

Chew Magna Parish Council's Objection to Planning Application 23/P/0176/AOC by Bristol Airport Limited

On 2 February 2022, the Planning Inspectorate granted Bristol Airport Limited ("BAL") planning permission for the expansion of its operations to 12 mppa and related matters (planning application reference 18/P/5118/OUT).

The planning permission is subject to 39 conditions. Condition 12 provides that the passenger throughput at Bristol Airport shall not exceed 10 million passengers in any 12-month period from 1st January to 31st December (or other agreed twelve-month period) unless an application to the Secretary of State to designate Bristol Airport as a fully coordinated airport is submitted.

BAL applied for fully coordinated slot allocation in November 2019, withdrew the application in 2020 and resubmitted it in June 2022, when it was supported by a detailed capacity analysis prepared by Mott MacDonald. The application has not yet been decided by the DfT, a point acknowledged by BAL in paragraph 1.3 of this planning application.

Condition 5 of the planning permission provides that the total passenger throughput shall not exceed 12 mppa in any calendar year. It also contains requirements for BAL's compliance with this condition. They include details of how total passenger numbers are to be established and steps to ensure that the limit of 12 mppa is not exceeded.

In 23/P/0176/AOC BAL have applied to North Somerset Council for the discharge of Condition 5. It now takes the view, in paragraph 1.2 of the application, that the slot coordination process, rather than compliance with the requirements of condition 5, will ensure that the airport does not exceed the throughput limit of 12 mppa. In paragraph 3.1, BAL explains that this is to be achieved by identifying and declaring its operating constraints for each flight season (summer and winter) including the annual passenger throughput, traffic movements and night flight movements.

The slot allocation process is predicated on BAL's input. BAL is under no duty to include, in its declaration of operating constraints, the throughput ceiling of 12 mppa or the ATM and night flight caps. By its very nature, the slot allocation process does not impose a constraint on BAL's requirements but will seek to accommodate them.

Chew Magna Parish Council take the view that a declaration of operating constraints as part of the slot allocation process is no substitute for an enforceable planning condition not to exceed 12 mppa. In the absence of Condition 5, BAL could, within, its discretion, declare an operating constraint in excess of 12 mppa. Therefore, Chew Magna Parish Council strongly object to this planning application.