

Airport Report for Chew Magna Parish Council Meeting

On 2 December 2025

Lighting consultation

With the plans to extend the runway there are lighting plans which propose purchase of part of Felton Common. The consultation is now available to view on BA website. The link is:

<https://www.bristolairport.co.uk/lighting-consultation/>

Below is the PCAA response to Bristol Airport Lighting Consultation

Q1: Do you have any comments or concerns about our proposals?

- The PCAA has the following concerns about lighting on Felton Common.
- Felton Common is situated above the height of Bristol Airport. This means that the impacts of lighting on Felton Common are not just immediate but widespread over the locality, including the Mendip Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Mendip Hills National Landscape is located within the Land Visual Assessment Study Area, 2.9km to the south of Bristol Airport at its closest point. The buffer zone for assessment is to be 5km with an outer one at 10 km. (Ref: Scoping Opinion application (24/P/2508/EA2)). In November 2024 the PCAA requested that the buffer zones for assessment should be widened to 10km and 15 km. The PCAA fully expect the area of assessments to be widened. Note, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England has already heavily criticised the Airport's current light spill associated with night flights which causes damage to local ecology and to the wellbeing of residents and visitors. The PCAA agree with this view.
- The PCAA believe that the rural tranquility of the Common will be greatly diminished. Noise from larger aircraft, that will now be descending around 12.5m lower in the sky over Felton, will increase the impact on local ecology and on the wellbeing of residents and visitors. The PCAA do not believe any mitigation that can be provided will negate the impacts of this increase in noise together with an increase in the frequency of aircraft movements at 15 mppa. For recreational walkers and visitors on the replacement land offered (the field adjacent to the Common which is in the Airport's ownership) the noise will be so great, it may be necessary to wear ear protectors as do Airport employees within its boundaries close by. Note, loud noise can affect young children causing hearing damage.
- The proposed replacement land under Airport ownership is next to a very busy road and to the runway. The openness of the land is compromised by the lights in the middle of the field. The diagram does not state how much of the land under airport ownership would be available as compensation. In any event, the PCAA consider that the land under Bristol Airport ownership is not suitable as compensation.
- Safety remains a concern especially as aircraft will be descending at a lower level, sometimes in low cloud, in fog and with cross winds. The large, low-flying aircraft will also create a significant vortex. These concerns are not just for users of the Common but for all users of the A38; this includes pedestrians, cyclists, car users, taxis, bus and coach users, double decker buses, delivery vans and HGVs. The PCAA question whether the land under the Airport's ownership opposite the Airport will be required for additional road safety improvements. If so, the Airport will, again, have failed to inform the public via the correct consultations.
- Felton Common is registered as common land under the Commons Act 2006. But recent changes to compulsory purchase orders (CPO) in January 2025 mean that the process for deregistering land has changed. The Airport has not explained the process it is following and the expected timescale. Public Notices have been given and the Runway Approach Lighting Consultation is underway. How do these fit within the process of achieving deregistering and the s.19 certificate (1981 Act) from the Secretary of State to avoid special parliamentary procedure?

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67eac2220678ace40a7f27b8/CPO_Guidance_Update_January_2025.pdf

- The proposed lighting is a visual intrusion on the Common, with the lights being in the middle of the Common almost creating a barrier which splits the Common in two. It removes the openness of the Common and is an urbanisation of a rural area. Information given within the Landscape and Amenity Section states “*Longer distance views would continue to be dominated by the sky*”, of course the sky would remain but dark night skies will be considerably diminished. This section failed to highlight this point.
- A further concern is that the Common is a public open space that is within a defined Air Safety Zone. This is covered by the Air Safety Policy LP13 and shown in the Draft Local Plan 2041 currently out for consultation. The PCAA question whether the Common and the replacement land will become higher risk and need to be re-categorised as such. The PCAA view the replacement land under the Airport’s ownership as unsafe for recreational use under the Air Safety Policy LP13 and not suitable for mitigation.

Q2: How would you be affected by the proposals?

- The PCAA has many parishes situated within a radius of approximately 5 miles of Felton Common and the Mendip Hills, an AONB, such as Chew Stoke, Chew Magna, Churchill, Backwell, Yatton, Congresbury, Cleeve etc. Many of the parishes’ residents walk on Felton Common, and some will use the bridleways. Lighting will not just create an increase in skyglow, which will be seen from many parishes, but also diminish recreational use of the Common and the Mendip Hills. Winford Parish including Felton will be heavily affected. The proposal for lighting on Felton Common is a major concern of our parishes. The rural tranquility of the Common will be lost at night and of course the main purpose of the lighting is to increase night flights which is against the wishes of local communities.
- Note that Felton Common is heavily used by residents from Bristol as well as Weston-super-Mare.

