airport Committees. Other than these points, the main feature of note was the small representation of ratepayers and general amenity bodies and of anti-noise organisations. In view of the preponderance of representatives of surrounding local authorities, it is inevitable that most of the Committees should appear to be balanced in favour of anti-expansionist viewpoints,

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3. For example, on this basis Luton's Consultative Committee is classed in Table 40 as having 8 pro and 12 anti members, whereas Table 28 has already argued that the real distribution is 8 pro, 8 anti and 4 neutral. To preserve comparability, Table 40 has not been amended in respect of the Luton situation.

Table 40. Membership of Consultative Committees.

Membership Category	B.A.A. Airports				Municipal Airports.				Leeds/Bradford
	Heathrow	Gatwick	Stansted	Luton	Manchester	Birmingham	Liverpool	Southend	
1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
2	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	3	3
3	15	18	13	11	14	9	18	7	6
4	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	4
5	3	5	3	2	2	1	3	3	3
6	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
Totals	21	28	20	20	23	14	23	15	18
Pro	5	8	5	8	5	5	5	8	10
Anti	15	18	13	12	15	9	18	7	7
Neutral	1	2	2	-	3	-	-	-	1

Note: the Committee in respect of East Midlands Airport cannot properly be fitted into this classification, and is best regarded as being a special case. It has 22 members, 14 from Chambers of Commerce from all over its region, 4 from surrounding local authorities and 1 independent noise expert. This would represent 17 pro-expansion, 4 anti-expansion and 1 neutral.

although three of the seven municipal Committees (including the anomalous East Midlands Airport Consultative Committee) appear to have majorities in favour of expansion. Luton Airport Consultative Committee is in no way remarkable when compared with the other situations summarised in Table 40.

The frequency of meetings at the municipal airport situations is summarised in Table 41.

Table 41. Frequency of Meetings of Municipal Airport Consultative Committees.

Airport	Date of Inaugural Meeting	1969	1970	1971 (to 3rd. May)	Total
Luton	14-1-69	9	6	1	16
Manchester	20-10-69	1	3	2	6
Birmingham	10-2-70	-	3	1	4
Liverpool	*				4
Southend	1970	-	1	1	2
East Midlands	6-4-66	6	5	2	13
Leeds/Bradford	6-10-69	1	5	1	7

\* Detailed information not supplied.

Note: again, East Midlands Airport Consultative Committee is really an exception, since it was started in 1966 and had thus been in existence for over three years at the time of designation. In the period up to the commencement of the above Table, it had held 15 meetings.

The major point to emerge from Table 41 is that Luton Airport Consultative Committee met more frequently than the others in the sample. Indeed, if the East Midlands Airport Consultative Committee (which by 1969 had already settled into a regular pattern of five or six meetings per annum) is discounted, the disparity between the Luton situation and the others is very large, with Leeds/Bradford with 7 meetings during the period in question being the closest to Luton's 16.

Members of the press and the public were allowed to attend meetings of the Committees at Heathrow and Stansted, and at Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds/Bradford Airports. Thus, the decision of the Luton Airport Consultative Committee to exclude members of the press and public from its

meetings was not unusual in relation to the remainder of the sample of municipal airports, although only one of the three Committees at B.A.A. Airports had taken such a measure.

The terms of reference for the various Committees at municipal airports hardly varied at all. Of the three items forming the terms of reference for the Luton Airport Consultative Committee,<sup>4</sup> the first two, *mutatis mutandis*, were common to all the Committees for which such information was available and a form of the third was also frequent. In fact, the terms of reference for the Committees appear to be based upon a model prepared originally by the Board of Trade subsequent to the passing of the Civil Aviation Act, 1968.

Thus, the sample survey has demonstrated that the Luton Airport Consultative Committee is structurally similar to those existing at the major municipal airports, and that the only difference worthy of note is the much greater frequency of meetings in the Luton Airport situation.

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4. See Chapter 12, Page 233.

Appendix 12. Membership of LADACAN.

Detailed information as to the membership of LADACAN was available in respect of the positions at the public inquiries of March, 1970 and January, 1972<sup>1</sup>. For the purposes of this Appendix, membership will be considered as referring only to the two classes of branch and affiliate, although associated local authorities will also be examined as further evidence of the support obtained by LADACAN.

Table 42. Membership of LADACAN Branches.

