

Matter 5
Regional Strategy
Personal ID No. 6191745
Representation No. 6191745
Save Filton Airfield



**Statement to the Examination in Public of South
Gloucestershire Council's Proposed Core Strategy**

Matter 5

Regional Strategy

Paul D. Lee, Robert Hindle, 23 May 2012, v1.1

Question 1

The Regional Strategy for the South West of England (RPG10) remains part of the development plan until the relevant part of the Localism Act is enacted. Is there any suggestion that the CS is not in conformity with this plan?

SFA does not believe the CS is in conformity with this plan (RPG10) with respect to Filton Airfield.

Policy TRAN 9 in RPG10 is pertinent.

Local authorities, airports and transport operators and other agencies should work together to encourage the sustainable development of the region's airports and their associated facilities. In particular they should:

- support the existing airports and airfields in the region to develop their respective roles to serve air travel needs;
- improve surface links and public transport to airports, particularly at Bristol, Exeter and Bournemouth, taking into account the results of the surface access strategies prepared by the Air Transport Forums;
- protect land (including through Public Safety Zones) around airports to secure operational integrity.

(Regional Policy Guidance for the South West (RPG10), page 93).

In addition, RPG10 refers to other documents with respect to aviation.

The South West Regional Air Services Study has been completed and is currently being audited and checked for consistency with the five other RAS Studies as part of the Regional Air Services Co-ordination (RASCO) Study. This will result in six regional consultation documents for each of the component regions that are expected to be issued by the DTLR later in 2001. These are in addition to the recently published Air Transport Consultation Document "The Future of Aviation". The results of these consultation documents and a further one scheduled for later in the year on air services in the South East of England will be fed into the preparation of a new Air Transport White Paper. RPG will need to be reviewed at the appropriate time to take account of the RASCO findings and the policies that emerge in the new White Paper.

(Regional Policy Guidance for the South West (RPG10), page 93, section 8.27).

SFA believes that the CS is not in conformity with these documents. A few examples are shown overleaf.

Air travel has increased five-fold over the past 30 years, and demand is projected to be between two and three times current levels by 2030. Some of our major airports are already close to capacity, so failure to allow for increased capacity could have serious economic consequences, both at national and at regional level. That must be balanced by the need to have regard to the environmental consequences of air travel. The Government believes that simply building more and more capacity to meet demand is not a sustainable way forward. Instead, a balanced approach is required which:

...

* minimises the need for airport development in new locations by making best use of existing capacity where possible;

(The Future of Air Transport (2003), Page 9, Executive Summary).

We believe there is significant potential for growth at existing airports in the South West of England and that this will generate substantial economic benefits to the region. ...

(The Future of Air Transport (2003), Page 102, paragraph 10.6).

Filton and Gloucester Airports play an important local role in respect of business aviation, We fully support the continuation of these roles. ...

(The Future of Air Transport (2003), Page 105, paragraph 10.30).

In the South West, Bristol has seen the largest increase in ATMs¹ (up 65% over the decade) as a result of growth in the number and frequency of services operated.

(The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: The South West (2002), section 2.5.2). ¹ "Air Traffic Movement"

Consultation on general policies for GA was set out in the recent consultation paper, "The Future of Aviation". Whilst this document and the analysis that supports it does not focus on GA, it is worth noting that a number of smaller airfields in the region do have an important role to play. Principally, these are Filton, which is an important base for business aviation and the manufacture and freighting of Airbus parts and Gloucester, which has recreational and business aviation and a GA maintenance base.

(The Future Development of Air Transport in the United Kingdom: The South West (2002), section 7.4.34).

SFA believes that as passenger air travel takes up remaining capacity at Bristol, the closure of Filton would result in Bristol being without a general aviation and business airfield. A Freedom of Information release has shown this is a view shared by some within DfT. SFA believes that Filton has a vital role to play in allowing Bristol Airport to maximise its capacity.

Sadly this opinion now appears to be reality. On 18 May 2012, Bristol Flight Training Centre Limited ceased trading. SFA expects that the high costs of operating from a busy commercial airport such as Bristol (Lulsgate) would have been a factor in this sad loss.

It is incredible to think that soon, there may not be any general aviation in Bristol at all. Potential pilots will have to travel elsewhere for their training, or worse still, be forced to give up on their aspirations altogether. Business aviation will fly elsewhere, taking their investment and wealth generation opportunities with them.

SFA believes that Sir George White will be turning in his grave.

Further Details

Further examples and details can be found in our EiP representation documents, the very latest copies of which can be found at the following locations:

http://www.savefiltonairfield.org/eipdocs/SFA_EIP_LEGALITY.pdf

http://www.savefiltonairfield.org/eipdocs/SFA_EIP_FOI.pdf

http://www.savefiltonairfield.org/eipdocs/SFA_EIP_VISION.pdf

http://www.savefiltonairfield.org/eipdocs/SFA_EIP_SOUND_1.pdf

http://www.savefiltonairfield.org/eipdocs/SFA_EIP_SOUND_2.pdf