Q3: Is there anything you feel Bristol Airport could do to help address the impacts of the new runway approach lighting?

- The PCAA is opposed to any further growth at the Airport. If the proposed lighting scheme is to go ahead, strong and formal Conditions must be set on night-time aircraft movements, both arrivals and departures. In line with a number of European airports, there must be a five-hour period within night-time hours of 23.30-06.00 hrs without flights and for the airport lights to be switched off to allow undisturbed sleep for residents and to reduce impacts on wildlife. The PCAA suggest between 01.00-06.00hrs. Note in 2022 there were on average in the summer months, 22 arrivals within the time period 23.00 -01.00 hrs excluding dispensations. If dispensations are included, there can be between 26- 28 arrivals.

<https://www.bristolairport.co.uk/media/di4b1nuy/brs-demand-capacity-assessment-jan-2023.pdf>

- In 2024 flights arrived throughout the night period of 23.30 - 06.00 hrs. This is intolerable.
- The PCAA do not agree that the replacement land under Airport ownership is suitable for mitigation for the lights. Any mitigation replacement land should be adjoining the Common and have full support of Winford Council.

Q4: If you have any other comments or suggestions related to the approach lighting, please use the box below:

- The PCAA recognise, as does the Bristol Airport, that the lighting on Felton Common will have many significant impacts on residents and wildlife and the wider area. But this proposal also illustrates how the location and topography of the Airport are severely constrained. The Airport has given only one alternative to lighting on the Common and that is consideration of the western end of the runway, “*We have considered whether we could extend the runway to the west to avoid the need to undertake any development in Felton*”

Common. However, the land off the western end of the runway drops significantly towards Wrington Warren and Goblin Combe etc.” The PCAA note that extending the runway to the west would also heavily impact on Lulsgate Wood which is 1.5 km northwest of the runway. The lighting would be raised as would the runway, negating all mitigation for the impact on bats from increased car parking on green belt under 12 mppa planning consent.

- The Airport fails to offer the alternative of a ‘no change’ scenario where the runway is not extended. This seems unreasonable when the Airport can already accommodate wide-body aircraft such as Boeing 787 Dreamliner and Airbus 330 and have done so in the past with flights to Mexico and the Caribbean. Due to fuel efficiency, flights can go further. There is no need to facilitate long-haul flights via an extended runway.
- There has been no costing or detailed evidence to explain different alternatives. The PCAA request that this information is provided.
- The consultation is lacking in detail and appears to be only for local residents. Parishes on the A370 such as Cleeve and Congresbury and also Wrington, home to the Airport, have received no letter or information leaflet. Due to the closeness of the Mendip Hills, parishes within the Mendip should have been informed. The PCAA question whether there has been any engagement with local authorities and neighbouring authorities via regular meetings and briefings on the lighting proposals. There has only been one resident drop-in event. The Airport Consultative Committee has had no presentation on the Runway Approach Lighting Consultation unlike the Master Plan meeting held 4 December 2024. There was one small reference to the consultation in the Airport Consultative Committee meeting which is in the draft minutes to the meeting held 16 October 2025. Members were informed that a short consultation would be taking place and that it was for “*minor adjustment to the design scheme.*” The lighting proposals on Common Land cannot be considered minor.
- The PCAA believe that the public have been misled due to the proposals not being stated in the Master Plan Consultation November 2024. The BA Scoping Opinion application 24/P/2508/EA2 was submitted to North Somerset Council on 26 November 2024. The Scoping Report point 3.3.30 Runway Extension states that “*Modified equipment and associated lighting will be provided in accordance with current regulations as part of the works to extend the runway*”. This implies that the Airport recognised that changes to the lighting would be required and the Master Plan failed to give a true picture of growth to 15 mppa and its impacts. Only now, 12 months later, is this major item made clear.
- The consultation diagram provides few details. It shows no access route for maintenance or potential areas close by for replacement land other than the land owned by the Airport. The consultation omits how frequently the maintenance team will be required to visit the lights which will cause another intrusion and will be usually in daylight hours when residents and visitors are using the Common. The question remains whether the maintenance team will have permission to access deregistered land by going over areas of the Common. The consultation omits the size of the area required for the lights and fencing that is to be deregistered. The consultation omits the timing of the lights and whether or not they will be switched on or off and run by an automated system. In any event, the increase in skyglow will be immense and seen from a wide area.
- Overall, the conclusion reached and agreed at the PCAA meeting held on 20 November 2025 is that the Consultation (Master Plan Vision 20240 and Runway Approach Lighting) process for growth is flawed.

