



The voice of London transport users

Way to go: Improving public transport access to London's airports

January 2019



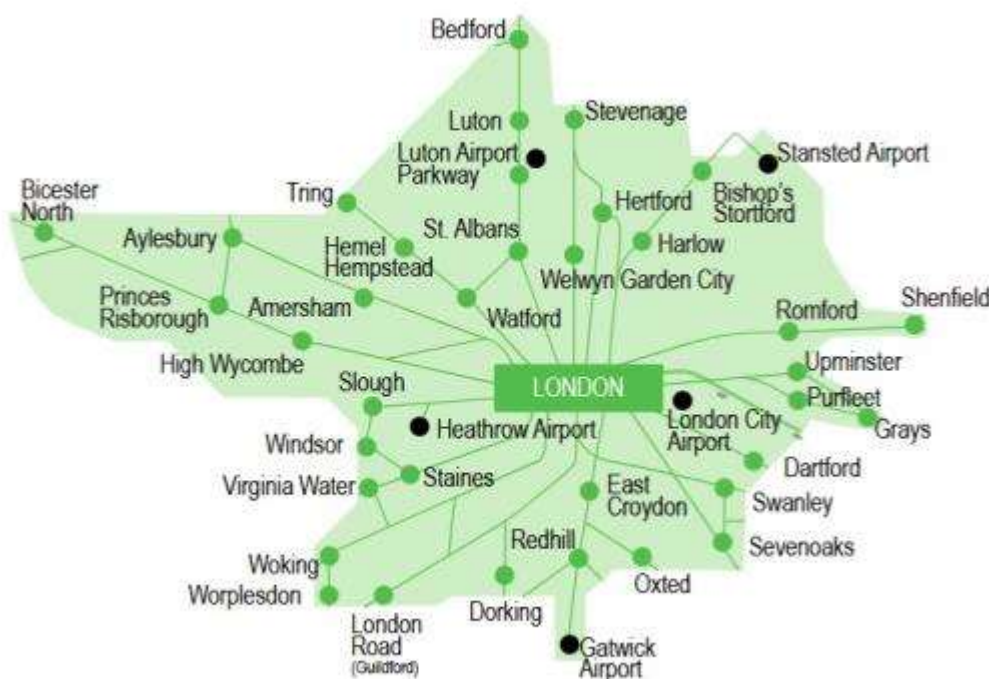
London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public, including the users of all forms of public transport. We are supported by and accountable to the London Assembly.

Our approach

- We commission and carry out research, and evaluate and interpret the research carried out by others, to ensure that decisions on transport policy and operations are based on the best possible evidence
- We investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers – we get more than 7,000 enquiries a year from transport users and in 2017-18 we took 2,400 cases up with the transport operator because we agreed that the response the complainant had received to their original complaint was not satisfactory
- We monitor trends in service quality as part of our intelligence-led approach
- We regularly meet and seek to influence the relevant parts of the transport industry on all issues which affect the travelling public and work closely with a wide range of public interest organisations, user groups and research bodies to ensure we remain aware of their experiences and concerns
- We speak for passengers and the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and decision makers at all levels, including the Mayor of London, the London Assembly, the Government, Parliament and local councils.

Our experience of using London's extensive public transport network, paying for our own travel, and seeing for ourselves what transport users go through, helps ensure we remain connected and up to date.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience for all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.



We represent:

- users of all TfL services – including Crossrail services to Reading
- rail passengers in the London Railway Area – the commuter belt
- passengers travelling to London's major airports by surface transport

Foreword

Travel by air can be stressful for many people and a difficult journey to or from the airport will only make this experience worse. 128 million passenger journeys were made into or out of London's five major airports in 2016. Around 44% of people used public transport to get them to or from the airport but not all of them found it a pleasant experience. Yet, as we set out in this report, there is much that could be done to make passengers' journeys easier.



London TravelWatch is the official consumer watchdog representing users of most land-based transport modes in and around London. With London's five major airports in our area, and a multi-modal remit, we are uniquely qualified to speak on behalf of passengers travelling to these airports by public transport. We have taken an active interest in the subject for many years because of what people give us about the problems they have on their journeys to or from the airport. In 2014 we published a report on improving public transport access to London's airports. This report was well received - many positive things have come out of it and we are pleased to have used our influence to secure improvements for passengers such as the extension of Oyster to Gatwick.

However, many of the issues identified by the Airports Commission¹ in its interim and final reports are still outstanding. And with the Government announcing its preference for expansion at Heathrow last summer but at same time committing to supporting all airports make best use of their existing runways, we considered it timely to update our assessment of the problems passengers face with surface access to London's airports, review the progress that has been made, and recommend further improvements.

Many of our recommendations require relatively little expenditure to implement. However, they do require a collective agreement by decision makers and service operators to make changes, and a willingness to accept responsibility that straddles transport and airport operators. Whilst they cost relatively little in transport infrastructure terms, they can be complicated due to the many different parties involved, especially as many passengers will use services provided by more than one operator to complete their journey.

We intend this report to be as impactful as our previous one: resulting in more joined up action to improve surface access to London's airports, and making public transport a more attractive option for passengers.

Arthur Leathley
Chair

¹ The Airports Commission was an independent commission set up by the UK Government in September 2012 to consider how the UK can 'maintain its status as an international hub for aviation and immediate actions to improve the use of existing runway capacity in the next 5 years'.

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1. Executive summary

This report updates previous work by London TravelWatch on improving surface transport access to London's airports, published in 2014. This research resulted in a number of positive changes, including the successful extension of Oyster to Gatwick airport. We are keen to build on the success of this work, building a strong case for further improving passenger experience in the coming years.

'The benefit that consumers derive from competition between airlines and airports can be undermined by poor surface accessibility, an opaque system of fares and ticketing, poorly designed interchanges and indifferent customer service.' (Improving public transport access to London's airports, September 2014)

What has changed since 2014?

Many of the problems outlined in our 2014 report have been improved upon. However, the underlying surface accessibility issues faced by passengers remain confusing and inconsistent: justifying the need to revisit them. Worryingly, the proportion of passengers using public transport to access London's airports has, with the exception of Stansted Airport and London City, declined since 2012.

In July 2015, the Airports Commission published its final report which looked at options for increasing the UK's airport capacity. In June 2018, the Government set out proposals for expansion of Heathrow Airport, but at the same time committed to supporting all airports making best use of their existing runways. Adopting the recommendations in this report would represent a significant step towards meeting this important objective.

Our approach

This report seeks to collate a wide range of information and analysis to inform new recommendations, building on the positive impact of our 2014 report. This includes fresh consideration of:

- **The key changes since 2014:** We assess these in terms of passenger services available; quality of, and improvements to, stations; as well as changes around fares and ticketing amongst other key issues.
- **Changing patterns of travel:** We identify how many passengers are using public transport to get to and from airports, and if not whether this is something that needs to be improved upon.
- **Passenger feedback:** We draw on our own extensive base of casework and appeals and outlining the key problems and experiences passengers have when travelling to and from London airports.
- **Closer analysis of individual airports:** Whilst helpful to take a general view on issues affecting access to and from airports, it is important to identify the issues and recommendations which are unique to each airport.

Our research method

This updated report draws on our broad evidence base, including a variety of research conducted by London TravelWatch amongst London's transport users in recent years. These includes:

- Material published by the Civil Aviation Authority and airport operators themselves
- The experiences of passengers who have contacted us, as well as the expert observations of the organisation as London's transport watchdog and previous research
- Material from the London Assembly Transport Committee scrutiny report on aviation capacity and the Campaign for Better Transport.

Improving surface access to London's airports: summary of recommendations

In this report we make a number of recommendations:

- **General recommendations** which are applicable to all London Airports are provided on pages 30 to 33.
- **Recommendations for each airport individually** are detailed in the sections of 'London's airports in detail', and summarised on page 55.

1 Heathrow

Fares, ticketing and service provision	Legal and contractual	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the purchase of Oyster Cards is available at all times • Extend contactless payment card acceptance to non-TfL bus services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and agree fixed rate taxi fare to central London • Reform of taxi and private hire licensing to reduce the number of empty journeys to and from the airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete western rail access to Heathrow • Provide southern rail access link to North West Surrey and South West London

2 Gatwick

Fares, ticketing and service provision

- Introduce more all night local bus services on the Gatwick Airport – Redhill corridor
- Extend contactless payment card acceptance to more local bus services

Infrastructure

- Electrify North Downs rail route
- Provide a new interchange station at West Hampstead on Chiltern line

3 Stansted

Fares, ticketing and service provision

- Extend Oyster/contactless system to the rail service at earliest opportunity
- Extend contactless payment card acceptance to more local bus services

Infrastructure

- Provide additional track capacity between London and Stansted

4 Luton

Fares, ticketing and service provision	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend contactless payment card acceptance to more local bus services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a new interchange station at West Hampstead on the Chiltern line • Complete electrification and upgrade of the Midland Main Line north to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield

5 London City

Fares, ticketing and service provision	Legal and contractual	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide full range of National Rail destinations and ticketing from DLR ticket machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and agree fixed rate taxi fare to central London • Secure reform of taxi and private hire licensing to reduce the instances of empty journeys to and from the airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Elizabeth Line station below the airport

2. Introduction

Background

London TravelWatch represents passengers travelling to all London's five major airports by National Rail. In the case of Heathrow and London City airports, we also represent all those using TfL's services including the principal road network and taxis as well as cyclists and pedestrians. This multi modal responsibility means that we are uniquely able to speak on behalf of transport users. Our casework gives us a direct insight into the concerns of people getting to the airport.

Changes to the structure of the airline industry and the ownership of airports in recent years have had a significant effect on the choice available to air passengers. Competition has increased with the development of new airlines and routes and real terms reductions in the cost of air fares. These changes have been of major benefit to passengers. There was a growth of 38% in the numbers of people using London's airports between 2010 and 2016: a change of considerable benefit to London's economy.

London is served by five major airports located in different parts of the greater South East region. Each has its own characteristics in terms of the airlines that use them, levels of congestion on surrounding roads, rail crowding, the types of public transport serving them, as well as varying levels of accessibility to central London, other parts of the London area, the midlands and wider South East. There are also variations in the types of passengers using each airport and their reasons for doing so (see pages 15-19).



What does this mean?

The accessibility of airports varies considerably, even from areas that are relatively close to an airport. Poor accessibility means that whilst passengers may be able to obtain a relatively cheap fare for the flight part of their journey, the cost of travel to and from the airport could be relatively expensive. Sometimes the cost of getting to the airport can exceed the cost of the flight.

Passengers who take these costs into account when deciding how to travel might discount options that would otherwise be attractive. Those who don't could end up facing unexpectedly high costs. The inconsistency in surface access effectively reduces consumer choice and competition between airlines.

Many things have changed since 2014, with some notable improvements for passengers. However, there is still much that needs to be done to further improve surface transport access to London's airports. Not only this, but it is in the interests of all involved to actively encourage passengers to choose public transport to get them to the airport.

3. Key changes since 2014

Before considering the individual airports in detail, it is helpful to outline the key changes for passengers that have occurred since the publication of our 2014 report – almost all of which are positive.

Fares and ticketing	
Oyster and Contactless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oyster and contactless payment technology has been extended to include Gatwick Airport. However, it is not always the cheapest fare available, and for most journeys to and from London it is not shown in journey planners as a means of paying for journeys. Despite this, usage has grown rapidly over the period, and it is now the dominant means of ticketing to and from the London Travelcard area. Oyster and contactless payment technology has been extended to include Heathrow Airport using TfL Rail services (which is due to become the Elizabeth Line in 2019), and will be extended to cover Heathrow Express services and services to Luton Airport Parkway in early 2019.
National Rail ticket machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ticket machines at Heathrow Airport stations have been replaced with new machines that are now capable of issuing tickets to any station on the National Rail network and with the full range of railcard discounts. More ticket machines have been installed at Luton Airport.
London Underground ticket machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> London Underground ticket machines at Heathrow Airport stations have been upgraded to allow the sale of Oyster cards.
Bus fares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Bus Hopper' fare introduced on TfL bus services in 2016 has reduced the cost of some passengers' journeys to and from Heathrow Airport.

Services	
Elizabeth Line (Crossrail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When Elizabeth Line services are fully opened in they will serve both Terminals 4 and 5 at Heathrow. This will significantly improve the public transport attractiveness and accessibility of Heathrow Airport.
Night Tube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Night Tube has brought better connectivity on Friday night/Saturday mornings and Saturday night/Sunday mornings to Heathrow Airport, and to connecting services to and from other airports.

<p>Reduced night rail services London - Gatwick</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail services to and from Gatwick Airport between midnight and 5am have been reduced on Sunday to Thursday nights/Monday to Friday mornings to allow greater engineering access for Network Rail. This has made access to and from early morning or late evening flights more difficult.
<p>Expansion of Thameslink services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thameslink services to and from Gatwick Airport and Luton Airport Parkway are in the process of being substantially expanded on completion of the Thameslink programme, with a wider range of destinations and increased frequencies.
<p>Luton light rapid transit link</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luton Airport has started construction of the light rapid transit fixed link between Luton Airport Parkway station and the airport terminal buildings.
<p>Express coach services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express coach operators have continued to change and adapt their services to London's airports. National Express now run services from Stansted to Kings Cross via Liverpool Street, and to Marble Arch via Paddington, as well as their existing services to Stratford and Victoria.
<p>Coach options London → Stansted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stansted Airport has seen a substantial reduction in competition between coach companies on routes into London. • The remaining routes now have a much greater focus on Stratford (where Airport Bus Express now compete with National Express) as a final destination rather than traditional terminals such as Victoria. This reflects the good quality public transport interchange there, but also the effects of extended journey times due to road congestion in central London, and the growth of population in East London over recent years.
<p>Local bus services outside Greater London</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local bus services to and from airports outside the Greater London area have suffered in recent years from the general cutbacks in financial support by local authorities and increased traffic congestion on the roads. This has resulted in the withdrawal of, or reduction in, services. • TfL bus services to Heathrow Airport have either remained static or slightly reduced in frequency as a result of traffic congestion on the road network.
<p>Greater Anglia extension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Anglia are progressing their plans to extend their Norwich – Cambridge service to Stansted Airport.



Bus and coach information at Stansted Airport

Vehicles	
Rail operators have continued to invest in new trains used on airport services:	
Gatwick Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gatwick Express has replaced its trains with more appropriately designed trains.
Thameslink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thameslink have replaced all of their trains with new trains that are much more suited to the needs of airport passengers.
Greater Anglia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater Anglia are replacing their entire fleet of trains that serve Stansted and Southend Airports.
Heathrow Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heathrow Express will replace their current trains with a common fleet with Great Western Railway.
Great Western Railway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Western Railway will replace their current diesel trains on the Reading to Gatwick Airport route with longer, refurbished bi-mode, dual voltage trains.
Buses	
TfL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfL have upgraded its airport express route X26 (West Croydon – Heathrow Airport) replacing formerly single deck buses with refurbished double deck buses with additional luggage space.



A Thameslink train at Luton Airport Parkway station

Stations	
Step free access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More rail and Underground stations now have step free access to the platforms and programmes for the expansion of this have continued – with notable plans for smaller stations on the Piccadilly line Heathrow branch.
Gatwick Airport Station redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive redevelopment of Gatwick Airport station is now planned and funded.
Consumer protection	
Consumer Rights Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail operators are now subject to the provisions of the Consumer Rights Act, and now cannot exclude consequential loss from compensation arrangements.
Staffing	
Customer service - Gatwick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional staff are now being recruited into customer service roles at Gatwick Airport station to assist passengers with luggage and getting on and off trains.

Private hire vehicles and taxis

Increased use of private hire vehicles and taxis

- Numbers of these vehicles have continued to increase, particularly with the development of app-based booking systems.
- For most airports there has been increased use of these vehicles leading to a reduction in journeys by private cars using car parks.
- This growth in usage has resulted in some airports experiencing problems with private hire vehicles 'honey-potting' outside the airport boundary in order to be in a position to attract work. This often leads to problems in residential areas adjacent to airports.

Car parking

Reductions in travel by private car

- There has been a reduction in the proportion of journeys made to airports by private car where the car is then parked at the airport for the duration of the passengers' time away from home.

Proportion of journeys made by public transport

Decrease in passengers using public transport

- The proportion of passengers using public transport to access London's airports has, with the exception of Stansted Airport and London City, declined since 2012.

Passengers using only one mode

- With the exception of Stansted Airport, the proportion of passengers using only one mode of transport to access London's airports has increased since 2012.
- The decline in the proportion of passengers using public transport and using more than one mode of transport to access London's airports can almost certainly be attributed to the growth in private hire services such as Uber and other app-based operators.

Growth of public transport usage at Stansted

- The growth of public transport usage and passenger willingness to use two or more modes of transport to access Stansted Airport can be attributed to the growth of coach services to and from London Underground stations at Stratford, Paddington and Golders Green, which have easy interchange.

4. Changing patterns of travel

The different modes of surface transport used to access each of London's major airports in 2016 are shown in the pie charts below. Overall:

- There was a small rise in the percentage of people using public transport to get to the airport between 2010 and 2012 at three of London's five main airports.
- However, in the period from 2012 to 2016, the proportion of passengers using public transport to reach London's airports fell at Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports. This is a concerning trend if the objectives of both the airports and the Mayor of London are to be met in the long term.

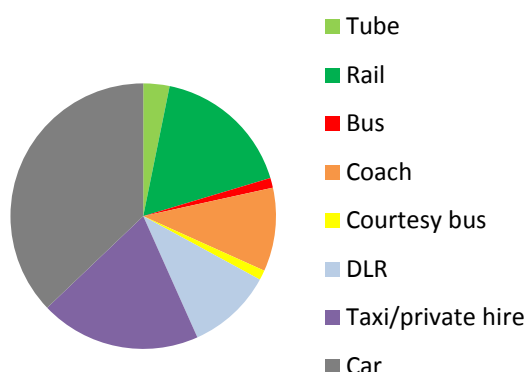
	Heathrow	Gatwick	Stansted	Luton	London City
2010	40	43	48	33	53
2012	41	44	51	33	50
2016	39.1	43.6	54.7	31.4	50.9

Table 1 Passengers using public transport to access London's airports (%)

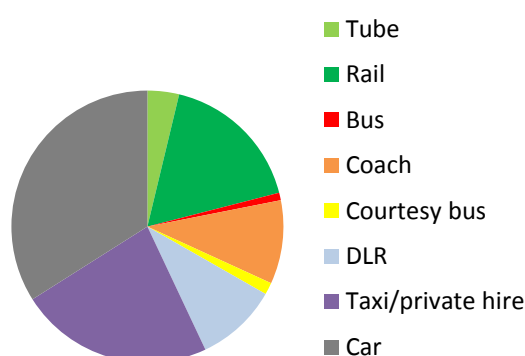
London Southend Airport is not covered in this research because, despite rapid growth in recent years, passenger numbers are still significantly less than for the other five London airports. However, it should be noted that the rail station, which opened in 2011, has undoubtedly facilitated the growth of this airport, with direct services to Stratford and Liverpool Street.

Graph 1 Primary mode of access to London's airports in 2010 and 2016

**Access to London's airports 2010
(92,990,000 journeys)**



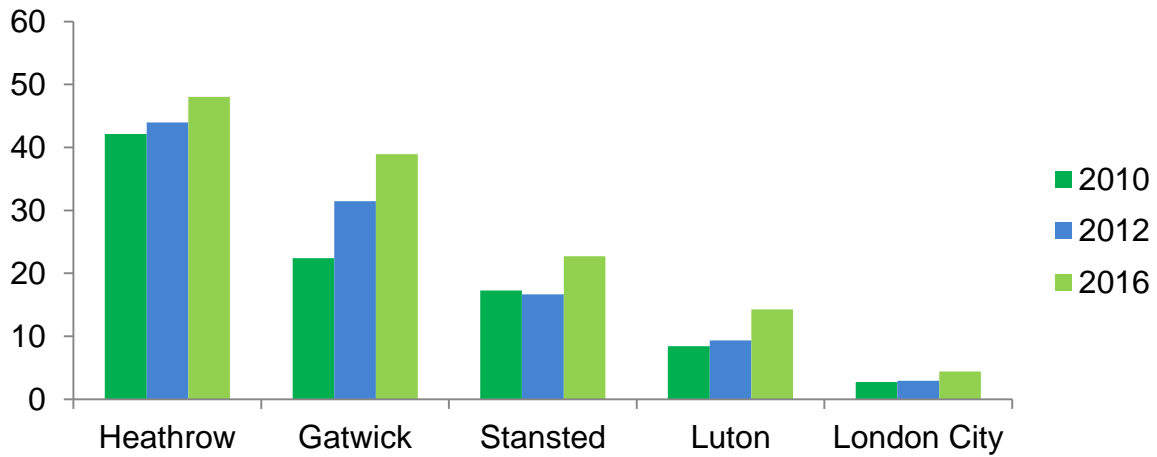
**Access to London's airports 2016
(128,358,000 journeys)**



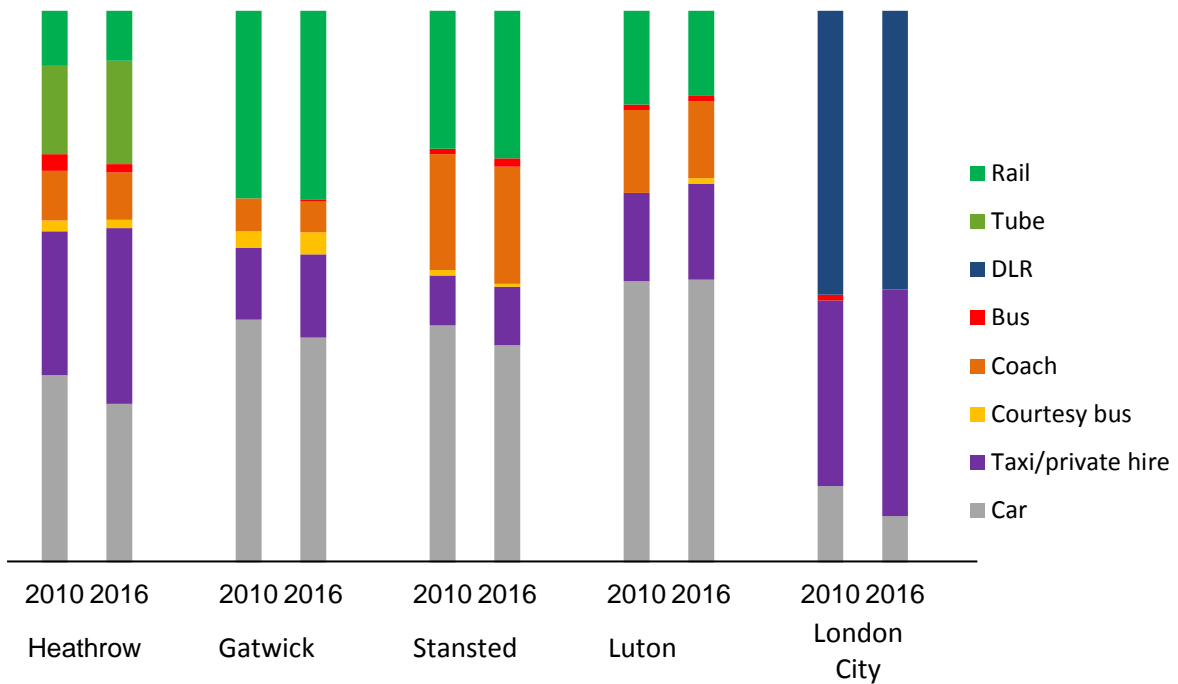
As can be seen above, car, private hire and taxis continue to account for over half of all journeys to access London's airports (with the exception of London City and Stansted). Private car use has decreased from 37.2% to 33.5% which is positive.

However, taxis and private hire use has increased from 19.6% to 22.7% - which is more worrying when the objective is to get more passengers using public transport to access airports. The share of other modes has stayed broadly the same. The chart below provides a comparison of the modal share breakdown for each airport individually:

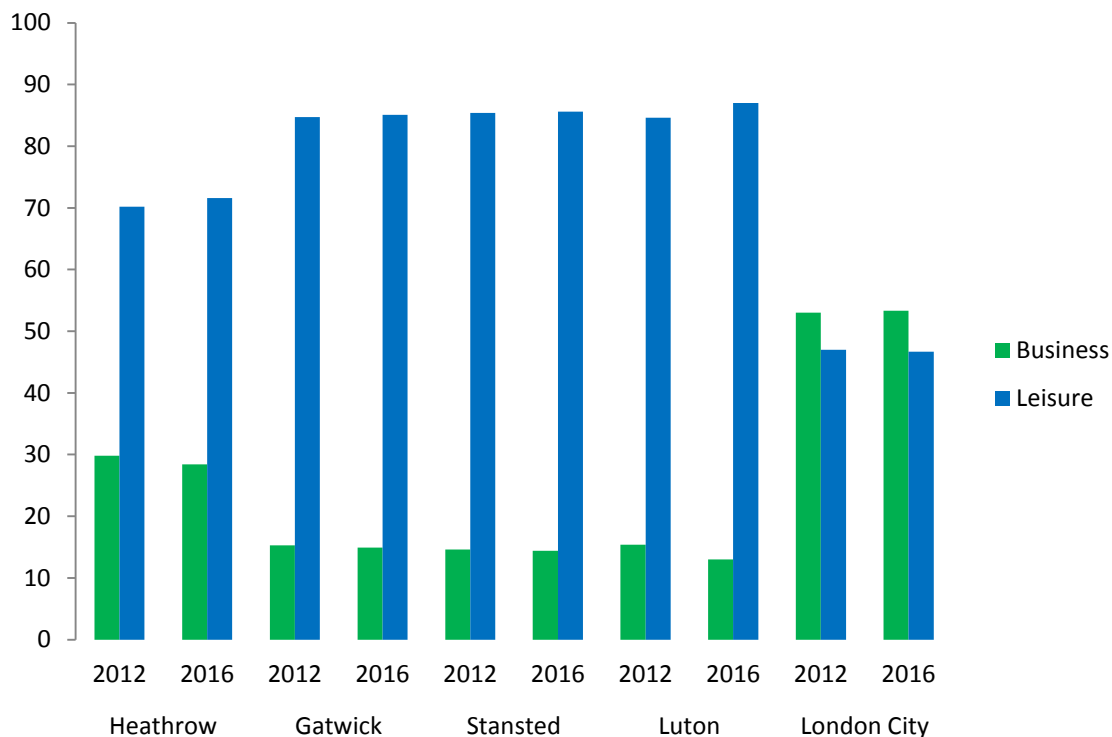
Graph 2 Number of passengers arriving at London's airports (millions)



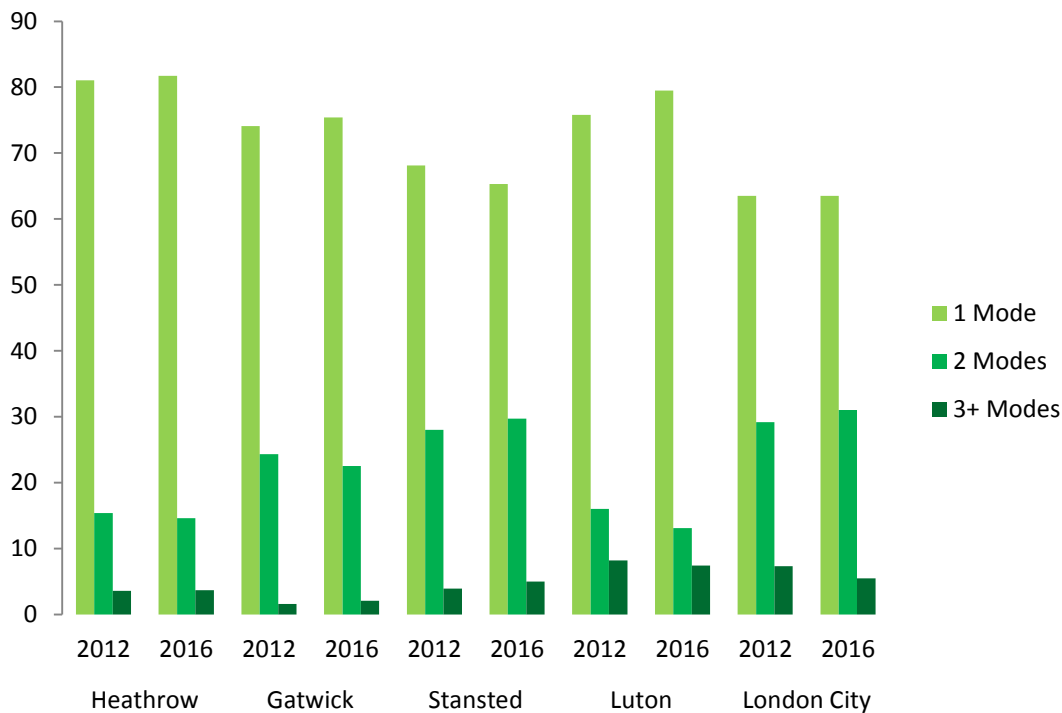
Graph 3 Primary mode of transport used by passengers arriving at London's airports 2010 and 2016



Graph 4 Split of business and leisure travellers in 2012 and 2016 by airport (%)



Graph 5 Number of separate modes of transport used by passengers to get to the airport in 2012 and 2016 (%)



What does the data tell us?

The availability of straightforward links to the airport is an important factor in determining whether passengers choose to make their journey by public transport or not². Therefore improving this, whether by providing more direct services or by enabling better 'one change journeys,' could have a major impact on consumer choice. It would help to improve efficiency and competitiveness within the aviation industry and bring wider economic and societal benefits.

Where there is no direct service, a passenger's decision to use public transport or a car-based mode - or even to use an entirely different airport - will depend on the ease of connecting, and knowing that this is possible, especially if they were planning to travel with luggage or young children.

A great example of the benefit of good public transport access is found with London City Airport. Here, the DLR provides direct services to a very limited part of London. Half of its passengers arrive by public transport – primarily on the DLR - which demonstrates the effect that just one infrastructure project³, can have on the accessibility of an airport.

It also demonstrates the effectiveness of the interchanges on the DLR with London underground and other modes down the line: London City Airport can be reached from most parts of London by a single change. This benefit is enhanced by the fact that all of its interchanges with other modes of transport are fully step free, which is not the case for journeys to other airports. This accessibility will be further extended into the Thames Valley and North West London with the advent of Crossrail – which is to be known as the Elizabeth Line.

By comparison, the lower proportion of people using public transport to access London's other airports reflects the lack of 'one change' options to these airports from within the London area.

Since 2010, Stansted Airport has increased the proportion of journeys arriving by public transport and also the numbers of passengers prepared to make multiple interchanges on journeys to and from the airport. This has been achieved by the concentration of coach services to London on major interchanges with the London Underground, such as Stratford, Golders Green and Paddington. If the number of people accessing London's other airports – where arrival/departure via public transport has decreased – then similar efforts to create 'one change' possibilities must be pursued.

²UK Aviation Forecasts, Department for Transport, January 2013

³ Prior to January 2009, and the opening of the DLR route between Canning Town and Woolwich Arsenal, most passengers going to or from this airport travelled by private car or taxi, with only a very small proportion using public transport. However the opening of the DLR made the airport much more accessible, not only from the immediate area served by direct train services, but also to a large part of London via interchanges at Bank, Poplar, Canning Town, Woolwich Arsenal and Stratford.

5. Passenger experience

Feedback from passengers is an essential component of developing our recommendations. Passengers travelling to and from London airports have encountered problems with:

- inconsistent and confusing fares and ticketing;
- consequential loss;
- the knock-on effects of delayed bus, coach and rail journeys to airports.

These issues can result in missed flights, and poor communication of onward journey information can be a confusing and frustrating experience. Some of the key concerns passengers have with regards to these issues are summarised below.

Fares and ticketing

A significant proportion of our casework relates to passengers attempting to travel to London's airports using an Oyster card. At present Heathrow, Gatwick and London City Airports are covered by Oyster and Contactless payment cards and this means of payment will be extended to Luton Airport Parkway in early 2019. However, many passengers, especially those from outside London or abroad, mistakenly believe that because the airport name is prefixed by the word 'London', London's well known Oyster ticketing system will be valid for all journeys to and from Luton and Stansted airports.

Passengers tell us they want a transparent and easy to understand system of fares and ticketing. The need for this is even greater for incoming air passengers, who may be unfamiliar with London and tired after a long journey. Improvements in this area have already been made: for example, London Underground put up a range of clear information posters outlining options for ticket purchase at each of its stations in response to our previous research. Whilst this is an example of good practice, we hope to see further efforts made to increase transparency around fares and ticketing.

Airports could also help passengers better by giving information on the relative costs of travel by different modes to popular destinations. The best international airports usually have a published fixed rate taxi fare to the central area of the main city that the airport serves. This is not the case with London's airports because of the varying local licensing regimes for each individual airport and the way airports as private landowners manage the taxi and private hire operators serving them.

Consequential loss

Consequential loss relating to airport travel is a major feature of both our casework and that of Bus Users UK⁴. This arises when delays on a rail, bus or coach journey to the airport result in a passenger missing a flight, meaning the airline then requires the passenger to buy another ticket, pay an additional fee or travel on a different day.

⁴ The appeals body for coach and bus passengers outside London

Importantly, the application of the Consumer Rights Act to the rail network and to buses and coaches now means that passengers can claim under this legislation for compensation as a result of any delay or disruption on the rail part of their journey.

The Consumer Rights Act advises air passengers to allow sufficient time in their journey to the airport to take account of potential disruptions to journeys. However, it is not always reasonable to expect passengers to have to do this, particularly for shorter air journeys or ones taken on routes which have a frequent service.

Travel by private car, taxi or private hire vehicle

It is worth noting that air passengers arriving by private car, taxi or private hire vehicle would not qualify for any type of compensation if there was disruption to the road network. Department for Transport (DfT) statistics for journey time reliability⁵ on major roads indicate reliability is getting worse rather than better. On account of traffic congestion on roads serving them, London's airports have in many cases no more than 60% road journey time reliability.

This means that air passengers accessing the airports by road (at many airports the majority of users) are also likely to miss flights and suffer consequential loss. It is particularly hard to predict how long passengers need to allow for a road journey to Heathrow Airport. This also affects rail passengers using rail-air coach links to reach the airport.

The best way to reduce missed flights because of delays in getting to the airport is to invest in the modes of transport most likely to deliver reliable journey times to airports. This would include both rail improvements and investment in bus priority on the road network.

In the shorter term, public transport operators and airlines should consider how they could work together to give passengers greater reassurance that the financial consequences of missing a flight or train because of delays elsewhere on the journey might be mitigated, if they can demonstrate that they had allowed reasonable time for their journey.

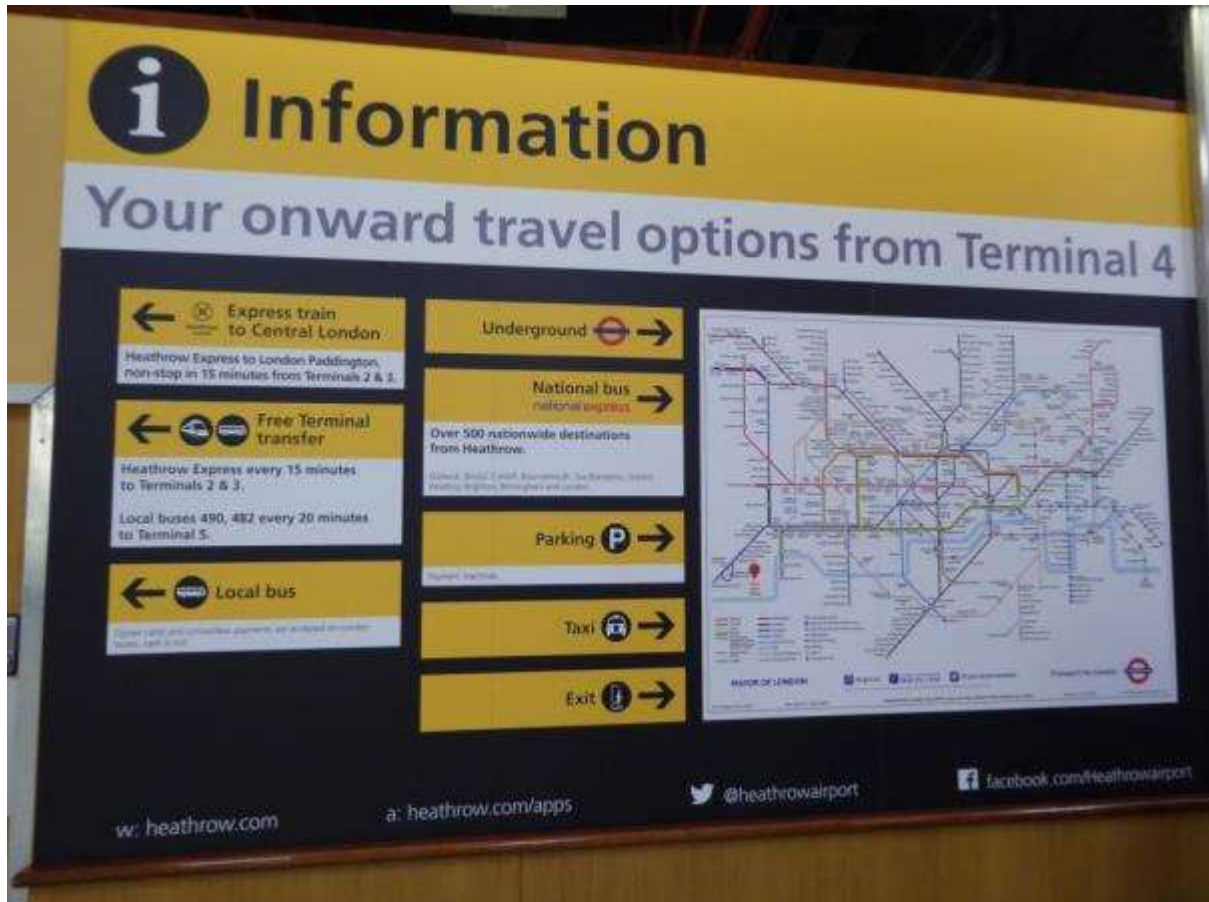
Onward journey information

Signage and information within airports to surface transport needs improvement, particularly where competing modes of transport are available. This would reduce passenger dissatisfaction, particularly among those not familiar with the UK transport system. This would also help cut the cases in which passengers unnecessarily pay too much, or were inconvenienced by following the directions.

In our experience, this problem is common in several of London's airports where train operators use paid for advertising at the airport for their services, which looks like impartial signage. This is something we highlighted in our 2014 report, and

⁵ Reliability of journeys on Highways Agency Roads: England, January to March 2014, Department for Transport, May 2014

London TravelWatch has since produced guidance on best practice for signage as part of its 'Interchange Matters' work.⁶



Information board at Heathrow Terminal 4. Key information about onward travel from airports should be available in the other languages that reflect the main countries of origin of arriving passengers. Poor signage at airport stations can result in passengers getting on the wrong train, often leading to extra costs as well as wasted time.

⁶ Interchange matters: passenger priorities for improvement (2015)
http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4040&field=file

6. A seamless journey to the airport

'Passengers do not think of their journey only in terms of its airborne component. The length of time it takes them to reach the airport, the cost, quality, comfort and convenience of that journey and the likelihood that it will be subject to delay are all important considerations.' (Airports Commission Final Report, July 2015)

For many people the journey to or from the airport is part of a significant life event - such as a holiday or reunion with family and friends. Any problems experienced on that journey will not be quickly forgotten.

Using public transport to get to the airport poses a number of risks (such as missing a plane or being unable to cope with luggage) particularly if the journey requires a change en route. For this reason many people will choose instead to drive or take a taxi as they believe this will reduce the likelihood of problems arising. However, if increased numbers of passengers travel by car or taxi to and from airports, this adds to existing congestion on the road network and the journey is not necessarily less of a risk.

The most effective way to reduce the risks associated with using public transport to airports is to provide direct links to airports from as many locations as possible. Where no direct service is feasible, expanding the options to make the journey with only one change – and ensuring changes were well publicised - would help make the journey to the airport as seamless as possible.



Passenger boards a DLR service at London City Airport

More people would make their journey to the airport by public transport if they could do so by either a direct connection or only one change. If more than one change is involved, this option becomes much less attractive.

The statistics shown in table 4 (p19) confirm that the vast majority of passengers choose to travel to the airport via a mode of transport which requires no changes on the way. In addition to this, passengers would like to see:

- Improvements to stations: Passengers have told us that improvements to accessibility, layout and information provision at rail stations and key interchanges have the greatest potential to make their journeys easier⁷. This is where investment should be prioritised to improve public transport access to London's airports.
- Increased accessibility: Stations where accessibility has been improved, for example by installing a lift or ramp, are easier for people with impaired mobility to use. These stations then tend to benefit from revenue and passenger growth. The benefit of such improvements grows exponentially as the accessibility of the rest of the rail and bus network improves. There is limited benefit to improving the accessibility of public transport at important interchanges unless passengers are able to reach them easily from their own local station or stop.

Whilst all airport rail stations are fully accessible, this is not always the case for the station at the end or beginning of the journey to and from the airport. The presence of steps and excessive stepping distances between the edge of the platform and the train at other stations are problematic. Poor accessibility at these other stations is a major deterrent to travelling by public transport to the airport, especially with heavy luggage or young children.

⁷ Interchange Matters: passenger priorities for improvement (2015)
http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4040&field=file



Travelling to the airport with children and luggage

A need to improve interchanges

The layout of interchanges en route to airports can be a major reason why passengers do or don't use public transport to access airports. The best interchange is one that is intuitive and allows passengers to navigate it in an obvious and easy fashion. Interchanges without good signage, perhaps obscured by advertising, and where staff are either not available or cannot be found, do not work well for passengers. Passengers expect the following at interchange stations:

- **Clear and consistent information:** this is particularly important for passengers travelling to and from airports as they are more likely to be unfamiliar with the journey than other passengers, and will seek regular reassurance that they are in the right place at the right time. Providing information at key stations on the status of flights from those airports with direct services to airports would give further reassurance. The need for information is even more important when there is disruption to transport services.
- **The availability of staff to provide assistance and information:** Visibility of staff is especially important at interchanges. As noted above, airport passengers and other less frequent users need a higher level of reassurance than regular travellers. The presence of staff helps with this, and also, where necessary, staff can assist with luggage and boarding and alighting from trains or buses.
- **Assuring passengers feel safe:** The visible presence of staff also gives passengers reassurance in respect of their personal safety. Our research into what consumers think of the London travelling environment highlighted

personal security concerns at certain London Underground and National Rail stations. This was to a greater degree than at bus or tram stops. This is especially true for women and for those making journeys at night - particularly airport passengers, for whom many journeys are unfamiliar and involve late night and early morning travel during the hours of darkness. These passengers are more likely to be carrying luggage, making them more vulnerable to crimes such as robbery.



Free toilets at Victoria National Rail station: access to toilets is very important for passengers.

- **Toilet facilities:** Passengers consider that toilets are the most important facility that operators should provide and that these should be free of charge. They strongly object to being charged for the use of toilets. They also resent being unable to access the toilets because they do not have the correct change or because they were unable to take their luggage through turnstiles.

The arrangements at St. Pancras work much better for passengers because the 'international' status of this station means that charges do not occur and therefore they do not need turnstiles. In March 2018, following pressure from London TravelWatch, Network Rail announced that they would be providing free toilet facilities at the stations that they manage from April 2019. This will be well received by passengers but many stations not managed by Network Rail (e.g. London Underground) will continue to charge for the use of toilets.

- **Amenities for long waits:** Passengers also expect interchanges to have reasonable levels of seating, shelter, waiting rooms, refreshments and shops. The longer the likely wait for an onward connection the more essential these facilities become.

Customer service

Airport operators and airlines recognise that good customer service is an important factor in encouraging people to fly from their airport. But there is also a lot that good customer service could do to improve the experience of travelling to the airport by public transport, and this is a point that the interim report of the Airports' Commission makes well:

'Not all passengers have the same expectations regarding their journey to or from the airport. A passenger on a short-haul flight using a low-cost carrier probably has different expectations to a passenger emerging from a long-haul overnight flight. Meeting passengers' needs in terms of surface transport often means offering a range of options, with a range of prices. Airlines respond to the needs of their customers; if passengers do not want to travel to an airport because of the quality of its surface transport, airlines will be less likely to schedule flights to or from it. Poor surface transport can send the message that an airport is "second best" or "not the city's main airport".' (Airports Commission Interim Report, December 2013)

Recent advertising by Heathrow Airport has emphasised the reintroduction of free portage from its car parks to the terminals and is a good example of customer service.

Similarly, key interchange points en route to and from airports would warrant higher levels of staffing to help passengers easily and effectively make their journeys to and from airports – such as providing a multi-lingual airport ambassador able to help anticipate the needs and queries of airport passengers.

The city air hub

The Airports Commission has also suggested that London as a city could be regarded as an air hub in future. In this case London's transport interchanges would need to become effective extensions to London's airports, with facilities to match.

This would make it even more important that the rail and air industries work together to help passengers facing disruption when travelling to airports, for example by helping passengers to complete their journey to the airport and by sharing information.

The ideal place for such a hub would be a central location from which there would be easy access to all of London's airports.

For coaches, Victoria Coach Station already fulfils this function with direct services to all London's airports (except London City), although it would need some additional facilities to be compatible with the air hub concept as detailed below.

Farringdon as a potential hub

There is no air hub location currently in operation. However, the completion of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) and Thameslink rail projects would allow the creation of such a hub at Farringdon, with its direct connections to Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports.

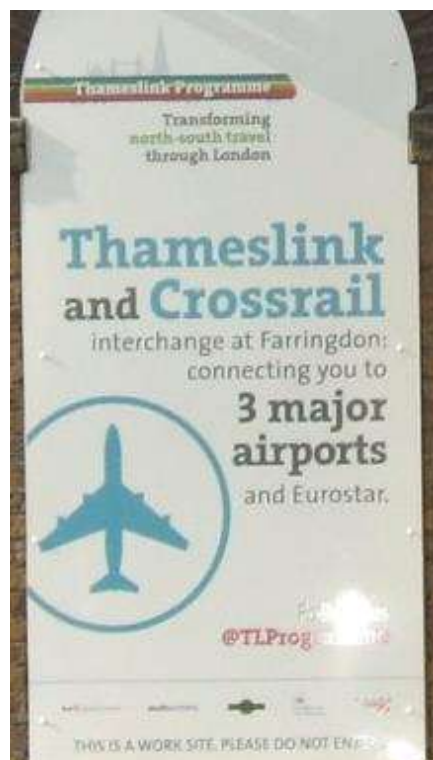
Farringdon has the advantage of being both centrally located and having potential land and buildings available nearby, on account of its proximity to the former extensive underground rail sidings and Smithfield meat market (currently used as car parking). As well as by rail, a hub at Farringdon would be easily accessible by foot, bicycle, bus, car, taxi and private hire vehicles from both the West End and City.

Options for connecting London airports at Farringdon

- London City, Southend and Stansted airports: These airports will be also be accessible from this date through the Elizabeth Line (by changing at Custom House or Liverpool Street stations). However these airports could be directly connected to Farringdon by extending the Elizabeth Line or reinstating rail lines. A link to London City Airport on the Abbey Wood branch of the Elizabeth Line could be made from Custom House Station and the route could be extended from Shenfield to Southend Airport.
- Direct access from Farringdon to Stansted Airport could be made by providing a link onto the Thameslink service by using reinstated short length rail lines at Kentish Town and South Tottenham to reach an enhanced Lea Valley rail route to Stansted.

A comfortable point of interchange for airport passengers

Information would be readily available for all flights from all of London's airports, and airline booking and check-in facilities would be available at the hub. There would be comfortable and appealing waiting and 'meet and greet' facilities for passengers, appropriate catering facilities and free toilet and baby change facilities. The ability to 'meet a number of journeys made to airports by people not trying to see off their friends, relatives or colleagues.



Poster advertising Thameslink services at Farringdon

Emergency and reasonable cost overnight accommodation would be available for passengers stranded by disruption or wishing to make use of early morning trains to airports. The hub would be managed by one named manager who would take responsibility for resolving issues in and around the location which might have a negative impact on passengers, irrespective of the owner or operator.



Passengers alight from the Stansted Express service

Vehicle design

The design and functionality of trains and buses can play an important part in making the journey more comfortable for passengers travelling to and from airports. The needs of airport passengers can be significantly different to that of other users:

- They often have larger amounts of luggage
- They travel in small groups rather than individually
- They are often unfamiliar with the route they are travelling.

These factors need to be taken into account when decisions are made on service specification and the design of vehicles used for airport journeys.

In many cases the vehicles used on airport routes will take account of the specific needs of air passengers. Examples of this include: Heathrow Express trains, buses on route X26 (Croydon – Heathrow) with additional large luggage racks, and the coaches used by National Express and Oxford Express to and from Heathrow and Gatwick airports. However, it is not always feasible or economically viable for services to operate with vehicles that are exclusively geared towards the needs of airport passengers.

In off-peak hours Thameslink services are not sufficiently busy to cause conflicts between airport and non-airport users. However, at peak times when the trains reach East Croydon, airport travellers are joined by a large number of regular commuters and there is a need for baggage to be reorganised and moved from gangways and seats to accommodate these passengers, often with a performance impact. This is a poor outcome for both airline travellers and regular commuters alike.

Our research has shown that, in general, passengers travelling to and from airports prefer trains and buses to have layouts that enable easy boarding and alighting with plenty of space to manoeuvre.

The needs of different types of passengers should, if adopted by the rail industry in rolling stock design, reduce the need for dedicated 'airport' rolling stock on services which serve both airport and non-airport markets. This in turn would reduce costs, and enable better working of train fleets.

A prime candidate for the use of such stock would be services to Heathrow Airport via any Western or Southern Rail Access to Heathrow, where integration with other local rail services would be essential to achieve the most efficient use of rail capacity.

