

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Appeal by Bristol Airport Limited
Bristol Airport, North Side Road, Felton, Bristol

Appeal Reference: APP/D0121/W/20/3259234
Planning Application Ref: 18/P/5118/OUT

Proof of Evidence of Andrew Renshaw MRTPI
Green Belt and Car Parking

Ref: BALPA W/1/1
June 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 My name is Andrew Renshaw. I am a chartered town planner, and have been in practice in the town planning profession for the last 40 years, in both public and private sectors. Most recently I was Senior Associate Town Planner at a multi-disciplinary practice encompassing architecture, town planning, building surveying, landscape architecture amongst other disciplines.
- 1.1.2 I hold an MA in Environmental Planning from Nottingham University and have been a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute for over 35 years. I have 14 years experience of working for planning authorities mainly in the area of development management, including positions at Sefton and Wirral Borough Councils, Bristol and Merseyside Development Corporations. I have been acting for BALPA since September 2018 when I was first approached in respect of an earlier planning application related to airport car parking.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of this proof of evidence is to explain the planning policy reasons for the objection to the appeal application by BALPA and to consider whether the objection might be overcome by a planning condition or by a planning obligation.
- 1.1.4 The evidence which I have prepared in this proof of evidence is true and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
- 1.1.5 This proof of evidence will firstly review how the current parking arrangements have developed since planning permission was granted to enable the expansion of the airport from 10m to 12m passengers per annum. It will then review the arrangements for staff car parking as they existed prior to the Covid pandemic and to which they would be expected to revert once air travel picks up. It will explain why I consider the case has not been made for 'very special circumstances' to overcome the issue of inappropriate development in the Green Belt in relation to car parking. It will set out BALPA's objection to the appeal application and the response to that objection from the planning authority and appellant. I will conclude by explaining how BALPA's objection could be overcome either by a planning condition or unilateral undertaking.

■ 2 BALPA

- 2.1.1 The British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA) is the professional association and registered trade union established to represent the interests of all UK pilots. BALPA represents over 85% of all commercial pilots flying in the UK and pilots of all the airlines based at Bristol airport.
- 2.1.2 BALPA has particular expertise in Flight Safety and Security, Fatigue and Scheduling and Occupational Health and Safety. Evidence is to be given by two members of the union in respect of the case, though the personal attendance of one of the members cannot be guaranteed due to potential flight duties.
- 2.1.3 BALPA's case is specifically concerned about the location of staff parking, with particular reference to pilots and air crew. My evidence, together with John Hatton and Simon Williams, will demonstrate that the location of staff parking within the southern area of the airport, within the Green Belt and which requires a shuttle bus to transfer staff to the terminal:
- (i) undermines the very special circumstances ('VSC') case advanced by the Appellant in respect of the additional car parking proposed In the Green Belt; and
 - (ii) due to the potential health and safety implications for aircrew as a result of the pressure placed on their rest periods, is in breach of the requirement of Core Strategy Policy CS11 that parking is "adequate...to meets the needs of anticipated users".

3 RECENT PLANNING HISTORY IN RESPECT OF CAR PARKING AT BRISTOL AIRPORT

PLANNING APPLICATION 09/P/1020/OT2

- 3.1.1 By the time this outline planning application to expand the airport up to its present permitted capacity of 10m passengers per annum was submitted, the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan 2007 had identified 44.2 hectares of land on the north side of the airport that was excluded from the Green Belt. Proposed development within this inset area is accordingly not subject to Green Belt planning policy, whereas all other parts of the airport remain within the Green Belt. It was intended that this inset area would accommodate the medium term expansion requirements of Bristol Airport.
- 3.1.2 This situation did not exclude the possibility that some future development might take place in the Green Belt, but this policy was intended to ensure that this should only occur once optimum use had been demonstrated to have been made of the Green Belt inset area.
- 3.1.3 In the event the 2011 planning permission (CD4.1b) did allow for some development in the Green Belt. This included:
- The Royal Mail building;
 - The Snow Base;
 - The Car Rental building; and
 - An extension to the Silver Zone parking area, including a seasonal overflow parking area.
- 3.1.4 The first three development proposals in the list above were justified on the basis of being moved from the Green Belt Inset (GBI) area to the Green Belt to enable more intensive use to be made of the GBI. Increased car parking by way of two multi storey car parks, referred to as MSCP 1 and MSCP2, was proposed in the GBI, providing an additional 3,850 car parking spaces.
- 3.1.5 The council decided that the extension to the Silver Zone car parking area was justified under the 'very special circumstances' exception. In the Planning Officer's report (CD 4.1a, pages 84-88, appendix 1) it was considered that the GBI area would be intensively developed and further development, including the level of additional car parking that was believed to be necessary to accommodate the airport's expansion, could not reasonably be provided in that location.
- 3.1.6 The planning permission (CD 4.1b) contained conditions specifically related to the phasing of the additional car parking proposals, so that the expansion of car

parking in the Green Belt would only occur after the additional provision in the GBI had been implemented.

