

Appendix C Policy Review Note

TECHNICAL NOTE

Job Name: Bristol Airport Expansion

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Prepared By: Ritika Kothari

Subject: Policy Review

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Technical Note (TN) has been prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) to provide a review of transport policies at national, regional and local government levels.

2. National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2018)

- 2.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in July 2018 and replaced the 2012 version of the NPPF. This policy document forms a key part of the Governments' approach to make the planning system less complex and more accessible to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development, which remains a core objective of the NPPF.
- 2.2. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states the following objectives to achieve sustainable development:
- ***"Economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;***
 - ***Social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and***
 - ***Environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".***
- 2.3. The transport related policies within the NPPF, set out within Chapter 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport', paragraph 102 states that *"Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals, so that:*
- *The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
 - *Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*

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- *Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- *The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- *Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places”.*

2.4. Paragraph 104 states that planning policies should:

- *“Be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned; and*
- *Provide for any large-scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support their operation, expansion and contribution to the wider economy. In doing so they should take into account whether such development is likely to be a nationally significant infrastructure project and any relevant national policy statements”.*

2.5. Finally, paragraph 110 of the NPPF states the following:

- *“Create places that are safe, secure and attractive;*
- *Allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and*
- *Be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations”.*

2.6. The Transport Assessment has been prepared to support the sustainable objectives set out in the NPPF.

Surface Transport to Airports (Transport Committee, February 2016)

2.7. The ‘Surface Transport to Airports’ report was published in February 2016 by the Transport Committee, highlighting the importance for the need of good surface access to airports, by which positive economic and environmental impacts can be seen. The report also sets out a number of recommendations, particularly in developing a *“coherent strategy to improve road and rail access to the UK’s major airports, and stressed the need for greater connectivity between airports outside South East England”.*

2.8. Additionally, paragraph 6 of the report, as stated by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, *“Poor surface access inhibits an airport’s ability to compete”*, citing Bristol and Leeds Bradford as examples.

2.9. Furthermore, Chapter 66 of the ‘Surface Transport to Airports’ report asserts Bristol Airport with poor connectivity, stating that *“some airports remain completely disconnected from major road and rail infrastructure. Bristol Airport, for example, remains the only top ten UK airport without access to a road of at least dual carriageway standard or a direct rail link. The Airport points to “the absence of a firm commitment in Government policy to improving transport links to regional airports”.*

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- 2.10. The proposals will seek to improve the accessibility to the airport and increase the competitiveness.

The Future of Air Transport White Paper (2003)

- 2.11. The Department for Transport (DfT) published the national policy on aviation in December 2003, set out in the Government's White Paper, titled 'The Future of Air Transport', provides a strategic framework for the growth in airport capacity over the next 30 years. It is noted within the report that *"increased capacity is needed at a number of regional airports across the country, including some new runway capacity, more terminal capacity and support facilities"*.
- 2.12. It is expected, that air travel demand is projected to be between two and three times current levels by 2030, with air travel having increased five-fold over the past 30 years.
- 2.13. The Government have identified the following measures to ensure that airport expansion is sustainable:
- *"Recognises the importance of air travel to our national and regional economic prosperity, and that not providing additional capacity where it is needed would significantly damage the economy and national prosperity;*
 - *Reflects people's desire to travel further and more often by air, and to take advantage of the affordability of air travel and the opportunities this brings;*
 - *Seeks to reduce and minimise the impacts of airports on those who live nearby, and on the natural environment;*
 - *Ensures that, over time, aviation pays the external costs its activities impose on society at large – in other words, that the price of air travel reflects its environmental and social impacts;*
 - *Minimises the need for airport development in new locations by making best use of existing capacity where possible;*
 - *Respects the rights and interests of those affected by airport development;*
 - *Provides greater certainty for all concerned in the planning of future airport capacity, but at the same time is sufficiently flexible to recognise and adapt to the uncertainties inherent in long-term planning."*
- 2.14. The report also provides specific policies and conclusions for Bristol Airport which are as follows:
- *"Bristol International Airport is by far the largest airport in the South West of England. Like several other regional airports in the UK, it has seen substantial growth recently, with passenger throughput nearly doubling between 2000 and 2003. The airport is now handling almost 4mppa. The forecasts suggest that by 2030 it could attract between 10mppa and 12mppa, taking account of our proposals in Chapter 11 for new runways in the South East;*
 - *The airport faces some complex constraints. The existing terminal site should be able to cope with up to 8mppa, provided additional aircraft stands can be accommodated. Beyond about 8mppa, a second terminal south of the runway would be required, together with a runway extension to the east and extended parallel taxiway;*

