



**Submission by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport  
to the  
Transport Select Committee Inquiry:  
Surface Transport to Airports**

**Summary**

- **Most air passengers and airport staff use road based modes, and most air freight is transported to and from the airport by road**
- **The larger the airport, the more significant is public transport, in particular rail**
- **All of the UK's larger airports have adequate surface transport, or plans to improve it to accommodate growth**
- **There are only a few examples where the inability to provide good connections to the strategic road and railway networks could potential inhibit the use of spare capacity. However, these examples tend to be at the smaller airports, which access to local transport networks is probably more important**
- **There have been examples in the past where conflicting objectives have resulted in degraded surface transport to airports, although these are being resolved**
- **The Government's role in providing guidelines for Airport Transport Forums and Airport Surface Access Strategies has been particularly worthwhile.**

**Introduction**

- 1 The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) is a professional institution embracing all transport modes whose members are engaged in the provision of transport services for both passengers and freight, the management of logistics and the supply chain, transport planning, government and administration. We have no political affiliations and do not support any particular vested interests. Our principal concerns are that transport policies and procedures should be effective and efficient and based, as far as possible, on objective analysis of the issues and practical experience and that good practice should be widely disseminated and adopted. The Institute has specialist Aviation and Strategic Rail Policy Groups, a nationwide structure of locally based groups and a Public Policies Committee which considers the broad canvass of transport policy. This submission draws on contributions from all these sources.
- 2 This is the CILT response to the Select Committee's Inquiry into Surface Transport to Airports. This submission is structured in the same order as the Committee's eight points under the opening statement.

**Q1 The range and capacity of current strategic connections to airports and how predicted changes in demand for capacity (both passengers and freight) are being planned for.**

- 3 CAA surveys show that private transport (mainly cars and taxis) is used by the majority of air passengers at all surveyed airports except one (Stansted). The larger airports tend to have the higher public transport mode shares. Similarly, the majority of staff journeys to work are by car, with the larger airports achieving the higher public transport shares. Public transport includes coaches and buses, which of course use roads, the former significant for air passengers and the latter for staff. While reductions in private transport mode share is an important objective, it should be recognised that roads remain the primary surface transport infrastructure.
- 4 The logistics of air freight are different from air passengers. While Heathrow is the largest airport in terms of both passengers and freight, it handles 31% of UK air passengers but 65% of air freight. East Midlands is the UK's second largest freight airport and handles 12% of UK air freight but only 2% of passengers. Stansted is the third largest UK air freight airport and handles 9% of air freight and 8% of passengers.
- 5 Air and road freight are closely linked. Indeed, much short haul 'air' freight is carried in trucks, not just from shipper to airport, but also between airports. On the other hand, air and rail freight are different, with the former primarily high value and time sensitive while the latter is predominantly bulk movements of low value. There are some overlaps, and initiatives in Europe to explore the opportunities for intermodality (Eurocarex), but in general there is very limited scope for air and rail freight connectivity.
- 6 The rise of Low Cost Carriers has reduced further the opportunities for freight to be carried on short haul flights, because of the need for rapid airport turnrounds. For long haul freight, Heathrow is even more dominant, and 85% of its freight throughput is carried in the belly holds of passenger aircraft. East Midlands and Stansted are bases for all freight aircraft operators.
- 7 CILT supports the policy of managing demand on roads including, in due course, the principle of road pricing, possibly associated with autonomous vehicle technology. An element of demand management already exists through car park charges (and some access charges) but no airport is yet subject to a congestion charge. However, this option is a possibility should other measures not be successful.
- 8 The remainder of this section of the response considers road and rail access to the 20 UK airports handling more than 1 million passengers in 2014, with particular mention of the three largest air freight airports noted above.
- 9 At Heathrow, CILT is satisfied that the range of rail links currently in operation, under construction and planned, will be adequate in the short, medium and long term including with a third runway as recommended by the Airports Commission. CILT believes that the additional capacity and connections provided by Crossrail (2019), the Western Link (2022), an upgraded Piccadilly Line (2026), Southern Rail Access and HS2 will be sufficient. While it is accepted that the three routes to central London will be busy, particularly with non-airport passengers closer to the centre, the CILT view is that Heathrow Express will retain a significant market share and provide a valuable choice of high quality public transport for air passengers. The completion of the Western and the Southern Rail Access schemes will fill significant gaps in terms of service to the west and south west, including locations both close to the Airport, such as Reading and Guildford, as well as longer distance locations. CILT does not support

the Heathrow Hub proposal for a station on the Great Western Main Line at Iver because of the extended journey times for non-airport passengers and the nature of the proposed terminal facilities at the Hub station. CILT accepts the decision not to build a direct spur from HS2 but urges that the design for Old Oak Common enables smooth interchange, not just in physical terms, but also in relation to the provision of information and the coordination of operations. Plans for passive provision for the Heathrow HS2 link are supported.

- 10 The major challenge for Heathrow surface access will be on the roads, both in terms of capacity and air quality. Heathrow Airport's proposals are based on no net increase in airport-related road traffic, with an increase in passenger-related movements being balanced by a reduction in staff-related traffic. Heathrow's past record of reducing staff travel by car and increasing use of road and rail-based public transport by air passengers bodes well for the future. This will require careful monitoring to enable the airport to be permitted to grow. Bus and coach services will play a significant role in this equation. Express coach services serve many markets where rail does not reach, and the extensive network of local bus routes, including 24 hour 7 day services, which also serve non-terminal perimeter locations, will attract many more staff journeys. Because the Freight Village is located close to the M25/M4 and is a 24 hour operation, much freight-related vehicle traffic is accommodated outside peak flows and away from local roads.
- 11 However, it will also be necessary to deal with the growth of non-airport traffic which would otherwise cause unacceptable congestion and exceed air quality limits. Road pricing remains an option, provided that the revenues are wholly hypothecated to improving airport surface access, improvements to which will enhance public transport connectivity in the airport's wider hinterland.
- 12 For Gatwick, CILT understands that the Airports Commission's analysis of rail demand and capacity was based on the significant growth of capacity resulting from the Thameslink and Gatwick Express rolling stock programmes and the limited additional airport-related demand at peak periods. If the Government accepts the Airports Commission's recommendation that a second runway is not built, then this analysis is easy to accept. If the Government decides to permit a second runway, either instead of or in addition to a third runway at Heathrow, CILT believes that more rail capacity will be required. This affects infrastructure in particular, to permit more trains to operate through pinch points such as at East Croydon and further north. In terms of the range of connections, the Thameslink programme provides for a significant increase in north/south connectivity, although a long-standing weakness remains in links to the east and west via Redhill, where reversal is necessary.
- 13 The completion of the smart motorway scheme for the M23 will provide some additional capacity and resilience. Access to central London by road is not good, and the embryonic junctions to take the M23 north of its interchange with the M25 and towards Croydon are a visible reminder of past works which were never completed.
- 14 Manchester Airport's growth, including the development of the Airport City, will be adequately served by the existing range of local and longer distance rail services, including Manchester Metrolink. Progressive improvements in capacity and connectivity of the network through the Northern Hub package will enable growth to be accommodated and better connections to be made. A HS2 Phase 2 station at the Airport will enable a step change in longer distance connectivity; it will need to be properly tied into the airport, perhaps by an extension of Metrolink. In terms of strategic road access adequacy, this will be achieved by the enhancement of existing capacity through motorway upgrades and the A6-Airport Relief Road, now under construction.

- 15 Rail access to Stansted remains inadequate in terms of quality and will become progressively inadequate in terms of capacity as the Airport grows towards the full capacity of its existing runway. While a number of schemes to reduce journey times to central London are being considered, commitment and funding remain uncertain. The key rail problem in this development corridor is the combination of airport and non-airport growth on a two-track line. That can only be dealt with satisfactorily by the reinstatement and perhaps further extension of the two additional tracks in the southern part of the Lea Valley and the use of bi-directional signalling. This would allow the separation of airport express and fast commuter services from local trains. The current high public transport mode share is sustained by the excellent services provided by the coach operators, but this will be challenged by increasing congestion on the M11. The motorway has the ability to be widened and this may be required for non-airport traffic, but this will only suffice as a medium term measure. Stansted is well located for freight distribution, with some plans for improvement (A14), albeit with some remaining concerns about resilience.
- 16 Capacity on the Midland Main Line and with the Thameslink programme will be sufficient for Luton Airport's growth. The major inadequacy is of course the road link from Luton Airport Parkway to the Airport. The Airport is considering how this link can be approved, but it is felt that only a dedicated people mover will provide the quality of service required to attract significant mode share to rail. The Airport will be expected to contribute significantly towards a link, but this contribution will reflect the expected benefit, in particular whether it does enable more capacity to be utilised. The funding of the link will also reflect the contractual relationship between the airport owner (Luton Borough Council) and the concessionaire. Strategic road capacity is now adequate and CILT does not advocate further construction.
- 17 The success of the Edinburgh Tram to Edinburgh Airport has yet to be demonstrated, although the pre-Tram public transport mode share of nearly 30% indicates that a good public transport service was already in operation. Nevertheless, Edinburgh Airport's growth will be facilitated in part by the Tram. Wider rail connections are seeing the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP), which includes further electrification, and investments such as reopening the Borders Railway.
- 18 Because of its general and specific location in the centre of England and close to major motorway and long distance rail lines, Birmingham Airport's strategic surface transport links are more than adequate, which is one reason why the Airport aspires to grow to serve more than just its immediate region. The addition of the HS2 Birmingham Interchange Station will further enhance this role, although it is currently unclear how airport and HS2 station will be connected.
- 19 The sorry history of the Glasgow Airport Rail Link project means that there are only limited current plans to enhance surface transport. However, indications are that this project may be revived in a different form and this would ensure that the Airport was able to use its potential capacity.
- 20 Rail connections to Bristol Airport are unlikely to happen, and road access is not immediately available from the strategic network.
- 21 Newcastle Airport benefits from the Metro connection and is close to the A1.
- 22 East Midlands Airport is well located for the strategic road network which is particularly relevant to its role for air freight. There is also access to a rail station, East Midlands Parkway, opened in 2009, although this is not well used.

