
Secretariat memorandum

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LTW578

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Surface access to Heathrow Airport – Airport Expansion Consultation

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To brief members on the proposed response to the Airport Expansion Consultation.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are recommended to agree that:

- London TravelWatch supports the principles that Heathrow Airport Ltd proposed to use for their surface access strategy in the event of a decision to proceed with an expansion of Heathrow Airport.
- London TravelWatch expresses no view on the merits or otherwise of airport capacity at London's airports.
- London TravelWatch advocates the use of a phased approach to any construction in and around Heathrow to minimise the impact on passengers and road users travelling to and from the airport or in its vicinity. This should include bus priority and other measures to increase the proportion of travel to and from the airport by public transport, walking and cycling.
- That priority is given to the construction of the Western and Southern Rail Access routes to Heathrow Airport prior to any major works on the road network or for runway construction.

3 Background

- 3.1. Heathrow Airport Ltd as part of their process for obtaining permission to expand Heathrow Airport have commenced a consultation on this. The relevant part to London TravelWatch's remit is the Surface Access Strategy.
- 3.2. The consultation may be viewed at <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/managing-effects/surface-access/> .

4 London TravelWatch report on improving public transport access to London's airports

- 4.1. In 2014 London TravelWatch as its contribution to the Airports (Davies) Commission produced a report on improving public transport access to London's airports. This can be found at http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3894&field=file
- 4.2. The report made a number of recommendations for improvements at both individual airports and more generally. At Heathrow Airport these included extending Oystercard / Contactless payment to include Heathrow Express and Heathrow Connect; ticket vending machines to retail the full range of National Rail tickets; Oystercard retailing outlets being available round the clock at Heathrow; Crossrail to serve Terminal 5 at Heathrow from its opening in 2018; and provision of direct rail links from South London, North West Surrey and the Thames Valley to Heathrow Airport.
- 4.3. For airports in general recommendations included: clear, transparent and easy to find information on the costs of travel for different modes to central London (including coaches and taxi or private hire vehicles) and to other significant destinations available in the main languages of the origin of passengers using the airport; Improvements in customer service at transport interchanges with direct access to airports; improvements to bus stops and stations to give step free access; and providing new interchanges to reduce journey times and increase consumer choice of airports and airlines.
- 4.4. Since the publication of the report significant progress has been made on a number of the issues raised. Oystercard / Contactless payment will be extended to Heathrow Express and to the replacement for Heathrow Connect – the Elizabeth Line in May 2018. As part of this process all ticket vending machines at Heathrow Airport operated by Heathrow Express will be replaced with new machines offering the full range of National Rail destinations and products. The Elizabeth Line (previously known as Crossrail) will also from December 2019 serve Terminal 5 at Heathrow. Heathrow Airport have already introduced special parking areas for Uber-based private hire vehicles designed to tackle the issue of 'honey potting' on local roads and reduce the numbers of empty journeys that are made to and from the airport. TfL have recently announced proposals to increase the number of step-free stations on the Piccadilly Line with direct services to Heathrow; Cockfosters, Finsbury Park, Holborn, Knightsbridge, Boston Manor and Osterley are programmed to become step-free. In addition other stations with a simple interchange to the Piccadilly Line will also benefit from such investment.

5 Discussion of Heathrow Airport Expansion proposals

- 5.1. Heathrow Airport Ltd have had extensive dialogue and interaction with London TravelWatch since the publication of our report in 2014. They recently presented to our Interchange Seminar on improving surface access to London's airports. See <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/calendar/event/view?id=1821> .
- 5.2. This engagement with London TravelWatch is now reflected in the approach that they are taking with regard to Surface Access in relation to their expansion proposals.

5.3. This is reflected in the eight key initiatives that they are proposing to underpin their Surface Access Strategy:

- Putting Heathrow at the heart of the rail network
- Providing a resilient and reliable road network
- Strengthening the coach hub at Heathrow
- Building on the success of our commuter programme
- Creating a public transport focused airport
- Investing in local transport solutions
- Making public transport easier to use
- Enabling more efficient and responsible use of the road network

5.4 The strategy is highly reliant on completion of the Western and Southern Rail Links to achieve the high levels of public transport mode share that they propose would be necessary to allow any development to go ahead. They also propose a replacement for the existing central bus station that serves Terminals 2 and 3.

5.5 For the road network (and therefore the reliability of the bus and coaches using it) there will need to be considerable investment in new roads around the airport and alterations to the M4 and M25 Motorways. These changes would be very disruptive during construction. Therefore, there is an argument for phasing of different elements of the Surface Access Strategy in order to minimise the impact on passengers and road users.

6 Phasing of proposals

6.1. As noted in our 2014 report the provision of direct rail links to Heathrow from the west and south should be regarded as essential for the operation of the current airport, regardless of any decision about aviation capacity at Heathrow. The Western Rail Access route is likely to receive approval shortly, and then move towards a construction phase.

6.2. The road and runway construction phases of the expansion proposals are likely to cause significant disruption to the road network through new works and additional traffic generated.

6.3. Therefore, to mitigate these effects and to give airport users alternative reliable means of getting to and from the airport, it is important that the building of the western and southern rail access routes is done before the road and runway works. In addition, other measures encouraging the uses of buses and coaches, and limiting the impact of taxis and private hire vehicles, should be brought forward to the beginning of the process of managing surface access demand.

7 London TravelWatch priorities

- 7.1. This report meets the London TravelWatch work prioritisation criteria because of the large volume of passenger journeys that would be impacted by these proposals.

8 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 8.1. There are no equalities and inclusion implications arising for London TravelWatch from this report. It should be noted that the expansion of step free access at National Rail and London Underground stations will increase the modal choice available to people with restricted mobility.

9 Legal powers

- 9.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).
- 9.2. Section 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate

10 Financial implications

- 10.1. There are no financial implications for London TravelWatch arising from this report.