AIRPORT 1

I have two points to make, one about the impact of increased passenger numbers on traffic particularly in the Chew Valley. The second is the likely change in passenger numbers going forward.

I would like to start by saying that I do not know why we are here now, having this appeal. There is an international scientific consensus that there is a climate emergency and international, national and local political consensus that we need to act now to cut global emissions to avoid catastrophe. All local democratically-elected bodies have unanimously agreed to oppose the expansion – having weighed up the advantages and disadvantages, as stated by Bristol Airport in their opening statement. I do not see why democratically made decisions have been questioned.

Transport impact on surrounding villages.

BAL proposes to increase public transport share from 13.8% (own figures) or 17% (CCA survey) to 17.5% (own figures). BAL make much of the fact that the percentage for Bristol is similar to other airports. However, as a local resident who cycles in the area (including a daily commute to Bristol during non-COVID times), I can safely say that I am not interested in the % public transport share in Manchester, nor am I very impressed by proposals to increase this % by 2.5%. Overall, with an increase in passengers from 10m to 12m, this will still equate to a large increase in traffic. The BAL impact plan examines specific roads around the airport. It doesn't consider the impact on the Chew Valley (where there is little public transport), or other parts of the road network (as described by the representative for Barrow Gurney). The modelling ascribes thresholds to traffic flow to determine fear/intimidation. As a cyclist, I can say that these thresholds are nonsensical – any increase in traffic numbers and speed increases the fear and intimidation. One short dedicated shared cycle/footpath will not outweigh the increase in traffic flow across the road network. It is also a fact that it is not only average flows (over the year) that are important, but number of occurrences of particularly high traffic density or high speed traffic. The increase in traffic due to increased passengers would not fall uniformly over the year, but would tend to be concentrated during the daytime and during peak holiday times. Thus the adverse health effects (pollution due to traffic jams as well as increased traffic, danger to cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders, residents, etc) will likely be greater than if only average traffic flow is considered.

Increase in passenger numbers

The case for expansion is predicated on a "demand" for flights, and that the benefits of satisfying this demand outweigh the obvious adverse effects. The forecasting doesn't take into account the fact that people are already choosing not to take excessive flights due to the impact on climate change, even before COVID (1). Additionally, COVID has taught us all the benefits of conducting business virtually – so likely to impact business flights in future. A survey by Bristol University suggested that many people are likely to fly less in the future (2). Concerns relating to COVID-19 and climate change were both identified to a similar extent by respondents as key factors which may put them off flying in future – 76.9 per cent and 73 per cent respectively. An Ipsos poll internationally found that 71% of adults globally agree that, in the long term, climate change is as serious a crisis as Covid-19 is.

Let's listen to our local council, and the overwhelming views of residents, and not allow the airport to expand further.

References

1. https://yougov.co.uk/topics/science/trackers/are-brits-considering-taking-holiday-in-the-uk-instead-of-abroad-to-reduce-the-impact-of-their-travel-plans-on-the-environment
2. https://www.bristol.ac.uk/neuroscience/news/2021/flying.html
3. https://www.ipsos.com/en/two-thirds-citizens-around-world-agree-climate-change-serious-crisis-coronavirus