

Expansion of Bristol Airport to 12mppa

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

Proof of Evidence for PCCA

Churchill Parish Council
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Churchill

STATEMENT IN RELATION TO APPEAL REFERENCE APP/DO121/W/20/3259234.

Churchill has previously lodged its **strong objection** to proposals for, or related to, the expansion of the airport and **reaffirms these objections**.

Whilst Churchill Parish Council recognises Bristol Airport as an asset to the region it has serious concerns regarding further expansion. These concerns are summarised below.

Churchill Parish Council sees nothing in the new documentation to diminish the justification for North Somerset Council's decision to refuse planning permission for expansion of the Airport to cater for up to 12mppa.

Churchill Parish Council is a member of the Parish Councils' Airport Association and fully supports the detailed and thorough submission offered by the latter body. Bristol Airport's poor connection by surface transport is a major concern for all local residents. This connection is by road only and the principal road connection is the A38.

BACKGROUND TO CHURCHILL PARISH COUNCIL OBJECTION

1. Churchill is a rural parish comprising the villages of Churchill and Langford. It lies adjacent to the A38, 6-7 miles south of Bristol Airport and 8 miles east of Weston-S-Mare. It also lies adjacent to the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

1.1. There is a major traffic-light-controlled intersection between the A368 and the A38 at Churchill Gate at the foot of the Mendip Hills AONB.

1.2. The villages comprise 1150 houses – 300 of which have been constructed in the last two years. Recent housebuilding east of this road has caused the A38 now to cut the settlement into two. Since this road now runs through the settlement the extra traffic bound to and from the expanded airport will introduce a very undesirable extra traffic contribution. The affordable component of the recent housing development is situated adjacent and exposed to the A38 on the right on the approach to the traffic lights where traffic can be stationary.

1.3. Both Langford and Churchill contain Conservation Areas. There are approximately 27 listed buildings, one of which is Grade 1, one historic park/garden and one unregistered historic park/garden.

1.4. The Parish is predominantly a rural community containing several farms, Langford House (Grade 2 listed) Veterinary School, homes for senior citizens in each village, a small supermarket on the A38, and a Doctor's surgery. The villages contain both a primary and a secondary school.

2. THE BA "ADDENDUM" CASE

2.1. From the addendum documents (Application no. 20/P/2896/ APPCON) it is understood that Bristol Airport's case centres on the assumption that air passenger numbers have been only "temporarily suppressed" owing to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Since submission of BA's appeal documentation, much new information has accumulated concerning the profound difficulties posed by the virus. These features now make it evident that profound and long-term effects both epidemiologically and socio-economically are to be expected from COVID-19.

2.1.1. It needs to be appreciated that the virus is always ahead of us. Further mutations are continually to be expected. The arrival of new (point) mutations is only part of the problem. The other element is genetic recombination, as distinct virus strains with different genomes meet in one infected individual, reassort and so cause novel gene sequences (extra genetic variety 'variants') to arise in consequence. RNA viruses like COVID are especially quick to produce variants (see *eg ref below and many others).

2.1.2. In the world context, a substantial viral genetic library will certainly persist for decades and even in Britain it's unlikely that development and deployment of vaccines will abolish this. We cannot expect a speedy elimination as was finally the case for smallpox. Worldwide public health measures, including isolation and quarantine will be required for at least a decade. The molecular biology of coronaviruses is uncomfortably clear.

2.1.3. These considerations and the conclusion will be widely resisted, the prospect is widely if not universally considered unappealing and to be ignored; unfortunately, time will corroborate this concern and will finally result, not merely in a rising UK concern about viral imports, but globally, others will become equally concerned about our own viral exports – however hard the UK works to keep abreast of viral evolution.

2.1.4. The debate about vaccination v public health measures (as above) is in detail complex. This virus requires a major long-term change in human behaviour. Vaccination within the UK does not confer adequate protection internationally. We are dealing with an international problem in response to which we will need to maintain global public health control measures long into the future. Within a year, UK might/may achieve herd immunity by vaccination; but many countries will not achieve this – at least for several years. Globally, the reduction of infective spread to acceptable levels may take decades. In the interim, substantial travel limitations must/will inevitably remain. The recovery projected by BAL towards a growth rate exhibited in the past is evidently unrealistic.

2.1.5. It could be argued that the success of the UK's vaccination programme would indeed mitigate against the above notes. However, this will only apply if over 70% of people have herd immunity (this is still uncertain and current predictions rate the percentage as possibly needing to be higher still). Not everyone will have been vaccinated. People will be mindful of queueing in airports and sitting and eating beside strangers who may not have been vaccinated or could be unwittingly carrying the virus. There are many more implications – travel costs may well increase due to distancing and extra personnel at airports, more administration, insurance, quarantine regulations

having to come in whilst abroad to name but a few.

