

One Hour Later

Transport for London's Consultation on Running the Underground an Hour Later on Friday and Saturday Nights.

Response from British Air Transport Association (BATA)

BATA welcomes the opportunity to respond to Transport for London's Consultation on the proposal to run Underground trains one hour later on Friday and Saturday nights. BATA represents UK-registered airlines, both scheduled and charter. Our members produce 90% of UK airline output.

Our response is limited to the effect this proposal will have on air passengers and airline staff.

Many passengers and staff will be disadvantaged by this proposal and none will benefit from it. It will have a negative environmental effect at airports by adding to road congestion and emissions. It is contrary to the Government's and the GLA's policies to improve air quality and to increase the proportion of passengers who use public transport to get to airports. **We therefore strongly oppose the proposal.**

The nub of the problem lies not with the later running on Friday and Saturday nights, but with the consequential later start on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The biggest effect will be felt at Heathrow, which is served directly by the Piccadilly line, but other London airports will also be affected.

Implications for Heathrow

The operating day at Heathrow is from 6am to 11.30pm. Night flights are restricted for noise reasons in the period from 11.30pm to 6am - the Night Quota Period.

The morning period from 6am is busy with the arrival of overnight long haul flights from around the world and the first departures to Europe and other parts of the UK. The one hour time difference with Europe means that early flights are popular with passengers who wish to maximise their time in Europe. There are also some key long haul flights which arrive before 6am.

The late evening period is less busy. There are some long haul departures up to 11.30pm but most short haul operations have finished well before 11pm.

Saturday and Sunday Mornings

If the later running were to happen, and assuming the same service pattern as now, then the first trains at Heathrow (Terminals 1, 2 and 3) on Saturday and Sunday mornings would be:

| First Trains Saturday and Sunday Mornings | Saturday | Sunday |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| First train from Osterley arrives at Heathrow | 6.06am | 6.49am |
| First train from Acton arrives at Heathrow | 6.26am | 8.09am |
| First train from Central London arrives at Heathrow | 7.32am | 8.51am |
| | | |
| First train to Central London departs from Heathrow | 6.13am | 6.57am |

About 14% of passengers and 5% of staff use the Piccadilly line to get to Heathrow. Both groups would be adversely affected by the later start of trains on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Staff

Well over half the staff who work at Heathrow work shifts or irregular hours and off-peak services are particularly important. Staff on early shifts have to get to work before 6am but the later running times mean that they could no longer use the Underground to get to work. About 200 current Underground users will be affected on Saturday mornings and more than 400 on Sunday mornings¹. Many would switch to using cars.

There are also several thousand staff who work night shifts in the Cargo, Catering and Engineering areas. Of these, more than 100 who currently use the Underground will no longer have a convenient service at the end of their shift.

Those who cannot use the Underground at weekends may switch to using cars all week since season tickets will be less valuable.

Passengers

Passengers for early morning flights on Saturday and Sunday will not have the option of using the Underground. It is necessary to arrive at the airport at least an hour before the scheduled departure time of a flight and much earlier for long haul flights. This means that passengers from central London for flights departing before 8.30am on Saturday or 10.00am on Sunday will not have the option of using the Underground. Many will use cars or taxis instead which will increase road congestion and air pollution.

Some passengers arriving on early flights will also be inconvenienced by the late start of the Underground especially on Sunday.

The following tables show the number of flights and passengers affected².

Flights which do not connect with the Underground to/from Central London

| | Number of flights per day (all carriers) | | | |
|----------|--|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | Flight Departures | | Flight Arrivals | |
| | Currently | Proposal | Currently | Proposal |
| Saturday | 44 | 78 | 0 | 9 |
| Sunday | 87 | 128 | 7 | 17 |

¹ BAA staff survey.

² From a recent survey by BA.

Passengers whose flights do not connect with the Underground to/from Central London

| | Number of passengers per day (all carriers) | | | |
|----------|---|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | Flight Departures | | Flight Arrivals | |
| | Currently | Proposal | Currently | Proposal |
| Saturday | 5,525 | 10,223 | 0 | 2,578 |
| Sunday | 11,645 | 17,692 | 1,976 | 4,702 |

These tables also show that more than 200 flights, carrying more than 30,000 passengers, will be affected over a weekend. They also show that the current Underground service, especially on Sunday mornings, is inadequate and fails to meet the early morning demand. As Heathrow has got busier, more and more flights are operating in the early morning and the Underground has failed to match the changes by adjusting its operating pattern. We contend that, if anything, the Underground should start earlier, not later.

Friday and Saturday Night

If the later running were to happen, and assuming the same service pattern as now, then the last trains at Heathrow (Terminals 1, 2 and 3) on Friday and Saturday evenings would be:

| Last Trains Friday and Saturday Night | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Last train to Heathrow arrives at | 02.18am | 02.18am |
| | | |
| Last train from Heathrow to Central London | 00.49am | 00.49am |
| Last train from Heathrow to Hammersmith | 01.04am | 01.04am |
| Last train from Heathrow to Acton Town | 01.22am | 01.22am |

The later running on Friday and Saturday night will convey little or no benefit to staff or passengers because the current service is late enough to meet requirements.

Environmental Impact

The Government's aviation policy calls for the expansion of Heathrow subject to environmental constraints on noise, local air quality and surface access being met. Stakeholders at Heathrow are working hard to improve air quality yet this proposal will make matters worse. Staff and passengers will be not be able to use the Underground on Saturday and Sunday mornings and they will switch to using cars or taxis. Air pollution and road congestion will worsen. This proposal is therefore contrary to the Mayor of London's air quality strategy and with his, and the Government's, policy of encouraging the use of public transport to access airports. This proposal should be subject to a full environmental assessment.

The proposal undermines the Government's policy to expand Heathrow and so threatens the huge economic benefits that the airport brings to London, the Thames Valley and the UK in general.

The extension of the Piccadilly line to Terminal 5 will cost many tens of millions of pounds all of which is being paid for by airlines and their passengers through airport charges. The later starting of the Underground would devalue this investment.

Other Airports

Other London airports, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City, are not directly served by the Underground but all have rail links. In 2004, for example, some 24% of Gatwick passengers went by rail. The operating day and pattern of operations at these airports is similar to Heathrow albeit on a smaller scale.

The later running of the Underground on Saturday and Sunday mornings may affect those passengers and staff wanting to use the train since they may be unable to connect with the airport train services. For example, a passenger wishing to travel by train to Gatwick may not be able to do so because they will be unable to get to Victoria station by Underground in time. As a consequence, there will be some switching from use of public transport to use of cars and taxis. This will increase road congestion and air pollution in the vicinity of these airports.

Conclusions

This proposal will disadvantage many staff and passengers at London's airports, especially Heathrow. It will have a negative impact on air quality and road congestion. We call for a full environmental assessment to be made of this proposal.

April 2005