

Wider Forum Winter Webinar

Summary Report

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Introduction

Val Shawcross, Independent Chair of the Heathrow Area Transport Forum (HATF) provided opening remarks to participants in attendance of the event.

HATF's work over the last 12 months has encompassed a wide range of activities and topics, although the focus of HATF's work has shifted during this period. Whilst much of the work undertaken by HATF during 2019 and early 2020 was focused on helping challenge, shape and refine Heathrow's proposed surface access strategies around their airport expansion plans, more recent focus has been helping to shape the surface access requirements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and a continuing 2 runway airport, whilst focusing on global and environmental challenges.

Heathrow Local Recovery Forum

Lord David Blunkett, Chair of the Heathrow Local Recovery Forum highlighted the work of the forum in maintaining and promoting economic growth to Heathrow and its environs. The recently published Local Recovery Plan, developed in partnership with a number of local stakeholders, looks at how to maintain capacity whilst quickly rebuilding the airport for the future, in which surface access plays a critical role.

The plan outlines the challenges faced by the local community as a result of the devastating impacts of Covid-19, primarily the impact of job losses in the communities around Heathrow. The forum is working to influence decision makers within government to rebuild both the aviation industry and the airport in a greener and more climate conscious way. Participants were encouraged to get involved in rebuilding their local communities and to think creatively about building jobs, but above all reskilling and reshaping for the future.

Section two – Covid-19 Economic Recovery Updates

Topic	Key Points
<p>Impact of COVID-19 on the Aviation Industry</p> <p><i>Nigel Wicking- Airline Operators Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 has resulted in an unprecedented impact on the aviation industry, with demand down 66% globally and recovery not anticipated to return until 2024. • Aviation industry is currently indebted £220billion globally. • Recovery is challenging due to lack of consumer confidence, concern about congregating in airports and uncertainty around testing regimes. • Cargo operations have performed well during this time, with cargo providing a stable source of income. • Aim is to reintroduce confidence amongst leisure travellers, in order to encourage business travellers to return
<p>Insights on Passenger Trends</p> <p><i>Shamal Ratnayaka- Transport for London</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL remain committed to promoting green recovery, despite the challenges of preventing a car led recovery. • As of October 2020, the road network within Greater London was operating at 85% of pre-lockdown levels. Whilst the road network outside of Greater London operating close to 90% and Central London experiencing the lowest levels of approximately 80%, highlighting the effectiveness of the Congestion Charge. • Public transport recovery has been happening since end of May in line with easing of restrictions. • Bus services are operating at around 45% of normal demand and tube services at approximately 35%. • Leisure travel more resilient than commuter travel. • Increase in active travel patronage, with over 25% observed increase in cyclists at weekends in particular. • Even though the number of car trips are up, there has been a decline in the number of passenger trips (E.g. taxi). • Data suggests that the number of people working from home full time is declining, however there is still a demand to work from home some of the time. • Travel demand by London Boroughs outline clear decline in public transport demand, with the greatest impact observed within Central London. • West London experienced a greater decline in comparison to other parts of London, which could be as a result of impact of the pandemic on the aviation industry. • TfL are to publish their annual Travel Report in December 2020.
<p>The Future Transport Opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every sector is affected by the lack of movement in and out of UK airports.