- 3.1.7 Firstly, condition 7 required that the first part of the seasonal car park should not be brought into use until the first phase of the multi storey car park had been completed and was in use. Secondly, condition 11 required that the first part of the seasonal car park should not be brought into use until it had been demonstrated that passenger throughput had reached 8 million passengers in the preceding year. Thirdly, condition 8 required that the second part of the seasonal car park should not be brought into use until it had been demonstrated that passenger throughput had reached 9 million passengers in the preceding year. Finally, condition 9 restricted the seasonal use car park to between 1 May and 31 October in any year.
- 3.1.8 The reason for condition 7 was 'to ensure that priority is given to development in the Green Belt inset in accordance with policy RD/3 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.' Similar reasons were advanced for the other phasing conditions.
- 3.1.9 The Planning Statement submitted with 09/P/1020/OT2 identified the phasing of the car park construction (appendix 2, pages 10 &11). Phase 1 involved the assembly of the site for the MSCP which required the relocation of the car rental facilities to the southside and some extension/ redevelopment of the Silver Zone car parking. Phase 2 involved the construction of 1800 MSCP spaces. Phase 3 involved the seasonal overflow car park extension to accommodate the construction of the second MSCP as the fourth phase.
- 3.1.10 Among the changes to the Silver Zone area was that staff parking was to occupy part of the Silver Zone area, whereas at the time of the 2011 planning permission, the majority of staff car parking was situated adjacent to the administration building at the eastern end of the runway. That space was identified in the approved proposed site plan (appendix 3) as an extension to the east apron ('proposed east apron').

PLANNING APPLICATION 16/P/1440/F

- 3.1.11 In 2016, through planning application 16/P/1440/F, Bristol Airport sought planning permission for an additional 196 staff car parking spaces adjacent to the existing staff car park within the northern area of the airport. At that time staff car parking remained where the east apron extension was shown in the proposed site plan. The planning statement submitted with this application confirmed that the development of the eastern apron was still in the pipeline (appendix 4, page 7,

section 2.3). The site for the additional staff car parking was not in the GBI area but was within the Green Belt. Accordingly, the very special circumstances test applied and in this respect, the applicant cited:

- Limited impact on the openness of the Green belt;
- Increased demand for staff car parking;
- Lack of suitable alternatives; and
- Policy support for development at the airport.

3.1.12 In respect of staff parking, it noted that there were 682 spaces in the main staff car park, adjacent to the former terminal building (of which 80 were for taxis/ car rental). A further 400 staff parking spaces were available in the Silver Zone car park *'for staff who do not need to be based immediately next to the administration building'*. At that time the administrative offices and the reporting point for aircrew were in the old terminal building. There were, therefore, a total of 1,000 general staff car parking spaces available. It was also noted that there were *'small numbers of staff car parking spaces for key operational staff...available at the Air Traffic Control Tower'*. It should be noted that these were and still are for air traffic control staff only.

3.1.13 The Planning Statement accompanying the application, (appendix 4, page 21, section 4.3) noted that the implementation of staff travel plans since 2009 had reduced single car occupancy journeys by staff and increased public transport use by staff. However, despite this modal shift, the applicant was clear that additional staff car parking was needed due the increase in the number of businesses working at the airport and the number of contractors working at the airport. It was further noted that *'the number of spaces needs to allow for staff shift changeovers, when staff reporting for duty and those finishing work are present and require parking at the same time'* (appendix 4, section 4.2 page 19).

3.1.14 Of further interest, on page 20, under lack of alternative suitable sites, the Planning Statement noted that:

'However, until such time that the eastern apron is extended, it is considered sensible and appropriate for staff car parking to remain adjacent to the [administrative] building as well as to the terminal and development sites. In this context, the proposed development would form a logical extension to the existing Staff Car Park. Further, by rationalising the current allocation of car park spaces, reducing the dispersion of spaces around the airfield and locating more staff,

contractor and visitor parking spaces closer to the administration building and the terminal, the proposed development would reduce worker trips during the day’.

- 3.1.15 The planning application was approved subject to conditions. In the event, the application was not implemented.

PLANNING APPLICATION 16/P/1455/F & 16/P/1486/F

- 3.1.16 Planning application 16/P/1455 sought planning permission for the development of the first five storey multi storey car park building providing 1878 car parking spaces, but this was now proposed to be built in two phases. In its Planning Statement Bristol Airport justified this change on the assessment of demand for lower cost parking. Between 2011 and 2016, the airport stated that the Silver Zone car park had full occupancy during the peak but the higher cost parking northside had only 85% occupancy, down from 88% previously. The reasons given for the increased demand for low cost parking were (appendix 5, section 4.2, p17):

- increased penetration in parts of the Airport’s catchment area which are relatively poorly served by public transport;
- an increase in business travellers using low cost parking;
- increasing propensity for leisure passengers to use low cost parking since the recession;
- higher than forecast growth in Charter flights with Charter flight passengers having a propensity to use the Silver Zone rather than premium parking; and
- growth in the number of aircraft based at the Airport which contributed to an increase in flights departing before 9:00am when public transport services are less available for the passengers of these flights.

- 3.1.17 Bristol Airport argued that it should react to customer demand and that building multi storey car parks is more expensive, it was not viable to comply with the planning conditions previously imposed. At the time the applicant drew on the increase in public transport use by passengers, stated to be up from 8% in 2008 to 13% in 2013.

- 3.1.18 BAL offered to bring a new public transport service from Weston super Mare into effect before the trigger point in the earlier planning obligation and the planning permission was granted.

- 3.1.19 The first phase of the MSCP was opened in 2018. The second phase was completed in 2019.

PLANNING APPLICATION 16/P/1486/F

- 3.1.20 This application, submitted at the same time as 16/P/1455, sought planning permission for the seasonal car park, providing 3,650 spaces.
- 3.1.21 This was to be provided earlier than permitted under the phasing conditions 7, 8 and 11 of the outline planning permission. The arguments put forward for this change in the phasing were the same as given for the MSCP application outlined at paragraph 3.1.16 above. The application was approved (CD 4.4).

