

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

Proof of Evidence of Simon Williams, BALPA

Remote Staff Car Parking & Flight Safety

Ref: BALPA W/3/1

June 2021

Summary

1. This proof of evidence documents my extensive experience as a pilot and pilot representative. I also discuss and illustrate the important and extant flight safety issues caused by remote car parking and how it is vital that the airport gives priority to a facility much closer to the building where flight and cabin crew report for duty (and from where their regulated duty time commences and completes).
2. It appears that the airport management give the issue no priority and must therefore be deliberately ignorant of risks to the safe operation of aircraft at Bristol airport caused by their decisions to keep staff car parking remote. The issue concerns not only the extended time that aircrew are in fact at the airport undertaking their duties which are not accounted for by the Regulations, but also how this extended time impacts the regulated rest time between duties.
3. Furthermore, I explain why shared car travel and public transport are entirely inappropriate for staff with regulated duty hours operating in a highly dynamic environment subject to significant disruption and last minute change, and also starting and finishing at hours where options other than discrete personal transport are severely limited or unavailable.

Qualifications and Experience

4. I am an airline pilot for easyJet, operating various types of the Airbus A320 series that currently serve in easyJet's fleet. Having commenced my commercial pilot career 18 years ago, I have been a Captain for easyJet since 2012. 12 of the past 18 years of my career have been based at Bristol with other periods of time spent at Cardiff and London Gatwick.
5. As well as my core pilot duties, I am also an elected representative for the British Airline Pilots' Association (BALPA). Having undertaken various roles within the BALPA structure of easyJet since 2007, I became a member of the National Executive Committee in 2018. Having initially chaired the Communications and External Relations Committee, I am now the chair of Legal Services, chair and chief editor of *The Log*, BALPA's official magazine, whilst also being an active local representative for easyJet matters at Bristol Airport.

6. My opinions contained within this evidence should be viewed within the context of the above, being those of an experienced, highly engaged member of the pilot community both locally, nationally and internationally (BALPA has close links with the European Cockpit Association, and the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association).
7. My direct employer, easyJet Airline Co Ltd, is the largest UK airline measured by several metrics including fleet size (approximately 20% more aircraft than British Airways) and has had a base at Bristol since 2003. Since then, the airline's presence has grown considerably and prior to the Covid-19 outbreak operated 18 aircraft from the base during the summer peak, the company's third largest base in the UK, and fifth largest in the pan-European network. The airline dominates operations at Bristol with the next nearest-sized airlines being TUI and Ryanair with 4 aircraft based at Bristol during peak summer. The vast majority of pilots and cabin crew working at Bristol are therefore employees of easyJet.
8. I confirm that the evidence which I have prepared for this appeal in this proof of evidence is true and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

Introduction

9. In his Proof of Evidence, Andrew Renshaw explains the planning policy case for BALPA's objection to the appeal application and sets out the case for staff car parking reverting to a location on the north side of the airport. He explains that the car parking arrangements put into practice in 2018 following the granting of planning permission to expand the airport in 2011 are contrary to policy CS11.
10. One of the reasons for this is set out in section 6.3 of his proof. This concerns the impact of the additional travel times for aircrew to their reporting base and the difficulty of achieving the necessary 12 hours rest before their next duty period. It is this issue which I address in this proof of evidence
11. I set out below the Regulations governing aircrew's working time and rest periods and the relevance of the move of staff car parking from its location northside to the Silver Zone on the potential ability to achieve 8 hours sleep between duties.

