



Department for Environment and Community Services

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Date: 1 February 2019
Our Ref: 18/P/5118/OUT
Enquiries to: Patrick Conroy
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Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Bristol airport – outline planning application

Thank you for consulting South Gloucestershire Council. Please see the officer response below on behalf of the Council regarding the above and in reply to your consultation dated 9 January 2019.

West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) Publication Document (November 2017)

Within Policy 4 of the draft JSP, Bristol Airport has been identified as a *key strategic infrastructure employment location*. This is in recognition of its contribution to the regional economy and furthermore to facilitate its future growth. However, as highlighted in paragraph 27, any expansion of the site will require associated transport infrastructure and is likely to give rise to economic and environmental impacts.

Economic Benefits

Since the 2018 consultations, it is noted that the accompanying Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) (November 2018) has been updated. This estimates that in 2018 Bristol Airport's economic footprint supported approximately 4,900 full-time employees (FTEs) and £430 million in gross value added (GVA) in the West of England. It is anticipated that the Airport will reach its 10 million passengers per annum (mppa) capacity in 2021, and if consented, 12mppa by 2026. The EIA suggests that this will present significant economic benefits to the West of England: 'the economic footprint of the airport will be around £110 million larger in GVA terms and support around 1,200 additional jobs (1,050 FTEs) in 2026. When wider benefits are also included this increases to £210 million larger in GVA terms and support around 2,050 additional jobs (1,725 FTEs)'.

The Council recognises the proposal would bring significant economic benefits to the site itself, as well as the wider West of England area and beyond, including to South Gloucestershire. It will be an attractive offer for foreign investors plus current indigenous businesses. It is also understood that the Airport is a significant contributor to the visitor economy across the region, including in South Gloucestershire. We would therefore welcome any future sustainable growth that will strengthen our tourist industry.

Transportation Considerations

National and regional context

As mentioned above, the proposal relates to an increase in airport capacity from 10mppa to 12mppa, with future aspiration to 20mppa. The current application to expand the Airport can therefore be considered as a stepping stone towards achieving the Airport's long-term ambitions. This context is crucial for understanding when, and how, new infrastructure is delivered to support surface access to the Airport. It is, however, important that growth in passenger numbers is managed in a sustainable way and new infrastructure delivered in a timely manner.

Bristol Airport is the ninth largest UK airport and serves a wide range of national and international destinations. With current peak passenger numbers approaching 9mppa, it is clear that the Airport performs a strategic function in delivering national airport capacity and providing national and international connections.

Data from the Civil Aviation Authority passenger surveys demonstrate that air passengers in the South West also use airports in the South East of England and West Midlands – which offer a wider choice of destinations and competitive fares. The figures contained in Table 1 below demonstrate use of airports outside of our region by those either living in the South West or wishing to travel to/from the South West. These figures imply there is latent demand for air travel in the South West that could be partially served by expansion of Bristol Airport, reducing the distance travelled (in terms of surface travel) to and from airports outside of our region. Notwithstanding any differential in airfares between Bristol Airport and other regional airports, this could therefore have positive implications for traveller convenience, national airport capacity and sections of the strategic and local road networks.

Table 1 - CAA Passenger Survey Report 2017 (Scheduled Flights Only)

Traveller Origin / Destination	Airport Used (passengers per annum)			
	Heathrow	Gatwick	Stansted	Birmingham
South West England	3.5m	2.0m	0.5m	0.4m

Local and South Gloucestershire context

The application includes a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan – to assess the implications for surface transport of the airport expansion at a more local level. Data on passenger origin/destinations is taken from the most recently available CAA survey covering Bristol Airport in 2015. The data unfortunately incorporates responses from South Gloucestershire residents with districts comprising Gloucestershire County Council to provide data for 'Gloucestershire', rather than the West of England. This makes meaningful analysis of passenger origins impossible at this stage. South Gloucestershire Council have been working with the Airport's consultant to obtain more meaningful travel data in order to assess the implications of the Airport expansion for South Gloucestershire residents. At the time of writing this response, that data is not available, but we will continue to seek this and will make the information available to North Somerset as soon as it is received.

One of the key challenges related to the airport expansion is the suitability and coverage of surface-level transport connections to the Bristol Urban Area (including parts of South Gloucestershire) and public transport interchanges such as Temple Meads and Parkway rail stations. It is vital that any expansion is supported by a step

change in improvements to surface-level travel, focussing on convenient and affordable public transport solutions, in order to reduce the impact of the expansion on our busy local road network.

Currently the Airport is served by the Airport Flyer bus service – a frequent bus service, but with geographical scope limited to Bristol City Centre, with origins at Bristol Temple Meads rail station and Bristol Bus Station. Residents of South Gloucestershire therefore have to make at least one interchange if wishing to travel to the Airport by public transport. This has the potential to discourage public transport use, particularly if carrying luggage or travelling with family, and leaves car travel as the most realistic and cost effective option for travelling to the Airport. The Council would therefore wish to see a more thorough interrogation of the passenger origin data to assess if expansion of the Airport Flyer to South Gloucestershire, to better serve passengers, is financially viable. Alternatively, ensuring ticketing is seamless and competitively priced, with necessary interchanges made as smooth as possible.

Improvements to highway and public transport access to the Airport will clearly be necessary. Although not part of the application, in the context of future expansion, South Gloucestershire Council supports the aspiration for a mass transit link to the airport, which will require joint working between the transport and planning authorities and the Airport to make the business case and secure future funding. The Council will continue to work together with our partners at North Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, the West of England Combined Authority and other key stakeholders to make the case for the funding of improvements through Joint Local Transport Plan 4.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments.

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Conroy
Strategic Planning Policy and Specialist Advice Team Manager