2.1.6. Where this fits in with international travel, we can expect persistent and substantial reduction in travel and an international retreat into less inter-connected population units. Certainly, the future for air transport implies contraction, not expansion. On these grounds alone, an expanded Bristol Airport would be a monumental stupidity.

*Ref. for example: M Figlerowicz, M Alejska, AK Kurtzinska-Kokorniak and M Figlerowicz(2003) *Genetic Variability: The key problem in the prevention and therapy of RNA-based virus infections* Med Res Rev (2003) 488-518

2.2. Consequently, BA Airport's anticipation of a rapid return to a previous trend of growth established in the past of reaching 10mppa in 2024, and 12mppa in 2030, is now based on a deeply flawed assumption.

2.3. As detailed above, it is now clear that coping with COVID-19 is not simply a question of locking down for a short period, as was originally supposed. It is likely that the virus behaviour implies very long-term reductions in international air travel. Furthermore, we are now rapidly expanding the use of alternative digital electronic means of remote communication, a change which will permanently remove much of that air travel undertaken for business purposes.

2.4. We have become more aware of climate change and more aware too of the carbon emissions of air passenger transport for non-essential travel. We have also realised that working from home can be less stressful. The reduction in aircraft noise has been both welcomed and enjoyed.

2.5. Climate Change is now far higher on individuals' agendas with a stronger realisation of the need to reduce our individual carbon footprints.

2.6. The introduction of aircraft powered by renewable fuels is technically very challenging and a distant objective. It certainly could not be offered as a reason why passenger numbers will increase in the next 3-4 years to reach 10mppa or 12mppa by 2030.

3. Issues of immediate/local Parish concern to Churchill Parish Council

3.1. **Increased Traffic Overhead** *Churchill and Langford are now immediately below some flight paths at take-off. This results from changes to the CAA rules CAP1616 plus CAP1615 and 1617, Consult Schedule ACP-2018-55 (paused at present)).*

3.2. INCREASED SURFACE ACCESS TRAFFIC

3.2.1. The A38 around Churchill becomes severely congested during peak holiday periods. At the traffic-light controlled intersection with A368, lengthy traffic queues develop both north and south-bound; with traffic stacking up as far back as Havyatt Green. The same applies in the opposite direction heading north towards Bristol Airport. Now that there is a new group of houses adjacent to the A38, pollution could be an issue at such times.

3.2.2. Some vehicles approaching the congested junction between A38 and B3133 now take an alternative route short-cut along Langford Road through Lower Langford in order to avoid the delays on the A38. This road runs through the Langford Conservation area.

3.3. On-street airport parking far and wide for lengthy periods

3.3.1. Recently cars have started appearing e.g. in Hilliers Lane, Churchill which again becomes heavily congested as it is also used by School buses and is a through route to Churchill Academy. This road is approx. 300m long yet when the schools come out it can take up to 20 minutes to traverse it partly because it is used obstructed by the (parked) school buses. When cars are inappropriately parked sometimes even close to the junction on the opposite side to the parked cars and buses, it can take even longer. Some of these cars parked on the wrong side of the road are believed to belong to travellers using Bristol Airport. There is a Falcon Coach that stops at Churchill traffic lights to take passengers onto Bristol Airport.

3.3.2. The Falcon Coach is unreliable as a method of transport as it starts its journey in Plymouth so is subject to motorway delays and closures.

3.3.3. Bristol Airport has not constructed the multi-storey Car Park which was one of the conditions of the previous planning consent. Instead, its present operating policy for parking effectively litters the countryside with additional impromptu car parking on Green Belt land.

3.4. A huge building entirely discordant with the local landscape has been constructed on the airport site. This can only be described as an 'inappropriate carbuncle' that has been constructed with total disregard for the setting which is within sight of the Mendip Hills AONB and is thus contrary to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Although not closely related to expansion, it demonstrates what could happen if further expansions were to be permitted.

4. Summary

4.1. Churchill Parish Council considers that the information contained in the Addendum ES, Passenger Traffic Forecast, Economic Impact Study and Parking Demand Strategy does nothing to alter the justification for North Somerset Council's decision to refuse planning permission for expansion of the Airport to cater for up to 12mppa

4.2. Bristol Airport's case is based on a deeply flawed assumption that air passenger numbers have simply been "temporarily suppressed" by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

4.3. Climate Change concerns indicate that it is necessary to curtail flying.

4.4. Expansion would cause unacceptably increased road traffic passing through Churchill Parish.

4.5. Inappropriate weeks-long parking in the village occurs to avoid the parking charges at the airport.

4.6. Due to CAA rule changes, we are now another Parish immediately under a flight path.

Accordingly, Churchill Parish Council wishes to uphold its **strong objection** to the proposal to increase the capacity of Bristol Airport from 10mppa to 12mppa and respectfully requests that the appeal be **dismissed**.