<p><i>Adam Tyndall- London First</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of visitors to London is costing the city five times as much as the lack of commuters. • Sentiment amongst members of London First highlighted 3 key phases. First phase of pandemic; Panic phase- how are we going to cope? • Second phase; Pleasant surprise phase of the pandemic- things might work out and isn't as bad as initially expected. • Third phase; realisation of the limitations. • Economy will remain in a state of uncertainty until the spring. • There is a need to shift into a new modern way of working. • More businesses taking advantage of flexible working arrangements and shorter working days. However, this will not result in a total revolution of the working environment. • Prediction is no longer enough. There are some normative choices to make in terms of what we want the city to be going forward. • London's labour pool for regular visitors could increase to the point where you have a lot more people visiting London, but a lot less frequently. • This presents an opportunity to restate the fundamental role of public transport and the objectives that public transport has been trying to achieve in relation to the net zero and air quality agenda, as well as unlocking new housing. • There has been a shift in passenger behaviour, with a greater focus on localised journeys, whilst other a shifting towards longer journeys. Public transport needs to be flexible in adapting to passenger behaviour. • There is a need for clarity around public transport. • A need for a campaign to encourage visitors back into the city; with focus initially on domestic visitors and then international. • Need for TfL to have a sustainable funding package to will allow it to continue to provide public transport services in the city. • Additional need to get international travel back up and running. • Transport is critical to how businesses across sectors are seeing a recovery.
<p>Airport Surface Access Update</p> <p><i>Tony Caccavone- Heathrow Airport Limited</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the airport. • Decline in passenger numbers by approximately 80-90%. • Lack of government support in setting up a testing regime and changes to quarantine arrangements, all of which have been exacerbated by the second lockdown. • Challenges experienced have been further worsened by a number of issues including the CAA refusal to accept HAL's request for the RAB reopener to reset pricing to reflect the impact of Covid-19. • Change in VAT and Duty-Free Rules will result in additional financial impact to the business.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The airport is currently operating under single runway operations because there isn't enough demand from airlines and passengers to open two runways. • Terminal operations have been consolidated into terminals 2 and 5. • A number of other products and services, including car parks are either closed or operating under reduced facilities. • Heathrow Express services have also reduced down to two trains per hour into terminal 5. As a result of the temporary closure of terminal 4, this has allowed TfL Rail service to operate into terminal 5 as well. • Temporary suspension of the Heathrow Free Travel Zone and public transport subsidies, that Heathrow contribute towards the local bus network around the airport for the period of 2021. • Intention is to reinstate the subsidies as soon as possible. • Heathrow are currently developing a business plan for the next regulatory period, which commences in 2022. • The surface access team are working to ensure that the provision of public transport subsidy is made into the next regulatory business plan. • New Heathrow Express trains to come into service in December 2020, resulting in an additional 2 trains per hour to Terminal 5. • This will result in the TfL Rail service to access the airport via terminal 4 and into the Central Terminal Area. • Whilst most terminal 5 passengers won't get the TfL Rail service, this does mean the CTA will be served by 6 trains an hour. • The airport maintains its commitment to protect all frontline jobs.
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Interactive Q&A

What can the airport do to encourage people into a more sustainable way of getting to and from the airport?

- Heathrow and Local Authorities are in alignment in discouraging a car led recovery.
- Introduction of the proposed forecourt charge will help discourage the use of cars.
- Challenge is currently around the removal of the travel subsidies, free travel zone and changes to the TfL Rail service.
- There is a need for the airport to put public transport and active travel at the forefront of its agenda.
- There is a requirement to be responsive and have the right resources available in 2021 once people start moving around again.
- Work is being done to determine what could return in the interim, that doesn't require Heathrow investment at present.