Branch	March 1970	January 1972	Change
Ayots	43	40	-
Breachwood Green	149	150	-
Caddington	161	160	-
Gaddesden	138	140	-
Harpenden	1,842	2,000	+9%
Hitchin	460	460	-
Kimpton	359	360	-
Luton	852	850	-
Markyate and Flamstead	334	330	-
Preston	63	60	-
Stevenage	118	120	-
Studham	83	80	-
Welwyn	197	200	-
Whitwell	239	240	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,038</b>	<b>5,190</b>	<b>+3%</b>
Berkhamsted	-	170	-
Hemel Hempstead	-	90	-
St. Albans	-	160	-
Wheatthampstead	-	160	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>5,038</b>	<b>5,770</b>	<b>+14%</b>

1. The position as at March, 1970 was obtained from a letter to the author from K. Coleman (Executive Secretary), 29th October, 1971, and the figures for January, 1972 were obtained from annex N.S.C.R.2 to the proof of evidence of N.S.C. Reid to the public inquiry of that date.

Table 42 demonstrates that the growth in branch membership which occurred during the period in question was almost totally a function of the formation of four new branches. Of the branches already in existence in March 1970, only Harpenden showed any appreciable growth and the membership of the others remained static.

Table 43. Membership of LADACAN Affiliates.

Affiliate	March 1970	January 1972	Change
Beacon Villages Society	120	120	-
Chiltern Society	1,400	1,400	+21%
Flamstead Society	90	110	+22%
Hertfordshire Society	1,582	1,580	-
London Gliding Club	570	570	-
Luton Ratepayers Association	935	930	-
Nettlesden and Frithsden Society	80	60	-25%
St. Albans Civic Society	253	250	-
Sundon Park Residents Association	1,370	1,370	-
Tring and District Residents Association	632	980	+55%
Tring Society	55	60	+9%
West Dunstable Residents Association*	700	1,000	+43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,787</b>	<b>8,730</b>	<b>+12%</b>
Amersham Rural District Residents Association	-	180	-
Council for the Preservation of Rural England	-	1,700	-
N.F.U. Hitchin Branch	-	330	-
Potten End and District Residents Association	-	50	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>7,787</b>	<b>10,990</b>	<b>+41%</b>

\* The figure for 1970 refers to householders who were members, whereas that for 1972 referred originally to the total population of all the households within which membership was held. To make the latter figure roughly comparable with the former, the figure 3,500 was divided by 3.42 (the figure used in Appendix 7 to convert male workers to total dependent population), producing a 1972 membership of approximately 1,000.

Of the twelve affiliates already in existence at the time of the public inquiry of March, 1970, five registered growths of membership up to January, 1972 and one registered a decline, with six remaining static. The majority of the total growth of membership in the affiliate class was attributable to the acquisition of four new affiliates during the period in question. The affiliate class grew faster than the branch class, nevertheless, and by 1972 it contained 66% of the total membership as compared with 60% in 1970.

Thus, the main characteristics of LADACAN'S membership can be summarised as follows;

	<u>March 1970</u>	<u>January 1972</u>
Branch membership.	5,038	5,770
Affiliate membership.	7,787	10,990
Overall membership.	12,825	16,760
Growth in membership.		31%
Proportion of membership growth attributable to pre-1970 branches and affiliates.		28%
Proportion of membership growth attributable to new branches and affiliates.		72%

In addition, certain local authorities associated themselves with LADACAN. At the time of the public inquiry of March, 1970, only two Parish Councils with a combined population of 2,340 had been prepared to make public their support in this manner. By the time of the public inquiry of January, 1972, however, this figure had jumped to fourteen with a combined population of 25,750. In addition, six County District Councils in Hertfordshire with a combined population of 179,106 had declared their support similarly. Whilst these local authorities cannot be regarded as being members of LADACAN in any sense, the increase from 2,340 in 1970 to 204,856 in 1972 as the population represented by supporting local authorities was much more dramatic than the increases in the branch and affiliate classes of membership.

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References have been classified according to their utility to the author in the preparation of this particular study. Several references proved to be of value in terms of more than one of the categories adopted, in which case they have been put in the category which reflects their greatest utility. For example, Professor Mackenzie's "Politics and Social Science" contains something of value in relation to all eleven categories, but it has been placed in category one because its broad sweep and methodological comments were felt to be of greatest benefit in terms of research approaches.

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