

## Bristol Airport expansion plans

Bristol International Airport (BIA) has recently put in its planning application for a major expansion of the airport. The website [www.nobristolairportexpansion.co.uk](http://www.nobristolairportexpansion.co.uk) has summarized the roughly 2,000 pages of documentation as follows:

What is BIA planning to do?

	2008	2016	Change
Passengers	6.2 million	10 million	60% INCREASE
Commercial Flights	60000	86000	40% INCREASE
Passenger car journeys	3.7m	5.7m	50% INCREASE
Night flights	3300	4500	36% INCREASE
Summer night flights	2300	3500	50% INCREASE
CO2 Emissions	520k tonnes	840k tonnes	60% INCREASE

The same website mentions that Bristol City Council, on 29 March, decided unanimously to pass a motion saying "this council believes that BIA should focus on becoming economically and environmentally sustainable without further increasing emissions and other external impacts."

Apart from the increased emissions, the airport's expansion would also clog up more streets, necessitate the expensive expansion of the Rapid Bus Scheme (to which the airport pledges to contribute only a tiny amount of the costs), cause a lot more noise for many communities affected by the flights, and require some greenbelt land to be converted to parking space. If, like me, you don't like this to go ahead, you can write a letter to the Development Control Officer before the consultation on BIA's planning application closes on 13 August:

Neil Underhay  
re: application 09/P/1020/OT2  
North Somerset Council  
Somerset House  
Oxford Street  
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1TG

Another very effective way to make the airport expansion less likely to go ahead is, of course, by not flying in the first place. It's not necessarily as difficult as it sounds. I've given up on plane journeys in 2002 (despite having family and friends in Germany), and I have never regretted this decision. In fact, I now much prefer slower modes of travel, allowing me to take in more of what's on the way. Three of my favourite railway routes - that I all discovered within the last couple of years - are: Chester to Holyhead along the coastline of North Wales (part of two train-and-ferry journeys I made last year to Ireland); Prague to Dresden along the river Vlatva surrounded by beautiful hills and vineyards; and Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh through the Scottish Highlands (experienced on my latest big trip this June - with the outward journey made on the Caledonian Sleeper train from London to Inverness). A good starting point for finding out more about travelling abroad (or on long distances within the UK) without taking the plane is [www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com)

Klaus Huber