

Expansion of Bristol Airport to 12mppa

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Planning Application Ref: 18/P/5118/OUT

Proof of Evidence

for PCCA

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Bristol Airport - Reference APP/D0121/W/20/3259234

The impact upon our lives and those around us.

A comment from a directly affected neighbour but with wider concerns

Introduction

1 Our family have lived at Rhodyate Lodge since 1947 when Bristol Airport was not a commercial airport. My wife was born here in 1952 and enjoyed her childhood here before training as a nurse in a London teaching hospital. We returned in 1985 following our marriage, the parents moving in to an adjoining property in 1995. The growth of the airport has blighted our lives, indeed we are advised that if we wished to sell our property its value has been eroded by many thousands of pounds. A further extension of flights by a factor of 50% may make it almost unsaleable, a factor which our family had not expected to test but which may now be inevitable, as none of the next generation wish to live here if the Airport is increased by the proposed application.

Location

2 Our home is some 2 ¼ miles from the western end of the runway. My map suggests that the runway is 187 metres above sea level and our home stands at 40 metres. Being west of the airport we therefore experience a predominance of outgoing flights, and on balmy summer days with southerly and easterly winds we experience the incoming flights, all directly above us.

Increased flights would presumably fill in the limited moments of comparative peace

3 In the early years of the Airport the flights were irregular, few, and at times of day that did not damage our health. The planes were noisier but fewer of them enabled peace to be restored, an important factor in one's wellbeing. The issue we have now is the constancy of flights at various times of day. The early morning flights and evening flights are almost a constant flow, and the increase will inevitably result in no gaps whatsoever making sleep in the morning beyond 6am impossible. The evening flights if they too become a constant flow will make any form of social contact impossible as one needs now to stop all conversations as flights pass over. The only respite is in the irregular flights mid morning and mid afternoon, and to fill in those gaps will lose such modest respite as we enjoy at the moment. We are concerned that the only way the level of increase of 50% can be achieved is to fill in the few gaps in the morning and evening, and furthermore the quieter times during the day that allow for some recovery are now likely to be filled as well.

Particularly offensive night traffic

4 We are awoken at various stages of the night that differ with the traffic but have some regular flights that are always intrusive. We no longer complain as to do so results in confirmation that there is permission for these night flights, but there seem to be regular flights around 3 am and arriving at about 5 am presumably to be ready for the morning flush out that will awaken us regularly at 6am. Some 'getting used to it' arises in the winter with windows and shutters closed fast, but in the summer it is impossible to sleep through the noise and with dreadful effect upon our health. My wife gets headaches as a result of interrupted sleep and I get 'scratchy'. If this is to be extended throughout the day and increased with night flights our life will suffer accordingly.

5 Here is an example of complaints made in the past, and which would be held on the Airport records:-

26 July 2018 email to the airport:- *“we went to bed last night comforted by the predicted east wind expecting to give us a quiet morning, only to find the grandchildren awoken at 5.07am...”* If this is allowed to be extended then it will be impossible for grandchildren to stay here with their grandparents.

Effect on visitors

6 Another major problem for us is the effect upon visitors. Grandchildren have made it clear that any further disruption to their sleep will deter them from attending overnight, as noted above. Fortunately, at present during the lockdown we enjoy the peace that we used to enjoy. Hence the very important ‘Child Care’ that is needed to relieve their parents enables us to take the grandchildren for their parents’ respite and continued working. That would not be possible with the increased flights sought.

7 Currently when adults visit us conversation must cease when planes pass overhead. Even now we can no longer carry out charitable events as we used to in the past very regularly because of the noise intrusion. If this was allowed to expand then all forms of adult social contact may have to cease.

Health and the Airport’s paltry offer of assistance

8 The airport noise is rapidly becoming a constancy. Whilst the inability regularly to talk because of aircraft noise is an irritant the greater concern lies in our health. It creates health and wellbeing problems which, while we have learned to manage, will not be manageable with increases in the aircraft envisaged in the application. Bristol Airport recognise this blight and have offered sums to insulate our house. That does not solve the problem outside and is a paltry contribution (£2,500 max) to the cost of insulation inside. In 2018 when the offer was instigated we sought to pursue the requirements within the guidelines, and spoke with one of the contractors capable of completing the works. Having first obtained planning permission which has a cost implication the contractors advised of a cost that would amount to some £60,000; and found our reaction very common, namely that we would not pursue into detailed quotations. For us to suffer tens of thousands of pounds to insulate our house from the Airport’s intrusion while they boast their support to us with a contribution to our costs is a bitter irony.

Quieter Aircraft?

9 It has been suggested that aircraft are becoming quieter. That was the case perhaps 10 to 15 years ago, but since then the noise levels have not only not reduced to our ears, they have increased with the constancy of noise. During the busy times of morning, lunch and evening the noise has been almost continuous, and whether or not technically there can be some proof of noise reduction for individual aircraft then to the human ear that constancy more than makes up for it, leaving a perception and I suspect reality of increased noise. For the few current gaps to be filled with more aircraft will lose us such little alleviation we are afforded.

Example of noise effect upon our lives

10 A simple example of the effect the airport is having on our lives lies in my role as Chairman of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, a world beating training establishment developing Oscar winners like Daniel Day Lewis and Olivia Coleman. I used to hold an important event for the students in a marquee at home to mark the end of the academic year when they could show their talents to key people. That is no longer possible because of the intrusion of the airport.

11 Generally, telephone calls have to be taken inside and conversation outside has to cease on the passing of aircraft.

Pollution

12 Finally, I am concerned at the air pollution and its effect upon our and our neighbours' health. The smell of aircraft fuel and exhaust emissions all falling upon us and our neighbours is frightening. How the UK and North Somerset consider that they can become carbon neutral whilst also permitting this extra pollution landing upon us I know not, it is a further concern for our health; and is a further reason why we are not developing redundant farm buildings on our property, for the damage that it may do to more people's health.

Conclusion

13 It seems that the Airport can encroach upon our lives with all the health, social and financial impacts, with alacrity. This further extension upon their existing intrusion would be of enormous adverse significance to us, our neighbours, and indeed to all of North Somerset who have to suffer the arrival and departure of so many people onto our creaking infrastructure.

14 Please think of the environment of the world, the country, the local residents and the directly suffering neighbours and refuse this application that the Local Authority has already rejected.

PRC Densham, January 2021