NSC has revamped its Bristol Airport page <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/planning-building-control/planning-applications/bristol-airport-proposals>

which confirms that the 15 mppa application is expected in 2026.

The application 24/P/2508/EA2 has also had additional information added from March 2025. The NSC Scoping Opinion shows that there have been several changes from the Master Plan with the terminal increasing to three floors

Planning applications

Application 25/P/2099/AIN - Bristol Airport, North Side Road, Felton, Wrington, BS48 3DY. PCAA comments:

- The PCAA is concerned about the proposed installation of 6 meter high single and double-headed LED lighting units at the Silver Zone parking area for a couple of reasons.
- Firstly, this parking area was meant to be temporary, and therefore unlit, however this lighting proposal now raises concerns about the potential light pollution in this area.
- Whilst it is recognized that the lighting will be PIR activated and at 30% for 8 hours each night, this is a significant increase in lighting that could have a negative impact upon local wildlife, particularly bat populations.
- Secondly, in 2024 Bristol Airport commented on a screening opinion application on a proposed solar farm on Wrington Hill, which is in one of the PCAA member parishes.
- As part of this response, Bristol Airport expressed concerns that 'glint and glare' from the solar farm could potentially impact aviation safety, in particular the potential impact to aircraft on their final approach.
- The current proposal indicates that each lighting tower will have one or two small solar panels attached in order to improve the sustainability of the lighting solution. However, these lighting stands will be much closer to the runway than the proposed Wrington Hill solar farm, and therefore Bristol Airport will be creating a similar potential impact to aircraft on final approach from 'glint and glare' reflecting off these lighting unit solar panels.
- As a result of the above comments, the PCAA is opposed to this proposal.

PCAA's Response to NSC Local Plan Consultation 2041

Policy LP9: Extent of the Green Belt

- The PCAA recognise that the Green Belt land at Bristol Airport under the 12 mppa planning consent is to be released. However, we do not believe that the new area of Green Belt proposed south of Nailsea and west of Backwell is adequate to compensate for loss of green belt both at the Airport under 12 mppa and also for the proposed new housing developments to be constructed on land to be released from the Green Belt.
- Although Felton Common is covered by Green Belt and is designated as a local Nature Reserve and Site of Nature Conservation Interest, the Local Plan fails to mention that it is a Common. Felton Common requires protection within the Local Plan and the PCAA suggest that a specific policy is written to safeguard the Common.

Policy LP11: Transport infrastructure, allocations and safeguarding:

- The PCAA expect further consultation on the route of the Mass Transit to Bristol Airport. It is not currently possible to comment on the route and the potential impacts on residents and the environment.

Policy LP12: Bristol Airport

- The PCAA support the idea of a mass transit link and suggest that the delivery of the mass transit is linked to passenger growth at the Airport. Bristol Airport predicts that growth to 15 mppa will be in the mid 2030's. The Airport has also made it known that it wishes to grow to 20 mppa. The Local Plan covers the time period to 2041. The PCAA are clearly of the view that the Airport should not grow further but, were this to happen, the PCAA suggest that a mass transit must be provided as soon as passenger numbers exceed 12 mppa.
- The paragraph on the impacts of airport operations and of any new airport development on the living conditions of residents should include the word 'REDUCE' as well as mitigation. The PCAA note the use of the word 'reduce' in relation to nighttime flights in the justification of Policy LP12 but the word needs to be put in the actual policy.

- On climate change, the Government has been advised by the Environmental Audit Select Committee 25 October 2025 (in a report titled 'Airport Expansion and Climate and Nature Targets') that it needs to produce a cumulative assessment of emissions arising from all airport expansion plans and to assess how they relate to the Net Zero target. The Government needs also to review evidence of overall economic benefits which includes taking account of the tourist deficit. We expect NSC to request in any further growth of the Airport that a cumulative assessment of emissions of all airport expansion is given and that the economic benefits include the tourist deficit and then for these factors to be taken into consideration in decision making.

Policy LP13: Air Safety:

- Bristol Airport detailed an extension to the runway in the Master Plan Vision 2040. Currently there is a Bristol Airport Runway Approach Lighting consultation with respect to lighting that is proposed to be put on Felton Common. This is a public open space that is within a defined Air Safety Zone. The PCAA question whether the Common and the proposed replacement land (which is even closer to the airport perimeter) will become higher risk due to the extended runway, lower approach altitudes and lighting infrastructure. If so, it may need to be re-categorised in accordance with CAA regulations. The PCAA view the proposed replacement land (currently in the Airport's ownership) as unsafe for recreational use under the Air Safety Policy LP13 and not suitable for mitigation for the proposed lighting on Felton Common.