

Active Travel Seminar

Summary Report

Date: 23rd January 2020

Prepared by: Andrew Tucker

Status: Public

Contents

Active Travel Seminar	1
Introduction.....	3
Section one - Introduction to the active travel challenge.....	4
Section two - Aspirations of local stakeholders.	6
Section three - Workshop	7
Closing Remarks	9

Introduction

Val Shawcross the independent chair of the Heathrow Active Travel Forum (HATF) welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. After explaining the role and purpose of HATF, she stressed the importance that she and the HATF board place in seeing to improve Heathrow's active travel provision, particularly given the challenges faced by the airport in terms of congestion, air quality, carbon and public health.

Christian Wolmar a HATF board member and trustee the London Cycling Campaign then provided an introduction including outlining the objectives of the workshop and the day's agenda.

Section one - Introduction to the active travel challenge

The London Cycling Campaign (LCC) provided a plenary presentation with a high-level overview of some of the key challenges and opportunities facing Heathrow in expanding the uptake of active travel to the airport. Some of the key points made by LCC included:

- Heathrow's target of having 6% of employees travelling to work by active travel is going to be very challenging and requires serious commitment. While there are some best practice employers in London who are currently reaching around 10%, the nature of the type of workforce at Heathrow (such as aircrew) and the geography of the airport will make reaching anywhere near this level of active travel very difficult. By way of further benchmarking the current proportion of cycling trips from Hackney is 8%, while for Schiphol it is around 15% LCC further explained, that although a quarter of Heathrow's employees live within a 5km radius of the Airport, only 4% of employee's car share – highlighting that car use at Heathrow is a serious issue.
- To be able to reach a 6% mode share target, Heathrow need to address two factors:
 - Cycling is currently not comfortable or safe
 - Driving is currently comfortable and safe
- TfL cycling analysis shows 94% of cycle trips are under 8km, with trips over 8km only undertaken by a very small proportion of "elite" cyclists. This means that the overwhelming focus of HAL's active travel strategy needs to be on trips less than 6km door to door.
- To effectively encourage people to cycle, workers need to have secure cycle parking at their place of work. If they are asked to cycle to an off-site location and transfer to their place of work by other means - as for example anyone currently working in the central terminal area is required to do - then this will act as a major deterrent. It is vital therefore for Heathrow to consider how active travel can be used within and across the airport, such that all employment centres can be accessed from all sides.
- People will not cycle unless there are high quality routes that provide a safe environment for the whole of their journey. Routes should not be isolated, they need to be well lit and signposted, and they need to be segregated from any fast-moving traffic. LCC stressed that any network is only as good as its weakest link, and employees need only perceive there being one poor quality element within their journey to act as a major deterrent.
- LCC further stressed that that Heathrow need to look into providing individual travel planning, to help encourage behaviour change across Heathrow
- LCC expressed some surprise that the proposed Heathrow ULEZ charge would not be paid by employees, as this might be another useful mechanism to help increase active travel take up.

Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) then provided a presentation on their current and future strategy for improving the provision and take up of active travel. Some of the key points made by Heathrow included:

- Acknowledgment that the current active travel infrastructure is inadequate and does little to incentivise airport workers to walk or cycle to the airport. As a result, only 1% of current airport workers cycle to work, with this level remaining relatively static over the last few years.
- Heathrow have an ambitious target to improve active travel take up, and that this target forms a key element of their future surface access strategy. To do this they are implementing a number of short-term measures and incentives to help encourage the work force to cycle more, such as tax-free bike scheme, behaviour change training, Way to Go campaign to raise awareness on how important the ANPS target are and piloting Brompton bikes to give employees a way to get around Heathrow during the day.
- Heathrow then outlined how in the longer term they want to use the airport expansion to provide extensive new active travel infrastructure, including new active travel provision to the central

terminal areas, from both the north and south, an active travel network into key employment centres and a green loop around the airport.

Following the presentations, a wide-ranging question and answer session was held between the speakers and the floor. Key points of discussion included;

- It was queried to LCC whether they thought a 6% mode share is feasible, they responded that they think it is feasible, however requires a high commitment from Heathrow.
- A question was raised regarding making driving uncomfortable, Heathrow acknowledged it has plans to move towards Needs Based Parking.
- The floor agreed that improving the permeability of the airport was an essential requirement, and that the provision of direct access to points of employment rather than to off-site cycle hubs was particularly important.
- There was widespread agreement that the current active travel provision to the airport was poor, and that there were many locations – particularly to the west –lacked any kind of active travel link to the airport at all.
- While HAL's proposals for a radically enhanced active travel network were welcomed, it was identified that this infrastructure needed to be of the highest quality, be extensive and offer direct active travel routes from all directions.
- It was suggested that the HAL's forthcoming Development Consent Order (DCO) for the expansion needs to include provision for any land beyond existing road boundaries needed to provide active travel lanes.
- It was recommended that HAL investigate the potential of a local cycle hire scheme

Section two - Aspirations of local stakeholders.