Section three – Surface Transport Access Strategy

Topic	Key Points
<p>Heathrow Surface Access Transport Strategy</p> <p><i>Tony Caccavone-Heathrow Airport Limited</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous Surface Access Strategy was developed to support an expanded airport and proposals for a third runway. • Requirement to review and update the strategy as a result of the Court of Appeal ruling on the ANPS, as well as the ongoing impacts of Covid-19. • Surface access remains a core part of Heathrow’s offer to both passengers and colleagues on how they get to and from the airport. • Surface access targets have been agreed alongside key stakeholders. • Aim is to achieve a public transport mode share of 45% by 2026, with this to increase to 50% by 2030. • Move towards reduction in single occupancy colleague car trips, with the aim being to achieve a 57% reduction by 2030. • Heathrow are no longer proposing to use the no more traffic metric in the next regulatory period. • Partnerships will be key to delivering the components of the Surface Access Strategy. • Surface access continue to play a critical role in the wider sub-region that will drive growth, support local businesses and protect jobs. • The proposed strategy will be a combination of incentives that encourage the right travel behaviours, increasing the use of sustainable transport by providing reliable, frequent and connected services. • The impact Covid has had on the airports financial position means that Heathrow are no longer able to deliver the services and infrastructure previously outlined within the 3-runway strategy. • To achieve these proposed targets, is to implement a form of road user charging. • During the Airport Expansion Consultation, Heathrow outlined proposals to introduce a form of road user charging, which was to be delivered in two phases. The first phase outlined was the low emission zone to tackle air quality related issues and the second being a form of road user charging to encourage a change in driver behaviour. • Proposal is to introduce a departures forecourt access charge. • Level of the charge is expected to be in the region of £5. • Revenue generated will be fed into the single till, which will help reduce the cost of the airport charge, but also contribute towards the cost of some of the surface access initiatives to be introduce in 2022. • Development of the scheme is still in its formative stage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Heathrow 2019 Travel Report has been published in line with the ANPS requirements.
<p>Western Rail and Southern Access</p> <p><i>Joanna Grew- Network Rail</i> <i>Stuart White- Department for Transport</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department remain committed and supportive to both the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) scheme and Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH). • Network Rail are awaiting guidance from the Department for Transport to determine the commercial approach to be taken in relation to Southern Access to Heathrow. The scheme is still in early stages of development and at present doesn't require a significant level of financial commitment. • The Government and Heathrow Airport both remain committed to the delivery of WRLtH and continue to explore options to progress the scheme. • The Department has instructed Network Rail to proceed with the revised programme to support the Development Consent Order. • Aspiration is to submit the Development Consent Order in the winter of 2021; subject to ministerial approval. • Commercial discussions are ongoing between the DfT and Heathrow Airport. Agreement of a funding statement is critical for a December 2021 DCO submission. • Final delivery date for the delivery of the WRLtH scheme is anticipated to be 2030. •
<p><i>Interactive Q&A</i></p>	
<p>What measures are being taken to give disabled passengers confidence in travelling to the airport on public transport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heathrow Express new Class 387 fleet provide a more modern form of rolling stock for passengers. • The airport is aware of challenges disabled passengers have in relation to the use of face masks. Work is being carried out to determine ways in which passengers with disabilities can be easily identified. Front line colleagues are also provided with face shields to enable verbal communication. • Network Rail promote the use of lanyards to help identify passengers with hidden disabilities and provide them with support required. <p>Additional comments were made in relation to the provision of electrification infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are opportunities for joint working between local authorities and the airport to support the strategic planning of electrification infrastructure. There is additional opportunity to support the whole subregion. 	

- Heathrow previously had ambitious aspirations to electrify its bus fleet that operates around the airport; as well as the installation of additional electric vehicle charging points within passenger and colleague car parks.
- Heathrow are incorporating these aspirations into its next regulatory business plan.
- Heathrow welcomes opportunities to work in partnership with local authorities and rebuild once the airport is in a better position.

Have there been any consideration towards cycle infrastructure within the Surface Access Strategy?

- There has been considerable interest towards cycling as a result of the pandemic, with the Heathrow Cycle Hub dealing with increased demand.
- Active travel forms part of Heathrow's Surface Access Strategy moving forward.
- Heathrow is working in partnership with London Borough of Hounslow to implement an active travel scheme to the south of the airport.
- Heathrow previously had aspirations within its expansion proposals to enable access through the Southern Road Tunnel, through the provision of a segregated cycle lane.
- At present, cycling into the Central Terminal Area is restricted due to improvement works taking place on the tunnels. With the project scheduled for completion in 2022, cyclists and pedestrians will be able to access the Central Terminal Area from the north of the airport.

Closing Remarks

The Chair provided concluding remarks summarising much of the key areas of discussion that had emerged during the course of the event.

Whilst Heathrow Airport and the wider aviation and transport industry are grappling with the effects of Covid, we remain hopeful in rebuilding for a better future. A future that provides an opportunity to improve surface transport access to and from the airport for both passengers and colleagues.

The Chair explained that the Board had met prior to the Forum and they shared the concerns raised in the Forum about the removal of Heathrow's public transport subsidies, the Free Travel Zone and the removal of MTR services from Terminal 5. It was agreed by the Board that two special interest groups will set up to discuss both issues in further detail, to examine the impact of public transport passengers and to examine the prospects of a phased recovery, external funding and other possible mitigations to help passengers and workforce alike. Additionally, work would be undertaken to explore the possibility of a stimulus package to encourage the use of public transport in the later months of 2021, as the airport become busier.