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- *The number of people living within the 57dBA noise contour in 1999 was only about 1,000, and we expect only a very small increase in this number by 2015, even at the higher end of our growth forecasts. With a runway extension, and our highest levels of forecast throughput, estimates suggest that by 2030 there would be no more than around 3,500 people within the 57dBA noise contour. The airport operator is invited to bring forward as soon as possible a long term master plan setting out these proposals, to be accompanied by a voluntary purchase scheme for any properties that would be adversely affected;*
- *The runway extension would also require some common land to be taken, and we would expect this to be replaced elsewhere. There would also be some loss of green belt as a result of a runway extension and new terminal development. However, we do not believe this would fundamentally affect the integrity of the green belt within the area and consider it would, on balance, be justified by the importance of the airport's growth to the region's economy;*
- *Strategic surface access links to Bristol are not as good as at many other airports of a similar size in the UK. Links to the motorway network, which is some distance away, are via 'A' and 'B' roads that pass through villages and other built-up areas. These are not heavily congested, except to the north of the airport where the A38 enters Bristol itself. Away from the immediate vicinity of the airport, the proportion of airport-related traffic is small. The express bus service from Bristol Temple Meads to the airport, which is the main public transport link, is proving increasingly successful; but public transport mode share is low at four per cent and the provision of a direct rail service is not a realistic prospect; and*
- *The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study will consider what might be done to improve both road and public transport access to Bristol Airport, and we encourage the airport operator to participate fully in this process. Access to the airport could be significantly improved by routing traffic away from congested urban areas within Bristol and by bringing forward bus priority proposals which would help provide speedy and reliable journey times for the airport express coach service operating from Bristol Temple Meads station."*

2.15. The proposed expansion at Bristol Airport will meet the capacity as outlined in the Future of Air Transport White Paper, and will provide the desired increase in regional airport capacity.

3. Regional Policy

Joint Spatial Plan (West of England, November 2017)

- 3.1. The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), published in November 2017, is a statutory Development Plan Document, to provide the strategic development framework for the West of England up to 2036. The JSP has been prepared by the local authorities of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council.
- 3.2. In conjunction with the JSP, a Joint Transport Study has been prepared, which identified future strategic transport proposals for delivery up to 2036, which is discussed further below. Both these documents aim to ensure future growth decisions are made with understanding of necessary transport investments.
- 3.3. The JSP is focused on addressing the following issues:
 - *"Identifying the number of new market and affordable homes and amount of employment land that is needed across West of England 2016 – 2036;*
 - *Identifying the most appropriate spatial strategy and strategic locations for this growth; and*

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- *Outlining the strategic transport and other infrastructure that needs to be provided in the right place and at the right time to support sustainable growth and to provide certainty for our communities and those that want to invest in our area”.*

Joint Transport Study (West of England, October 2017)

- 3.4. The Joint Transport Study (JTS), published in October 2017, is a technical report, to provide a clear, long-term development strategy for the transport system in the West of England up to 2036 and beyond. The JTS has been prepared by the local authorities of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council. The JTS has been prepared in conjunction with the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP).
- 3.5. The Transport Vision has been *“designed to address existing transport problems and respond to the challenges associated with the high levels of forecast growth in the West of England”.*
- 3.6. Chapter 4.4.3 suggests for a Mass Transit transport scheme, the ambition for a new form of mass transit (light rail or light metro). It is discussed that for major transport corridors, a rail-based mass transit would be the preferred option, as it is able to accommodate future demand, through higher operational capacity than bus-based options, and providing service to maximise mode shift from car-based trips to using public transport.
- 3.7. The Mass Transit scheme would connect Bristol City Centre to the East Fringe, North West Bristol and Bristol Airport. It is anticipated that a mass transit network would *“form an integral part of the future public transport system and it will be critical to plan for effective interchange with the bus network, MetroBus, rail network and Park & Ride”.*
- 3.8. Chapter 5 of the JTS discusses various improvements to strategic connectivity corridors, in particular to Bristol Airport. It is noted that Bristol Airport has a large catchment area, extending across the South West region and South Wales; therefore, it is proposed to improve access to the airport both by public transport and by road.
- 3.9. Chapter 5.2 ‘Access to Bristol Airport and A38 Corridor’ discusses the public transport access to the airport, the A38 network and potential improvements to increase connectivity. Currently, the A38 is the primary route connecting Bristol City Centre to the airport. However, a lack of motorway junction on the A371 crossing the M5 has resulted in increased traffic flows on the A370 to access the M5 and increased traffic using country lanes. To address the issues on this corridor, the South Bristol Link has significantly improved connections between these routes, and has helped to accommodate traffic growth anticipated with the expansion of Bristol Airport. Additional issues on corridors include that Bristol Airport has no direct access to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and no direct rail links. The report states that *“to meet future needs of the airport it will be necessary to both improve road capacity on the A38 and transport the quality of public transport connections to the Airport”.*
- 3.10. During the design stage of the proposed expansion at Bristol Airport the West of England’s Joint Transport Study was reviewed, as such as part of the proposals the capacity on the A38 will increase.

