

# New study to examine Heathrow Southern route plan



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A DETAILED feasibility study is to be carried out into a new railway route into Heathrow Airport.

Heathrow Southern Railway would require eight miles of new track, linking to existing services at Chertsey and near Staines.

"For a start, it won't need a single penny of public money," enthused Christopher Garnett, one of the directors of Heathrow Southern Railway.

"And unlike previous ideas, it will have eight miles of new track, running parallel to the M25. That will avoid the conflict at level crossings in Egham, which has been a stumbling block in the past."

The other major difference is that services from the south would not terminate at the airport. The aim is to run four trains an hour in each direction, two starting from Basingstoke, and two from Guildford. They would run through Heathrow to Old Oak Common (to connect with HS2), and from there into Paddington.

Currently the only public transport

access to Heathrow from the south is the RailAir bus link from Woking station. This proposal would offer a new route into London that would avoid congestion at Waterloo, Britain's busiest station. It would also be possible to run services from Waterloo to Heathrow and Old Oak Common.

Later, services from Basingstoke could be extended to the South Coast, although Garnett said that is definitely not part of the initial business plan.

He added: "We are in final negotiations with AECOM to deliver the first phase of this - a detailed feasibility study to make sure we have the right figures, the train paths and everything else. AECOM is one of the world's leading engineering and design consultancies. This will give credibility and muscle to what we have done, and they are putting up a lot of money for this."

"We are in discussion with the

Department for Transport. We've met with Transport for London, the Office of Rail and Road, Heathrow - you name them, we are meeting with them. Highways England is supportive because of the effect we would have on M25 traffic."

Heathrow Southern Railway says the only public sector input would be a commitment that future franchise operators would be required to buy the train paths.

Basingstoke to Heathrow Terminal 5 would take 40 minutes, with Paddington reached in 63 minutes, compared with the current 45-minute ride to Waterloo. Woking to Heathrow would take 16 minutes and to Paddington 39 minutes.

Currently, passengers from south of London must either drive by road or travel by train through central London. The Government has said that an expanded Heathrow must ensure 55% of passengers use public transport.

The lack of a southern rail route has been an issue at Heathrow for decades. A western rail route, with services to Reading through a new spur at Langley tunnelling beneath

the M4 and M25, has long been planned but has been delayed.

Services via Woking would open up a new rail-airport catchment through south London, Sussex, Hampshire and beyond. Direct trains to Paddington would create a major new commuter flow, linking with other long-distance services and the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail).

Heathrow Southern Railway believes that it would offer significant relief to the South Western Main Line (SWML). The London-bound fast line from Surbiton in the morning peak is busier than any other stretch of main line in the country, with Network Rail forecasting an additional 60% growth in demand by 2043.

Heathrow's Terminal 5 has space for two additional rail platforms in a concrete box built beneath the terminal, alongside the existing platforms. These are planned for use by future services west to Reading.

"This seems such an obvious thing to do," said Garnett.

"The number one issue is that we are building a new line. We don't

use the congested Slow line with the Egham level crossings. You come off the South West Main Line at West Byfleet, already grade-separated with a dive-under, go round towards Chertsey, and then alongside the M25.

"No bay platform at Woking is needed because the intention is to run to Basingstoke and Guildford. There is an issue around what is happening to the planned flyover at Woking to take the Portsmouth lines. It would certainly make the Heathrow options easier, but it is not impossible without the flyover."

Network Rail's 2015 Wessex Route Study proposed flyovers at Woking and Basingstoke with an extra platform at Woking. It said these were essential to meet future capacity needs on the SWML.

"Going Up, it would run on the Slow line to West Byfleet," explained Garnett. "On the Down, it dives underneath the main line and comes onto the Slow line. That's the beauty of this - it does not interfere with the Fast line."

"Also, you could use it to extend the Elizabeth Line from Heathrow to Staines if you put in another platform at Staines. That would give people another journey option."

