

**Environment Committee – Air Quality and Noise Pollution Around Heathrow Airport
Surface Access Issues – informal meeting
3.30pm on 6 December 2011 in Committee Room 2**

Present:

- Murad Qureshi AM, Chair
- Darren Johnson AM, Deputy Chair
- Mike Tuffrey AM

Expert guests:

- Allan Gregory, Surface Access Director, BAA Heathrow
- Simon Earles, Head of Surface Access Strategy, BAA Heathrow
- Theo Panayi, Sustainable Travel Manager, BAA Heathrow

Introduction

1. Murad Qureshi AM introduced the discussion by explaining that the meeting had arisen from an offer made by Matt Gorman, BAA's Corporate Responsibility Director, at the Committee's meeting on 20 October 2011 for the Airport's Surface Access Team to brief the Committee.

Air Quality

2. In response to the opening question from Murad Qureshi AM about how much PM₁₀s and NO₂ levels around Heathrow are caused by airport traffic, Simon Earles referred to the last comprehensive set of data from 2002. This data showed that the proportion of PM₁₀ around the airport from aircraft, airside traffic and surface traffic was a maximum of 7.6 per cent at the LHR2 monitoring site (non airport traffic was 1.5 per cent). The highest figure for NO₂ levels from the same sources was 28.8 per cent, also at the LHR2 site (and 3.8 per cent non-airport traffic). The Hillingdon monitoring site showed 5.7 per cent PM₁₀ from airport-related sources and 19.3 per cent from non-airport traffic.
3. Simon Earles pointed out that the data was old and also pre-dated the opening of Terminal 5 and that updated data was expected to be available by Christmas and would be shared with the Committee. Murad Qureshi AM asked for a further breakdown if possible of cars, vans, buses and heavy goods vehicles.
4. Mike Tuffrey AM questioned why the proportion of people travelling by public transport to Heathrow, according to Transport for London (TfL) figures, had risen from 34.8 per cent in 2001 to only 39.2 per cent in 2010. Simon Earles pointed out that the increase, although comparatively small in percentage terms, represented a large increase in the actual number of people travelling by public transport.
5. Theo Panayi reported that all staff transit buses met Euro V standards and all airside vehicles were less than seven years old. BAA was also involved in a biodiesel and hydrogen fuel pilot (at Stansted Airport).

6. Allan Gregory gave details of electric charging points at Heathrow. The charging points were part of the Source London project and were paid for with a Department for Transport investment with BAA match funding. The charging points were in short term car parks and offered a 20-minute rapid charge at no cost, other than the parking fee. At present not many people own electric vehicles, so usage was not high.
7. Simon Earles described the new Passenger Rapid Transit system at Terminal 5, 'Heathrow Pods', replacing a bus service between the business car park and the terminal building. He extended an invitation to the Committee to visit the scheme, which was zero carbon at source. He reported that the customer experience scores outstripped every other aspect of using the airport; "Passengers love it."

Presentation

8. Theo Panayi gave a presentation setting out:
 - Slide 2 – the role of integrated access in the airport system; it was emphasised that surface transport plays a major role in creating the first and last impression of the airport for most travellers.
 - Slide 3 – Heathrow as an integrated transport hub; Theo Panayi described the Free Travel Zone around Heathrow, where the use of local buses or Heathrow Express between Terminal 1 and Terminal 5, and now on the Underground between terminals 1/2/3 and 5 is funded by BAA. The scheme cost about £1 million a year, with payments made direct to Transport for London, First Group buses and Abellio London buses. The planned Cycle Superhighway 9 is not intended to go as far as Heathrow, however, there is a cycle route around the airport perimeter.
 - Slide 4 – passenger growth expectations; there is a growing gap between forecast passenger growth and actual numbers.
 - Slide 5 – targets in the current Surface Access Strategy; the target of 40 per cent of air passengers travelling to and from the airport by public transport by 2012 has been achieved, but the higher 45 per cent target had been dependent on Airtrack going ahead. The target to reduce staff travelling to work in single-occupancy vehicles to 65 per cent had resulted in a fall from 71.2 per cent in 2004 to 61.4 per cent. Out of 42,000 parking spaces at Heathrow, 17,500 are for staff. Staff do not pay for parking, but BAA Heathrow, which is required to provide parking for its tenants, can recover the costs as a contribution to its public transport levy, as applies to its public car parks. The public transport levy had provided just over £25 million towards sustainable transport schemes in the last ten years. Theo Panayi described how a decision had been made by the Chairman of BAA in 1994 to invest in public transport. There was no planning requirement to have a travel plan; indeed, at the Terminal 5 Inquiry, the Inspector said that BAA was already doing enough on transport planning.
 - Slide 6 – investment by BAA Heathrow in transport; BAA has invested over £1 billion in transport schemes. The Retail Consolidation Centre has reduced vehicle mileage and DHL, which operates the Centre, uses electric vehicles. Simon Earles pointed out that of the 7.6 per cent of PM_{10s}, a disproportionately high 5.2 per cent came from heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Murad Qureshi AM questioned how much the airport's cargo business affected the contribution of HGVs to air pollution. Theo Panayi reported that 0.1 per cent of all freight in

the UK comes through Heathrow and the majority of that went straight out onto the M25. Air cargo numbers were not showing significant increases or decreases. Allan Gregory reported that BAA Heathrow had recently formed an independently-chaired Heathrow Freight Forum to improve access for freight in a sustainable way and also to look at the impact of the Olympics on freight movement.