7. General recommendations

Given the findings from our own research, passenger feedback and external research (including the Airports Commission), a number of key recommendations can be identified which are mostly applicable to all London airports:

Fares and ticketing

Oyster and Contactless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oyster and contactless bank card payment technology should be extended to cover rail journeys to Stansted Airport. • Fares and ticketing should be simplified to reduce passenger confusion.
Contactless payments on local buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contactless bank card payment technology should be extended to non-TfL bus services to Heathrow Airport, and to local bus services to Gatwick, Luton and Stansted Airports

Services

Rail access routes to Heathrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail, DfT and other organisations should progress plans for western and southern rail access routes to Heathrow Airport
Reading to Gatwick route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Western should increase the frequency of their Reading – Guildford – Redhill – Gatwick Airport route.
Chiltern line – Thameslink connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail, DfT, TfL and Chiltern Railways should progress a new Chiltern line station at West Hampstead to connect to Thameslink services to Luton and Gatwick Airports.
Electrification of Midland Main Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail and DfT must complete and progress electrification and upgrades to existing electrification (to allow for 125mph operation) of the Midland Main Line to enable easier access to Luton Airport from both London and the East Midlands, and to maintain train service frequency.
Better access between London City and future Elizabeth Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL should develop plans for better access to London City Airport from the Elizabeth Line.
Improve early morning/late night bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements should be made to the provision of bus services to London's airports to cover the shift patterns of airport or ancillary workers, or passengers arriving or departing on early morning /late evening flights.
Increase track capacity London - Stansted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail, DfT and TfL should progress additional track capacity between London and Stansted Airport.

Vehicles	
New rolling stock – East Midlands and Cross-Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New rolling stock in the East Midlands and Cross-Country rail franchises currently being tendered or under consultation, should reflect the needs of airport passengers in its design.

Stations	
Step free access and reduced step-gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of step free access and reduced step-gaps between trains and platforms needs to be increased across the rail network. This is particularly the case at stations with direct rail and Underground services to and from airports, and those that have good connectivity to other stations that have such access.
Farringdon Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The industry needs to work together to realise the potential benefits of Farringdon station and its' environs becoming a 'city air hub'.

Private hire vehicles and taxis	
Reduce instances of 'empty mileage'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action needs to be taken to reduce instances of 'empty mileage' caused by an increasing proportion of private hire vehicles and taxis, which have consequential impacts on road congestion, bus and coach reliability and air quality.

Car parking	
Repurpose excess parking estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the decline in car parking at airports we suggest that there is scope for airports to reduce their car parking estates, and reuse land for other purposes.

Proportion of journeys made using public transport	
More destinations with direct services to airports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The change in figures between 2012 and 2016 suggests that airport users prefer to make journeys with the minimum number of interchanges between mode. The increasing sophistication and low cost of apps such as Uber in the private hire and taxi field and their convenience means that, given a choice, airport users are more likely to choose these over other public transport options. Public transport overall needs to provide more destinations with direct services to airports.
'Seamless' interchanges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further to the above, interchanges should operate in such a way as to be regarded as 'seamless'. The rail industry needs to address other barriers to usage by airport travellers such as step free access to stations and reducing step-gaps between the train and the platform.

A seamless journey to the airport

Improvements to accessibility, layout and information provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passengers have told us that improvements to accessibility, layout and information provision at rail station/key interchanges have the greatest potential to make their journeys easier. This is where investment should be prioritised to improve public transport access to London's airports.
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Improving interchanges

Clear and consistent information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing information at key stations on the status of flights from those airports with direct services to airports would give further reassurance: this is particularly important for passengers travelling to and from airports as they are more likely to be unfamiliar with the journey. The need for information is even more important when there is disruption to transport services.
Availability of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff should be visible and easily available at interchanges to reassure airport passengers and other less frequent users and assist with luggage and boarding and alighting from trains or buses.
Ensuring passengers feel safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visible presence of staff also gives passengers reassurance in respect of their personal safety.
Toilet facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stations not managed by Network Rail (e.g. London Underground) should provide free toilet facilities as Network Rail have agreed to do from April 2019.
Amenities for long waits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interchanges should have reasonable levels of seating, shelter, waiting rooms, refreshments and shops. The longer the likely wait for an onward connection the more essential these facilities become.

Customer service

Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts should be made to ensure customer service improves at airports, as well as at key interchange points en route to and from airports: e.g. Higher levels of staffing to help passengers to easily and effectively make their journeys.
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City air hub

Farringdon as a future hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operators and policy makers should take the opportunity provided by the completion of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) and Thameslink rail projects which makes Farringdon a good choice for an air hub, with its direct connections to Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports.
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<p>Extending the Elizabeth Line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London City, Southend and Stansted airports could be directly connected to Farringdon by extending the Elizabeth Line or reinstating rail lines. • A link to London City Airport on the Abbey Wood branch of the Elizabeth Line could be made from Custom House Station and the route could be extended from Shenfield to Southend Airport.
<p>Direct access from Farringdon to Stansted Airport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct access from Farringdon to Stansted Airport could be provided with a link onto the Thameslink service by using reinstated short length rail lines at Kentish Town and South Tottenham to reach an enhanced Lea Valley rail route to Stansted.
<p>A comfortable point of interchange for airport passengers</p>	<p>Operators should work together to provide a future airport hub at Farringdon including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management by one named manager who would take responsibility for resolving issues in and around the location. • Readily available information for all flights from all of London's airports and airline booking and check-in facilities would be available at the hub. • Comfortable 'meet and greet' facilities for passengers, appropriate catering facilities, free toilet and baby changing facilities. • Emergency and reasonable cost overnight accommodation

Vehicle design

<p>Rolling stock which meets needs of airport passengers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators should ensure that rolling stock meets the needs of different types of passengers. This should, if adopted by the rail industry, reduce the need for dedicated 'airport' rolling stock on services which serve both airport and non-airport markets. This in turn would reduce costs, and enable better working of train fleets.
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8. London's airports in detail

Building on the above evidence which focuses on issues that affect all London airports, this section of the report aims to profile each of London's busiest airports individually.

8.1 Heathrow Airport

Current owner: LHR Airports Ltd

Existing surface transport links

Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> London Underground Piccadilly Line Heathrow Express⁸ (a subsidiary company of LHR Airports Ltd, operated on their behalf by Great Western Railway) rail service Heathrow – Paddington TfL Rail (to be known as the Elizabeth Line upon completion of the Crossrail project) local service Heathrow – Paddington
Bus and coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Express and Oxford Express coach service hub location Local bus services provided by TfL (within London) Variety of commercial operators to places outside London (some under contract to local authorities)
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive road access via M4, M25 and local road network; taxis are licensed by TfL. Private hire vehicles serve the airport via a 'field' car park

Context

London Heathrow is one of the busiest airports in the world. The need for Heathrow to improve surface accessibility is made even more important given the recent decision to go ahead with expansion plans at Heathrow Airport to develop a third runway.

This will have considerable impact on surface access to the airport and on transport systems and users in the vicinity, both during and after construction. It is therefore important that a surface access strategy is developed that encourages modal shift and reduces the impact of traffic congestion.

⁸ Heathrow Express is a wholly owned subsidiary of LHR Airport Plc. It owns the rail infrastructure between Stockley Junction and Heathrow. It is not a franchised or open access rail operator – instead operating under its own legislative and commercial framework, with limited interaction and common ticketing with other National Rail operators.



The exit to Piccadilly line services

Positive changes since 2014

Heathrow previously presented arriving passengers with difficult ticketing choices for onward travel. However, since 2014 significant progress has been made to improve this:

- TfL's Oyster/contactless system is now valid to or from Heathrow on the TfL Rail (Elizabeth Line) service to and from Paddington. Heathrow Express is expected to follow suit in early 2019 once works at Paddington station are complete.
- Ticket machines at Heathrow have now been upgraded to include fares to all National Rail destinations.

The Elizabeth Line and Thameslink projects

- Both of these projects will improve the accessibility of Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports through the interchange at Farringdon between the two lines. This will provide more opportunities for 'one change' travel by public transport to and from the airport, both from within London and from other regions such as the East of England that account for smaller but significant proportions of traffic to these airports.
- Since 2014, plans have been brought forward to run Elizabeth Line trains to Terminal 5 at Heathrow. This terminal is the largest in terms of passenger volumes. Without the inclusion of this stop, passengers would have missed out as it would have added a 'second change' into the journey. It is therefore welcome that this issue has been resolved.



Ticket purchasing facilities at National Rail stations and Heathrow Underground station need to be improved and offer all options for travel to and from the airport

Ongoing problems for passengers using public transport

Fares and ticketing

- For passengers travelling to Heathrow Airport from National Rail stations within London, many ticket machines are configured such that passengers typing in 'Heathrow Airport' are only offered tickets routed via Heathrow Express rather than the cheaper route via the Piccadilly line. Only the few passengers 'in the know' will be aware that they need to request a ticket for Zone U1256 in order to purchase the cheaper option.
- Furthermore, The London Underground ticket machines at Heathrow are only able to issue a limited range of National Rail tickets.

Buses

- Buses at Heathrow also have divergent policies on ticketing. There is a 'free fare zone' supported by Heathrow Airport Ltd that covers all buses within the confines of the airport and its immediate vicinity, however;
- TfL buses offer the ability to use Oyster or contactless cards as tickets and no longer accept cash. Non-TfL buses from Heathrow have only recently started to accept payment by contactless bank cards or smartcards rather than cash.

- All terminals at Heathrow except 4 are served by a TfL night bus service (N9) to central London, whilst a non-TfL bus service operates from all terminals to Slough all through the night.

Poor transport links for South West London and North West Surrey

Even with the development of the Elizabeth Line and Thameslink, there are areas of London that are poorly served in terms of rail access to airports. The most significant of these are South West London and North West Surrey to Heathrow.

Currently, rail links from these areas are poor, with passengers expected to travel to the airport by car, taxi/private hire vehicles, bus or a combination of train and bus, especially from Feltham. The lack of such a link substantially contributes to traffic congestion and poor air quality in the vicinity of the airport and surrounding areas. Yet, as noted in the London Assembly report on airport capacity in London, these areas generate a large number of passengers to London's airports.

Solutions

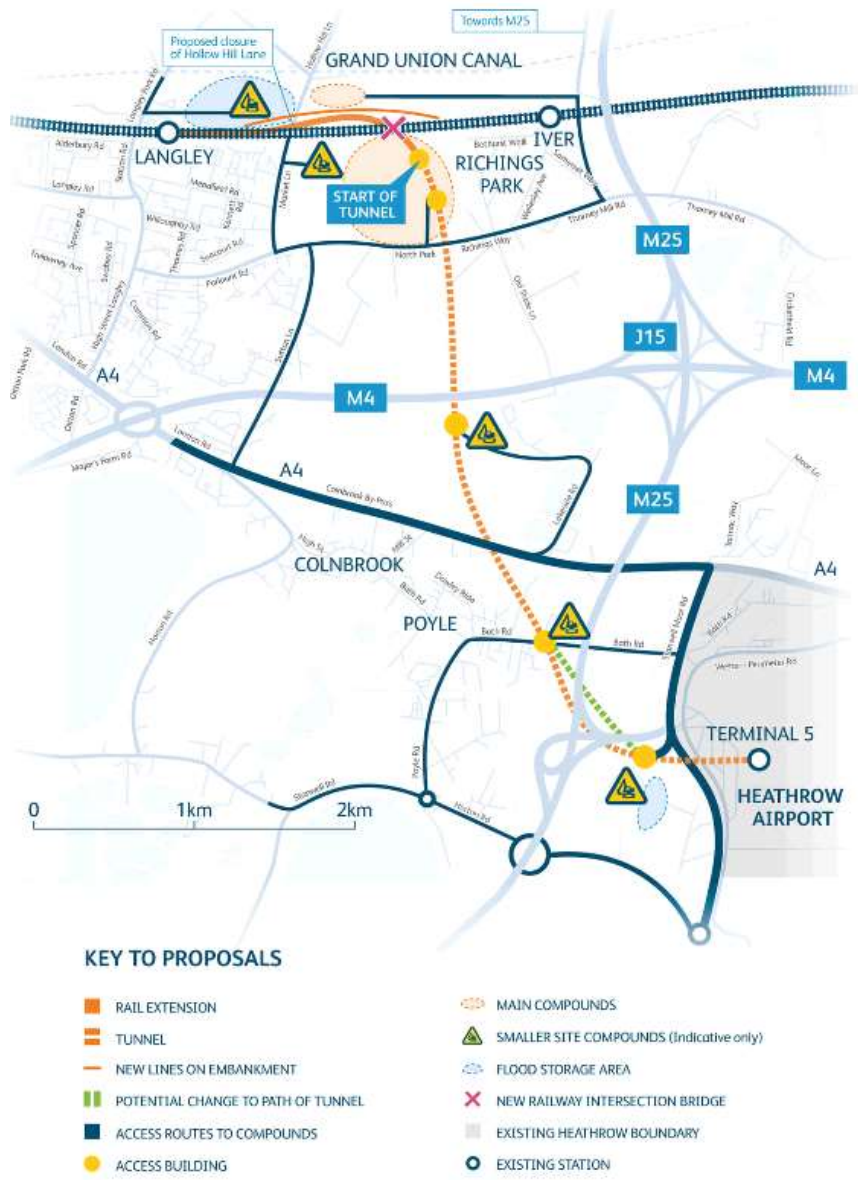
It is therefore welcome that two schemes (at different stages of development) are being brought forward that will add rail connectivity to the airport irrespective of any decision to expand it: the Western Rail Access Scheme and the Southern Rail Access Scheme.

