

BACKWELL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport, Aviation Policy & Reform,
Zone 1/25, Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
London, SW1P 4DR

Dear Mr Shapps

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

Backwell Residents Association (BRA) is an independent organization with a paid up membership of 400 households representing up to 700 residents. In a recent survey 47% of members responded, 86% of whom opposed Bristol Airport Expansion, with only 4% in favour. Bristol Airport land adjoins Backwell Parish and some of the property identified in this CPO at Lulsgate and Downside is within the parish boundary.

This application from the Bristol Airport Statement of Reasons predicates the airport planning application for growth to 12 million passengers per annum. (mppa) However planning reference 18/P/5118/OUT was refused by North Somerset Council (NSC) in February 2020 and is subject to an Appeal. BRA objects to this CPO on the basis of prematurity as the applicants' rationale explains that the Highway works to the A38 and Downside Road are primarily to accommodate additional traffic generated by a further 2 mppa. Therefore Bristol Airport is assuming the Inspectorate will overturn the refusal decision. To grant permission for the CPO before the Appeal would be pre-determining the outcome of the Appeal.

North Somerset Council consultation process is under way for its new local plan with an associated infrastructure transport plan; therefore this application is ill-timed as it prejudices the outcome of this process. The CPO covers Highways Works which are subject to a draft 106 Agreement which will be examined and play a part in the Appeal process. Thus, the draft 106 Agreement may change under the examination process.

BRA contends that if highway improvements proposed on the A38 are considered necessary to improve safety for all users including walkers and cyclists from the surrounding parishes, these improvements should be made for their wellbeing without being tied to further growth at Bristol Airport to 12 mppa.

As an organisation we believe that this application is inappropriate at this time; post Covid19 our focus should be realistic and pragmatic. Therefore rebuilding the aviation industry to pre-covid status balanced with what is required to support the green economy seems to make more sense.

This application disregards the Climate Emergency declared by NSC in February 2019. Furthermore the CPO does not comply with NSC's Core Strategy relating to the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability CS1, CS3, CS4 and CS6. Concerning is the loss of green belt with negative impact on habitat, wildlife, pollution, noise and lighting. Bristol Airport despite its name is situated within a rural setting adjacent to an area of outstanding natural beauty which is at risk through increased urbanisation.

Plot 21 falls within and on the western boundary of the Felton Hill Common Land area and is owned by Highways England. Although under Highways ownership, Plot 21 may still be Common Land. Until this is determined, it should be assumed that Plot 21 is Common Land and that Replacement Land is necessary.

We would request assurance from The Secretary of State as to whether the highway will revert to the appropriate agency? We would wish to avoid residents accessing their homes via Airport Property which potentially could lead to future legal issues. In addition, if granted, the Secretary of State would need to ensure that, in line with Aviation Acts 1982 & 1986 respectively, all the services embedded and adjacent to the A38 are not interrupted or adversely affected by construction works. Residents must have recourse to their Local Authority as the key administrator, rather than a local business, in matters pertaining to the said services and connectivity.

To conclude, the anxiety caused to the local residents by this Land Order is unnecessary in these extraordinarily worrying times. If approved this could set a precedent for further CPO's and could be applied adversely, affecting Downside residents in particular in addition to those in neighbouring villages.

Yours sincerely

M J Veal
Hon Secretary
Backwell Residents' Association