CONSULTATION REQUEST 18/P/3919/AIN & VARIATION OF CONDITION APPLICATION 18/P/4007/FUL

- 3.1.22 It was at the end of July 2018 that BALPA and the Unite union realised that changes were about to occur to their members car parking arrangements. This came about due to the submission of reference 18/P/3919/AIN, which was a consultation by BAL with the planning authority, in accordance with the provisions of Class F of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. This concerned the erection of a staff waiting area building as part of the move of staff car parking from the east apron to part of the Silver Zone area. This consultation application is not listed in the recent history of applications in appendix 2 to the Planning Statement accompanying 18/P/5118/OUT (CD2.3).
- 3.1.23 BALPA, together with Unite, made a submission to the council (appendix 6) arguing that planning permission was required, as they said it countermanded a planning condition attached to an earlier planning application and requested the council to ask BAL to consider an alternative strategy for staff parking. This was not agreed by the officer concerned (appendix 7).
- 3.1.24 Although Wrington Parish Council acknowledged submission 18/P/3919/AIN was permitted development, the parish council was rightly concerned at the loss of car parking spaces caused by the construction of an additional building in the Silver Zone area (appendix 8). The plan upon which this is based is shown in appendix 9. North Somerset Council's observations on this consultation request (appendix 10) noted Wrington Parish Council's comments and advised '*Whilst acknowledging that the proposal is permitted development Wrington Parish Council has raised concerns that a large number of existing car parking spaces will be lost as a result of this development. It is therefore requested that you show*

how you intended to replace these spaces'. It is not known whether the council received a response to this observation.

- 3.1.25 This concern had been exacerbated by an earlier proposal for a new administration building, brought forward by BAL in the Silver Zone area, which was not in accordance with the proposed site plan illustrated with application 09/P/1020/OT2, see 3.2 below.
- 3.1.26 Shortly after the consultation submission 18/P/3919/AIN, application 18/P/4007/FUL sought permission for all round use of the seasonal car park for a temporary period of one year. BAL justified this variation to condition 9 of the outline planning permission 09/P/1020/OT2 on the grounds that there were so many development projects underway in the GBI that there would be insufficient car parking available during the winter months.
- 3.1.27 Had the multi storey car park been constructed in accordance with the conditions of the original planning permission, it is likely that this situation would not have arisen.
- 3.1.28 BALPA, together with Unite, again made a submission to the council in respect of this application in view of the loss of 'lower cost' parking space to staff car parking and the issues arising from staff parking remotely from their place of work (appendix 11).

3.2 CONSULTATION REQUEST FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW AIRPORT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING & ASSOCIATED FACILITIES 18/P/3206/AIN

- 3.2.1 This planning submission, which is very relevant to BALPA's case, is the slightly earlier consultation under the General Permitted Development Order in respect of Bristol Airport's new administration building 18/P/3206/AIN. The proposed site plan submitted with outline planning permission 09/P/1020/OT2 showed this building being located adjacent to the western terminal building, in the GBI, on the northside of the airport (see appendix 3). BAL, however, subsequently decided it wished to relocate this southside, adjacent to the A38 within the Silver Zone and Green Belt.
- 3.2.2 Due to adverse comments from Wrington Parish Council and the PCAA, the case officer requested information by e-mail from BAL regarding car parking arrangements (appendix 12). The request asked '*how many spaces are presently located to the east of the present admin building and how many in the Silver Zone. How many will be available in the Silver Zone upon occupation of the building.*' The e-mail then went on to comment about the parking spaces '*Presumably they*

are to be located in a position close enough to the new building so that staff can walk from their cars to the entrance’.

3.2.3 It is clear from the officer’s report (appendix 13) that it was accepted that the proposed 3 storey building benefitted from permitted development rights, but sited so close to the A38, it would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt. This was noted on the council’s response letter.

3.2.4 As a consequence of this amendment to the siting of the administration building, a further 140 ‘low cost’ car parking spaces were to be lost from the Silver Zone, together with others from the realignment of the access road to the Silver Zone car parking area.

3.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PLANNING HISTORY

3.3.1 I draw the following conclusions in respect of the planning history in relation to car parking.

- Provision of low cost car parking has always been a priority for BAL;
- Commercial arguments in favour of the provision of low cost parking have led to delays to MSCP provision;
- When additional staff car parking was sought in 2016 it was acknowledged by BAL that northside of the airport was the best location, as it would reduce worker trips during the day;
- No consideration was given to the planning and transport implications of moving staff car parking southside in previous applications;
- BAL’s proposals for the administrative building in the Silver Zone led to lost parking capacity there; and
- The location of parking was noted as relevant to planning application 16/P/1440/F and the construction of the new airport administrative building in the Silver Zone parking area (18/P/3206/AIN).

4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAFF CAR PARKING

- 4.1.1 John Hatton's proof of evidence provides details of the parking arrangements which would normally exist for staff car parking. Due to the closure of the Silver Zone parking area during the Covid pandemic, staff have been parking northside.
- 4.1.2 In October 2018, staff car parking was moved from the area close to the former terminal building to the Silver Zone. The result is that there is now car parking for about 1,000 staff car parking spaces in the Silver Zone.
- 4.1.3 It is understood that the airport levies a charge for staff other than those working for BAL or their contractors through third party employers, such as the airlines and other terminal based staff, for a 6 month car park pass who wish to use the staff car park. It is understood that most businesses pay the parking charge on behalf of their staff, but it is in their interests to reduce the numbers of staff for whom they have to pay by encouraging other travel choices.
- 4.1.4 It is acknowledged that the relocation of staff car parking to the Silver Zone has already occurred. However, it is apparent that with an application for planning permission for further expansion of the airport it is now an appropriate time to consider whether the location of staff car parking on the southern area of the airport is consistent with planning policy objectives: a matter which has not previously been appropriately considered.