London TravelWatch has supported both of these schemes because of the benefits to passengers in terms of shorter journey times, reduced need to transfer between buses and trains, and improved connectivity of Heathrow Airport from Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Richmond, Twickenham, Staines, Woking, Guildford, Bracknell and Wokingham. All of these stations also offer good onward connections to other areas served by rail.

1) Western Rail Access scheme

Network Rail is at present progressing a 'Western Rail Access' scheme, providing a link in tunnel between Langley on the Great Western Main Line and Terminal 5.

The proposed rail link to Heathrow Airport from the Great Western Main Line near Langley would reduce journey times from the Thames Valley (Slough, Maidenhead, Reading and Oxford) to the airport and should therefore reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Again, these areas are significant generators of London airport traffic, and improving public transport connectivity from them should be seen as a priority.



Western Rail Access Scheme, Network Rail Proposed map

2) Southern Rail Access Scheme

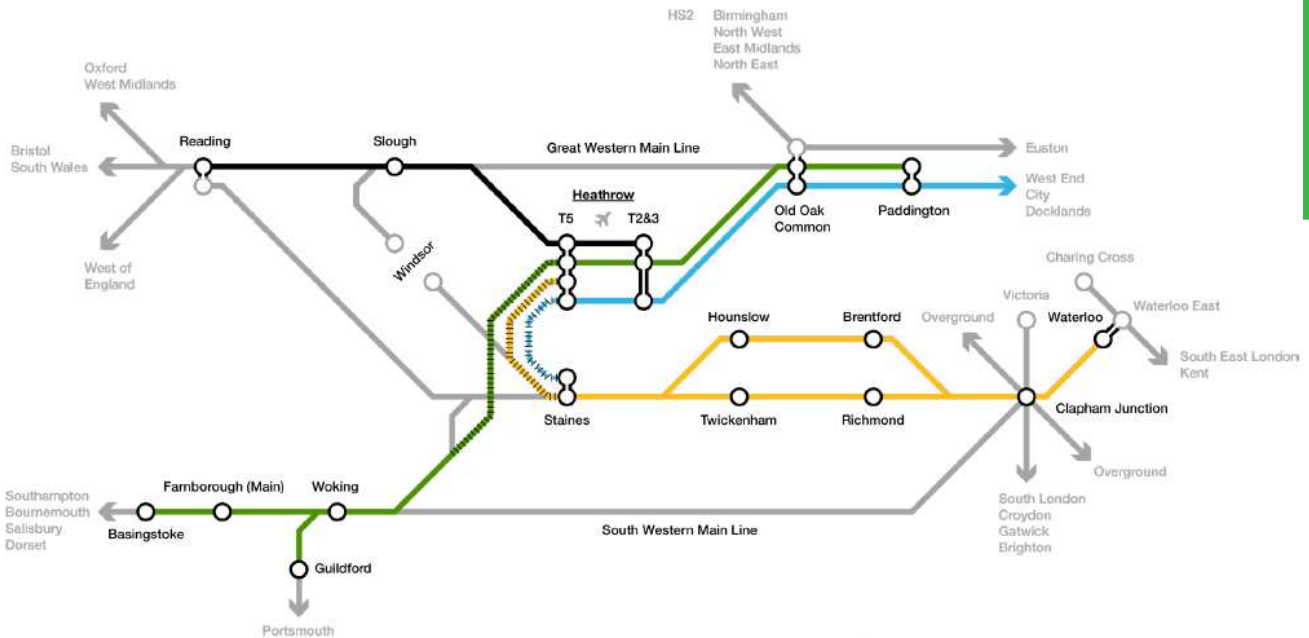
Separately, the DfT has asked for expressions of interest from the private sector to invest in a 'Southern Rail Access' scheme, linking Terminal 5 to the South Western Railway network at Staines and Woking.

The importance of the Southern Rail Access route to North West Surrey and the onward connections to Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire, West Sussex and Devon cannot be overstated, as this would bring many of these areas into the 45, 60 and 120 minute catchments that the Airports Commission considers crucial to the sustainability of any option for additional airport capacity.

Combined, the Southern and Western Rail Access schemes could serve over 25% of demand for surface access to Heathrow from outside of London⁹.

⁹ CAA Passenger Survey Report, 2012

Without the implementation of both schemes it is difficult to envisage how Heathrow Airport could achieve any significant improvement in public transport share. We therefore recommend that both of these schemes are pursued now the Government has decided to expand Heathrow.



Projected Rail Journey Times enabled by Heathrow Southern Railway

Minutes (direct trains in bold)	Staines	Richmond	Woking (via Option 3)	Guildford (via Option 3)	Basingstoke (via Option 3)
Heathrow Terminal 5	6	26	16	26	40
Heathrow Terminals 2 & 3	15	35	20	30	44
Old Oak Common for HS2 and Elizabeth Line	29		34	44	58
London Paddington	34		39	49	63

Map Key

- Basingstoke / Guildford – Woking – Heathrow – Paddington
- Waterloo – Heathrow
- Elizabeth Line
- Potential Western Rail Link to Heathrow
- ||||| Proposed New Heathrow Southern Railway Infrastructure
- - - - - Potential Elizabeth Line extension to Staines

Southern Access Scheme

Road congestion and access by taxi and private hire vehicle

As noted in table 6 (see appendix), the proportion of journeys to the airport made by taxi and private hire cars increased from 26% in 2010 to 31.5% in 2016. At the same time, other car based journeys dropped from 34% in 2010 to 29% in 2016.

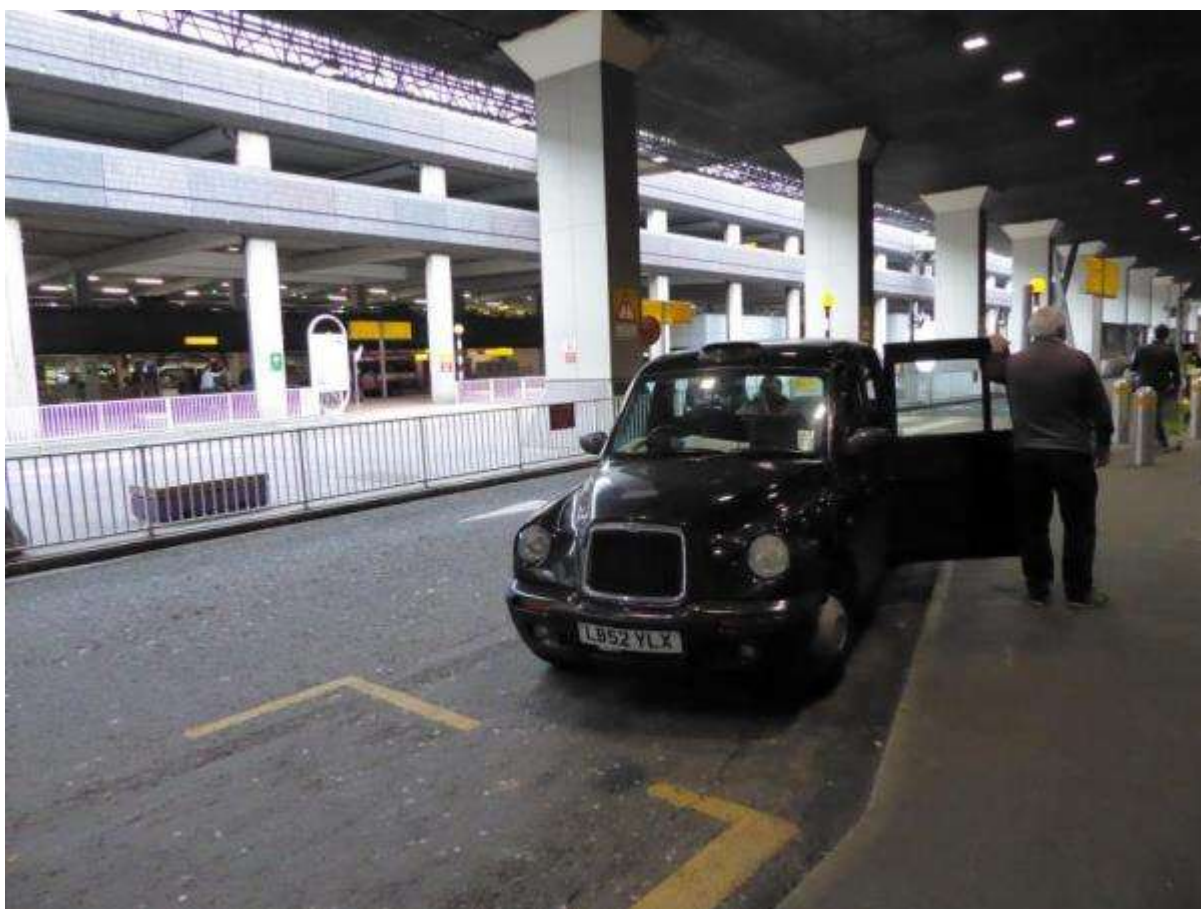
The DfT national transport model shows that on the strategic road network around Heathrow there is already severe congestion, which is only likely to increase and spread without further intervention. Journey time reliability for road users accessing Heathrow is already extremely poor. The Campaign for Better Transport has also highlighted the existing severe stresses on surface transport to Heathrow in terms of congestion, crowding and poor reliability of journey times.

These trends are likely to continue, and are also reflected at London City Airport which is of a similar distance from central London. The main reason for this change is likely to be the growth of 'ride hailing apps', making taxi and private hire journeys more competitive and more attractive than private car journeys involving a drop off or parking at the airport.

This change may be welcome in reducing pressure on airport car parking, but it adds other problems by producing more empty journeys to or from the airport, putting pressure on the road network capacity and the 'honey potting' of private hire vehicles in residential streets near the airport waiting for potential hires. To combat this Heathrow Airport have developed a parking area with Uber that effectively bars drivers and vehicles that have not passed through it from taking hires from the airport.

Road congestion continues to be a problem in the vicinity and this is reflected in the declining share of bus and coach passenger journeys between 2010 and 2016 (see figures 5a and 5b, appendix). This will require further bus priority measures both in London and surrounding local authorities.

All of these issues would suggest that reform of taxi and private hire licensing should be considered and further efforts should be made to reduce the instances of empty journeys to and from the airport.



Taxi picking up passengers at Heathrow airport

8.2 Gatwick Airport

Current owner: Global Infrastructure Partners

Existing surface transport links	
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Rail station operated by Southern • Train services to parts of London and the South East operated by Southern, Gatwick Express and Thameslink • Also Great Western service to Reading via Guildford
Bus and coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Express and Oxford Express coach hub, Easybus minibus service to central London, local bus network provided mainly by Metrobus including some 24 hour services (with some services under contract to local authorities) – some buses still only accept cash to buy tickets
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive road access via the M23, M25 and local road network. Taxis are not permitted to pick up at the airport, but the private hire vehicle concession managed by the airport effectively regulates this activity.

Context

Since 2014 there has been some significant progress in resolving some, if not all, of the previously identified issues with Gatwick Airport. However, other issues have emerged as a result of the scaling back of overnight train services serving local stations, Clapham Junction and London Victoria on Monday to Thursday nights.

Positive changes since 2014

- **Extension of Oyster Card to Gatwick:** The interim findings of the Airports Commission highlighted the need to extend London's Oyster smart ticketing system to Gatwick Airport and recommended that this happen. This recommendation has now been implemented, resolving a major issue for passengers. Statistics confirm that there was a good take up of the service - in the first six weeks of operation alone, passengers made almost 150,000 rail journeys to and from London Gatwick Airport Station by Oyster PAYG/Contactless payment card and this number has continued to grow.

The fact that Oyster was not valid for travel between London and Gatwick Airport Station was the cause of much passenger confusion and frustration as so many passengers wrongly assumed it must be so as the airport is described as 'London Gatwick'. The advent of Oyster and Contactless bank card acceptance has considerably reduced queuing at ticket machines and ticket offices both at Gatwick Airport and London Victoria. It has also reduced the incidence of passengers buying the wrong ticket for their journeys as this is reconciled at the end of the journey. The opening of additional platforms at Gatwick Airport station has also helped ease congestion there.