- 23 Belfast International relies on good access to the strategic road network. At one point (“An air transport strategy for Northern Ireland”, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee First Report of Session 2012–13, para. 40), it seemed to be government policy not to support a rail link for airports with less than 10m passengers a year. Whilst a rail link to Belfast International may be only a long term aspiration, the evidence is that the criteria should be the financial viability (given local geography) rather than a passenger throughput figure.
- 24 Liverpool Airport is served by the current frequent bus service from Liverpool South Parkway Station with its multiplicity of rail routes, but is not particularly well used. There is a good local road network.
- 25 At Aberdeen Airport, public transport connections to the city and to Dyce Station, together with the local road network, provide adequate surface transport links.
- 26 The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) at London City Airport is particularly well used because of the airport's unique location, which means that road access is constrained. Major expansion of the airport will require additional rail access, either through greater capacity on the DLR or a Crossrail station.
- 27 Leeds Bradford Airport is not particularly well served by road and not at all by rail, and current studies show that road schemes have much better Benefit:Cost Ratios (BCRs) than rail links. Current bus and coach links are not well used.
- 28 Belfast City Airport's location means that local road and rail transport is more relevant than strategic links.
- 29 Southampton Airport benefits from the Parkway Station which also serves non-airport passengers. This illustrates how smaller airports can be served by rail by spreading the costs among different users.
- 30 Southend Airport's rail and road links are more than adequate for the airport's growth, but the rail service reflects this being primarily a commuter railway. Plans to improve the train service frequency and the quality of the rolling stock are to be welcomed.
- 31 Cardiff Airport's primary public transport link is an express bus which has achieved its demand target, while the bus shuttle from Rhoose Cardiff Airport Station has limited appeal due to the low frequency rail service. There is an aspiration a new road link from the M4, but current plans are for improvements to the A4226.
- 32 It is noticeable that a number of these examples show that bus links from smaller airports to local stations are not successful. This may be if the range or frequency of rail services is limited, but it is also because of the perceived difficulty of interchange. Stations within walking distance of airport terminals are more successful.

**Q2 The importance of surface transport in freeing up existing spare capacity in airports.**

- 33 In general, the larger the airport, the more important is surface transport (public and private) in enabling the full capacity to be used. Thus at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Manchester, major public transport operations are required. At smaller airports, the amount of airport-related traffic on the highways is less (although locally it may be significant as a proportion of total traffic). With some exceptions, smaller airports can

operate adequately with road based public transport. London City is perhaps the major exception which, because of its location, could not operate without the DLR link.

- 34 The question refers to all surface transport, not just public transport and, of course, it is true that no airport of whatever size could operate without surface transport. However, many of the smaller and medium sized airports have spare airport capacity (i.e. runways, terminal space etc) and the question is whether inadequacies in surface transport are inhibiting the use of that capacity. Local transport authorities will argue that growth requires improvement schemes and indeed many improvements are noted in Airport Surface Access Strategies. There are some examples where poor surface access inhibits an airport's ability to compete.
- 35 Bristol is not well connected to the strategic highway network which may inhibit its growth. Leeds Bradford also faces competition from Manchester, the latter being better connected to many areas closer to Leeds Bradford Airport. The larger airports do, of course, offer a wider range of air services and frequencies which is a key competitive element. However, at both Bristol and Leeds Bradford, the case for improved surface access is difficult to justify, and these airports are likely to retain this disadvantage.
- 36 This question may also have been asked in terms of the ability of improved surface transport to enable short haul flights to be reduced, thus freeing up airport capacity. This is an issue which has been studied at length, with the most common conclusion that it has little impact on the number of aircraft movements. High speed rail has changed the share of air and rail demand in some parts of Europe, and in particular on the London, Paris and Brussels routes. Generally, the 50/50 rail/air share point is between three and four hours rail journey time. However, HS2 studies have shown that passengers who would use rail instead of short haul flights are a small proportion of total rail demand. Passengers connecting with long haul flights (eg. the majority of Manchester-Heathrow air passengers) tend to continue to choose short haul flights because the connection process is more certain. At airports where capacity is constrained, the effect of this mode share change would be minimal and would not result in any significant reduction in the need for additional runway capacity.

