

## **Expansion of Bristol Airport to 12mppa**

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

# **Summary Proof of Evidence**

## **for PCCA**

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## **Parish Councils Airport Association Proof of Evidence – Residential Amenity**

### **1. Summary**

I am a long-term resident of Cleeve, living under the flight path within the airport's 57dB noise contour. I am a Parish Councillor and also chair of the Parish Councils Airport Association (PCAA) which has a membership of 30 parishes. I can speak with some authority about the impact on local residents and the views that they have in respect of airport expansion but I am not an expert on technical issues. The PCAA support the reasons for refusal by North Somerset Council and see ample grounds for dismissing the appeal: the need to achieve net zero carbon emissions should be reason enough but there are also particular issues at Bristol Airport that provide another, equally strong argument. These include inadequate road access; noise; infringement of the Green Belt; threats to biodiversity and health impacts. All of this outweighs considerably the meagre economic benefits, and potentially negative economic benefits if the tourist deficit is acknowledged.

**1.1.** The PCAA feels unable to trust to the Airport having been let down badly by the Airport disregarding repeated, clear and well-evidenced input from the parishes, for example over night noise and by reneging on commitments, for example in placing a major new building on Green Belt land (using permitted development rights) when they had committed to a smaller building on the North Side of the airport. For these reasons we have decided to take Rule Six status at this Inquiry. The following paragraphs summarise the PCAA's position:

#### **1.2. Traffic**

1.2.1. The proposed modal split is 82.5% for car travel to the airport. This is the worst in the UK and exacerbates the poor road infrastructure surrounding the airport. Proposals to mitigate the impact of increased traffic are inadequate.

1.2.2. The upcoming Clean Air Zone in Bristol will drive more cars onto smaller country roads and the impact has not been modelled. This needs to be done as a cumulative exercise that includes the traffic impact from proposed new housing using the A38 and A370 roads.

#### **1.3. Parking in Villages**

- 1.3.1. The high number of car travellers and the reluctance to pay for car parking has led to more people parking in neighbouring villages and catching the airport bus. The parking is sometimes highly anti-social, clogging up villages. There is the added disturbance from car owners retrieving their cars often late at night.

#### **1.4. Green Belt and Silver Zone Car Parking**

- 1.4.1. Permitted development rights have jeopardised protection for Green Belt land and these rights should be removed. This would help to alleviate the impact on the AONB, just 3km away
- 1.4.2. Extension of the Silver Zone car park and any further use of Green Belt land should be prevented for reasons including:
- 1.4.2.1. The loss of biodiversity, for example the loss of foraging for protected species of bats with inadequate mitigation
- 1.4.2.2. There has been no quantification of the negative impacts and no attempt to develop a cost-benefit analysis
- 1.4.2.3. The Airport has a conflict of interest in that much of their business model relies on income from parking and they will wish to provide space at minimum costs to themselves, on open land. It is against their interests to improve the modal split or to build expensive multi storey car parks.
- 1.4.2.4. Building multi storey car parks (MSCP) would, however, provide a sensible way forward: saving green belt land and increasing parking charges that will help drive people onto public transport
- 1.4.2.5. The Airport has previously committed to building MSCP and a Public Transport Interchange but has failed to do so

#### **1.5. Noise**

- 1.5.1. The Airport measures noise impacts by reference to average noise levels over several hours but residents experience each aircraft as a separate noise event. The fact that fractionally quieter aircraft may be introduced is of little benefit if the number of flights increases significantly
- 1.5.2. In fact a noise reduction of 3dB is hardly noticeable to the human ear
- 1.5.3. The Airport's claim that quieter aircraft will become the norm is misleading as they have no influence on this. These decisions are made by airlines who have

had a difficult period recently and have less headroom for investment, especially when the economic life of an aeroplane is around 20 years.

1.5.4. The Airport can fine an airline for noise or other infringements but they will do anything to avoid fining their customers so this measure is totally ineffective and no fines have been issued for very many years, if ever.

1.5.5. Night noise is of critical importance to residents and the subject of frequent complaints. In many European airports there is progress in reducing night flights and some have banned them (e.g. Cologne Bonn, Zurich and Frankfurt). Yet Bristol has more even than Heathrow and wishes to increase them. Their proposal would yield one every nine minutes throughout the night on a busy summer weekend.

1.5.6. This level of air traffic is driven by the low-cost, tourist business model but it rides roughshod over the interests of local people generating negative health impacts and a drastic reduction in well-being.

1.5.7. There are caps on night flights relating separately to winter and summer months. The Airport wishes to roll these into one annual cap but the impact will be a major increase in night flights during busy summer periods. The PCAA is very strongly against this change.

1.5.8. Compensation for noise impacts is a small grant which pays only part of the costs of noise insulation for a dwelling. This gets nowhere close to compensating for the impacts of noise or loss of enjoyment of a garden. Furthermore, the fund created to provide compensation should be managed by the local Community Foundation (Quartet) in order to provide a transparent and trustworthy approach to the best use of these funds. This approach works successfully in the case of the Hinkley Nuclear project in Somerset.

## **1.6. Health**

1.6.1. WHO guidelines indicate a maximum noise level of 40 dB during night hours and an uninterrupted period for sleep of 7-9 hours.

1.6.2. The noise contour levels go up to 63 dB for some residents and there is no respite period throughout the night. As stated above it will be entirely possible for residents to experience a flight every 9 minutes throughout the night. This is clearly not conducive to physical and mental health.

## **1.7. Residential Amenity**

- 1.7.1. Residential amenity will suffer greatly from airport expansion including: noise, traffic, anti-social parking, road degradation, lighting, litter. Benefits in terms of economic activity and job creation are very weak in comparison.

## **1.8. Airport Runway**

- 1.8.1. Bristol Airport has a short runway, shorter than the length required for some of the aircraft that are in the planned mix. If these aircraft have to take off from shorter runways they need to use much more power (and generate more noise) or fly with fewer passengers. Either way this is inefficient in fuel consumption, it increases carbon emissions and is disrespectful of local residents who have to suffer increased levels of noise and/or a greater numbers of flights

## **1.9. Conditions**

- 1.9.1. Tight conditions are not seen as an adequate response to the proposal to expand the airport. The PCAA call for a rejection of the appeal.
- 1.9.2. However, if the Inspectors are minded to allow expansion, the PCAA request conditions to cover:
- 1.9.2.1. Night flights
  - 1.9.2.2. The scale of compensation for noise and other impacts
  - 1.9.2.3. A more ambitious modal split of at least 25% public transport
  - 1.9.2.4. No further use of Green Belt land or expansion of the Silver Zone
  - 1.9.2.5. Removal of Permitted Development rights.