- **Brighton Main Line Upgrade Programme:** In October 2018, Network Rail began consulting on the first stage of the Brighton Main Line Upgrade Programme which aims to unblock the Croydon bottleneck. This scheme, which is supported by London Travelwatch, would help to improve punctuality on routes to Gatwick Airport as the 'bottleneck' is a major underlying cause of knock-on delays. It would also provide additional capacity to meet demand. In the medium term, Network Rail's plans also include proposals to rebuild the concourse at Gatwick Airport station to increase capacity and enhance the passenger experience.
- **The Elizabeth Line:** The Elizabeth Line will substantially improve access to Gatwick via the interchange at Farringdon to West and East London with its 'one change' functionality. This would be significantly enhanced by the addition of services from the West Coast Main Line as suggested by the Department for Transport in 2014 (diversion of current Tring – London Euston London North Western Railway services).



Passengers queue for tickets and Oyster top-ups

Ongoing problems for passengers using public transport

The extended periods of disruption and poor reliability of Thameslink, Southern and Gatwick Express services since 2014 has had an impact on public confidence in using rail to and from the airport.

Thameslink Programme

The Thameslink programme introduced new through services to the Great Northern route to Peterborough and Cambridge, and improved connectivity to North and North

East London through interchange at Finsbury Park. However, at the time of writing, these new services have not proved to be sufficiently reliable. These services will need to become much more reliable if passenger confidence is to be gained. As noted already, at Heathrow, access to regions such as the East of England will be substantially improved under this programme. To take further advantage of the Thameslink programme, investment should be made to further improve Finsbury Park station as an interchange.

Electrification of North Downs route

Enhanced station environments at Redhill and Reading will allow more through trains from Reading and a potential extension of services to Oxford. The North Downs route to Reading is, however, hampered by low frequencies and longer journey times because of the diesel multiple unit stock that has to be employed on this route on account of gaps in the electrification provided¹⁰.

Currently around 16% of all demand at Gatwick Airport comes from the districts served by this line, so there is a considerable opportunity to increase usage of this route¹¹. Filling the gaps in the electrification of the North Downs route should be regarded as a priority for investment. At present, proposals for a third hourly train per hour from Reading are on hold due to Network Rail's concerns regarding level crossings en route and the increased risk of conflicts with road traffic.

Linking infrastructure improvements between Heathrow and Gatwick

Combined with a southern rail access link to Heathrow Airport (via Woking and Staines), electrification of this route would open up the possibility, of efficiently serving catchment areas for Heathrow and Gatwick, and be a low cost way of providing a Heathrow to Gatwick rail link.

It would reduce journey times to Gatwick by bringing major centres such as Guildford, Aldershot, Reading, and other parts of Surrey, Hampshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire within the 45, 60 and 120 minute catchment areas for surface access advocated by the Airports Commission. It has recently been announced that Great Western Railway are procuring refurbished class 319 dual voltage electric trains with an additional diesel engine added to enable operation over sections of route without electrification.

¹⁰ Between Gatwick Airport and Reading the route is electrified at the beginning, end and middle with only the sections between Wokingham and Ash, Shalford Junction and Reigate with no electrification. About 30 route miles would need to be electrified.

¹¹ CAA Passenger Survey Report, 2012



Farringdon Station

New Chiltern line station at West Hampstead

Access to North West London, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire from Gatwick and Luton airports could be substantially improved with a major reduction in journey times from these areas by the construction of a station on the Chiltern line at West Hampstead. This would allow interchange with the Thameslink route. West Hampstead is also served by other routes such as the London Overground Richmond/Clapham Junction to Stratford service and the Jubilee line. Creating an interchange at West Hampstead is something we have advocated for many years because it would bring significant local and regional benefits of which improved connectivity to airports would be a relatively small part.

Rail and Road constraints near Hooley

On both road and rail links into London there are major capacity and resilience constraints in the area around the village of Hooley, where the M23 and A23 join together at junction seven of the M23, and where the main railway routes via Redhill (slow line) and the Quarry (fast direct line) pass through.

The rail route suffers from defects in the original Victorian design as a result of the excessively steep sided cuttings at this location leading to and from tunnels. These often require lengthy and disruptive closures to maintain them properly or to conduct emergency repairs after landslips and rock falls.

The road route suffers from congestion through the village due to the stretches of single carriageway road. This affects coach services running to and from Gatwick Airport and local bus services that run via the existing road. A possible solution to both issues might be to deck the railway cutting to form a tunnel and use the space above for a replacement road route that would by-pass the village and remove the existing bottlenecks.

The reduction in overnight train services to London Victoria, Clapham Junction and local stations to Gatwick Airport on Monday to Thursday nights, has highlighted the paucity of local bus services, particularly on the Gatwick Airport – Horley – Redhill – Merstham / Reigate corridor. There is a need for more overnight local bus services on this route.

8.3 Stansted Airport

Current owner: Manchester Airports Group

Existing surface transport links

Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stansted Airport station is operated by Greater Anglia. Their services include the Stansted Express to Liverpool Street and local services to the Lea Valley and Cambridge. Arriva Cross Country operates between Stansted Airport, Cambridge, Peterborough, Leicester and Birmingham
Bus and coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Express and Airport Bus Express operate from a coach hub at the airport. Local bus services are provided by a number of operators, some under contract to local authorities
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive road access via the M11, A120, M25 and local roads. Taxis and private hire vehicles are managed by a concession operated by Stansted Airport.



Customers purchasing tickets at Stansted Airport

Ongoing problems for passengers using public transport

- Penalty Fares: The number of Penalty Fares issued to passengers trying to travel to Stansted Airport using Oyster PAYG or Contactless has increased from around zero to 16,000 a year over the past two years – around three quarters of those

are issued at Stansted Airport. This is a similar situation to the one at Gatwick Airport before Oyster/Contactless acceptance was expanded to the Airport.

- **Consequential Loss:** Consequential loss is a common complaint from passengers on the Stansted Express. Many passengers believe that if they miss their flight due to delays on the train service, the train operator will refund them the cost of their flight. Although they now have the right to claim for this, there is no automatic entitlement. The lack of Oyster/contactless availability has also been a problem for passengers using the airport.
- **Journey times:** Stansted Airport has the longest journey times of all the London airports to central London by both rail and coach, although coaches call at Stratford and trains call at Tottenham Hale to connect with Underground and TfL bus services for local and central London destinations. It also acts as a regional airport for Cambridgeshire and East Anglia.
- The airport and other stakeholders aspire to substantially reduce the rail journey time to central London. This would require largescale investment in additional track capacity, network resilience and reliability along the route to meet demand and reduce instances of disruption and overcrowding. We would support investment in such a scheme provided that there is no adverse impact on the ability to provide local services in an area which is also expected to absorb a large increase in housing and population.



Passengers queue to board a coach service from Stansted Airport

- **Connecting Infrastructure developments:** The route is also proposed as a potential outlet for any Crossrail 2 line from North East to South West London.

Crossrail 2 would substantially increase the accessibility of Stansted Airport if included in this project.

- The Elizabeth Line: The Elizabeth Line will improve accessibility of some parts of London to Stansted Airport through 'one change' interchange at Liverpool Street with the Stansted Express or at Stratford for slower but cheaper coach services. However, access to South London will remain more difficult, with most passengers needing to change at least twice without Crossrail 2.
- Connection to Farringdon: Stansted has poor connectivity to Farringdon (which has the potential to be a location for an airport hub for central London, on account of its Thameslink and Crossrail connectivity to Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports) because it requires passengers to change at Liverpool Street. However, Thameslink services could be extended in some form to Stansted via an enhanced Lea Valley route. To do this would require the reinstatement of existing short curve lines from Tottenham Hale to South Tottenham, and between Upper Holloway and Kentish Town.

8.4 Luton Airport

Current owner: Luton Borough Council – operations managed by London Luton Airport Operations Ltd

Existing surface transport links

Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luton Airport Parkway rail station (located 1.5 miles from the airport) is served by Thameslink and East Midlands Trains (EMT) to and from St. Pancras International, and to the East Midlands and Gatwick Airport/Brighton (Thameslink). A shuttle bus links the Parkway station to the airport
Bus and coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Express use Luton Airport as a coach hub; Easybus/Green Line operate services to central London in competition with National Express. An extensive local bus network is operated by a variety of operators on a commercial basis – some using the Luton – Dunstable busway that extends to the airport. All buses only accept cash to buy tickets. The bus/coach interchange arrangements at the airport are impressive.
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive road access via the M1, A505, M25 and local roads. Luton Borough Council licenses taxis and private hire vehicles.

Ongoing problems for passengers using public transport

- Too few passengers using public transport: Currently, the proportion of air passengers using public transport to get to Luton Airport is the lowest of London's airports. Between 2010 and 2016 this dropped further so that less than a third of passengers now use public transport to access the airport. Passengers arriving at Luton Airport Parkway Station have to make onward connection to the airport building by using a shuttle bus.



Bus and coach services at Luton Airport

- Fares and ticketing: The key issue that passengers complain to us about at Luton Airport is fares and ticketing. Passengers complain that Oyster is not valid for their journey to or from London although Oyster will be extended to Luton Airport Parkway station at the start of 2019. The inconsistency of ticket conditions for parties of two or more passengers between East Midlands Trains and Thameslink also causes problems. This has resulted in passengers inadvertently travelling on East Midlands Trains and being issued with a Penalty Fare.
- The shuttle bus is provided free to passengers who already have a National Rail ticket but costs £2.30 for a single ticket and £3.60 for an open return if the passenger does not have a train ticket. The drivers do not sell train tickets. Luton Airport Ltd are constructing a light rail link between Luton Airport Parkway station and the terminal building. Due to be operational in 2020, this will replace the bus link.



Customers queue to purchase train tickets at Luton Airport

Improvements to infrastructure

- A new interchange at West Hampstead on Chiltern Line: Luton Airport has, benefited from the Thameslink improvement programme and the Luton – Dunstable busway. As noted previously, accessibility by a 'one change' station will improve with the opening of Elizabeth Line and the interchange at Farringdon, and could be improved further with the opening of an interchange at West Hampstead on the Chiltern route.
- Electrification of the Midland Main Line: In addition, there is potential to improve rail access to the airport from the East Midlands area with the electrification of the Midland Main Line, and an upgrade of existing electrification to allow for 125mph running, the re-opening of the East – West rail route from Oxford, Bicester and Milton Keynes, and potentially more locally by a diversion of the Watford Junction to St Albans Abbey branch line to St Albans City station.

- We support the already agreed and funded partial electrification of the Midland Main Line and the reopening of the East – West rail route. The latter would produce greater benefit if a projected extension from Bedford to Cambridge were included.

8.5 London City Airport

Current owner: Global Infrastructure Partners

Existing surface transport links

Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Docklands Light Railway (DLR) trains from Woolwich Arsenal to Bank and Stratford International
Bus and coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two local buses are provided by TfL, one of which operates 24 hours a day. No express coaches serve this airport.
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access is via the A13, A406, local roads and the Woolwich Free Ferry. Taxis are licensed by TfL.



DLR entrance to London City Airport

Ongoing problems for passengers using public transport

- Limited ticketing options: Public transport is very simple here as it is only served by the DLR and TfL (Oyster/contactless only) buses. Nevertheless, we have had appeals casework relating to the poor reliability of ticket machines, and the fact that it is only possible to purchase tickets to a limited range of National Rail destinations at this station. For example, a passenger wanting to travel to Guildford would have to use an Oyster card or contactless payment card to get them to Waterloo and then purchase another ticket to continue their journey.



Ticket machines at London City Airport Station

Elizabeth Line

- The airport's accessibility will be substantially improved with the completion of the Elizabeth Line, which will give access to East London and Essex via Stratford, and West London via Custom House.
- However, accessibility could be even more substantially improved if a station was provided at the airport on the Abbey Wood branch of the Elizabeth Line. The line passes directly underneath the airport in tunnel and emerges near the main terminal briefly, which could provide a potential site for a station. This would give a direct link to Canary Wharf, the City, Farringdon, the West End, Heathrow and the Thames Valley.
- If the business case to provide a new station was not sufficiently strong we recommend as an alternative that a dedicated link should be built from Custom House Station to City Airport.

9. Recommendations for individual airports

Table 5: Improving surface access to London's airports - summary of recommendations

Fares, ticketing and service provision	Legal and contractual	Infrastructure
Heathrow		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add 24/7 Oyster agency • Extend contactless payment card acceptance to non-TfL bus services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and agree fixed rate taxi fare to central London 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete western rail access to Heathrow • Provide southern rail access link to North West Surrey and South West London
Gatwick		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce more all night local bus services on the Gatwick Airport – Redhill corridor • Extend contactless payment card acceptance to more local bus services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrify North Downs rail route • Provide a new interchange station at West Hampstead on Chiltern line
Stansted		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend Oyster/contactless system to the rail service at earliest opportunity • Extend contactless payment card acceptance to more local bus services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional track capacity between London and Stansted
Luton		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend contactless payment card acceptance to more local bus services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a new interchange station at West Hampstead on Chiltern line • Complete electrification and upgrade of the Midland Main Line north to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield
London City		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide full range of National Rail destinations and ticketing from DLR ticket machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and agree fixed rate taxi fare to central London 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Elizabeth Line station below the airport

10. Final considerations

Surface access arrangements must be integral to the planning of new airports and the operation and expansion of existing ones. A decision to increase aviation capacity at any airport must be accompanied by a surface access travel plan as the Airports Commission recommended.

