

From: Val Shawcross, Chair HATF

To: HATF Members and associated parties

Title: Lobbying for Western Rail and Southern Access to Heathrow

Date: July 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The HATF Board have recently been considering how best to continue to lobby for delivery of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) and Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH) schemes. Regardless of whether the airport is expanded, the HATF Board consider both schemes are vital components for delivering a sustainable transport strategy that meets the needs of airport passengers, workers, and the wider region.
- 1.2 With Government reconsidering its spending priorities in light of the covid crisis, and the expansion programme facing its own uncertainty and delay, both schemes are now at a crucial juncture in their development;
 - The DCO for the Western Rail scheme was supposed to have been deposited last year, but without an agreed funding package the DCO has been repeatedly delayed. There now remains only a small window of opportunity to submit a DCO, before the scheme would need to undergo a new round of statutory consultation, something that would inevitably add further delay and costs to the programme.
 - The Southern Access Scheme is much further behind in its development. It is currently undefined beyond some high level modally agnostic objectives that were identified by the Government last year. However, since then there has been little obvious progress in identifying a preferred scheme and moving forward with its development and planning.
- 1.3 For these reasons, HATF have recently written to Grant Shapps the Secretary of State for Transport to remind him of the importance to which the HATF Board attach to both of these schemes.
- 1.4 Grant Shapps responded promptly, and confirmed the Government's support for WRtH is still subject to it having a satisfactory business case and the agreement of "acceptable terms with the Heathrow aviation industry". He stated that the DCO for Western Rail faces further delay due to the paused expansion programme and the impact of the covid-19 virus, but that Network Rail continue to work on developing the scheme. On SAtH, he stated that the Government is currently developing a pre-strategic outline business case and that potential commercial models are in the process of being shortlisted, preceding a market announcement, expected to be early next year.

- 1.5 The HATF Board is now encouraging members, local authorities, LEPs and other relevant organisations to similarly write to Government and particularly their MPs with their own lobbying letters. To help support this, HATF are providing some background information on the scheme including;
- A summary of the key benefits that might be provided by Western Rail Access and Southern Access based on publicly available material;
 - A list of local MPs together with their contact details;
 - A copy of a letter from HATF to Grant Shapps setting out HATF support to the schemes;
 - A reply from Grant Shapps confirming his support for both schemes but that also the DCO for Western Rail faces further delay due to the paused expansion programme and the impact of the covid-19 virus.
 - A copy of a letter from the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to Grant Shapps setting out their arguments for the scheme; and,
 - A letter from Network Rail to the HATF chair with further supporting information.

2. Summary of the Western Rail to Heathrow scheme and its key benefits

2.1 The Western Rail Link to Heathrow scheme involves building a new 6.5km rail link between the Great Western Main Line and London Heathrow Airport. It would leave the Main Line between Langley and Iver, then descend underneath the main railway line into a cutting before entering a 5km tunnel. The tunnel would pass under Richings Park and Colnbrook and then merge with existing rail lines underground at Heathrow Terminal 5.

2.2 The main benefits of the scheme presented by Network Rail in their consultation during summer 2018 include:

- Reduced rail journey times between Reading and Heathrow through the delivery of a new, faster, frequent, more reliable direct train service to Heathrow with four trains per hour in each direction. All trains would call at Reading and Slough and alternate trains at Twyford and Maidenhead. Journey times could be as short as 26 minutes from Reading and 6 to 7 minutes from Slough.
- Significantly improved rail connectivity to Heathrow from the Thames Valley, South Coast, South West, South Wales and West Midlands.
- An alternative form of transport for passengers and the large number of people who work at the airport who are currently travelling by road.
- Reduced congestion on roads, including the M4, M3 and M25 resulting in lower CO2 emissions equivalent to approximately 30 million road miles per year.
- Economic growth and new jobs across the Thames Valley and surrounding areas.
- Reduced passenger congestion at London Paddington.

2.3 The scheme has been in gestation for a long time;

- Network rail conducted informal consultations in 2015 and 2016 that helped develop a detailed design.
- In summer 2018 Network Rail undertook a final round of statutory public consultation that showed overwhelming local support for the scheme.
- A Development Consent Order, which is needed to build the scheme, was originally hoped to be submitted in 2019, but has been delayed due to ongoing negotiations between NR, DfT, HAL and the CAA over securing funding for the scheme.
- The consent can be expected to take around a year. The main construction works that could then follow would take approximately 5 years, followed by a period of testing and commissioning. This would result in rail services starting around 2029.

