



Proof of Evidence

of

Konrad Bernard Charles Lansdown I. Eng, FIHE, MCIHT

on behalf of North Somerset Council

Public inquiry into The Bristol Airport Limited (Land at A38 and Downside
Road) Compulsory Purchase Order 2020

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/D0121/W/20/3259234

1 PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Personal Details/Qualifications

- 1.1 I have been employed on a full-time basis by North Somerset Council (“the Council”) since 5th January 2010. My current position is Senior Project Manager in the Major Projects team within the Place Directorate. I am professionally registered as an Incorporated Engineer (I. Eng) since December 1993 and I have Fellow membership with the Institute of Highway Engineers and Corporate membership with the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. I have been continually employed on a full-time working basis in the Highways industry in both the Private and Local Government sectors since 1983 holding a series of progressive positions.
- 1.2 Since the commencement of my employment with the Council I have managed the following major highway related projects:
- (a) Greater Bristol Bus Network real time information roll-out (route corridors 8 and 9);
 - (b) M5 Junction 19/A369 major improvements (joint-managed);
 - (c) Weston Package M5 Junction 21 combined major improvements;
 - (d) the Council’s Highways Term Maintenance replacement contract; and
 - (e) North South Spine Road.

The Council’s interest in BAL’s Scheme

- 1.3 The Bristol Airport Limited (Land at A38 and Downside Road) Compulsory Purchase Order 2020 (the “Order”) has been made by Bristol Airport Limited (“BAL”) to support BAL’s planned increase in the permitted passenger cap at the Bristol Airport from 10 million passengers per annum (“mppa”) to 12 mppa (which is the subject of an appeal against the refusal of planning application (reference 18/P/5118/OUT) (“BAL’s Scheme”)).
- 1.4 The Council’s interest in BAL’s Scheme arises because of the A38 Major Road Network (“MRN”) which is a joint scheme venture between the Council and Somerset County Council (the “A38 MRN Scheme”). Forming part of this major scheme are two proposed transport improvement interventions situated on the A38 in the immediate vicinity of Bristol Airport. One of these A38 corridor improvement interventions will involve land that is included in the Order. The A38 MRN Scheme is independent from BAL’s Scheme and the expansion of Bristol Airport.

Scope of Evidence

1.5 This proof considers:

- (a) The purpose, scope, and delivery strategy for the A38 MRN Scheme; and
- (b) The interaction between the A38 MRN Scheme and the Order.

1.6 I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2 A38 MRN SCHEME

2.1 In July 2016 the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (“WoE LEP”) submitted the Bristol South West Economic Link (“BSWEL”) bid to the Department for Transport (“DfT”) as part of the Local Major Scheme Fund to support the technical development of a corridor improvement, covering the A38 environs from Bristol to Somerset and across to Weston-super-Mare. The main intent was to consider what modal-solutions were likely to solve existing network resilience and capacity issues and to enable future planned growth and to identify preferred options.

2.2 Despite this initial bid being unsuccessful the scope and platform for future interventions was well received by local councils and DfT. Funding was secured in 2017 from both North Somerset and Somerset County Councils to continue to develop the BSWEL strategic level work stream and provide a robust platform for any future bid submissions whilst identifying preferred solutions. In line with WebTAG guidance, a long list of options was generated. An initial sift of the list of options was undertaken using DfT’s Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (“EAST”). Options that performed well in the EAST assessment were taken forward for a more detailed assessment. These options were developed to a sufficient level of design / specification, collating further evidence to be assessed against the Transport Business Case Criteria of the Option Appraisal Framework (“OAF”). The A38 MRN Scheme was one of the proposed interventions identified for progression.

2.3 In December 2018 the DfT published “Investment Planning Guidance for the MRN and Large Local Majors Programmes” and invited local authorities to bid for funding to support the proposed MRN in England. The MRN has five central objectives which build on the commitments made in the DfT Transport Investment Strategy. Those objectives are to:

- (a) Reduce congestion - alleviating local and regional congestion, reducing traffic jams and bottlenecks;
- (b) Support economic growth and rebalancing - supporting the delivery of the Industrial Strategy;
- (c) Contributing to a positive economic impact that is felt across the regions;

- (d) Support housing delivery - unlocking land for new housing developments;
 - (e) Support all road users - recognising the needs of all users, including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people; and
 - (f) Support the Strategic Road Network - complementing and supporting the existing SRN by creating a more resilient road network in England.
- 2.4 Using the BSWEL Strategic Outline Business Case (“SOBC”) as a basis for development work, the Council and Somerset County Council developed a specific A38 MRN SOBC which was submitted via the Sub-National Transport Body to the DfT in July 2019 for possible highway improvements on the A38 MRN. After assessment by the DfT the SOBC was approved in September 2019 and was able to progress to the Outline Business Case (“OBC”) stage with funding from DfT and S.106 confirmed and available.
- 2.5 After procurement of external consultant support, work began on the OBC in Spring 2020 with submission of the final OBC due in Autumn 2021.
- 2.6 The A38 MRN Scheme covers a number of proposed transport improvement interventions along the circa 30km stretch of the A38 corridor spanning North Somerset and Somerset, between the A38 Barrow Tanks junction (south of Bristol) and Edithmead roundabout at Junction 22 of the M5 (in Somerset). The A38 corridor forms a key strategic function as a diversion route for the M5 motorway so its improvement would enable wider network resilience. The scheme through the proposed transport improvement interventions addresses current issues experienced by road users along this A38 stretch by improving journey reliability times through reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety, better connecting local communities by active travel modes, and minimising effects upon the environment. Furthermore, the A38 MRN Scheme would support the regional economy and support housing delivery in the vicinity of Junction 22 of the M5 motorway in Somerset. Given that the A38 MRN Scheme is at OBC preparation stage and out to public consultation, the design of the proposed transport improvement interventions is continuing and being refined. The proposed transport improvement interventions contained in this scheme are shown in the Scheme Element Overview Plan within Appendix 1 attached. It may become the case however that the A38 Redhill improvement and Strawberry Line crossing elements may become removed in the OBC submission.
- 2.7 Designer assessments and modelling have been undertaken for the two proposed road improvement interventions in the immediate vicinity of Bristol Airport. BAL’s initial design was originally adopted on a provisional basis and taken forward in subsequent design in order to develop the optimum design solution. That design work is continuing.

