



**PAUL HOLMES MP**  
**Member of Parliament for Eastleigh**

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Eastleigh Borough Council  
Eastleigh House  
Upper Market Street  
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**Extension to Southampton Airport Runway - F/19/86707**

Dear Craig,

I am writing in my capacity as the MP for Eastleigh and on behalf of my constituents regarding the application by Southampton Airport to extend its runway by 164 metres.

In reaching my conclusion, I have carefully listened to the variety of opinion that exists from across the Eastleigh constituency including, and most importantly, local residents and businesses. As well as this, I have also spoken extensively with Southampton Airport themselves, business groups, interest groups as well as other organisations concerned with the economic and social wellbeing of the area.

**Economic considerations**

Southampton Airport is a key asset in our community that is responsible for employing thousands of people, indirectly employing thousands more and supporting economic growth locally in Eastleigh and the wider region. Plans for an extension of the runway within the existing land boundary, have been promoted for some years so that Southampton Airport can have a viable and sustainable future. Such an extension will allow the airport to work with different carriers, reduce its reliance on one main carrier and service millions of people in the south of England without having to commute in and use busy London airports.

The demise of Flybe has had a devastating impact on Southampton Airport and the need to create diversity in the type of carrier using the Airport is imperative. We should be under no illusion that a failure to allow the airport to expand will prevent the airport from working with other carriers and in so doing, make Southampton Airport unviable. This would have an enormous detrimental impact to our local and regional economy.

In considering the economic factors, we must also look at the demand for air travel both nationally and regionally. Southampton Airport ceasing to operate will not reduce the demand for air travel, it will simply disperse that demand and force people to travel to the London Airports or other airports in the South East and South West. In allowing Southampton Airport to expand, we can service the existing demand more effectively and indeed offer people a viable alternative to flying from Heathrow and Gatwick. This has economic benefits and environmental benefits.



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### **Environmental considerations**

Having touched on the environmental benefits of the Southampton Airport expansion over other airports, as I set out previously, it should also be noted that this cannot be looked at as a zero-sum game. The closure of Southampton Airport will not in itself do anything to reduce demand for air travel. Rather, the current catchment area will just need to travel further to complete their journeys. In this context, we should also acknowledge that there are significant advantages to Southampton Airport meeting the demand for air travel in the South of England as this will reduce the volume of long car journeys to reach Heathrow and Gatwick airport.

Noise and air quality considerations are also integral and having engaged heavily with Southampton Airport on this application, I am pleased by the steps they are taking to manage the noise and air quality issues posed by the extension. Noise is a major concern for any person living near to an airport or its flightpaths. The £5,000 grant money being offered by the airport to identified households to insulate their homes is a welcome step in terms of noise mitigation and will make a significant difference.

The application also includes a cap on vehicle movements associated with the airport which will also help address air quality issues from vehicles visiting the airport and ensure local roads are not congested. Building on this, Southampton Airport has some of the best facilities in the UK in terms of its accessibility by public transport and again, this infrastructure should be used to help reduce the carbon footprint associated with flying.

I am also encouraged by Southampton Airport's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the plans for this extension which focus on efficiency. At the moment, we see small aircraft taking off that can only serve a limited number of passengers. This extension will allow more mid-size (not large-scale) aircraft to use Southampton which will enable an increase in passengers without an increase in the number of flights. I understand that the number of flights in 2034 will be broadly similar to the number of flights in 2018, the extension will just deliver a more efficient way of flying.

The commitment to no night-flights remains which is also important for reducing any disbenefits for local people. Moreover, the airport also remains committed to promoting cleaner and quieter aircraft which is essential for the long-term future of aviation. I also believe this should be an ongoing priority for the airport as becoming a leader in this area will provide Southampton Airport with a real competitive advantage that allows people to fly, in an environmentally friendly way.

### **Conclusion**

The expansion of the airport will increase the economic contribution of the airport from by over £100m, making a total combination of £275m to our local economy. This will grow in the next twenty years to over £400m. In addition to this, over 400 jobs will be created locally plus many hundreds more in the supply chain. While it is also important to get this application right for the long-term good of Eastleigh, we should also acknowledge the short-term boost this investment will give in a time economic uncertainty as a result of COVID-19.



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Having weighed all of these factors, I believe that Southampton Airport should be allowed to expand providing the appropriate environmental mitigation is in place and that the construction of the new runway, is also carried out in a careful and considered way. I know Southampton Airport recognises this point and is committed to acting as a good neighbour.

I strongly support Southampton Airport's application for runway extension and hope Eastleigh Borough Council will now finally, after several unnecessary and unhelpful delays, grant planning permission.

Yours sincerely,



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