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Joint Local Transport Plan 3: 2011 - 2026 (West of England Partnership, March 2011)

- 3.11. The Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP3), published in March 2011, covers the period from 2011 to 2026, which sets out the transport improvements to be delivered in the West of England region. The JLTP3 is jointly delivered between four councils (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire), making up the West of England Partnership. The vision for the region is to provide *“affordable, low carbon, accessible, integrated, efficient and reliable transport network”*.

4. Local Policy

North Somerset Core Strategy (North Somerset Council, January 2017)

- 4.1. The North Somerset Core Strategy, adopted in January 2017 sets out the broad long-term vision, objectives and strategic planning policies for North Somerset up to 2026, which provides details on allocated strategic sites.
- 4.2. The policies set out in the Core Strategy document, provide the framework for implementing visions and objectives for the North Somerset region, and to guide investment and development proposals. The policies have been divided into the four following sections, reflecting the Sustainable Community Strategy:
- *“Living with environmental limits (CS1 – CS11);*
 - *Delivering strong and inclusive communities (CS12 – CS19);*
 - *Delivering a prosperous economy (CS20 – CS24); and*
 - *Ensuring safe and healthy communities (CS25 – CS27)”*.
- 4.3. A further two policy sections are ‘Area Policies (CS28 – CS33)’ and ‘Delivery (CS34)’, which discusses specific locations and the implementation strategies.
- 4.4. CS10 addresses transportation and movement related policies for the region, stating *“integrated transport networks allow for a wide choice of modes of transport as a means of access to jobs, homes, services and facilities”*. The transport schemes should be capable of the following:
- Enhance the facilities for pedestrians, including those with reduced mobility, and other users such as cyclists;
 - Deliver better local bus, rail and rapid transit services in partnership with operators;
 - Develop innovative and adaptable approaches to public transport in the rural areas of the district;
 - Improve road and personal safety and environmental conditions;
 - Reduce the adverse environmental impacts of transport and contribute towards carbon reduction;
 - Mitigate against increased traffic congestion;

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- Improve connectivity within and between major towns both within and beyond North Somerset; and
 - Support the movement of freight by rail.
- 4.5. The following are part of the West of England major transport schemes, set out in the Joint Local Transport Plan:
- Weston Package (Phase 1 low cost option);
 - Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit;
 - South Bristol Link;
 - Junction 21 Bypass or Relief Road;
 - Bristol Rail Metro;
 - Barrow Gurney Bypass;
 - M5 Junction 19 improvements; and
 - Expansion of the Park and Ride at Long Ashton.
- 4.6. Development of Bristol Airport is discussed within Policy CS23. It is noted that proposals for the development are required to demonstrate satisfactory resolution to surface access infrastructure. Monitoring and review of public transport usage, particularly of the proportion of passengers using the Flyer bus link will aid in surface access improvements.
- 4.7. Paragraph 1.18 confirms the importance of Bristol Airport as a regional facility, playing an important role in fulfilling the needs of the area, in terms of employment, holiday and business air travel. However, recognises that the airport would benefit from measures to improve the accessibility from Bristol and Weston-Super-Mare.

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Peter Brett Associates LLP Caversham Bridge House Waterman Place, Reading Berkshire RG1 8DN

T: +44 (0)118 950 0761 F: +44 (0)118 959 7498 E: reading@peterbrett.com