2.4 Salient issues that parties may wish to raise with MPs and government include:

- Heathrow is Europe's busiest airport and one of the largest single-site employers in the UK, providing 22% of employment in the local area.
- Heathrow is poorly served by rail from the Thames Valley, South Coast, South West, South Wales and West Midlands and currently 97% of passengers from these areas travel to the airport by road.
- The scheme and its business case is not dependent on a third runway. It can provide significant benefits even if the airport remains a two-runway airport in perpetuity.
- The scheme does not just benefit the airport. It provides significant benefits to wide areas of the country that have poor airport links and as such can help with the Government's "levelling up" agenda.
- If the DCO is not submitted this year, then it is likely that Network Rail would have to undertake a new statutory consultation, introducing additional delay and cost into the programme.
- The scheme design is at relatively mature stage, and subject to a DCO, is "shovel ready". The construction itself will employ over 180 workers per month during a five year construction process.
- The scheme can help meet the UK's climate change targets while also mitigating the some of the climate impacts of Heathrow.

3. Summary of the Southern Access to Heathrow scheme and its key benefits

3.1 The Southern Access to Heathrow is not a defined scheme. Instead the Government had defined a set of modally agnostic strategic objectives, against which it wishes to seek market led solutions.

3.2 Over the last two decades, various rail schemes linking Heathrow to the Southern Rail Network to Waterloo, Surrey and Hampshire have been proposed, including the aborted Airtrack scheme. In 2015 Network Rail completed a major rail study to identify

the potential market and preferred options for a southern rail scheme. Other proposals include the Heathrow Southern Railway¹ and Spelthorne's proposed Southern Light Railway².

- 3.3 In 2018 DfT undertook a market sounding exercise to explore options for bringing forward SRLtH with greater private sector involvement than has conventionally been used for rail infrastructure projects. The key findings of the review, which did not provide any details of any proposed schemes or their merits were that;
- responses did not support a market led approach to Southern Rail Link to Heathrow;
 - the market indicated significant interest for involvement in the development and financing of the Southern Rail Link to Heathrow;
 - the Department should provide greater detail on minimum requirements and objectives; and,
 - the Department should consider an appropriate commercial model for early market involvement.
- 2.5 In November 2019, and following consultation, Government published high level objectives for the scheme. These included;
- Encouraging modal shift and reduce road congestion;
 - Reducing environmental impacts;
 - Connecting communities;
 - Boosting economic growth and encourage regeneration;
 - Enhancing our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to invest;
 - Minimising the impact on current and future passenger and freight journeys and services;
 - Being deliverable; and
 - Being affordable and value for money.
- 2.6 Salient issues you may wish to raise or point out with MPs or other key stakeholders include:
- Southern Access to Heathrow could provide extensive benefits to the surrounding region as it would link extensively to existing transport networks providing opportunities to improve access to communities and regions as well as the airport.

¹ <https://heathrowrail.com/>

² <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/18267/Southern-Light-Railway>

- The scheme should not be dependent on a third runway, and can provide extensive benefits whether or not the airport is expanded
- The scheme can help support the governments 'levelling up' agenda by providing access to the airport from regions that have poor connectivity to the airport.
- The scheme can help support mode shift, reducing congestion and improving air quality while also helping to meet the UK climate change commitments.
- Progress to date in identifying and developing a preferred scheme has been disappointingly slow. The Government now need to show urgency and leadership in moving the development of this scheme forward.

