

Stakeholder Update

We're still pressing the case for transforming rail access to Heathrow Airport

Baroness Jo Valentine, Chair of Heathrow Southern Railway Limited, writes:

The team at Heathrow Southern Railway Limited (HSRL) send our best wishes to all our stakeholders as together we continue to work our way through the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We wanted to reassure you that we are undiminished in our commitment to the project and we're still pressing the case for transforming rail access to Heathrow Airport.

Neither the slump in airport passenger numbers since the worldwide lockdown nor doubts about the proposed expansion of Heathrow undermine the case for our new railway. We've always been clear that HSR is needed with a two runway Heathrow to reduce the airport's overwhelming dependence on car travel, both for passengers and employees. Even if passenger numbers take some years to recover from the pandemic, we need HSR to be open by 2027/28 in order to draw substantial numbers of road users onto trains.

HSR is also much more than an airport rail link. With construction of HS2 underway, our line will connect Old Oak Common with Woking, Guildford, Basingstoke and other towns via Heathrow, unlocking massive interchange benefits for Surrey and Hampshire with the Midlands and the North. HSR will also provide an alternative route to London from Surrey and Hampshire with trains able to arrive at Paddington, whilst south west London will at last have direct rail access to Heathrow via Staines (please see the map below).

The public finances are bound to be under pressure in the wake of the pandemic, and the Government was elected on a programme of rebalancing the country through investment in new infrastructure for the Midlands and the North. The strong business case for HSR means that we can access private sector funding to help ensure the South East does not become the new left behind area, with our project becoming the pathfinder for schemes financed in this way.

Basingstoke/Guildford – Woking – Heathrow – Paddington

Trains would operate every half hour from Basingstoke, Farnborough, and Guildford, and every 15 minutes from Woking, to Heathrow, with journey times faster than road. Heathrow Southern Railway is more than just an airport rail link as after Heathrow these trains would continue to Old Oak Common and Paddington creating new connections to HS2 and the Elizabeth Line.

Heathrow – Staines – Clapham Junction – Waterloo

Services would be fully integrated with the South Western network via Staines-upon-Thames, creating four high capacity, direct trains per hour between London Waterloo and Heathrow, half via Richmond and half via Hounslow.



There is now a clear need for a process and a timeline for the Government selecting the right technological solution and development partner

Chris Stokes, Chief Executive of Heathrow Southern Railway Limited, writes:

The General Election in December followed by new ministerial appointments and announcements and then the pandemic have all served to obscure the real progress being made with Southern Access to Heathrow (SAtH) towards the end of 2019.

On 4 November, the Government published its Strategic Objectives for SAtH. We were very pleased to see that our scheme is a close match to these Strategic Objectives, including its effectiveness in shifting journeys away from the roads, reducing environmental impacts and connecting Heathrow to central and south west London, Surrey and Hampshire.

However, the Government's Strategic Objectives also took some backward steps by opening up consideration of other transport modes and technologies and setting the expectation that the link would not be completed prior to 2030.

In our view a conventional rail link of the sort we advocate is best able to meet the requirements of airport passengers, employees and stakeholders by providing direct links to the airport from the existing rail network. Consideration of other modes risks unnecessarily delaying completion of the scheme. We are fully prepared for HSR to be rigorously scrutinised but there is now a clear need for a process and a timeline for the Government selecting the right technological solution and development partner.

We are urging stakeholders to continue pressing for urgent progress on a Southern Rail Link to Heathrow to meet the existing air quality emergency, ease road congestion and contribute to the achievement of a carbon neutral economy by providing an alternative to the car.

Please make your representations to:

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
Email: grant.shapps@dft.gov.uk

Follow HSRL on Twitter **@HSR_Ltd**

Visit our website for further information:

www.heathrowrail.com

Contact us via our communications advisers Cogitamus Limited via email **mark.walker@cogitamus.co.uk** or telephone **01733 767244**

MODAL SHIFT TO RAIL

Transfers 3 million road journeys per year to rail

POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Reduces emissions by 8,600 tonnes of CO2 and 2 tons of NOx per year

RAIL NETWORK BENEFITS

A new orbital route from Hampshire and Surrey to Old Oak Common and London Paddington

CONNECTS COMMUNITIES

Fast, frequent trains from Surrey, Hampshire and South West London to Heathrow Airport

GROWTH AND REGENERATION

Enabling people to reach their work at Heathrow by public transport

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Linking the region's businesses to inward investment and export opportunities

DELIVERABLE

10 km of new railway mainly in tunnel, filling a missing link in the existing network from 2027/28

AFFORDABLE AND VALUE FOR MONEY

User funded and potentially privately financed at no cost to taxpayers