Passengers travelling to or from the capital by air have the choice of five major airports within a 40 mile radius, all of which can be reached by public transport in less than 50 minutes from central London. For many destinations air passengers will not only have a choice of airlines but also airports from which they can travel.

Uncertainty about what the journey to or from the airport may be like can make the travelling experience a stressful one for an infrequent traveller, or one unfamiliar with London. They may worry about how to reach their end destination from the airport, how they will manage heavy luggage, where they will be able to buy a ticket and which ticket they will need, whether they will have the right currency or bank card with which to pay for their travel and what happens if something goes wrong. There is also the added concern for passengers travelling to the airport that delays will mean they miss their flight.

The Airports Commission report notes that improvements to surface transport will help to make airports with spare capacity more attractive to airlines and passengers. We think there is also a lot more that operators and service providers should do to improve the experience of getting to or from London's airports by public transport for the benefit of all air passengers.

We support the Airports Commission recommendations that a package of improvements is needed, including:

- The enhancement of Gatwick Airport station
- Further work to develop a strategy for enhancing Gatwick's road and rail access
- Work on developing proposals to improve the rail link between London and Stansted
- Work to provide rail access into Heathrow from the South
- The provision of smart ticketing facilities at airport stations.

We agree that these measures are worthwhile in their own terms, but none of them, either in isolation or in combination, go far enough to realise the potential public transport offers to provide a convenient, comfortable and reliable way to get to the airport; helping to make better use of London's airport capacity.

In addition to the infrastructure improvements listed above, action is needed to:

- Ensure the Elizabeth Line has a dedicated link from Custom House station into London City Airport

- Provide a station on the Chiltern rail route at West Hampstead to enable passengers to connect onto Thameslink and London Overground rail services and London Underground's Jubilee line
- Develop new rolling stock that better caters for the needs of airport and local passengers simultaneously
- Continue to improve accessibility of local stations and bus stops to ensure that the entire journey to the airport can be step free
- Ensure that all train and bus stations have fully accessible toilets provided free of charge to passengers with a ticket to travel. They should also have an adequate level of covered seating.

Transport operators can go a long way towards compensating for poor infrastructure by providing excellent customer service with a real focus on the needs of passengers. Conversely, air passengers will notice when this is not forthcoming. Customer service is seen as a key point of differentiation between airlines so many air passengers will receive an excellent service on their flight and at the airport and may well judge what is provided by London's public transport operators by the same standards.

In our 2014 report, we outlined our checklist for good customer service for airport-related journeys. We believe these are still essential criteria for improvements:

1. Accessibility

- All passengers using public transport in and around London should be able to 'turn up and go' without needing to book advance assistance. Arriving air passengers unsure about whether their entire onward journey will be step free should be able to get such information at the airport, along with assistance to plan a suitable alternative route if necessary

2. Staff

- Appropriate numbers of staff at stations are essential to provide reassurance, advice and assistance to air passengers who are more likely to be unfamiliar with the journey and travelling with luggage
- Staff should be highly visible, well trained, proactive in engaging with the public and able to communicate easily with passengers with special needs. They should understand what are likely to be the key concerns of air passengers
- Staff should be easily able to give advice on coping with planned and unplanned disruptions to journeys to and from the airport, and to assist with contingency planning
- Additional staff should be provided at airport rail and bus stations to help passengers load and unload baggage onto luggage trolleys and also to advise them on the best way to stow their baggage on the vehicles

- Multi-lingual airport ambassadors should be provided at key interchange points on routes to London's major airports.

3. Information

- Signage at stations where passengers change from one mode of transport to another should be simple, clearly visible and located at every point where the user has to choose which direction to take
- Clear maps showing all available public transport routes should be provided at all stations and stops as well as at public information points within the airport building. Information should be provided about all the scheduled services available.
- Passengers should be given clear advice on what to expect at airports, bus and rail stations and at other interchanges en route, including how to avoid conflict with other users particularly at peak times
- All information should be made available in other formats or languages as required
- The option to use public transport to access London's major airports should be better marketed because infrequent travellers or visitors to the capital may be unaware that it is possible to do this, or of how convenient such a journey could be for them.

4. Fares and ticketing

- Fares charged for different journeys, and by different operators for the same journey, should be clearly set out wherever tickets are sold or journeys started
- London's Oystercard/contactless bank card payments system should be valid on all journeys to London's airports. Ticket purchase for onward travel should be possible round the clock at major airports to cater for passengers arriving for early flights or on late flights which have been delayed. Passengers should be able to purchase tickets at the airport for through travel to National Rail destinations outside London.

5. Co-ordination

- The one team transport approach that worked so well during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games should be adopted at key interchange points en route to London's airports – particularly to co-ordinate advice to air passengers on how to get to the airport during times of unplanned disruption.

Improving the experience of travelling to or from London's airports would not only help to make best use of aviation capacity it would also further enhance the attractiveness of London as a destination.

Appendix A – Statistics

Mode of Access to London Airports 2010 (%)¹²

Transport mode	Heathrow	Gatwick	Stansted	Luton	London City
Public transport					
Tube	16	-	-	-	-
Rail	10	34	25	17	-
Bus	3	0	1	1	1
Coach	9	6	21	15	0
Courtesy bus	2	3	1	0	0
DLR	-	-	-	-	52
Taxi/private hire	26	13	9	16	34
Car based					
Hire car	3	2	3	3	1
Private car parked	13	23	20	22	3
Car dropped off	18	19	20	26	10

Mode of Access to London Airports 2016 (%)

Transport mode	Heathrow	Gatwick	Stansted	Luton	London City
Public transport					
Tube	18.5	-	-	-	-
Rail	9	34	26.5	15.5	-
Bus	1.5	0.4	1.5	1	>1
Coach	8.5	5.5	21	14	>1
Courtesy bus	1.5	4	0.5	1	>0.05
DLR	-	-	-	-	48
Taxi/private hire	31.5	15	10.5	17.5	39
Car based					
Hire car	2.5	1.5	2	2.5	>0.05
Private car parked	11	22.5	18.5	21.5	>1
Car dropped off	15	16.5	18.5	27.5	9
Other					
Walk	>0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	2
Cycle / Motorcycle	>0.02	0.4	>0.01	>0.1	>0.05

¹² All figures in these tables are taken from Civil Aviation Authority Passenger Survey Reports.

Appendix B – Key insights from our recent research

Buying tickets and paying for travel

There is a need to

- Have empowered and knowledgeable staff available to answer passenger queries and resolve problems
- Provide help at ticket machines and enough machines
- Have a clear and transparent ticketing system that is easy to understand, with information on how fares are structured and applied, including how and when Oyster or other smartcards can be used
- Reduce ticket and fares complexity, particularly for journeys starting at airports
- Dispel myths surrounding the availability of advance purchase tickets

Getting accurate and timely information

- Information needs to be reliable, transparent, accurate, in real time, and multi-modal between air and other transport modes
- Apps and social media information outlets need to be developed, but links to those without access to these means also need to be maintained
- Improvement works need to be better publicised, including the benefits they bring to passengers.

Addressing barriers to using public transport to airports

- Carriages and vehicles need to be designed to enable passengers to get on and off more easily
- Station accessibility needs to be improved for people with mobility impairments, and by extension to air travellers with luggage
- Step/gap issues at station platforms need to be reduced as they make it more difficult for passengers with luggage to negotiate
- Measures are needed to deal with crowding on trains, including dealing with conflict between air travellers and other passengers
- Litter and graffiti needs to be tackled on rail routes serving airports
- Catering and toilet facilities should be improved at stations
- Additional charges for the use of toilets at main line stations should be removed
- The reliability and punctuality of buses serving airports should be improved

Appendix C – Passenger case studies

The following case studies demonstrate the difficulties for passengers travelling to airports by public transport. They show that better connectivity and journey time savings could be achieved through relatively small improvements.

Lack of step free access at stations

Alexandra Palace Station

Alexandra Palace Station was recently partially rebuilt as part of a capacity enhancement scheme, but regrettably, only passive provision was made for step free access. In this part of North London there are very few step free stations as most lines are either in deep tunnels or cuttings, on viaducts and embankments, or are multi-track making it extremely expensive to provide step free access retrospectively.

Putting in lifts at this station would make a major difference to this part of London in terms of accessibility. The trains that serve this station currently connect with the Piccadilly line for Heathrow at Finsbury Park; and Gatwick and Luton airports via Thameslink at Kings Cross St.Pancras. In 2018 Thameslink services started serving Alexandra Palace giving direct access to Farringdon for Crossrail and services to Gatwick and Luton Airport (via St.Pancras International). The step free journey to all airports from Alexandra Palace would be reduced by *nearly an hour* if there was investment in lifts to the platforms at this station.

Penge West Station

Penge West Station is only step free in the northbound direction. Access to the southbound platform is via a convoluted route with two sets of stairs. It has a half-hourly service southbound to East Croydon, with step free access and very frequent services to Luton and Gatwick airports, and St. Pancras International. Travelling from Gatwick Airport to Penge West or from Penge West to Luton Airport is therefore relatively simple. However, travelling to Gatwick Airport or Luton Airport from Penge West is much more difficult, particularly for anyone travelling with luggage as it involves the use of many sets of stairs.

A London Borough of Bromley scheme to provide ramp access to the southbound platform at Penge West is feasible and relatively straightforward but requires funding. However, a relatively modest outlay would significantly improve accessibility and increase the choices for many more people in how they travel to or from the airport. Step free journey times to Gatwick Airport would be reduced from at least an hour to under 30 minutes. From Luton Airport step free journey times would be cut by at least 20 minutes from a minimum of 1 hour 40 minutes. Passengers could save *up to half an hour* getting to the airport from this station.

Sudbury Hill

Sudbury Hill (London Underground) and Sudbury Hill Harrow (Chiltern Railways) stations could both be made step free by providing additional entrances leading directly onto the local road network. The stations are very close together and such a

scheme would also be an opportunity to create a significant interchange that would have wider benefits locally, as well as providing opportunities for travel to airports by public transport.

Silver Street

Silver Street has no step free access, but is the main rail access to North Middlesex University Hospital. Provision of lifts here would provide much improved public transport access to this hospital from a long corridor of North East London, Hertfordshire and Essex, which is the principle catchment area for the hospital. Connections at Cheshunt for Stansted and at Liverpool Street for Heathrow (via the Elizabeth Line) and Southend Airports would substantially reduce step free journey times to these airports for a large proportion of North East London.

Improving local service frequency

An important part of passengers' decision-making on how or whether to use public transport to access airports is the frequency of services provided. In most parts of London there are frequent services provided by rail and bus throughout the day and week. However, some routes in London whilst enjoying frequent services during the daytime Monday to Saturday, have very infrequent or no services at all in the late evenings, early mornings or Sundays – times that have a greater proportion of airport traffic demand than conventional peak demand.

Examples include South Western Railway services to Chessington South, Hampton Court and the Hounslow loop (Barnes Bridge, Chiswick, Kew Bridge, Brentford, Syon Lane, Isleworth and Hounslow) and Southeastern services on most routes in South East London. These connect with airport services at stations such as Clapham Junction, Waterloo, Victoria, Blackfriars and London Bridge. The disadvantage for airport passengers is that these low frequencies can often result in extended journey times, the need for more interchanges and general diminution of the journey experience. Operators should make increasing the frequency of these services a priority as it would benefit passengers and also encourage modal shift away from car traffic.

The Chiltern line in Greater London, is probably the best example of how a dramatic improvement in local accessibility could be achieved. At present the six stations in the London area¹³ have at best only hourly daytime services and no constant stopping pattern, so do not allow connections with stations in the London area apart from Marylebone. Providing all stations with at least an hourly stopping service throughout the day to Marylebone would greatly enhance the usefulness of these stations and cut journey times to the areas they serve, particularly with an additional interchange station at West Hampstead to connect to Gatwick and Luton airports. In addition, Northolt Park station has a direct bus connection¹⁴ to Heathrow Airport with step free access.

¹³ Wembley Stadium, Sudbury & Harrow Road, Sudbury Hill Harrow, Northolt Park, South Ruislip and West Ruislip

¹⁴ Route 140

Appendix D – Research referenced in the report

London TravelWatch research:

- Bus passenger priorities for improvement (2010)
- Incomplete Oyster Pay As You Go journeys (July 2011)
- Passenger ticket purchasing and journey experiences (July 2013)
- Value for money on London's transport services: what consumers think (August 2013)
- The London travelling environment: what consumers think (January 2014)
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