"There is one complicated bit where we cross the M3 near the M25 interchange. You have to build a bridge over the M3. But it is all doable."

A Waterloo service via Clapham Junction would require a new connection to the Windsor-Staines line between Staines and Wraybury.

The total cost is estimated to be between £1.2 billion and £1.3bn. The earliest completion date would be 2025. Heathrow Southern Railway says there is a



Source: Heathrow Southern Railway

"very strong" payback on private sector investment, with or without a third runway at the airport. Garnett added: "The traffic from Woking to Heathrow is not enormous - it's the through traffic that makes the real difference. It's slightly longer than going to Waterloo, but it gets you to a different part of London - it links to HS2 and to the Elizabeth

Line. The economic benefit is in the total traffic. These trains will run full from Day 1. This is a big market." Garnett is 71, and more-or-less retired. "It's just such a good idea," he said. "The need is obvious and the case for doing it is so overwhelming. We have the right people, too." @PaulCliftonBBC

## Second scheme at Windsor

A competing scheme has been proposed by Windsor Link Railway, with Managing Director George Bathurst submitting a feasibility case to Network Rail which he claims "puts us far ahead of any other scheme in terms of maturity".

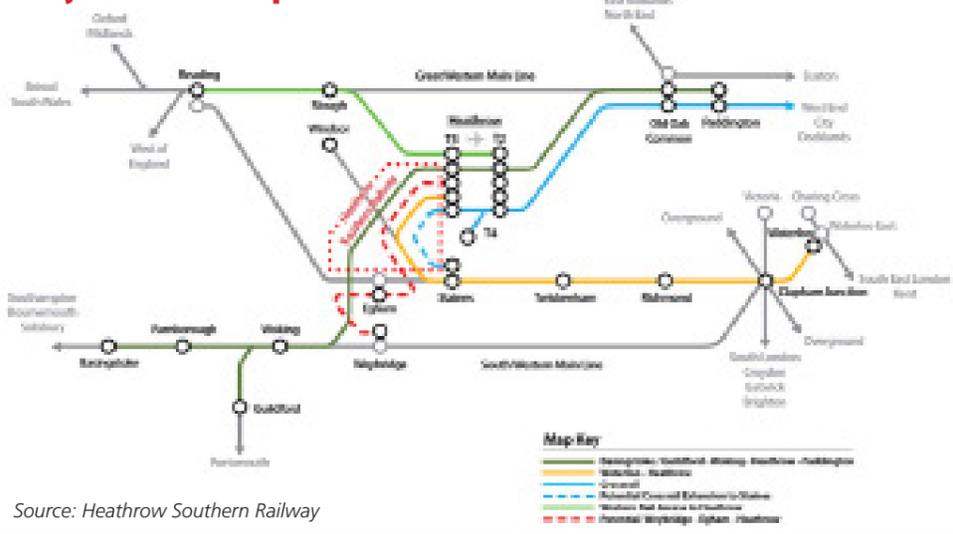
Bathurst says this would be the first privately funded railway in living memory, and would be profitable without Government subsidy.

Phase 1 would link Slough to Waterloo with a new route around Windsor offering four trains per hour. The £370 million scheme would enable four million new rail journeys a year, with a claimed shift from road to rail. There would be a tunnel from the edge of Windsor, with an existing viaduct demolished, and a new station close to the town centre. A Park & Ride alongside the M4 motorway is proposed.

The scheme would be linked to development of 1,000 new homes and improve tourist access to Windsor Castle.

Phase 2 would extend into Heathrow Airport, offering benefits similar to Heathrow Southern Railway. It claims this would be half the cost of separate Heathrow links from the west and south.

## Projected service pattern



Source: Heathrow Southern Railway

## Who is behind Heathrow Southern Railway?

Heathrow Southern Railway's company board reads like a Who's Who of former rail industry leaders.

Chairing the board is Baroness Jo Valentine, who retired last year as chief executive of the business group London First.