**Q3 The Government's role in planning surface access to airports in conjunction with airport owners, local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.**

- 37 The Government has a strategic role in all elements of transport and in ensuring that their plans and operations are integrated. Thus the Government's airports policy (as set out in the Aviation Policy Framework and in its responses to the Airports Commission's Interim and Final Reports) should be aligned with its other transport policies, as well as its economic, planning and environmental policies. For the most part, this is the case.
- 38 If the Government accepts the Airports Commission's recommendations for Heathrow, it will have to follow through with its directions to Network Rail and Highways England and provide the appropriate level of funding. At Gatwick and Stansted, growth within their current limits will also require follow through of current commitments. Particular tensions arise where different transport organisations have conflicting objectives. Thus Network Rail, and the DfT's Rail Division have in the past sought solutions which are not beneficial to airport passengers (changes to the Gatwick Express operation and rolling stock being the most notorious example), but both parties have to recognise that other non-airport passengers are also involved.
- 39 Government Guidelines on Airport Transport Forums and Airports Surface Access Strategies, most recently set out in the Aviation Policy Framework, have been

particularly effective in bringing together airports, local authorities and transport providers to identify and implement schemes aimed at increasing network capacity in and around the airports.

**Q4 The funding of strategic connections to airports**

- 40 Policy for funding should be as for any other developer who creates an increased demand on the surface transport network. To the extent that the developer benefits, it should contribute. The policy is sometimes stated as the inverse, that is the Government should contribute to the extent that there are wider benefits. In practice, the wider benefits are almost always much greater than the benefits to the airport. Thus Crossrail's £15 billion capital cost is rightly funded mostly by Government and TfL because of the wider benefits, while Heathrow's contribution is relatively modest. Similar considerations apply to projects such as the Gatwick Airport station enlargements, and the HS2 stations at Birmingham Gateway and Manchester Airport. The benefits to the airports, while not insignificant, are more than outweighed by the wider benefits. It may be possible to argue that in some circumstances, the transport operator should pay the developer for the opportunity to serve the development, although the value of that opportunity may be difficult to estimate. The loss of car parking revenue, net of any benefit of using the land for other uses, should also be taken into account.
- 41 However, it would seem relatively straightforward to expect an airport developer to pay for the cost of a link that is used exclusively by their customers. An example of this might be a people mover between a station and airport terminal, although if this provides some wider benefit, perhaps by relieving congestion on a road used by the wider community, there is an argument for the cost to be shared.

**Q5 Department for Transport's (DfT) role in ensuring that surface access infrastructure is planned and built in a joined-up way where different parts of the infrastructure are funded by different parties.**

- 42 See the answer to Q3.

**Q6 The level of responsibility that should be borne by the taxpayer for funding access and interfaces with national networks.**

- 43 See the answer to Q4.

**Q7 The Government's effectiveness in ensuring that its own policies, such as modal shift, are being achieved in decisions about surface transport to airports.**

- 44 Government policies on mode shift are designed to achieve objectives such as reducing congestion and improving air quality. There are few examples of airport surface access decisions being in conflict with these objectives. The cancellation of the Glasgow Airport Rail Link was perhaps one of the few examples but a new solution is being considered. Similarly the degradation of the Gatwick Express service is being partly dealt with by new trains, as was the downgrade of the Stansted Express.

**Q8 The extent to which airport customer preference and DfT policy concur in terms of preferred modes of surface transport to airports.**

- 45 There are a number of market segments among airport customers whose preferences vary significantly. These segments include journey purpose, nationality (or

resident/visitor), origin/destination and staff. Business passengers tend to be time-poor, money-rich and will be attracted to faster modes. The opposite applies to leisure passengers – so choice is good. Visitors tend not to have access to a private car and are more likely to use public transport or taxis. City centre origins and destinations are also more suited to public transport modes.

- 46 Staff will travel every working day, although many travel according to shift patterns (needing appropriate start and finish times for the public transport services), and from local origins. Other factors such as the amount of baggage and group size may also affect mode choice. Private car remains the preference of most customers although some airports cannot accommodate this and, for example, seek to deter 'kiss& fly'. A combination of deterrence and attraction measures is usually required. DfT policy is usually secondary in the choice of mode.
- 47 Finally, air freight shippers are particularly conscious of the value and time sensitive nature of their goods and this is reflected in their choice of mode being quick, secure and capable of detailed monitoring.

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