- 2.8 The A38 MRN Scheme is separate from BAL's Scheme, addressing current issues experienced by road users along the prescribed A38 corridor through the implementation of transport improvements as outlined in Section 2.6 above. The funding for the A38 MRN Scheme is 85% from the DfT with the remaining 15% to be funded locally by the Council and Somerset County Council. The A38 MRN Scheme subject to approved DfT funding would be carried out irrespective of BAL's appeal outcome and is not influenced by BAL's Scheme.
- 2.9 The A38 MRN Scheme includes two proposed transport improvement interventions situated on the A38 in the immediate vicinity of Bristol Airport. These two proposed transport improvement interventions are the A38 sections i) between West Lane and the Airport roundabout and ii) between the Airport roundabout and Silver Zone roundabout. The former section will necessitate land acquisition by the Council from a number of landowners in the immediate area to facilitate the widening of the existing highway for the additional traffic lanes needed to reduce traffic congestion currently experienced along this road section. Detail covering both these A38 road improvement sections were included and described in the A38 MRN Scheme's Strategic Outline Business Case ("SOBC"), where element i) is covered in sections 2.2.8. to 2.2.10. and element ii) is covered in sections 2.2.11. to 2.2.13. These sections are contained in Appendix 2 attached.
- 2.10 The SOBC was subsequently approved by the DfT for which funding was then received from the DfT covering the preparation for the scheme's OBC. This OBC is due to be submitted to the DfT this Autumn and upon receipt of DfT approval, further scheme funding from the DfT would then be provided covering the preparation of the A38 MRN Scheme's Full Business Case ("FBC").

3 THE ORDER

- 3.1 The A38 MRN Scheme, as a standalone scheme, is the Council's preferred option in addressing current issues experienced by road users along the prescribed A38 stretch by improving journey reliability times through reducing traffic congestion, improving road safety, better connecting local communities by active travel modes, and minimising effects upon the environment. Furthermore, this scheme would support the regional economy and support housing delivery in the vicinity of Junction 22 of the M5 motorway in Somerset. As part of the scheme's ongoing design work there will be a review of the existing speed limits along this stretch of the A38 with the aim to improve road safety. As detailed in the SOBC submission back in July 2019 the estimated cost covering all transport improvement interventions in both North Somerset and Somerset is £23.4m which is currently being reviewed (along with the scheme's Benefit Cost Ratio) for the forthcoming OBC submission.

- 3.2 The benefit of the A38 MRN Scheme compared to BAL's Scheme is that it will deliver the improvements currently needed on the A38 but without the need of BAL's proposed expansion and thus without the uncertainty of when and how Bristol Airport will expand. Furthermore, the A38 MRN Scheme will provide a series of road improvements at other locations on the A38 which are not part of BAL's Scheme. This represents a more robust and holistic solution to the problems identified on the A38 than BAL's Scheme.
- 3.3 Following the Council's refusal of BAL's planning application the A38 MRN Scheme has been taken forward as a standalone joint venture scheme. As a consequence, the funding for the A38 MRN Scheme will need to come from both the Council and Somerset County Council in the absence of a financial contribution from BAL as envisaged as part of BAL's Scheme. The A38 MRN Scheme has subsequently been developed to include the benefit of proposed active travel improvements at some other locations on the A38 providing improved infrastructure and area connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.4 The Council considers that BAL should not be seeking acquisition of the land required for the A38 MRN Scheme. The works for the A38 in the vicinity of Bristol Airport are being progressed as part of the wider A38 MRN Scheme. The Order therefore has the potential to compromise the delivery of these works within DfT's funding availability window (indicative to March 2024), and in BAL owning the land required for the A38 MRN Scheme with no arrangements in place for the Council to be able to control construction or maintenance of those works. It is contrary to public interest for the relevant land to be acquired by a third party developer when that land is required by the Local Highway Authority. The A38 MRN Scheme provides wider highway network perspective and through design continuation will provide active travel and highway network resilience benefits.
- 3.5 Further and separately, the evidence of Mr Colles has identified a number of technical deficiencies and additional data and analysis requirements for the improvements proposed as part of BAL's Scheme. The detailed design work of the A38 MRN Scheme is currently ongoing and will provide a solution that does not suffer from these technical defects. This is an important indication that the public interest is best served by the A38 MRN Scheme not BAL's Scheme.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The A38 MRN Scheme, subject to approved DfT funding, will be carried out irrespective of whether BAL's scheme is carried out. This is due to having no dependency on BAL, as the A38 MRN Scheme (in particular the two elements described in Section 2.9 above) would address current road user issues along the A38 stretch through benefits as outlined in Section 2.6 above and is being funded separately from BAL's Scheme.

- 4.2 There is currently no agreement in place for the completion of the A38 MRN Scheme works on the land included within the Order. Should the Order be confirmed, this will jeopardise the A38 MRN Scheme to the detriment of the A38 corridor and wider communities.

29 June 2021