Making Bristol a Coordinated Airport?

Dear Member

We send our best wishes to members and your families in these troubled and uncertain times, and hope you are coping as well as possible in spite of the many restrictions. Although we are all properly focused on Coronavirus, the BRA committee is trying to keep an eye on other important issues - we hope you will agree this is one such issue.

Much planning and development work has come to a halt during the current lockdown but there is a proposal regarding Bristol Airport, **for which comments are invited by Friday 26th June**. This bulletin covers this single topic.

**Background**

Bristol Airport handled 9 million passengers per year (mppa) last year, and has permission to go to 10mppa. It made an application to have this increased to 12mppa. This was refused by North Somerset Council (NSC) on 10th Feb 2020, then ratified by NSC on 18th March. The main grounds for refusal were damage to the environment and the impact on residents. Bristol Airport applied to be granted Coordinated status in December 2019.

**What is a Coordinated Airport?**

If an airport gets to a certain size, with airlines all wanting the popular slots, it can apply to become a fullyCoordinated Airport, working to a four-rotation system, within a twenty-four-hour period. In practice this means that an aircraft could fly out from Bristol in a four-flight onward rotation, i.e. Bristol to Alicante, Alicante to Amsterdam, Amsterdam to Edinburgh, finally returning to Bristol.

**Fully coordinated** means aircraft are in maximum use. Airlines usually need the early morning and late slots to work four rotations.

Coordinated airports are considered to be at capacity and congested. Consequently, flight time restrictions can be removed in favour of assigned ‘slots’ throughout the day and night.

In the UK, Coordinated Airports include Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, London City, Luton, Manchester and Birmingham. Bristol is currently ‘partially coordinated’ with restrictions limiting times and numbers of night flights (11pm to 7am), to 1,000-night flights during the winter, and 3,000 in the summer.

**Bristol Airport’s Application for Coordinated status**

As part of its application, Bristol Airport commissioned a 38-page report from Mott MacDonald, aviation consultants, to make its case. This can be seen on the consultation website link below. The report assumed that Bristol Airport would be granted permission to expand to 12mppa. Despite the planning refusal the coordinated status application is still under consideration, with an original deadline of April 3rd, now revised to Friday, June 26th.

The operation of a coordinated airport is very complex, with many regulations and associated procedures. **Becoming fully coordinated increases the number of night flights, with major implications for flights over Backwell, including increased noise, CO2 emissions, and night time road traffic movements.**

**If approved, Bristol Airport flights will be allocated by an independent aviation organisation which will assign landing and take-off slots rather than be accountable to local planning conditions.**

**Response from our MP, Liam Fox**

“*the request for coordinated designation was made in the expectation that the increase in passenger numbers would be granted. This is not the case and, given that there is to be no change of the planning status, it would* ***seem utterly inappropriate to change the status of the airport at this point.*** *There is local suspicion that this is a means to ensure that there is a mechanism to increase the number of night flights without a change in planning permission being given.”*

His full letter can be found on his website,

<https://www.liamfox.co.uk/news/bristol-airport-application-designated-airport-status-letter>

**Stop Bristol Airport Expansion**

This organisation has a website with suggested responses which members may find helpful.

<https://www.stopbristolairportexpansion.org/bristol-airport-still-wants-to-increase-night-flights-despite-rejection-by-north-somerset-council/>

**What has BRA done?**

* One of our committee members, Barbara Harland, has attended several meetings, including those of the Parish Councils’ Airport Association representing 27 local councils, and read key reports. This has helped us to establish contacts, and understand the implications of the airport’s plans.
* BRA responded before the original deadline of 3rd April. Our letter is attached to this bulletin, and contains many of the points made by Liam Fox.
* Liaised with Backwell Parish Council.
* BRA has written to Bridget Petty, Backwell’s District Councillor who confirmed NSC’s response to this consultation supported the status quo, having ‘*recently refused expansion due to raised concern over the impact to local communities and also questioned the need given current uncertainty in the airline industry*.’

**What you can do**

In any planning consultation, responses from members of the public are considered as well as comments from technical “experts” and formal bodies

**We encourage members to respond via email, letter or the website with views on this matter, in your own words, before the deadline of Friday 26 June 2020**

**By email to**: SlotConsultation@dft.gov.uk

**Or write a letter to:**

Josie Fieulleteau

Airports and Infrastructure Directorate

Department for Transport

Great Minster House

33 Horseferry Road

London SW1P 4

**Or via the consultation website for response**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bristol-airport-designation-as-a-coordinated-airport?utm_source=5e6a489f-b726-4de4-aab5-5d82e14455f3&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily>