

LHR AIRPORT EXPANSION CONSULTATION
Heathrow Airport Ltd
The Compass Centre
Nelson Road
Hounslow
Middlesex
TW6 2GW

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To whom it may concern

I am writing as the Independent Chair of the Heathrow Area Transport Forum to provide comments on the Surface Access Proposals which form part of the Airport Expansion Consultation carried out in Summer 2019.

Since the HATF is only recently re-formed it wasn't possible at this stage to provide a commentary on the entirety of these proposals. However, the newly reconstituted Board of HATF have discussed the challenges facing Heathrow with regard to heavy rail and underground rail access. Below are my comments which distil the views of the Board at our meeting on 17th September 2019. We were grateful for presentations from HAL colleagues and the Civil Servants from the DfT who provided presentations to supplement the Consultation materials.

The Heathrow Area Transport Forum Board has reviewed progress on the high capacity rail schemes proposed to serve Heathrow and outlines its observations and concerns below.

The need to migrate from car dependency to public transport use

It's widely accepted by all participants in the debate about airport expansion - and is stated clearly within the Government's Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) - that passengers and staff accessing Heathrow airport are currently dramatically over-dependent on private cars. At present only 38% of passenger trips are by public transport and the figure for the workforce is even lower at 26%. Consequently, the airport and its surroundings suffer from extremely poor air quality and surface transport contributes significantly to Heathrow's carbon footprint. Reducing the use of unsustainable transport modes - motor cars - should be an urgent priority in the era of Climate Change emergency.

To achieve the required modal shift targets (from private cars to public transport, walking and cycling) outlined within the ANPS, as well as the consequent reduction in emissions and traffic congestion, there needs to be a significant increase in the number of passengers utilising public transport. It is anticipated that the number of public transport passengers is required to double to 50.5million (or 55% of mode share) as a result of Heathrow's

aspiration for an expanded airport by 2040. While some proposed rail schemes are not yet fully designed or modelled in detail, it is self-evident that this will require the creation of additional public transport capacity over and above that which is currently envisaged within the Heathrow Airport 'Assessment' case, as outlined in its current Surface Access proposals. The current services accessing the airport have limited geographical linkages - there are significant gaps in the rail network - especially to the south and west, which mean airport passengers and workforce are forced to use either private cars or relatively slow and sometimes indirect bus services. The proposed Vehicle Access Charge (VAC) measure to discourage car usage is not going to be effective without the provision of suitable public transport alternatives for passengers and staff.

The majority of HATF Board members are of the view that the high capacity rail schemes and rail expansion plans described in the Heathrow Airport Surface Access proposals 'Expected' case should be shifted from the 'desirable' category into the necessary prerequisites for expansion outlined in the 'Assessment' case.

Rail schemes and services in focus

Southern Rail Access to Heathrow

Southern Rail access is particularly important to Heathrow, its passengers and workforce, due to its ability to provide increased connectivity to regional locations currently without direct links to Heathrow. These areas are noted to be key hotspots in relation to passenger demand and popular residential locations for the workforce. The Assessment case is not credible without a definitive commitment to the creation of a new Southern Rail scheme.

The HATF Board strongly supports the concept of a Southern Rail Access Link (SRAtH) and the eight Strategic Objectives presented in DfT's consultation held in July 2019. However, lack of clear and linear progress on this scheme means that it is currently simply an outline concept and a very long way from delivery.

HATF Board members call upon Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) and the Government to provide a clear and explicit commitment towards SRAtH, with a clear programme outlining its pathway from a concept to a committed scheme: HAL, by shifting SRAtH into the Assessment (base case) for Heathrow expansion in its DCO application & the Government by making faster progress in the development of the scheme. Moreover, HATF considers that much faster progress is needed in the design and development of SRAtH and that the potential route options should be narrowed down so that a clear business and regeneration case can be developed for a short list of potential projects.

There is currently some market interest in investing in a potential scheme and it would be disastrous if this interest and enthusiasm from the private sector were to be dissipated because of further uncertainty and subsequent loss of momentum. Real progress on a

scheme design would open up the opportunity of productive engagement with the commercial development sector.

