

Bristol Airport Consultative Committee

Draft minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 24 September 2024 at 10.00am

Bristol Airport Flight Dispensations

Hybrid Session - Microsoft Teams and Bristol Room B

1. Introductions and Apologies

Present:

David Hall, Chairman of the ACC

District Councillor Thomas Daw, North Somerset Council

Councillor Hilary Burn, Cleeve Parish Council (HB)

Councillor Barbara Harland

Councillor Rob Bryher, Bristol City Council

Councillor Izzy Russell, Bristol City Council

Tony Welch, Business West and Bristol Chamber and Initiative (TW)

Joachim Steinbach, Chair of the PCCA

Hannah Pollard, Head of Sustainability, Bristol Airport

Matthew Sharp, Planning Manager (MS), Bristol Airport

Tracy Comer, Media and Community Relations Manager, Bristol Airport

Andrew Goodchild, Head of Planning and Growth, Bristol Airport

Sam Goldsworthy, Operational Planning Manager, Bristol Airport

Alicia Fox, Secretary

Apologies received from:

Councillor Jill Patch, Winford Parish Council (JP)

Simon Crew, TUC, Bristol and South West Region (RC)

John Savage, Visit West

Neil Bromwich, CBI (NB)

Councillor Robin Moss, BANES

Wendy Walker, ABTA

2. Purpose of the Session (Chairman)

DH welcomed the members of the meeting and requested any questions are kept until the end of the presentation and will then be dealt with individually.

The meeting is purely to deal with Bristol Airport's dispensations.

3. Bristol Airport's Night Flights and Dispensations Process

- a. Presentation from Sam Goldsworthy (Operational Planning Manager) and Matthew Sharp (Planning Manager – Development)

Slides attached as appendix A

- b. Question and Answer session following presentation

JS- Thanked the airport for their presentation and asked whether the presentation will be available on the line?

SG confirmed that the night movements are published within the Annual Monitoring Report and that the presentation can be shared. Quarterly reports are also shared with North Somerset and published on our website.

JS-Both conditions 16 and 17 of the planning appeal are extremely detailed, and he expects BA comply to these restrictions strictly and at all times. The vast majority of complaints he received are the night flights which is an extremely sensitive issue. JS appreciates the details provided in this meeting.

HB- Asked who sits on the Internal Slot committee dealing with the slot coordination.

MS- Confirmed the committee is made up of Bristol Airport staff but the information is shared with NSC who are the enforcing authority. They are shared on a monthly basis with NSC who do view the list, query decisions and challenge when necessary.

HB- wanted to know what the number of rationed flights were between 11.15pm-11.30pm, and what was the historic movement within this timescale? There is still a possibility of these overrun. What are the limits that have been imposed?

SG- advised that between 23.00 and 23.25 there are 8 scheduled flights with 4 scheduled within period between 23.15-23.25. Historically there have been times when there were 5 scheduled flights rather than the 4. SG confirmed that private jets would be included within a scheduled figure but the figure of 4 does not include a flight or flights which is/are delayed.

HB- Other airports in Europe do refuse landing if this would be outside of the limits in place. Bristol Airport uses the "hardship rule" to apply dispensation using a 2 hours rule however it is the local community which actually have the hardship, not the passengers. How is the congestion within the Airport a reasonable reason for an aircraft coming into land late? The airports are creating the congestions not the community. It comes down to unrealistic scheduling starting at the beginning of the day.

AG- Suggested that this be addressed at the next ACC meeting when ACL will be there and can help answer this in more detail.

HB went through the ACL website and there is no mention of the community and how their scheduling impacts the local area. She suggests there has to be multiple allowances throughout the day to allow delays. ACL do not seem to be putting any fines on airlines they are just given dispensations. Who regulates the ACL?

AG said that the conditions set out in the planning permission are what is sent to ACL for them to create the scheduling at Bristol Airport. SG confirmed that ACL are regulated by the CAA (The CAA is a public corporation of the DfT). ACL will schedule depending on each airport's capacity.

HB asked if the community need to go to the CAA and tell them that ACL are not working in a correct manner?

AG advised that is up to the communities but from the Airport's point of view they believe that ACL is working effectively.

DH thanked HB for making valid points.

TC confirmed for the October meeting there will be two representatives attending and will be able to take questions on ACLs role at Bristol Airport. Any questions specifically for ACL need to be sent in with enough notice for a response to be prepared.

TD asked if the agreement of the 2 hour hardship rule is in writing within the planning permissions granted?

MS confirmed it is not.

TD advised he had been researching the rules around the 2 hour hardship rule and how it is down to the Airport and airlines to manage. The rule is not to minimise the suffering of the passengers as they know the risks when booking flights and therefore should not be allowed to be granted a dispensation. There is not any accountability for the flights which are coming in over 2 hours.

MS acknowledges that 2hours is not necessarily a significant amount of time, however a threshold has to be set and it's about avoiding significant passenger hardship. The option available would be for Bristol Airport to refuse the landing. Consequently, the aircraft would need to be diverted, probably to Cardiff or Birmingham. This would add up to an hour in flight time. Then coaches would need to be arranged to bring those passengers back to Bristol. In the middle of the night, finding suitable coaches would not be easy and would probably add another hour. Then the travel time from Cardiff/Birmingham would be a further hour. Therefore, in reality the hardship for passengers would amount to 5 hours plus in these situations. Diverting planes would also increase emissions from the additional flight time and coaches back to Bristol and returned.

TD said it is down to the Airport managers to use their discretion when deciding if a flight landing constitutes as a major hardship, a delay of 3 hours would be more of a mere inconvenience and therefore should not be allowed to be classed as a dispensation and should be refused approval for landing.

MS confirmed that BA are answerable to NSC as the enforcing authority, and it has been agreed with their planning officers.

JS said that even though BA have outsourced the flight allocation to ACL they are still legally liable for ensuring that the planning conditions 16 and 17 are upheld when it comes to routine movements.

HB asked why have NSC never consulted with the local community? If the agreement was made with NSC in 2017, how often is it reviewed?

MS said that there is no strict criteria on when the 2 hours rule is reviewed.

HB asked whether the local community could go to NSC and request a review of the 2-hour rule?

TD said he will go to the planning manager at NSC to confirm and obtain clarity on the agreement on the 2-hour rule.

AG confirmed that there are monthly meetings with NSC to discuss the dispensations and at any of these meetings the 2-hour rule could be questioned.

RB said he was interested regarding the impact the Airport has on Bristol and the surrounding area. He said it seems the control mechanisms for the general public is not there, and asked if there is any reason why decisions on dispensations are not made public as they happen? From transparency it would better if they are shared sooner?

AG advised that the information is not shared more regularly as the Airport needs to complete the process described in the presentation and to share the data with NSC prior to it being made public.

HP added that complaints can be made through the Airports CRM portal, and they are then responded with the necessary information.

HB said she put in a complaint about delayed flights and it took around eight weeks for a response to be received.

HP advised she will pick it up with the CRM team as an eight-week response is not ordinary.

TD asked what happens if the Airport hit their quota?

SG confirmed the Airport would take action prior to them reaching the quota which is why they track the data and manage it early. There is more demand for night flights and these are being turned down by ACL to avoid the quota being exceeded.

Questions sent in advance of the meeting by HB will be responded to in writing.

4. AOB - None

5. Date of future meetings :

EEWP on 9th October 2024

ACC 23rd October 2024

DRAFT