

Heathrow Airport Interim Master Plan

Response from the British Air Transport Association

BATA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the BAA's Interim Master Plan for Heathrow Airport (LHR). BATA represents UK-registered airlines, covering the scheduled, charter and freight sectors. Our members produce 90% of UK airline output. Three of our members, British Airways, bmi and Virgin Atlantic, carry more of their passengers through LHR than through any other airport. Collectively they carry about half of all LHR's passengers.

Our response is limited to the strategic issues raised by the plan. Comments on the details of the plan will be made by airlines.

We welcome the publication of the plan. The airline community at LHR has long felt the need for a long term plan to bring some stability and certainty to developments at the airport. It will enable airlines to make their own long term plans at LHR with greater confidence.

We would like to see some additions in the next version of the plan. For example, more detail is required on public transport developments and inter-terminal connectivity. There are no quality service standards for passengers nor any targets for aircraft delays.

Regulatory Context

Although the 2003 Aviation White Paper states that a new runway should be developed at LHR "as soon as possible after the new runway at Stansted" this was predicated on the new runway at Stansted being developed by "around 2011/12". The Stansted timescale has already slipped and it may slip more. The second runway at LHR should not be linked to developments at Stansted or anywhere else. It should be provided as soon as possible since it delivers the most economic benefit of any of the runway options in the White Paper.

Forecasts

We agree that demand for flights at LHR will continue to exceed supply throughout the 30 year period covered by the 2003 White Paper. For this reason we believe that keeping within the existing Air Traffic Movement (ATM) limit until 2015 is far too constraining. Current movements are already close to this limit. The implementation of mixed mode operations should include the removal of the ATM limit.

We think the plan is optimistic in expecting the airport to handle up to 90-95 million passengers per year within existing limits. This implies a significant increase in the number of passengers per ATM which we do not think is achievable in practice despite the introduction of the A380. Many airlines are reducing the number of seats on long haul aircraft by introducing beds or sleeper seats.

It is the shortage of ATM capacity which is the limiting factor at LHR. The comparison with other large European airports in Chapter 2 shows that this where LHR is being most strongly challenged and overtaken.

Connectivity

We agree that effective connectivity across the airport is vital. We are disappointed that there are no details at all about how this might be achieved. With five, and later six, terminals, creating good connectivity for passengers and baggage is a major challenge and it is not surprising that discussions with airlines are still under way. However we would have expected to see some description of the options being considered.

Surface Access

To improve the mode share of public transport, we would like to see a scheme to improve operating times so that more passengers and staff will become regular users. This is particularly important for staff on the earliest and latest shifts. If public transport does not meet their needs they will not buy season tickets and will use their cars instead.

We share the BAA's concerns with regard to some aspects of the rail links to LHR:

- We agree that **Crossrail** should terminate at Terminal 4 and not Terminal 5 so as not to compromise platform capacity at Terminal 5 and the operation of the Heathrow Express and Airtrack.
- The recent Transport for London proposal to run the **Underground** service one hour later on Saturday and Sunday mornings must be resisted. This will adversely affect both staff and passengers.
- The lack of progress with **Airtrack** is disappointing. It would seem that there is as yet no commitment from DfT to the scheme let alone an implementation date. We would urge the BAA to seek a commitment from the DfT, perhaps as part of the overall plan to improve air quality and reduce road congestion in the LHR area.

Additional Runway Capacity

We fully support the safeguarding of land for the third runway and terminal facilities north of the A4.

We believe that a new terminal is a better option rather than a satellite served from Central Area. With a satellite, all passengers, and their baggage, using the satellite will have to travel via Central Area or Terminal 5 and the interconnecting transit system. However with a terminal, a high proportion of the terminal's passengers will have a simpler and quicker journey by not having to transit Central Area. This will improve the travel experience for some passengers, reduce road congestion in the approaches to Central Area and reduce emissions from road traffic.

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