

# **Expansion of Bristol Airport to 12mppa - Planning Appeal**

PINS Ref APP/D0121/W/20/3259234

Planning Application: 18/P/5118/OUT

## **Planning Issues Summary of Evidence for XR Elders**

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**XR/W4/3**

My name is Liz Beth, and I am a chartered Town Planner, with 35 years experience in all aspects of the planning service. I have worked with local planning authorities, in development management and policy development, as well as for private and not for profit organizations. I have a BA in Prehistory and Archaeology (2.1 hons) and an MA in Town and Regional Planning both from Sheffield University, and a post-graduate diploma in Design in the Built Environment from Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education.

## **1. Summary of Planning Issues**

Further expansion at Bristol Airport will have an unacceptable impact on the AONB. The proposal does not have acceptable sustainable transport solutions, and the appellant has not implemented sustainable transport proposals and more acceptable parking solutions agreed in previous planning applications. The proposal to build new car parking in the Green Belt, contrary to policy, is not justified by any 'very special circumstances'. It is quite likely given the revised forecasts of growth that this extra parking will never be needed. Any proposals for extra parking should never have been proposed for a Green Belt location when alternative parking can be constructed in the Green Belt Inset, particularly as this is the most sensitive part of the site as regards impact on the Mendip Hills AONB. The Application is effectively premature because the development plan required a formal planning document to examine the case for any further expansion beyond the already permitted expansion to 10mppa.

## **2. Summary of XR Elders Case**

2.1 We have presented evidence across our submitted proofs that the predictions offered by the appellant of a quick return to 2019 levels of airport use, and then increased use rising as before, are far too optimistic. Their assumptions on economic factors are likely to be erroneous (XR proof J Devas). Contrary to the YAL assumption that the COVID impact will be short-lived, ongoing travel restrictions and developments in the pandemic are likely to continue to impact adversely on the airline industry, and people's ability and willingness to fly (XR Proof Dr S Lawson). Social factors such as greater awareness of the environmental damage caused by flying (XR Proof Dr S Capstick), coupled with a tightening of the requirements for carbon reduction nationally, also suggest that increase in passenger traffic is likely to be much slower than predicted.

2.2 Passenger numbers in UK airports have fallen on average about 80% in 2020, and are still severely impacted. All recent forecasts from the industry show that this will delay pre-COVID

projections of increase in air travel. We have shown that it is quite possible the currently permitted increase to 10mppa at Bristol Airport will not happen before 2030, and further increase beyond this cannot be assumed. In these circumstances, at this point in time, an application for further expansion with all its damaging impacts is not justified. These adverse impacts include increased carbon emissions, harmful impacts on local ecology, increases in traffic and air pollution and noise nuisance for local people with resulting health impacts.

2.3 Very special circumstances have not been demonstrated for this inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which also impacts adversely on the Mendip Hills AONB. When a need for further expansion of permitted car parking cannot be confidently evidenced, there can be no special circumstances justifying development in the Green Belt. Similarly there can be no justification for setting aside the requirement to promote sustainable transport effectively and reduce carbon emissions.

2.4 In our opinion the adverse impacts of the proposed expansion were not outweighed by the claimed benefits prior to the pandemic. In these new medical, societal, economic and technological circumstances, where there may never be a need for the expansion proposed, the application is clearly not justified. The adverse impacts of the development cannot be weighed against claimed planning benefits of a further expansion in passenger numbers that may never happen. The planning balance now comes down firmly in favour of avoiding the dis-benefits of this development proposal, and we respectfully request that the appeal is dismissed.