Health and Safety Requirements for aircrew

12. The nature of 24/7 Commercial Air Transport operations means a regulated approach is required to ensure human fatigue is considered carefully to avoid it becoming a flight safety issue.
13. To help avoid fatigue in aircrew, pilots and cabin crew throughout Europe are governed by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency's (EASA) Flight Time Limitations (FTL) and rest requirements – Commission Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 (as amended by No 83/2014) – see Article 8, and subpart FTL of Annex III, which *“establishes the requirements to be met by an operator and its crew members with regard to flight and duty time limitations and rest requirements for crew members.”* Each individual airline operator will have a bespoke FTL scheme which is based on this Regulation which must be approved and audited by their National Competent Authority (NCA) to which they must comply. The NCA in the United Kingdom is the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Whilst each airline will have slightly differing arrangements, they are broadly similar to each other, and the arguments set out below remain extant and relevant.
14. Key elements of each scheme define the maximum Flying Duty Periods per day (FDP), flying/duty hour limits over specified timescales and defined rest requirements.
15. Working time and rest periods must be carefully planned by operators in order to adhere to these rules. Operator responsibilities include providing *“rest periods of sufficient time to enable crew members to overcome the effects of the previous duties and to be rested by the start of the following flight duty period”* (ORO. FTL.110(g)). Individual crew members are also subject to responsibilities, including the requirement to a *“make optimum use of the opportunities and facilities for rest provided and plan and use their rest periods properly.”* (ORO.FTL.115(b))
16. To allow individuals the time and opportunity to recover from their duties, which can occur at any point between 00:01-23:59, minimum rest periods are set in place by the Regulations. A minimum rest period at the aircrew member's home base should be at least 12 hours in duration (and longer if the preceding duty period was greater than 12 hours) (ORO.FTL.235(a)). This is intended to permit an 8-hour sleep opportunity, time

for physiological needs, and the commute to/from the place of work. In a typical 24-hour period, the average person requires around 8 hours of sleep to maintain their alertness at a level required for safe operation, and for the maintenance of overall health.

17. Operators will put limitations on their crews to ensure their commute to work does not affect their fitness to fly. The maximum length of a pilot's commute is generally restricted by their terms of employment to 90 minutes for them to reach the reporting point at the airport from their home.
18. This issue is less of an issue for long haul crew members as they do not always begin and end at the same place or ever on the same day. To provide some context there is currently only one long haul capable aircraft based at BRS – most aircraft and airlines are short haul focussed.

Impact of the Silver Zone Parking Arrangements on Aircrew

19. These responsibilities are carefully considered by individuals when deciding where to live in relation to their place of work. Car parking can be a critical element in a crew member's decision making. If car parking arrangements are subsequently relocated which increases the commuting time, as has been the case at Bristol Airport since October 2018– whether that be an increase in time needed for the journey from home to the car park, the journey from the car park to the reporting point or both – pressure will be placed on the 8-hour sleep opportunity, referred to above, as there is little scope to take it from elsewhere in the rest period.
20. Aircrew who were previously close to the 90 minute limit between the car park and the crew report point when commuting from home now invariably find themselves having to budget not only for possible traffic on the roads, or other unforeseen factors within the airport prior to flight, but also the additional time required once they reach the Silver Zone car park, waiting for a bus to take them back to the reporting point near the airport's terminal building, and the bus journey itself.
21. It has been repeatedly measured at differing times of the day that the additional time required by aircrew is 20 - 25 minutes at each end of the day, i.e., 40 - 50 minutes in total on each duty day compared with adjacent car parking northside of the airport. It is

therefore demonstrable that a rest period between duties is reduced by nearly an hour simply to accommodate remote car parking. As staff have been parking either in an old car hire centre or the multi-storey car park due to the Covid-19 test site occupying the staff car park in Silver Zone and the reduced demand on passenger car parking in general, measuring not only the difference in time but also the convenience and reduced stress is straightforward.

22. Whilst rest periods are normally of a greater duration than the regulated minimum defined in the FTL rules, minimum rest periods are becoming increasingly commonplace as operators seek efficiencies in their staffing. The problem is exacerbated for short haul crew members, such as those flying from Bristol, who are required to report for work on usually 5 consecutive days in a working block. The corollary of such rostering combined with remote car parking is that the sleep opportunity within the minimum rest period may be compressed thus presenting a considerable risk to flight safety.
23. The change to the staff car parking arrangements in October 2018 has increased the time aircrew have to budget within their working day, once their commute journey is over, which currently is not accounted for within the pilots' duty day and the FTL regulations. With a remote car park, pilots have therefore been on duty for longer than officially recorded, have often been on site at the airport earlier than officially recorded, and have put themselves under unnecessary stress dealing with the extra requirements reaching their report point. All of which play a role in a pilot's wakefulness and responsiveness during the duty day.
24. Strict restrictions on aircrew working hours and the impact of the time taken to get from the car park to the reporting point at Bristol airport does not appear to be fully understood by airport management. Nor, as Mr Renshaw explains, has this issue been properly considered by the local planning authority. The tables below demonstrate the impact of an increase in 20 minutes in the time taken to travel between the car park and report point. 20 minutes is the average time to complete the journey accounting for the bus journey plus waiting for the next bus departure on a 10 minute schedule – it may be a slightly greater or lesser time on any given day depending on the road conditions. Please consider that the staff bus makes use of the public highway for much of its journey thus further exposing safety-critical staff operating on strict timescales for safety reasons to the vagaries of public traffic, roadworks etc uncontrollable by the airport.