- Slide 7 – incentives and behavioural measures; the introduction of a 75 per cent staff discount on Heathrow Connect had resulted in an increase in usage from 500 staff to 1,700 per month – a number that continued to grow. A Heathrow travelcard had been introduced for staff living outside the London area, offering, for example, a £50 monthly ticket from Slough. The travelcard had generated sales of £200,000 and BAA Heathrow was continuing to work with operators to reduce prices and increase passenger numbers. From 2012, BAA Heathrow planned, in conjunction with TfL, to sell Oyster cards and top-ups to Heathrow staff in the same way as a retailer would, except that the commission is refunded back to the customer. Simon Earles stated that this would give staff “high single-digit savings” in percentage terms. The scheme is funded through the public transport levy.
- Slide 8 – trend in sustainable travel choices; the slide showed a gradual increase in the trend for passengers making sustainable travel choices.

Buses

9. Theo Panayi listed the bus routes that BAA Heathrow subsidises to enable staff to arrive for shifts starting at 4.00am: 350 (Clarendon Road, Hayes to Heathrow Terminal 5), 423 (School Road, Hounslow to T5), 482 (Southall Broadway to T5) and 490 (Pools on the Park, Richmond to T5). This brings the total number of services serving the airport from London and elsewhere to 31 (and soon to be 32), with 13 of them running services that arrive at Heathrow by 4.00am. Theo Panayi indicated that the southern side of the airport had the weakest transport connections, with only routes 482 and 490 serving the southern perimeter.
10. Simon Earles emphasised that BAA Heathrow was determined that if a bus service was commercially viable, it should be run on that basis. Some services had been withdrawn recently as a result of not getting enough passengers. He stated that Transport for London chairs the Heathrow Bus and Coach Working Group.

Incentives to use public transport

11. Mike Tuffrey AM questioned whether BAA Heathrow was prepared to use the ‘stick’ as well as the ‘carrot’ (for example introducing charges for people wanting to drive to Heathrow, as other airports do). Simon Earles responded by emphasising BAA’s principle that it operates a service and takes its responsibility seriously to provide choice and encourage access to its services. Allan Gregory referred to the regulatory regime that applied to Heathrow following the Terminal 5 Inquiry enshrined in law the requirement on the airport to focus on the passenger.
12. Simon Earles pointed out that many customers have a choice of airport they could fly from and there are many gaps in provision of public transport to Heathrow. BAA Heathrow was confident that it could benchmark itself against other major European hub airports. Only Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands has a significantly higher public transport mode share, and that airport has a number of high speed rail lines serving it. The only higher mode share for a major UK airport is at Stansted.

13. Allan Gregory pointed out that the mode share at Heathrow was high in spite of poor rail connections to the south, west and north. The airport therefore has a limit on the proportion of passengers who have a real choice to travel by public transport. Mike Tuffrey AM encouraged BAA Heathrow to consider a charging policy with a fee to drop off passengers, as other airports do.

Surface Access Strategy

14. Simon Earles made clear that BAA Heathrow had not set the targets on slide 7; the Heathrow Surface Access Strategy was drawn up by the Heathrow Area Transport Forum, which includes Transport for London, local authorities within and beyond London and transport operators. BAA supports the targets but does not own them. Simon Earles said he would welcome the GLA becoming a member of the Forum.
15. Theo Panayi reported that the current Surface Access Strategy, covering 2008 to 2012, was coming to an end and the Regulator had decided to make the next full strategy cover the period 2014 to 2019. BAA Heathrow had begun discussions with the Forum to formulate an interim strategy for 2012 to 2014. The interim strategy's objectives and themes would focus on areas where 'quick wins' could be achieved, such as passenger travel, staff travel, freight and logistics and campus connectivity. Other issues might range from the Olympics to ensuring that Heathrow is Crossrail-ready by 2018/19 in terms of infrastructure. There would be actions in each year for BAA and for other stakeholders. For example, for Hillingdon Council there might be actions about improving connectivity to the north of the borough.
16. Simon Earles indicated that Heathrow wanted to be ambitious and intended to rename the Strategy a Sustainable Transport Plan and to focus on making a difference to airport-related surface access emissions. Allan Gregory stated that the priority should be integration and that BAA Heathrow wanted to work with TfL, Network Rail and the Highways Agency in the hope that it can happen.
17. Darren Johnson AM asked about the impact of increased passenger numbers. Simon Earles pointed out that operating at 98 per cent capacity for air traffic movements meant that Heathrow was already effectively full and that, in terms of actual passenger numbers, the trend had flattened out. BAA Heathrow did not expect numbers to increase dramatically. The main areas where there could be a difference to numbers using surface transport would be if the proportion of transfer passengers changed significantly or the proportion of foreign-originating passengers (who tend to have different travel characteristics) increased. Employee numbers were expected to remain around 70,000.