5 BAL'S CASE

5.1 DEMAND FOR LOW COST CAR PARKING AT BRISTOL AIRPORT

- 5.1.1 In its Statement of Case, BAL accepts that the proposed year round use of the existing Silver Zone car park extension and the further extension to it constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but sets out a case for there being 'very special circumstances' in accordance with para 144 of the NPPF (CD5.8) that override the potential harm to the Green Belt.
- 5.1.2 It states that the very special circumstances are:
- The need for additional low-cost parking to meet demand associated with an additional 2mppa and to address the impacts of unauthorised parking in the Green Belt, as part of a holistic approach to sustainable travel;
 - The lack of alternative, available and suitable sites for parking outside the Green Belt; and
 - The need for and benefits of growth of Bristol Airport

- 5.1.3 The Parking Demand study submitted with the planning application (CD2.11) considered the future demand for passenger parking. It provided a number of factors that would lead to demand increasing, notwithstanding an intention to increase public transport mode share from the current 12.5% to 15%, with further public transport service improvements. One of the reasons why demand for car parking will grow is considered to be the growth in 'based aircraft', whereby aircraft based at Bristol leave early in the morning. This BAL argues means that public transport opportunities are more limited in the early morning. This point also has relevance to staff car parking requirements, which I will refer to later.
- 5.1.4 The Parking Demand study (CD2.11) anticipates a growing proportion of passengers preferring 'low cost' parking. The appellant's case regarding expanding car parking in the Green Belt is constructed around the need to expand 'low cost' parking because BAL argues that this is the primary need and lack of provision would result in more cars being parked off site in unauthorised car parks to the detriment of the environment and the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.1.5 The addendum to the Parking Demand study (CD3.6.2) sought to explain why the permanent use of the seasonal car park was necessary. At para 3.1, it referred to the long term capacity changes at the airport. Bullet point 2 page 11 advises that the relocation of staff parking to the Silver Zone, which it noted '*has led to a reduction of 1.0k capacity*'.

THE PARKING STRATEGY

- 5.1.6 The Parking Strategy (CD2.12) identifies that there are three main types of passenger car parking at the airport. The Silver Zone car park in the Green Belt on the southside of the airport is the least expensive, where passengers drive their car to the reception and the car is then block parked by car park staff. A free bus shuttle service transfers passengers to the airport terminal from a reception and waiting room building.
- 5.1.7 On the northside, within the GBI, higher cost short and long stay car parking is situated within a short walk or courtesy bus ride to the terminal. The most expensive option is the premier parking closest to the terminal building, including the multi storey car park. A further option is a 'meet and greet' arrangement.
- 5.1.8 The Parking Strategy (CD2.12) identified the Green Belt as a key planning policy issue in providing additional airport car parking (para 2.6.4). It noted that 'very

special circumstances' would need to be justified to overcome the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriate development.

- 5.1.9 The strategy identified the need for 3,900 additional car parking spaces based on the growth of the airport to 12m passengers pa, assuming a public transport share of 15%. However, in order to reduce the impact of on-going construction activity and to help ensure a reduction in off-site unauthorised parking, the Parking Strategy explains that a total of 4,850 spaces are required. Taking into account the context and Green Belt policy, a sequential approach was adopted to the location of the additional parking. Firstly, sites within the GBI were considered; secondly, strategic park and ride locations remote from the airport outside the Green Belt; thirdly, sites within the airport but outside the GBI; and finally, sites in Green Belt locations adjacent to the airport.
- 5.1.10 An additional MSCP was proposed in the GBI, which would provide about 2,150 spaces and this was considered the maximum that could be accommodated without significant visual impacts. Further decked car parking in this premium area was considered to over-provide premium spaces.
- 5.1.11 A longlist of possible off-site parking locations was identified to make up the balance of the parking spaces, but none were considered realistic to serve the airport.
- 5.1.12 In respect of the third category – within the airport but within the Green Belt, decked car parking in the existing Silver Zone area was discounted due to its visual impact and cost reasons.
- 5.1.13 The solution proposed is an additional 2,700 spaces to be provided on land immediately to the south of the seasonal car park site. In order to provide for peak parking in the winter period, it is also proposed that the seasonal car park be available all year round. It should be noted that at para 5.3.30 of its Planning Statement (CD2.3) and in its Statement of Case at paras 9.17 and 9.19, BAL maintains it is committed to maximising development in the GBI.
- 5.1.14 It should be noted that there is still a second MSCP to provide, a further 1800 premium parking spaces that has not yet been constructed as part of the extant planning permission. The Parking Strategy (CD2.12) stated at para 3.3.1 that this is expected to be completed by 2021. However, there is no indication as to when this might now be constructed. At para 9.15 of its Statement of Case, BAL refers to there being insufficient demand to bring this forward before the provision of

additional parking in the Green Belt. There was no phasing condition attached to this in outline planning permission 09/P/1020/OT2 (CD4.1b).

- 5.1.15 In terms of the phasing of the additional car parking now proposed, para 6.1.5 of the Parking Strategy states ‘ *the development of low-cost car parking is a more practical step to develop further parking capacity at Bristol Airport and that there will be an immediate need for this provision*’.
- 5.1.16 Following negotiations with North Somerset Council’s officers during the consideration of the application, BAL agreed to increase the target for public transport use by passengers to 17.5%. North Somerset Council consider that only 3,200 additional passenger parking spaces are required if this target is achieved, but this has not led to a reduction in the amount of car parking proposed to be provided in the Green Belt in the planning application.
- 5.1.17 The outcome of the strategy is that in addition to the 4,850 spaces proposed as part of the appeal application, there remains 1,800 spaces to be provided in MSCP2. Thus of the 6,650 spaces that BAL are seeking or have outline planning permission to provide, only 2,700 are ‘low cost’ spaces. It is questionable whether this reflects the stated emphasis on the requirement for ‘low cost’ parking.

6 BALPA OBJECTIONS TO THE APPEAL APPLICATION

6.1 UNNECESSARY DISPLACEMENT OF ‘LOW COST’ PASSENGER PARKING IN THE SILVER ZONE

- 6.1.1 In response to the appeal application, BALPA submitted an objection by letter to North Somerset Council on 25 January 2019 (appendix 14). It argued that the expansion of the Silver Zone car parking in the Green Belt could not be justified. Staff were now occupying 1000 spaces in an area that could have been available to meet ‘low cost’ parking demand. Furthermore, because staff have to park conventionally, it was estimated that if used for the block parking of passenger cars, 1400 car spaces could be made available by relocating staff car parking back to the northside, where the majority of staff work. This was expanded upon in BALPA’s Statement of Case (paras 2.1.8 & 2.1.9). I consider this undermines the appellant’s ‘very special circumstances’ case for additional development in the Green Belt.
- 6.1.2 BAL’s approach to use of the Silver Zone parking area does not support its ‘strong commitment’ to maximising development in the GBI.
- The development of its administrative offices at the entrance to the Silver Zone (section 3.2 of this proof);

- Delays to the building out the approved multi storey car parks;
- Insistence in providing 3,900 additional spaces, rather than the 3,200 North Somerset Council consider appropriate; and
- Failure to respond to BALPA's strategy of making more efficient use of the staff car parking area.

6.1.3 John Hatton will explain in his evidence how more efficient use of the existing staff parking area can be achieved. He will also demonstrate that further space in the Silver Zone is wasted by the separate staff park and ride waiting facility and turning arrangements for the service that has to be provided to transport staff back to the terminal area.

6.1.4 He will also give evidence that from surveys undertaken in June and July, 2018 after the first phase of the MSCP had been completed, there were on average at midday during June and July 260 and 540 available spaces. From August 2018 the airport reduced the parking rates in the MSCP to attract custom. In other words there was unused car parking north side during the peak summer period which had to be discounted to filled. With the completion of the second phase of the MSCP, it can be expected that there would be further spare capacity north side.

6.1.5 John Hatton's evidence also examines the cost implications to BAL of staff reverting to parking in the northside. His analysis suggests that the apparent loss of income from staff occupying spaces northside would, at most peak times be no more than that lost from occupying space in the Silver Zone and sometimes it would be less. This analysis does not take into account the additional cost to BAL of providing buses and drivers to transfer staff from the parking area to the terminal buildings and vice versa. In short it is unlikely that there would be any significant loss of income by staff occupying spaces in the long stay or premium parking areas.

6.1.6 Further significant points were also made to the council in BALPA's representation as to why the location of staff parking in the Silver Zone was contrary to sustainable planning practice.

6.2 UNNECESSARY ADDITIONAL VEHICLE MOVEMENTS

6.2.1 The employee catchment analysis, in section 3 of the Transport Assessment Addendum (CD identifies the distribution of employee's home addresses. From this it can be deduced that, excluding employees from North Somerset, staff travelling by car from Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, Wiltshire, Cardiff, Newport, Stroud, Monmouthshire, Vale of Glamorgan,

Caerphilly and Swindon (52% of the total) will be approaching from the north of the airport. In addition, a proportion of North Somerset residents, especially those from the Portishead and Nailsea area will also be approaching from the north. Accordingly, we calculate that some 60% of the staff will approach from the north. BALPA's own survey of its pilots' journey to work shows the figure approaching from the north to be 65%.

6.2.2 Accordingly, one outcome of the move of the staff car park to the Silver Zone is to create additional unnecessary vehicle movement on the A38 past the airport. It should be borne in mind that the same situation does not necessarily apply to passenger car parking. The Parking Demand survey points to the growing demand for car parking from increased numbers of passengers from Somerset and Devon, from where public transport links to the airport are poor. Due to the better services available, passengers from the Bristol area will have a higher propensity to travel by public transport.

6.2.3 A separate park and ride service is necessarily provided for staff, which runs every 10 minutes except during night time hours, when the frequency is reduced. BALPA has calculated that over 150,000 unnecessary additional park and ride vehicle miles per annum could be saved by staff parking northside, as explained in the table below.

| Time period | Hrs x trips each way | Total daily trips | Mileage per trip | Total Daily Mileage | Total Annual Mileage |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 05.00-02.00 | 21hrs x 12 | 252 | 1.6 | 403.2 | 147,168 |
| 02.00-05.00 | 3 hrs x 6 | 18 | 1.6 | 28.8 | 10,512 |
| | | 270 | | 432 | 157,680 |

6.3 STAFF TRAVEL TO WORK ISSUES

6.3.1 The draft Workplace Travel Plan, (CD2.10 para 4.4.17), sets out the difficulties that staff have in travelling to work by means other than the car and the difficulties of car sharing. *'The 2017 questionnaire results suggests that 60% of employees work variable shift patterns.....most airlines operating at Bristol operate their flights over an 18 hour day commencing with departures from 0600 onwards. Airline employees will work shift patterns set out in their crew roster, with start and finish times varying from day to day. As an additional complexity, they are unlikely to work with the same people from one day to the next. The hours worked by security employees, terminal building concessionaires, handling agents and flight catering will also be related to the flight schedule and hours can vary from day to*

day. Early shifts will commence between 0300 and 0500 and late shifts will finish around midnight’.

- 6.3.2 The current working arrangements for airline staff are that, as set out in para 4.4.17 of the Draft Workplace Travel Plan, aircraft operate over an 18 hour day commencing with departures from 0600 and sometimes earlier. Early shift crew start work one hour before departure. Many planes will not stop operating until midnight or later, especially if there have been unexpected delays. Since 2009 pilots working hours have increased due to changed shift patterns. Pilots working these longer shifts are required by European Aviation Safety Agency Flight Time Limitation Regulations to have a minimum 12 hours rest before their next Flight Duty period (see Simon Williams’ proof of evidence).
- 6.3.3 Simon Williams proof considers the additional travel times and the implications for pilots and cabin crew of the staff parking arrangements in the Silver Zone. He refers to the survey of pilots that indicated that due to this change, achieving the required rest has been removed by the additional commuting time.
- 6.3.4 Planning policy CS11 (CD5.6) requires that adequate parking must be provide to meet the needs of anticipated users in usable spaces. Simon Williams will explain the implications for staff in terms of additional journey times caused by the relocation of staff car parking.

6.4 LONG TERM STAFF PARKING PROVISION

- 6.4.1 There are currently about 1,000 car parking spaces in the Silver Zone staff car park. There are also a number of spaces for air traffic control staff around the ATC tower and it is understood that security staff also park northside.
- 6.4.2 The future provision for staff remains unchanged in the planning application proposals. The intention is that the Travel Plan provisions will continue to reduce the proportion of staff travelling by sustainable means.
- 6.4.3 According to the Draft – Workplace Travel Plan 2018 (CD2.10), single occupancy car use by staff has reduced from 93% in 2004 to 84% in 2017. The target set in the Travel Plan was 75% to be travelling by sustainable means by the 12m ppa. That target has been subsequently made more challenging by lowering it to 70%, following negotiations between the planning authority and BAL.
- 6.4.4 In short, neither the planning authority nor BAL have recognised the difficulty that employees working unsocial shifts have in travelling to or from the airport by sustainable means. For example, Table 3.15 of the TA Addendum (CD2.20.3) forecasts that 835 out of 2115 journeys to work (39%) at 10mppa will be by staff

starting work between 0200 and 0700 and 498 journeys home (24%) will be between 0200 and 0700. John Hatton will make reference to the particular difficulties that airline crew have with their schedules in travelling sustainably, even car sharing.

6.4.5 No calculations have been undertaken to show whether a 70% target for sustainable travel would actually reduce the staff parking demand if it was met, given the significant increase in employment which expansion to 12m ppa would entail.

6.4.6 The Transport Assessment (CD2.9.1) identified 2,976 FTE employees at the airport in 2018. With growth to 12m ppa, there were estimated to be 4,350 FTE employees, an increase of 1,374 (46%). Whilst it is estimated that only 58% of employees are actually present on any day, this suggests that there could be some 800 additional employees working daily. The Travel Plan (CD2.10, para 6.1.1) simply asserts that by not increasing staff parking '*employees will have to change mode*'.

6.4.7 I have set out above the constraints that airline staff have in relation to travel at times when public transport is limited, added to the need for staff to achieve the required rest time. Airline staff amount to 30% of employees based at the airport. It is difficult to see how the 70% target for sustainable travel can realistically be achieved by airline staff given this situation. Even if this target can be met overall, the increase in employment suggests strongly that there will be a need to make further parking space available. If it is provided in the Silver Zone, this will further reduce 'low cost' public passenger spaces and is a further reason for staff parking northside. The corollary of this is that BAL will seek to expand low cost parking further into the Green Belt.

6.5 POLICY CS11

6.5.1 The approach to staff parking is contrary to policy CS11 (CD5.6). The relevant part of this policy states that '*Adequate parking must be provided and managed to meet the needs of anticipated users (residents, workers and visitors) in usable spaces*'.

6.5.2 The context of this policy is that although the council is committed to sustainable development, it recognises that '*across much of the district cars are still essential for many journeys*'. Core Strategy (CD5.6, para 3.156) states '*National policy in the past has perhaps naively tended to assume that if less provision is made for the car, then less car use will take place. The North Somerset experience is that*

while much can be done to encourage travel by other modes, there will still be high car ownership and people will need space to park’.

- 6.5.3 This is very pertinent to the situation faced by airline staff. The provision of all staff car parking in the Silver Zone with its attendant delays caused by the bus transfer operation, (as described in John Hatton and Simon Williams’ proofs), the times at which airline staff are required to travel (either very early or very late) and the need for adequate rest between shifts does not comply with the policy. Given the location of the airport in the countryside and the shift patterns worked, many other staff will have good reason to travel to work by car.
- 6.5.4 The only staff for whom the parking arrangement meets the requirements of CS11 are those working for BAL, whose offices happen to be adjacent to the car park, and this as a result of the change to the location of the building from the Green Belt Inset. These office based staff are more likely to work normal hours and hence more likely to be capable of travelling in a more sustainable mode.
- 6.5.5 The statement in the Travel Plan that staff will simply have to change modes or find it impossible to park is again contrary to the thrust of policy CS11. There is already anecdotal evidence of aircrew arriving for the afternoon/evening shift being unable to find a space in the Silver Zone car park and having to drive back northside to find a space in the multi storey car park and as a consequence leading to a delayed flight departure.

7 RESPONSE OF NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL AND BRISTOL AIRPORT

- 7.1.1 The representations from BALPA (appendices 14 &15) were considered by North Somerset Council’s officers along with other representations in relation to transport.
- 7.1.2 In November 2019, the council sent a list of ‘Transport and Highway summary comments’ to BAL (CD extracts in appendix 16). The report considered staff transport provision and noted the issue that the majority of staff working airside such as pilots, cabin crew, terminal operatives and retail workers. At section 8 ‘Staff transport provision’ it commented:
- 7.1.3 *‘From review of the workplace travel plan it is noted that some staff will be working within the new staff building, Southside. However, the majority airside staff, such as pilots, stewards/stewardesses, terminal operatives and retail workers work airside (northside). Consideration should be given by BAL to locating some staff parking relative to their working locations with a view to reducing staff trips on the*

A38 outside the main entrance, however, we would encourage activity to support public transport in preference to parking location changes’.

7.1.4 On page 36 of this document, as actions in respect of staff car parking location, the council requested, inter alia, the following from BAL.

- *‘NSC requires BAL to detail their specific plans for public transport improvements for staff travel including to serve shift patterns around early morning/late night flight peaks.*
- *Consideration should be given by BAL of staff parking locations relative to staff working locations and justification provided, including detail for any changes proposed within the Workplace Travel Plan. As parking will be less available to staff, clear proposals are required on how demand and supply will be managed by BAL not only for BAL staff but for employees of all companies on site. It is recommended BAL bring forward a review of airport-wide staff car park charging to encourage less car use and to drive increases in public transport and smarter choices’.*

7.1.5 In the same document, the officers considered that a 15% mode share by public transport for passengers was not consistent with the Airport Surface Access strategy and that the target should be 17.5%. This would reduce the amount of additional parking required to 3,200 spaces, subject to future review.

7.1.6 There was a response from BAL (CD3.9.1, 3.9.2 & 3.9.3) in respect of agreeing to a number of public transport improvements to the airport. The additional parking at 3,900 spaces was still required by BAL, who accepted that this could be reviewed prior to the construction of the third MSCP.

7.1.7 In relation to staff, there was also a commitment to a new travel plan agreeing to a raised target of 30% of staff travelling by sustainable modes, including a review of employee parking charges and an employee travel card to encourage sustainable travel. There was no response at all to the request to review the location of staff parking, nor any consideration to the health and safety implications of the parking arrangements raised in BALPA’s objection and whether they were

adequate in this respect. Given the half hearted way this had been requested by officers, this was perhaps not surprising.

- 7.1.8 In short, neither the planning authority nor BAL recognise the difficulty that employees working unsocial shifts have in travelling to or from the airport by sustainable means, despite the thrust of policy CS11.

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- 7.1.9 The Planning & Regulatory Committee report (CD4.11) noted at page 91 '*A more sustainable parking balance would see some of the 1,000 spaces relocated to the north side of the airport. BAL reject this option and it would mean that car travel, which may be the only practical means of travel for some, remains less convenient than it was when staff car parking was at the north side of the airport*'. The report then goes on to assert without any justification that '*Notwithstanding this however, the amount and distribution of staff car parking at BA is considered reasonable*'.

- 7.1.10 This response misses the crucial planning points that BALPA have been making in their representations:

- Firstly, that staff are occupying the very spaces that BAL needs for low cost passenger parking;
- That this means that unnecessary additional Green Belt land is given over to low cost car parking;
- That it results in additional and longer trips on the road network;
- The potential implications of the failure to allow any increase in staff car parking; and
- That there are genuine health and safety implications for aircrew.

8 PLANNING POLICY CONCLUSIONS

8.1 GREEN BELT: POLICY DM12

- 8.1.1 The appellant claims that there are 3 very special circumstances that outweigh any harm to the openness of the Green Belt – the need for additional low-cost parking, the lack of alternative available and suitable sites outside the Green Belt and the benefits of the growth of Bristol Airport.

VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE 1 - NEED FOR ADDITIONAL LOW COST PARKING IN THE GREEN BELT

- 8.1.2 BALPA's case suggests that 1,400 'low cost' car parking spaces could be found immediately by moving staff parking northside. It is noted that Bristol Airport administrative employees are now based in offices recently constructed adjacent

to the staff car park. The gross floorspace of that building is given as 1504m². Although the Draft Workplace Travel Plan states that BAL employ directly 275 staff, given the size and content of the offices (the plans include a gym) it seems unlikely that no more than 200 staff could work there on a daily basis – at 7.5m² per employee. I have noticed that part of the office building currently has a 'To Let' sign, indicating that there is spare space in the building, possibly due to changed working practices arising from the Covid pandemic.

- 8.1.3 On the basis that all 200 staff were employed at the offices and 70% travelled sustainably, no more than 140 car park spaces would be required.
- 8.1.4 Accordingly, if BALPA's Green Belt case is accepted, even if only 860 of the staff spaces were relocated from the Silver Zone to northside, allowing for block parking, some 1204 additional spaces would be available for low cost passenger parking. It is also noted that removal of the staff waiting and bus turning facility would add further spaces. North Somerset Council envisage a requirement for only 3,200 additional passenger spaces, 700 fewer than the 3,900 proposed by BAL. This, added with BALPA's proposal, would reduce the amount of parking needed to be provided in the Green Belt by 1,900 spaces to a total of 1,300 spaces. In other words there would only be a residual need for a very limited incursion into the Green Belt, even at 12mppa.
- 8.1.5 In respect of the health and safety evidence raised in John Hatton and Simon Williams proofs, in relation to the need for aircrew to park within easy access of the terminal, even if the Green Belt argument is rejected, there is a case for around 400 car parking spaces for aircrew to be moved from the Silver Zone to the northside. This would yield a potential 560 spaces if the space was given over to the block parking of passengers' cars.
- 8.1.6 BAL argue that multi-storey car parking does not meet the need for low cost parking because of the higher level of charging required. BALPA has demonstrated that staff parking northside is likely to have no adverse financial impact for BAL. By using space here more intensively, by including staff car parking there, this is likely to lead to greater demand for the use of MSCP space by those willing to pay for premium parking.

VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE 2 - NO FURTHER SUITABLE AND AVAILABLE SITES OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT

- 8.1.7 It is agreed that BAL went through a sequential approach to identifying possible suitable and available sites for car parking outside the Green Belt.
- 8.1.8 BALPA's solution makes no difference to the strategy of providing a further MSCP in the GBI but makes maximum use of the car parking provided there. It defers the need to extend the phase 2 site in the Green Belt.
- 8.1.9 BAL at para 9.22 of its Statement of Case, in promoting arguments in favour of phase 2 site notes in the first bullet point that it is well located from an operational perspective, allowing car parking to the south of the airport to be consolidated in one location. BALPA's proposal achieves the same situation.
- 8.1.10 The second bullet point notes that the phase 2 site benefits from existing services and facilities associated with the Silver Zone car park. The same applies to the current staff car parking area, which was previously used for passenger car parking.
- 8.1.11 The third bullet point says that the phase 2 site is well suited to block parking, where public access is not required. I consider the same situation applies to the staff car parking area.

VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE 3 - NEED FOR, AND BENEFITS OF, THE GROWTH OF BRISTOL AIRPORT

- 8.1.12 With BALPA's solution, the benefits of airport growth, as set out in BAL's Statement of Case, can be achieved without the need for the impact on the harm that its proposals currently cause to the Green Belt.

8.2 CAR PARKING POLICY CS11

- 8.2.1 As explained above not only does the continuation of staff parking arrangements in the Silver Zone undermine the Appellant's case that there are very special circumstances for expanding passenger car parking in the Green Belt, but I consider it is also contrary to CS11. The approach of the appellant to the location of staff parking, other than to its own staff and the inflexible approach indicated in the Travel Plan to the future provision of parking is plainly contrary to CS11. The parking provided is remote from the place of work for the majority of staff when

there is an alternative. The location of the airport in the countryside and the shift patterns worked, staff will have good reason to travel to work by car.

8.2.2 One outcome of the failure to provide any additional parking, despite the significant increase in staff employed at the airport, is that it could lead to delays to flights of the airport.

8.2.3 The only staff for whom the parking arrangement meets the requirements of CS11 are those working for the appellant, whose offices happen to be adjacent to the car park. If one justification for the remote staff car parking location is to encourage car users to switch modes, those who are most inconvenienced will have the least propensity to do so, because of the shift patterns and particularly in the case of aircrew, the need for adequate rest.

8.3 THE STATUS QUO

8.3.1 The existing car parking arrangements for staff formed part of the changes envisaged in outline planning permission 09/P/1020/OT2. I accept that changes to staff car parking have occurred which have been consistent with the intentions of the outline planning permission. However, this proof of evidence together with those of John Hatton and Simon Williams demonstrate the adverse impacts of that change.

8.3.2 It is clear that changes to the parking strategy at the airport have occurred for a number of reasons. I consider that the implications are relevant to the determination of the appeal. Firstly, there has been a significant change from the early provision of parking in MSCPs to the early development of 'low cost' parking in the Green Belt. The decision to relocate staff parking has reduced the availability of 'low cost' parking. So too have other changes, such as the development of BAL's administrative offices in the Silver Zone area.

8.3.3 BALPA's evidence plainly relates to planning policy issues concerning the consideration of the appellant's 'very special circumstances' case, although it is acknowledged that it emanates from matters relating to the interests of pilots and cabin crew working at the airport.

8.3.4 My evidence suggests a simple means to reduce the impact on the openness of the Green Belt by a reallocation of parking spaces. This will make better use of the Green Belt inset for parking given the spare parking capacity identified there.

It would also provide a greater incentive to construct the additional MSCPs in the GBI by more intensive use of the northside area for parking.

8.3.5 Because a planning permission granted 10 years ago has sanctioned the current staff parking arrangements does not mean that it is not right to review them, especially as the full implications of this were not appreciated by the planning authority at the time. BALPA has identified sound planning reasons for doing so. They have also identified operational reasons why aircrew need to be parking closer to their place of work, which reinforce the purpose of policy CS11.

8.3.6 Accordingly, I ask that the Inspectors should give weight to BALPA's case and the means by which it might be remedied should they be minded to uphold the appeal and grant planning permission for the development.

8.4 RESOLUTION OF BALPA'S CONCERNS

8.4.1 BALPA consider that its objection could be overcome either by the imposition of a suitable condition or by a unilateral agreement on the part of BAL.

PROPOSED DRAFT PLANNING CONDITION

8.4.2 Within 6 months of the grant or outline planning permission, it shall be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the council that staff parking which is not related to the airport's administrative building has been relocated to the Green Belt Inset area.

Reason: to meet the demand for additional passenger parking in the Green Belt with the minimum impact on the openness of the Green belt, in accordance with Policy DM12 of the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 and to comply with policy CS11 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

PROPOSED UNILATERAL UNDERTAKING

8.4.3 Alternatively, it is considered that this could be achieved by a Unilateral Undertaking by Bristol Airport Limited under section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). This would commit BAL to the reallocation of staff parking which is not related to the airport's administrative building to the northside within a period of 6 months from the grant of planning permission.

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