25. Tables showing the effects of an increased commute:

Car park to report point – 10 minutes

Home to car park	Car park to report point	Flight	Report point to car park	Car park to Home	Physiological needs and 8 hour sleep opportunity	Home to car park	Car park to report point	Flight	Report point to car park	Car park to home
01:20	00:10	11:00	00:10	01:20	09:00	01:20	00:10	10:45	00:10	01:20
MINIMUM REST – 12 HOURS										

Car park to report point – 30 minutes

Home to car park	Car park to report point	Flight	Report point to car park	Car park to Home	Physiological needs and 8 hour sleep opportunity	Home to car park	Car park to report point	Flight	Report point to car park	Car park to home
01:20	00:30	11:00	00:30	01:20	08:20	01:20	00:30	10:45	00:30	01:20
MINIMUM REST – 12 HOURS										

This simple example of rest period compression for just one day due to a car park move increasing the overall required commute time from 10 minutes to 30 minutes with an 80 minute commute from home to the airport car park.

26. The above situation leaves no time for any activities not directly related to pilots' work or sleep. Whilst pilots may not be planned to absolute minimum rest on a daily basis, this example highlights how the car parking arrangements impacts on crew members when it does occur.

27. With a maximum 10 minute walk (normally 5- 7 minute) from the northside car park to the reporting point and an 80 minute journey to the airport car park, there are 9 hours available for sleep and other physiological needs. If this increases so that 30 minutes need to be allowed by staff to transfer from the car park to the reporting point, there is only 8 hours 20 minutes left for sleep and other physiological needs.

28. As a representative of BALPA, I am used to hearing on a regular basis pilots' views on many matters, including those of flight safety despite easyJet possessing a regulated Safety Management System with a well-established reporting mechanism. The SMS is heavily biased towards flight operations, with ground operations concerns focussed entirely on activities that are 'air side' (i.e., past the reporting point). Bristol airport is an operationally efficient airport for many reasons, but in part because historically air crew have been able to access their reporting point following their commute easily and

quickly. Since the move to a remote car park and thus forced to make use of a bus service to arrive at the reporting point, it is quite clear that pilots are extremely disgruntled, more fatigued and concerned about their fitness to safely undertake their jobs. Although pilots are encouraged to report concerns about flight safety issues to the airline management via the SMS, this system does not adequately address the issues raised within this proof, because matters such as commuting and car parking lie outside the direct responsibility of the airline and are, as such, unregulated. Pilots are increasingly frustrated that their duty days are being unnecessarily extended by ill-conceived airport management decisions which have not been properly considered by either the airport management or the local planning authority. Moreover, this issue has the potential to worsen as pressure on the airport's property grows with expanding passenger numbers.

29. In my professional opinion, a remote car park, even one as comparatively close to the reporting point as the one adjacent to the Silver Zone, significantly undermines mechanisms put in place to ensure flight safety.

30. Increased use of public transport or car sharing for aircraft in itself presents a risk to flight safety as such arrangements, being inherently less flexible than private vehicle usage, not only generally increase the commute time but also increase stress on a safety critical staff member. Pilots generally live in a wide variety of locations, few of which are served by public transport, particularly at the hours of day that duties commence or finish. Furthermore, airline operations are subject to frequent change and re-schedule (for example due to weather diversions – Bristol airport's location makes it particularly prone to this) thus reducing the realistic potential to make, keep or re-arrange car sharing.

Conclusion

31. My evidence supports the case for transferring the majority of staff car parking northside within a short walking distance of the terminal, which I consider is necessary in the interests of flight safety and in accordance with the requirements of policy CS11.