Western Rail Link to Heathrow

The proposed Western Rail Link scheme (WRLtH), which is much further advanced in its development, enjoys enormous support from transport stakeholders - including the HATF Board, business, workforce and local Government. It is evident that WRLtH is justified by the current over reliance on cars of passengers and staff alike to access the airport from the west. The west of England is the second largest catchment area for Heathrow after London, with over 8M journeys in 2017. WRLtH is required at the earliest opportunity, whether airport expansion proceeds or not, and should definitely precede any further growth of passengers and workforce at Heathrow. It will help reduce the surface traffic burden, relieving traffic congestion, improving journey times and the reliability of journeys for passengers and workforce alike, as well as reducing the damaging environmental impacts of traffic to the west and north west of the airport. Moreover, it will improve the quality of life of the workforce and access to the airport for the local community.

We recommend that the Government and HAL should both show their commitment towards delivering this scheme as a matter of urgency. HAL should also move this scheme from the 'Expected' case to the 'Assessment' case.

Piccadilly Line

Currently 80% of passengers using rail to access the airport originate within London and demand for the Piccadilly Line is strong, with upwards of 10M passengers per year currently using this service. Sadly, the financial burden caused by the overrunning of Crossrail 1 construction has contributed to the current stalling of plans for a significant upgrade to both signalling and trains on the Piccadilly Line. The impact for surface access at Heathrow is significant. Whilst current funding and plans are in place to install some new Piccadilly Line rolling stock, which will improve capacity by 23%, proposals to upgrade signals and trains to deliver an additional 41% capacity by 2030 are stalled due to lack of funding.

On this basis, any modelling by HAL of the Piccadilly Line capacity should continue to be on a worst-case scenario - that is take on board only the 1st phase (confirmed) capacity increase of 23%. HATF supports TfL's, and the business communities' representations to the Government for a commitment to funding of the phase 2 Piccadilly Line upgrade, which would result in the delivery of an additional capacity uplift of 41%. This would contribute to the achievement of the modal shift target by providing, faster, more frequent and modernised services to the area generating the highest levels of passenger demand. Tube upgrades are amongst the most cost efficient of public transport investments in that they generate maximum passenger number increases for the least financial investment. As such

the Piccadilly Line upgrade would be a cost-efficient contributor to achieving ANPS modal shift targets.

High Speed 2 (HS2)

HATF supports the provision of HS2 given that, combined with an interchange at Old Oak Common, it will provide better access to Heathrow from the Midlands and the North.

Previous engagement activity undertaken by the DfT demonstrated the importance of Old Oak Common operating as an interchange. Coupling this interchange with Crossrail at Old Oak Common is especially significant, highlighting the need for a full scheme, with this station not acting as a terminus, but rather a through station.

Furthermore, it is important that the system design of stations associated with HS2 incorporates facilities and features to facilitate the safe movement of luggage.

Key Design Features

HATF is keen to ensure that the design principles for the High Capacity Rail programmes in review should encompass some key principles.

Firstly, there should be an absolute commitment to universal best practice in disability accessibility.

HATF also wishes to see the creation of 'seamless' interchange facilities supported by timetable co-ordination and excellent customer services, utilising smart ticketing, digital information and journey planning. If possible, rail services should be designed to serve all terminal stations without interchange within Heathrow Airport boundary being necessary.

Additional consideration needs to be given to timetable planning and maintenance schedules to enable some services to support the night shift travel demands of the workforce. The inconvenience of travelling for shift work is an important reason why many staff continue to use their private cars.

All services, stations and interchanges serving Heathrow should incorporate special design features to ensure the safe, efficient and easy movement of luggage.

The planning of all the potential rail schemes under discussion should be co-ordinated with each other so that there is no future conflict or additional costs created.

Early consideration should be given to a phased plan for the construction of each scheme and any airport expansion to make sure that construction traffic, spoil disposal and the

continuing running of freight and passenger services are not jeopardised. Co-ordination and communication will be key.

Conclusion

The HATF Board recognises the potentially transformative impact that high capacity rail programmes could have on passenger and workforce modal shift, which would support HAL's ambition to achieve the targets outlined in the ANPS.

Improvements in the rail infrastructure and the creation of additional capacity would support the achievement of the modal shift targets outlined in the ANPS and play a positive role in the reduction of Heathrow's carbon footprint and other dangerous emissions. Conversely a lack of adequate public transport capacity will lead to dramatic increases in highway and public transport congestion, pollution and economically damaging travel delays.

Whilst there are a number of complexities that surround these programmes, it is crucial that both the Government and HAL seek to provide their clear commitment towards these schemes and make faster and more certain progress in their development.

Yours sincerely,



Valerie Shawcross CBE

Independent Chair
Heathrow Area Transport Forum