

BACKGROUND ON APPLICATION FOR PARTIAL SLOT COORDINATION

What is an airport 'slot'?

A 'slot' is the permission given by an airport 'coordinator' for an aircraft to arrive or depart at a specific airport at a specified time on a specified day. This permission allows an aircraft - along with its crew and any passengers - access to the airport infrastructure, including runway, terminal facilities, baggage handling and operational requirements such as aircraft refuelling.

Why have slots?

The management of airport slots is required at airports where the available airport infrastructure is insufficient to meet the demand of airlines and other aircraft operators. It also gives airports greater control of when flights arrive and depart.

What is coordination?

Airport coordination is a means of managing airport capacity through the application of a set of rules set out by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Coordination involves the allocation of constrained or limited airport capacity to airlines and other aircraft operators to ensure a viable airport and air transport operation.

The process of slot allocation is designed to achieve the maximum utilisation of scarce airport capacity within an acceptable level of delay.

If an airport is designated as Level 3 coordinated, it enables the control of slot allocation along with the monitoring of slot usage to ensure carriers adhere to the given slot.

What are 'airport levels'?

For the purposes of airport coordination, airports are categorized by the responsible authorities (the Department for Transport in the UK) according to the following levels of congestion:

- a) Level 1: airports where the capacity of the airport infrastructure is generally adequate to meet the demands of airport users at all times.

Level 1 examples: Bournemouth, Durham Tees Valley, Doncaster Sheffield, Exeter.

- b) Level 2: airports where there is potential for congestion during some periods of the day, week, or season, which can be resolved by schedule adjustments mutually agreed between the airlines and facilitator. A facilitator is appointed to organise the planned operations of airlines using or planning to use the airport.

Level 2 facilitated examples: Bristol, East Midlands, Newcastle, Southampton.

- c) Level 3: airports where demand for airport infrastructure significantly exceeds the airport's capacity during the relevant period, or where governments have imposed conditions that make it impossible to meet demand. A coordinator is appointed to allocate slots to airlines

and other aircraft operators using or planning to use the airport as a means of managing the declared capacity. Today there are 159 fully slot coordinated airports around the world.

Level 3 coordinated examples: Heathrow, London City, Luton, Manchester.

What is Bristol Airport's status?

Bristol Airport is currently a Level 2 facilitated airport, and has been since 2006. Bristol currently uses Airport Coordination Limited (ACL) as its appointed facilitator (also known as 'scheduler').

Bristol Airport's Level 3 application

With year-on-year increases in passenger demand, Bristol is one of the fastest growing airports in the UK and will handle 8 million passengers in 2017.

Since 2010, the Airport has invested more than £160 million in new infrastructure and facilities, which includes two terminal extensions, enlarged security screening / search areas, additional immigration facilities and three new aircraft stands.

However, increased demand has not been distributed evenly throughout the day, with airline operating models resulting in a particularly busy schedule during the early morning and late evening periods. This has the potential to increase activity in the night period, which is subject to planning conditions limiting the number of movements and total noise impact of flights. With more new routes planned for summer 2018, there is now a need to more tightly control the number of slots granted in the night period to ensure planning conditions continue to be met.

Therefore, in May 2017, Bristol Airport wrote to the Department for Transport (DfT), requesting designation by the Secretary of State for Transport of Bristol Airport as a 'coordinated' airport, to come into effect from summer 2018. The request was for Level 3 status to be granted during the summer season only, which is approximately the last week of March until the last week of October, and only to be effective between 11.00pm and 07.00am British Summer Time i.e. for night time plus a shoulder period each side.

Having this Level 3 status will give Bristol Airport greater control over its night flights and help prevent the night flight movement and noise quota count limits – part of the Airport's planning permission (granted in 2011) with North Somerset Council – being exceeded.

Outside of this coordinated night period, there would be no change to the normal Level 2 schedule facilitation rules. The majority of the Airport's aircraft movements would therefore not be affected, and subject only to voluntary changes in schedule.

What happens when an Airport applies for Level 3 coordinated status?

The responsible authority - the DfT - must ensure that an airport is only designated as Level 3 following a thorough demand and capacity analysis and full consultation with airline stakeholders and interested parties. The airport should be designated as Level 3 only if this analysis and consultation concludes that the demand for airport infrastructure significantly exceeds the declared capacity and there is no practical way to alleviate the problem in the short term.

Bristol Airport appointed Mott MacDonald to conduct a comprehensive capacity analysis of Bristol Airport's facilities and night time operations.

Who are the stakeholders in relation to a Level 3 status?

When an application is received for a change in airport level, the DfT holds a consultation with all relevant stakeholders. These are: airlines and aircraft operators; the airport; air traffic control authorities; the coordinator of the airport; the government authority (in the UK this is the Civil Aviation Authority).

When did consultation take place?

Consultation was carried out by the Department for Transport and took place from the beginning of August and concluded on 13 September.

What happens next?

The Secretary of State for Transport considered Bristol Airport's capacity analysis and the views of consultees before making the decision to designate Bristol Airport as partially co-ordinated for the night-time and morning and evening shoulder periods from the summer 2018 scheduling season, and subsequent summer scheduling seasons.

What will change next summer?

The airport will need to set up a Coordination Committee with airlines and ACL to agree a set of Local Rules that determine how the limited slots are allocated.

Current IATA guidelines grant airlines that already had slots in summer 2017 "grandfather" rights to the same slots in 2018. Any left in the pot will then be open for use by all airlines. A small General Aviation pool will be kept, based on the number of movements used in 2017 (around 45).

The full 3000 summer night movement would not be allocated. This is because our planning permission is based on actual runway time rather than scheduled time. A buffer would be built in to allow flexibility for an anticipated level of late running.

Overall, Level 3 coordination adds greater control to Bristol Airport to ensure that the planning condition limit is not exceeded and discourage scheduling of flights in the night period unless absolutely necessary.

GLOSSARY

ACL - Airport Coordination Limited

This is the company appointed by Bristol Airport to conduct its schedules facilitation.

CAA – Civil Aviation Authority

The statutory corporation which oversees and regulates all aspects of civil aviation in the United Kingdom. It is public corporation of the Department for Transport.

DfT – Department for Transport

The Department for Transport (DfT) is the government department responsible for the English transport network and a limited number of transport matters in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that have not been devolved. The department is run by the Secretary of State for Transport.

IATA – International Air Transport Association

A trade association of the world's airlines, whose members (currently 274 airlines) account for approximately 83% of the passenger carrying capacity of all airlines. IATA supports airline activity and helps formulate industry policy and standards.