Contact Details of local MPs

Name	Role	Email Address	Postal Address
Grant Shapps	Secretary of State for Transport	TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk	Office of the Secretary of State for Transport, Department for Transport, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road
Chris Heaton-Harris	DfT Minister for Rail	chris.heatonharris_mp@dft.gov.uk	Chris Heaton-Harris, Minister for Rail, Department for Transport, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road
Kelly Tolhurst	Aviation Minister	kelly.tolhurst_mp@dft.gov.uk	Kelly Tolhurst, Aviation Minister, Department for Transport, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road
Simon Hart	Secretary of State for Wales	secretary.state@ukgovwales.gov.uk	Office of the Secretary of State for Wales. 1 Caspian Point, Cardiff, Wales, CF10 4DQ
Jesse Norman	Financial Secretary to the Treasury	fst.action@hmtrasury.gov.uk	HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards, London, SW1A 2HQ
Theresa May	MP Maidenhead	mayt@parliament.uk	Theresa May MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
James Sunderland	MP Bracknell	james.sunderland.mp@parliament.uk	James Sunderland MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Adam Afriyie	MP Windsor	adam.afriyie.mp@parliament.uk	Adam Afriyie MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Steve Baker	MP Wycombe	steve.baker.mp@parliament.uk	Steve Baker MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Alok Sharma	MP Reading East	alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk	Alok Sharma MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Laura Farris	MP Newbury	laura.farris.mp@parliament.uk	Laura Farris MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
John Redwood	MP Wokingham	john.redwood.mp@parliament.uk	John Redwood MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Tan Dhesi	MP Slough	tan.dhesi.mp@parliament.uk	Tan Dhesi MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Ben Spencer	MP Runnymede and Weybridge	ben.spencer.mp@parliament.uk	Ben Spencer MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Joy Morrissey	MP Beaconsfield	joy.morrissey.mp@parliament.uk	Joy Morrissey MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA



Val Shawcross CBE
Independent Chair
Heathrow Area Transport Forum
chair@hatf.org.uk

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

16th July 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

RE: HATF Support for Western and Southern Access schemes to Heathrow as a 2-runway airport.

In January I wrote to you as the independent chair of the Heathrow Area Transport Forum (HATF), stressing the urgent need to secure the delivery of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) and other high capacity rail schemes to Heathrow Airport.

I was very grateful to receive a reply from Paul Maynard in which he explained that while Government also recognised the widespread benefits of the scheme, both to airport and non-airport users, that the Government's support for the scheme was dependent on a strong business case and the reaching of acceptable commercial terms with Heathrow. He also explained that the Government intends to make the Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH) scheme a 'pathfinder project' with increased levels of commercial involvement than have conventionally been seen in transport infrastructure delivery, and that work is ongoing to develop an appropriate 'market led' commercial' model.

Since then of course there have been two significant events. Firstly, the Court of Appeal's ruling on the judicial review of the Government's Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) has caused Heathrow to pause its expansion programme pending an appeal from Heathrow or a redrafting of the ANPS. And secondly, the coronavirus crisis has had a devastating impact on the aviation industry, resulting in a significant downturn in demand.

In light of this I, and the HATF board, have been working closely with Heathrow, airlines, local authorities, LEPS, and other key stakeholders to develop a revised long term surface access strategy for Heathrow that is able to accounts for short, medium and long term impacts of these events.

All stakeholders are clear that whether or not the airport is expanded, the WRAtH scheme is an essential priority for both the airport and the regions. Work by Network Rail and local authorities has shown that WRAtH will provide a significant boost to the UK economy, generating an additional £1.5 billion economic activity and helping generate 42,000 jobs. It will support a modal shift from road to rail that will remove over 1 million car journeys from some of the most congested roads around Heathrow, providing a reduction in CO2 equivalent to removing 30 million road miles per year.

Network Rail's consultation found that over 70% of local people supported the scheme. However, the scheme benefits much more than just the airport and local region. It will provide widespread transformational benefits across large parts of the country including the west, south west and south of England, and south Wales. As such it can help play a key role in the Government's 'levelling up' agenda.

We therefore urge you to reach an appropriate commercial agreement with Heathrow, CAA and other funders that is independent of the expansion programme, such that a DCO application can be submitted later this year. We understand that if the DCO is delayed beyond this year, then the scheme will need to be reconsulted, which is likely to add at least two years to this urgently needed and already much delayed programme.

The HATF Board also continue to support the SAtH project. While the Board and I are cognisant of the ambition to allow a market led approach, we are also increasingly frustrated with the seemingly slow progress over the last decade that has been made in even identifying a preferred scheme. Given the SAtH's vital importance to the wider region and the economy of the south east, we would urge that increased resource is provided to help move this scheme forward such that a detailed design and planning process can be undertaken within the next year.