Airtrack

18. Simon Earles referred to the April 2011 announcement that Airtrack was not going ahead. The emphasis remains on making sure that the connections between London and Heathrow are right, including regular, frequent stopping services and an Express proposition. The second priority should be connecting to the west, with Thames Valley-Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Slough Council in agreement. Connecting Heathrow to the South Western Main Line and South Coast via Staines remains an objective, but there are serious challenges for the rail industry to overcome, particular concerning level crossings and capacity on the South Western Main Line.

19. Murad Qureshi AM asked at what point BAA Heathrow would look again at an Airtrack link from Staines to Terminal 5. Simon Earles indicated that the issue would not be triggered by passenger numbers, but was related to improving connectivity to the south, west and north. As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Department for Transport was unable to give assurances about public funds being available. Simon Earles indicated that this service would deliver a 3.5 per cent modal shift; Allan Gregory stated that this would amount to 1 million cars off the road.

High Speed Rail

20. Simon Earles explained that the airport community remains 100 per cent supportive of high speed rail, as it had the potential to connect other parts of the UK to Heathrow and would enable the airport to allocate scarce capacity to other destinations. High speed rail was unlikely to be serving Heathrow before 2022/23. Allan Gregory made clear that other European hubs have through services for high speed rail, so was emphasising to government that through services would be better than a spur for Heathrow. Simon Earles emphasised that the airport community, including the airlines, shared the same view.

Heathrow Express and Heathrow Connect

21. Murad Qureshi AM asked what BAA was expecting from Crossrail. Simon Earles stated that the current expectation was for four trains per hour from late 2019, replacing the current Heathrow Connect service. Network Rail has identified an issue of capacity on the Great Western Main Line, with an unmet demand of 5,000 passengers per day from the late 2010s to the mid-2020s. Network Rail has an option to increase Crossrail services from the planned four per hour to ten per hour, which would remove the Heathrow Express service. Four of these might be services that called at a smaller number of intermediate stations. However, BAA Heathrow estimated that mode share for rail would fall by three per cent if the non-stop Heathrow Express service was withdrawn, because of the number of passengers who use the service for its speed. BAA Heathrow has made representations to the Department for Transport and Office of Rail Regulation for more capacity on the Great Western Main Line.
22. Heathrow Express currently carried 5.5 million passengers per year and Heathrow Connect carries 400,000 passengers. Theo Panayi indicated that many in-bound passengers make decisions about onward travel as they walk out of the baggage hall. Tickets for the Heathrow Express services were now sold in the baggage hall. The added advantage of encouraging passengers to use the service is that once they have tried it they are more likely to become repeat users. Simon Earles commented that at peak times passengers often had to stand on the Heathrow Express.
23. Murad Qureshi AM asked whether Heathrow Express and Heathrow Connect could be Oysterised. Theo Panayi explained that BAA needed to recoup its costs from Heathrow Express, which made using Oyster difficult. He pointed out that TfL was reluctant to introduce pricing on Oyster that didn't fit into its regular price structure, so the X26 bus was not priced as an express bus route.

Piccadilly Line

24. Murad Qureshi AM commented on the large numbers of Piccadilly line passengers travelling with luggage, and questioned whether there was an expectation of an increasing switch to using that line. Simon Earles explained that over the longer term, a sizeable shift from the Piccadilly line to

Crossrail would be expected, and not much in the way of a shift from private car use. 13.5 million passengers passed through the Tube ticket gates at Heathrow each year¹, about of million of whom used the airport as a public transport hub. Simon Earles stated that BAA Heathrow did not believe there is an issue with capacity on the Piccadilly line, but that its operating hours remained an issue; services running an hour later would particularly help.

Feltham

25. Theo Panayi reported that BAA Heathrow was starting work with South West Trains and Hounslow Council, the owners of Feltham station forecourt, to improve connections. The 285 service (Heathrow Central to Cromwell Road bus station, Kingston) links Feltham with the airport 24 hours a day and the 490 service, which operates early enough for the 4am shift, serves Terminal 4, the cargo terminal and Terminal 5. BAA had provided £150,000 funding towards improvements at Feltham ten years ago.
26. A similar system operates at Staines station, which was considered to have capacity for more Heathrow passengers. The 285 service had increased its frequency from three per hour to four per hour, but the buses used remained small (because of the nature of the route). BAA Heathrow considered that extra luggage space on that service would help. Theo Panayi indicated that BAA Heathrow would be interested in becoming involved in the procurement process for buses serving the airport.

¹ Heathrow Terminals 1, 2 and 3: 7.96million; Terminal 4: 2.14 million; and Terminal 5: 3.14 million. Transport for London Annual Entries and Exits, 2010.

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/passenger-numbers-at-underground-stations.pdf>