Colne Valley Park provided a presentation with their view on how a well-designed active travel network should not only provide opportunities for improved access to the airport, but also a wider objective to improve connectivity between communities across the region. They also showed how the Colne Valley is keen to ensure that the expanded airport provides a really positive legacy for leisure trips, by bike or foot, in the region. They welcomed the concept of a green loop but stressed that this is not an end to itself but needs to be something that is integrated in a wider active travel network. They expressed concerns around some of the specific elements of HAL current proposals for an enhanced active travel network, such as the proposed crossing of the M25. In this and other locations they would like HAL to be much more ambitious and innovative in the design of some of the active travel and green loop links.

Hounslow Borough Council provided a presentation of the challenges they face in encouraging active travel. Hounslow introduced the current situation; they share a 5.5km border with HAL, 10,000 people in their borough work at Heathrow, and 1% of these individuals currently cycle to work. Their introduction showed the scale of the challenge by showing that of these 10,000 employees, there are currently 7000 daily car journeys to the airport but only 200 cycle trips. Hounslow then outlined some of the current active travel infrastructure in their borough, much of which they recognised as needing significant improvement. It was stressed that to be successful it was imperative that any active travel infrastructure is designed to agreed industry best practice standards such as the London Cycle Design Standards, Greenways Design Guidance, and TfL New Route Quality Criteria (2019). Hounslow further emphasised that given the nature of work at Heathrow, employees need infrastructure and facilities to be fit for purpose 24/7. This includes ensuring that all paths are well lit, and safety is a priority. Hounslow closed their presentation with mentioning that they would like to work together with Heathrow to achieve these targets.

Dr. Will Norman TfL's walking and cycling commissioner provided a summary of TfL's perspective on the challenges and opportunities for promoting active travel. He started by providing some wider background on the growing climate and air crisis challenges, as well as some of the physical and mental health issues that can occur from obesity and inactivity and showed how active travel can play a key role tackling these issues. He stressed that an active travel network should look to be more ambitious than just serving the needs of the airport - important thought though this is. To do so he stressed the importance of all stakeholders, such as local authorities, HAL, TfL and local employees working in partnership, and made clear that any new infrastructure needs to be provided to the highest active travel standards. Other points of discussion included;

- Heathrow should not just focus on the traditional active travel measures but should recognise that e-bikes are a key future technology and may encourage a much higher take up of active travel.
- The importance of active travel as not only a means to make an end to end journey, but also to access public transport.
- Agreement with other speakers that the perimeter of the airport is not the end destination, and that is therefore crucial that improvements are made to the permeability of the airport.
- The value of bike share schemes, and the importance of high quality cycle parking and changing facilities at the point of work.
- Active travel needs to be promoted from the top down, having the appropriate infrastructure is the first measure, however it needs to be accompanied by a behavioural and cultural shift

Living Streets then provided a presentation that re-enforced many of the points made by other speakers, with particular emphasis the importance of providing high quality walking routes alongside other active travel measures.

During the subsequent question and answer session, the following additional points were raised from the floor;

- Improved walking routes within the airport need to be considered for a successful active travel network.
- The importance of engaging all local authorities including Hillingdon in further developing active travel proposals.

Section three - Workshop

A working lunch was then provided, with delegates asked to break into one of two groups.

One group, facilitated by Sustrans, discussed at what measures employers could take to help improve cycling and walking. With use of a case study, discussion centred around the importance of ensuring that workplaces had well placed secure cycle storage and high-quality shower and changing facilities with ample locker storage and drying facilities.

The discussion raised some of the specific challenges facing Heathrow such as the wide range of employers in the area and dispersed nature of the site. Ideas proposed included the use of reward plans and other financial incentives to encourage employees to use sustainable modes of travel, as well as the importance of engaging with unions and the workforce.

The second group was facilitated by Val Shawcross, which focused on providing recommendations to Heathrow on how to become walking and cycling friendly. The group started the discussion by focusing on walking and boiling down some of the key priority concerns. Some of the priority concerns discussed are the following:

- A pedestrian network is to be included in the Masterplan within the boundary and external routes
- There is a need for complex walking structures not just for walking commuters but also for interchanges
- Legibility signage needed
- Opportunities to think of speed limits on roads – should use the TfL matrix and have roads within the airport boundary cater for walking
- Heathrow to focus more on the local community rather than just passengers – there need to be active benefits to the local community with access to the natural environment

The group moved on to discuss key recommendations to Heathrow to become cycling friendly, points included:

- Agreed standards of the infrastructure need to go beyond the TfL quality standards, standards need to be aspirational
- Roundtable agreement for Heathrow to encourage moving towards electric bikes
- Infrastructure and proposals need to be future proofed
- Due to the density of the network, spokes need to reach out to more communities
- Heathrow is to work with the local community and school to provide cycle training
- Bus network is to be improved to improve walking
- Heathrow need to provide a level playing field, the cost of travel by car into Heathrow needs to be increased and policies need to be put in place to discourage car usage

Closing Remarks

Christian Wolmar provided some concluding remarks summarising much of the key areas of discussion that had emerged during the day. While he was encouraged by much of scope of HAL's ambition to radically improve active travel to the airport, he was also mindful of the scale of challenge given the current level of active travel use and the scale of take up from even best practice employers.

He concluded by suggesting that to really deliver a transformative approach to active travel required the engagement and support at the highest executive level, not just within HAL, but also within government, the CAA, local authorities, Transport for London and so on.

He thanked all the speakers and attendees for contributing to a very useful day.