I would be very happy to discuss further the work of the Heathrow Area Transport Forum, and in particular our development of a partnership based surface access strategy that can effectively, sustainably and efficiently meet the needs of airport users, workers and the wider regions, under both an expanded and two runway airport.

Yours sincerely,



Val Shawcross CBE
Independent Chair
Heathrow Area Transport Forum



Department
for Transport

Val Shawcross CBE
Independent Chair
Heathrow Area Transport Forum

Via email: chair@hatf.org.uk

From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: grant.shapps@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/301071
Your Ref:

7 July 2020

Dear Val,

I am writing in response to your letter dated 16th July, titled 'HATF Support for Western and Southern Access schemes to Heathrow as a 2-runway airport'.

I welcome your continued support for the Heathrow Rail Access Programme. As you have rightly mentioned, there are two events that have significantly impacted the development of both the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) and Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH) schemes. These are the Court of Appeal's ruling on the legality of the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) in February and the unprecedented impacts arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

I would like to assure you that my officials are working hard during this unprecedented time to deal with the challenges presented by these events. The Government has now recommenced communications with Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) regarding next steps to agreeing a funding contribution for WRLtH. In this regard, the Government's conditions for supporting the scheme are unchanged, in that its support for WRLtH is subject to a satisfactory business case and the agreement of acceptable terms with the Heathrow Aviation industry.

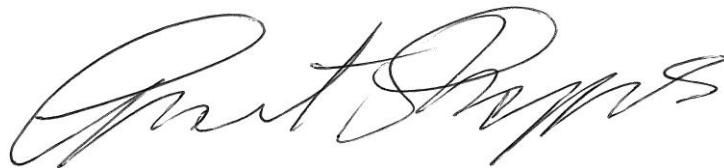
In response to these unprecedented challenges we have to recognise the challenges that the aviation sector is currently facing. There is no lack of will or desire in government to progress with this scheme but given the current context, it will take more time to reach a meaningful agreement with HAL. This will inevitably lead to a further, regrettable delay in our ability to instruct Network Rail to submit its Development Consent Order (DCO). However, I am intent that we use that additional time usefully; the Department will update the WRLtH Outline Business Case and we have also instructed Network Rail to continue work on the DCO by utilising the additional time to update the environmental analysis to meet the latest regulations.

This delay does not affect the Government's support for the scheme and Network Rail have been advised to expect to submit the scheme's application for Development Consent following approval of the scheme Outline Business Case and confirmation of funding arrangements which offer value for money for the taxpayer.

On SAtH, good progress has been made. The work developing the Pre-Strategic Outline Business Case (Pre-SOBC) and commercial model has been done as quickly as possible, but it is crucial to the success of the project that the initial outcome-based specification on which the scheme will be developed, is appropriate to ensure value for money to the fare payer, the scheme proposer and the tax payer. The Pre-SOBC is now beginning the process of internal governance. This will set out the case for change and set out practically how the scheme should be taken forward. The potential commercial models are in the process of being shortlisted, preceding a market announcement, which is now likely to be early next year.

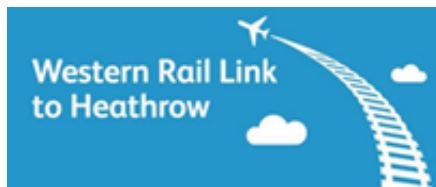
I welcome your continued support for both schemes as we work towards reaching our next milestones.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT



To The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Transport

Dear Secretary of State,

Western Rail Link to Heathrow: capable of rapid delivery and of wide economic impact

We write on behalf of the members of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) and the many private and public organisations across Wales, the South West, the South and Midlands who have publicly stated their support for delivery of WRLtH. We are aware that this is a project that you too support.

Our members and partners understand and share the great challenges the country is facing and the new agenda upon us. As TVCC we:

- Recognise that government must deal with immediate and short-term pressures
- Know that you are planning for recovery
- Understand you will be looking for infrastructure solutions which will instil confidence in investors, businesses and trading partners
- Are, as a Chamber network, supporting government with a “Restart - Rebuild – Renew” agenda that will help us all move towards a ‘new normal’ for business

We recognise the importance the aviation sector plays in trade, inward investment and freight to the UK. Connectivity to the UK’s only international hub airport is crucial to the future prosperity of UK plc and to both its economically stronger and weaker regions.