Executive Director Steven

Costello has worked on many of the UK's large infrastructure projects.

Chris Stokes was a director of the Strategic Rail Authority during the early stages of franchising and more recently chaired Agility Trains, the joint venture supplying new Hitachi fleets to the Great

Western and East Coast lines.

John O'Brien was the Government's Franchising Director, and held numerous other industry roles.

And former GNER Chief Executive Christopher Garnett and Mark Bostock are well-known industry figures.

## What went wrong before?

Since 1960 there have been at least ten studies or attempts to build a southern rail access to Heathrow.

By the 1990s the scheme became known as Airtrack, and the name was retained by subsequent schemes, all of which have been rejected by local planning authorities.

BAA, the former owner of Heathrow, proposed Heathrow Airtrack, which would have run new services through the airport to Waterloo, Guildford and Reading. The idea was dropped in 2011, with lack of Government subsidy cited as a key obstacle.

Local councils revised the

scheme, calling it Airtrack Lite and using a section of the former West Drayton to Staines railway line running parallel to the M25 (as in the latest Heathrow Southern scheme).

It would have required only 2½ miles of new track (much less than the eight miles proposed by Heathrow Southern), and would have run from a tunnel beneath Heathrow across Stanwell Moor and Staines Moor, with new track into Staines town centre to a remodelled Staines station, as well as a new depot at Feltham.

It envisaged two trains an hour to Waterloo, two to Guildford via Woking, and two to Reading.

The key issue was the large number of level crossings - 15 on the whole route. Local Runnymede and Weybridge MP Philip Hammond, later Secretary of State for Transport and now Chancellor of the Exchequer, raised serious concerns about the impact on Egham level crossing, which would have been closed for up to 40 minutes each hour.

He was involved in a petition to the then Labour Government not to allow Airtrack because of the impact on his constituents.

Concerns about level crossing closure times were also raised by local authorities, business groups and emergency services.

## Joyner to take over as ATW's MD

Tom Joyner has been appointed the new Managing Director of Arriva Trains Wales.

Currently Passenger Services Director for London Midland, Joyner takes up his new role on October 2. He replaces Ian Bullock.

The new MD has more than 20 years' experience in the rail sector. He has been with LM since 2013 (he was Operations Director from April 2013 until July 2014), where he led a team of 2,000. Prior to that he worked for Network Rail as Principal Operations Specialist.

From March 2009 until July 2010 he was Operations Director at FirstGroup, and before that he was Performance Director at First. Both roles were for rail.

From 2005-08 he was Business Director at National Express (working again on rail), and for two years before that he was Operations Manager at NX. From 2001-03 Joyner was Major Projects Manager at NX, again on rail.

## Licence granted for new operator

Locomotive Services (TOC) Ltd is Britain's newest train operating company after being granted a Train Operating Licence at the start of August.

The company is part of Locomotive Services Limited, and is ultimately owned by Jeremy Hosking. It has a collection of steam locomotives and intends to operate a limited number of charters, but also own six Class 47s (47501, 47790, 47805/811/816/841) and two Class 37s (37610/667). Four of the '47s' and the two '37s' will be returned to main line use.

Its main engineering headquarters is at Crewe Diesel Depot, and the company owns significant numbers of coaching stock that it is overhauling.

## Veitch takes key UK role for Spanish firm

Spanish train builder Talgo has appointed Jon Veitch as its Key Account Manager for the UK and Ireland.

Veitch has almost 30 years of railway experience. Previous roles include as Production Director at Hitachi Rail Europe, Fleet Manager at East Midlands Trains, IEP Director at East Coast for almost two years, Fleet Director at Arriva Trains Wales, Head of Fleet at Virgin Trains, and posts at West Coast Traincare, South Eastern Trains, ScotRail and British Rail.

Headquartered in Madrid, Talgo has built trains for Spain as well as exports to America, Kazakhstan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan.