

Consultation response to Outline planning application reference 18/P/5118/OUT from West of England Combined Authority

The UK Government is currently developing a new aviation strategy to 2050, which supports maximisation of regional airport runway capacity to accommodate forecast growth in air passenger numbers.

Within this context, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) supports in principle the expansion of Bristol Airport. This is in recognition that:

- Local, regional, national and international connectivity is a core component of a sustainable city region. Growth in the airport will reflect and help facilitate the strategic importance of the West of England and our own ambitions to grow our economy.
- Bristol Airport's role as a regional airport reduces the necessity for long distance journeys from and across the West of England region to access airports further afield.
- Bristol Airport is approximately eight miles from Bristol city centre. This is a relatively short distance, which offers opportunity for increased public transport mode share for both passengers and staff, particularly given its location on a public transport corridor.
- Growth in the airport is likely to act as a longer-term catalyst for wider investment in our public transport and highway network, which will in turn help sustain our city region through its wider benefits.

WECA support the spatial development strategy for the region as set out in the West of England Joint Spatial plan, which is currently under examination. This regional plan identifies Bristol Airport as a key strategic infrastructure employment location which will contribute to the region's delivery of 82,500 additional jobs by 2036 and ensure the continued economic growth of the West of England.

All development will have an impact on the capacity of our transport network. The location of Bristol Airport means that proposed expansion has clear implications for the A38 corridor. WECA expects the agreement of a proportionate and reasonable package of off-site investment in transport improvements as part of this application, and welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with Bristol Airport and the four West of England Unitary Authorities to ensure appropriate mitigation on the A38 corridor and connecting roads, to work towards a step-change in the use of sustainable travel modes to access Bristol Airport. The Bristol South West Economic Link (BSWEL) study looking at a range of public transport options to the Airport including heavy rail, tram train and mass transit is timely in this respect. As part of the currently draft Joint Local Transport Plan 2019 to 2036 WECA is proposing as part of a region wide network a mass transit route to the Airport. WECA will work closely with Bristol Airport on emerging proposals from this work and the BSWEL study.

WECA are committed to working with Bristol Airport to overcome shared challenges and achieve joint aims of economic growth in the West of England region.