We firmly believe that the swift delivery of WRLtH will stimulate confidence and recovery and should be a priority in government’s plans.

WRLtH is:

- A fully developed and costed project, capable of rapid delivery subject only to planning and final funding approval
- Transformational – bringing substantive improvement in connectivity to 14 million people across multiple regions and so delivering improved competitiveness and productivity, inward investment and business growth and retention
- A levelling-up project – serving and supporting regional economies in the South West, south Wales, South Central and Midlands including regions forecast to suffer disproportionately badly from the impact of COVID-19
- A carbon reduction project – delivering UK climate change targets and mitigating the impact of Heathrow

- A vital stimulus to the UK aviation industry nationwide
- An important facilitator in the recovery of freight, tourism and universities
- Value for money and with well-evidenced Return on Investment to HMG and business.

WRLtH is a standalone scheme. Its strong economic, environmental and commercial case is based on a two-runway airport and is independent of Heathrow's proposed expansion. It has approval to 2022 to complete the Development Consent Order (DCO) process and early stages of procurement. We are aware there is a funding gap but know that over time the return to UK plc and fare income will repay the investment. An early decision will avoid significant costs. There is a window of opportunity to submit the application by the end of 2020 before evidence becomes time-expired, taxpayers' investment is lost, and new costs and a long delay are introduced. There are opportunities for significant cost reductions if elements of the scheme which would primarily serve and be funded by a three-runway airport are deferred. Cost escalation of £30+m p.a. can also be avoided. In addition, our members are coming forward with proposals to further cut costs and secure funding.

We will be pleased to provide more information about the economic and environmental benefits of the scheme and the multi-regional advocates. We will be pleased to explore opportunities for funding and cost reduction.

We urge government to commit to this scheme now and demonstrate to Wales and the English regions, to business and the many million beneficiaries a practical step towards recovery.

Yours sincerely

Paul

Paul Britton
Chief Executive
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce



Val Shawcross CBE
Independent Chair
Heathrow Area Transport Forum

20 July 2020

Dear Val

HATF – Heathrow Rail Access Programme

I am writing with an overview of the benefits of the Department for Transport's Heathrow Rail Access Programme, which would provide a step-change in surface access to Heathrow Airport benefitting air passengers, airport workers and the local community.

The Heathrow Rail Access Programme comprises two projects with the potential to deliver a significant mode shift from private road vehicles to public transport – Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) and Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH).

Network Rail is leading the development and design of WRLtH which would see a new rail alignment from the Great Western Main Line to Heathrow Airport, allowing passengers to travel to the airport from the West without having to interchange at London Paddington. This offers significant journey time savings to existing rail passengers as well as relieving congestion on the road network, including the M4, M3 and M25, resulting from airport passengers and employees switching from road to rail.

In addition to transport and environmental benefits, WRLtH would generate economic growth and new jobs across the Thames Valley and surrounding areas both as a project outcome but also during construction. The overall average number of construction workers per month is estimated to be over 180 during the construction period, and the total operational investment has been expected to be in the region of £20 million to £30 million per year.

As you know, the SAtH project is considerably earlier in the development process and is yet to have confirmed outputs, though its overarching aim is to improve public transport access to Heathrow Airport from the south. The Department for Transport has now published the Strategic Objectives of the project which clearly set out the potential benefits that the scheme could deliver. A frequent and reliable service can be expected to generate significant mode shift away from road and private vehicle use and onto public transport with associated reduction in road congestion. To date key markets for this service have been identified as South West London, Surrey and Hampshire with benefits afforded to airport passengers and employees alike.

Mode shift from road to rail also goes hand in hand with environmental benefits, and both WRLtH and SAtH have the potential to make a strong contribution to the Government's target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 as people get out of their cars and move onto greener, cleaner rail services.

The SAtH Strategic Objectives also set out the opportunity to improve connectivity and increase journey opportunities to and within these key market areas. This, along with direct links to Heathrow Airport, would have the wider benefits of boosting productivity, economic growth and encouraging regeneration.

Network Rail supports the continued development of both WRLtH and SAtH as part of the Heathrow Rail Access Programme and look forward to continuing to work with the Heathrow Area Transport Forum as these projects come to fruition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rupert Walker', is positioned above the printed name.

Rupert Walker
Policy and Programmes Director
System Operator, Network Rail