**BRA Bulletin 30.11.19**

**Dear Member**

**BRISTOL AIRPORT PLANNING APPLICATION (18/P/5118/OUT)**

**Background** During 2018 there was much activity on the planning application made by Bristol Airport to North Somerset Council (NSC) to expand its operations from the current level of 8m passengers a year to 12m a year, which it expects to achieve in the mid 2020’s. (The present permission allows Bristol Airport to expand to 10m.) The closing date for comments was Jan 26th2019. We encouraged members to comment, and many did. BRA submitted a letter to NSC, which is attached to this email, on 18th Jan 2019, with the following conclusion:

*The airport is seriously constrained by its location, local topography, and very poor road infrastructure. Increased use of air travel cannot be allowed to continue un-checked. The time has come to call a halt to further expansion. BRA therefore feels that it cannot support this application*.

Currently the BRA committee is reconsidering this conclusion.

It was expected that NSC would make its planning decision in early 2019. This crucial meeting has not yet taken place, and is now expected in early 2020. There is still the opportunity for comments to be made on the NSC website, by clicking on “Make a Comment”, and we encourage you to do so.

<https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=PJML85LPMKI00>

or by post to: Planning Dept, North Somerset Council, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ, making sure you quote the reference 18/P/5118/OUT

**What has changed during 2019**

* Local elections, in May 2019, produced a major change in the composition of NSC.
* There has been much publicity at national and international level of an urgency to tackle climate change, and the negative impact of air travel - emissions, noise etc.
* Weston Town Council has changed its views and is now objecting, along with Bath & North East Somerset Council, whilst Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council have supported the application.
* Several authorities have declared Climate Emergencies, including NSC and Nailsea Town Council.
* The Parish Council Airport Association (PCAA) has registered a strong objection on behalf of its membership of 27 councils, and has developed into a very articulate and powerful group. There is also an organisation called “Stop Bristol Airport Expansion” with a website: <http://www.stopbristolairportexpansion.org/>.

**Bristol Airport**

Bristol Airport continues to be heavily criticised for not meeting a number of conditions set in previous Planning Permissions, including: using more green belt car parking rather than building a second multi-storey car park; failing to meet noise limits and not penalising airlines; and issues with current night flights. There is also the prospect of changes to flight paths to help accommodate more flights, which could be detrimental to Backwell and residents of other villages.

**What has BRA been doing?**

We recognise that both the advantages and drawbacks from further expansion are complex and important matters. BRA committee members have tried to gain a better understanding of the issues. On the NSC website there are 650 documents relating to the application, and 5849 public comments, with objections outnumbering those in support by 2:1.

We have attended two public meetings: one in Nailsea hosted by Climate Emergency Nailsea and one in Congresbury hosted by Congresbury Parish Council. We have also attended (as an observer) a meeting of the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee (BACC), at which Backwell Parish Council is represented, and will attend (as an observer) the next meeting of the PCAA. We have also taken an active interest in Bristol Airport’s Noise Action Plan.

**Should BRA Object?**

The BRA Committee discussed the issues at its meeting on 26 Nov and is now reviewing its position. It resolved to seek views from the BRA membership before submitting a further comment to NSC, by early Jan 2020. **Please let us know by Dec 31st (email address below) if you would like us now to Object, or retain our previous, slightly ambiguous stance of 'cannot support'.** The committee thinks this is one of the most important topics it has had to deal with. We are not experts, but are trying to consider the best interests of the community and the environment. If we have any experts on airport operations, noise, pollution, please come and help us! We realise that there is a wide cross section of views in Backwell, from whole hearted support to passionate objection.

Following this consultation, we may send a revised letter in Jan 2020.

One key point to bear in mind is that Bristol Airport has permission to expand from the current 8m passengers a year to 10m, a 25% increase. The current application is for Bristol Airport to go up to 12m, with aspirations up to 20m a year. The organisations seeking to halt further expansion are NOT seeking a decrease in passenger numbers from the current level, or to prevent the already agreed expansion.

From your BRA Committee 30th November 2019

**Visit our website on** [**www.backwellresidents.org.uk**](http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk/)

**Email at backwellresidents@btinternet.com**

The above email is attached as a pdf for those preferring a hard copy.

The letter from BRA to NSC dated 18.1.2019 is also attached.