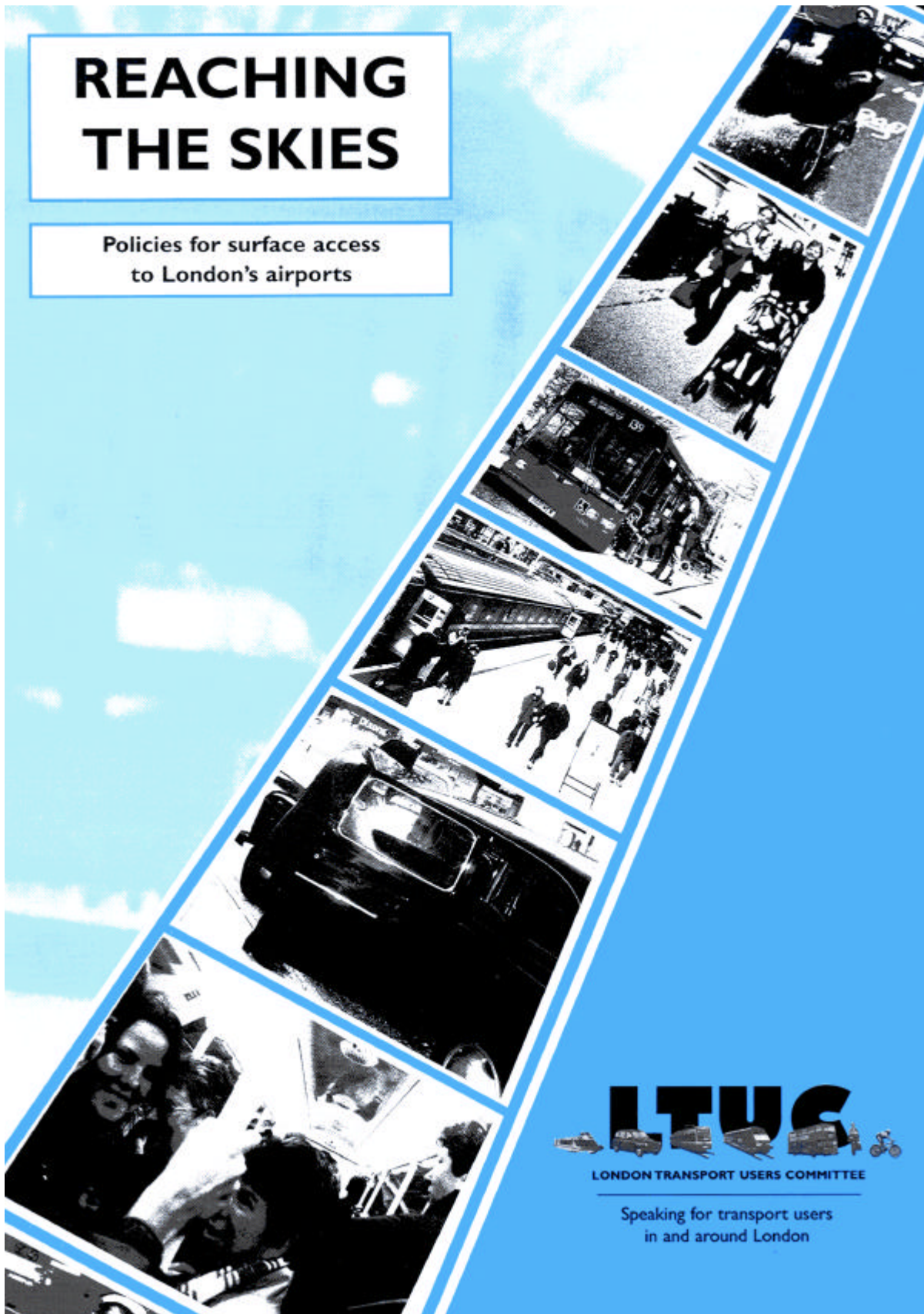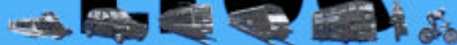# REACHING THE SKIES

Policies for surface access
to London's airports

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LONDON TRANSPORT USERS COMMITTEE

Speaking for transport users
in and around London

This report was prepared and approved in the summer of 2001, but its publication was delayed in view of the events of September 11th.

It is still not clear what long-term effects those events, and the current international situation, will have on the demand for air travel and hence on the demand for surface access to airports. Although some parts of the civil aviation industry are currently scaling back their operations, others are reporting steady demand, or are expecting previous growth patterns eventually to resume.

However, we believe that *Reaching the Skies* remains valid. Its principles (sections 2 to 4 and section 11) apply whatever the demand levels. Few of the specific aspirations for each airport (sections 5 to 10) are predicated on growth; rather, they remain necessary in order to address existing problems. And, as the opening section makes clear, we are always willing to revisit and update our policies and aspirations, in the light of changing needs and circumstances. *Reaching the Skies* remains both a continuing policy framework and a snapshot of the current issues.

February 2002

London Transport Users Committee

Reaching the Skies

Policies for surface access to London's airports

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Policies for surface access to London's airports

Foreword

by Suzanne May
Chair of the London Transport Users Committee

As a body representing London's surface transport users, the Committee has deliberately stood aloof from the great debate about whether (and where) the increasing demand for air travel should be met or restrained. Our concern is simply this: the surface transport system must fulfil users' travel needs, whatever they might be.

Eighty million passengers go to or from London's airports each year, and that demand is increasing. Amazingly, more people travel through Heathrow than travel on the whole of Thameslink. Over 100,000 airport-related staff work at or around the airports, which have become substantial commuter hubs in their own right.

The air travellers tend to have particular needs. Luggage, deadlines and perhaps unsocial timings make for demanding journeys; the more so if you are flying in to a strange location and having to make sense of timetables, tickets and where to go next. Airport staff have their own travel needs associated with 24-hour shift operation.

There have been many welcome developments in recent years, with hard work and investment by airport operators and surface access operators alike. There are plenty of good practice guides that show what is being done. But some needs are still better catered for than others. We can all think of smooth journeys, difficult ones and perhaps the odd horrendous one. The Committee wants them all to come up to the standard of the best.

This report represents our manifesto for surface access to airports. It covers general principles and aspirations that apply to all airports – in a way, a good practice guide but coming from the user perspective – as well as our specific aspirations for each airport.

We don't regard it as the last word on the subject. We will be continuing our discussions with operators and regulators alike, responding to new developments, problems and opportunities, and reflecting passengers' changing demands. But this report gives our view of the user's needs, and is a snapshot of the specific issues that concern us now.

I commend the report to transport operators, local authorities, regulators, and all those who can contribute to improving this important aspect of the transport system.

Executive summary

- Surface access to airports is an increasingly important element of the transport system in the London region.

- The principles that should underpin surface access are as follows:

    - Services must provide adequately for the airport's entire surface catchment area.

    - Services and facilities must reflect the particular needs of the clientele.

    - Transport must be available at times that match the travellers' needs.

    - The entire journey chain matters – particularly in public transport where one weak link can put people off that method of access.

    - Ticketing systems must be sufficiently flexible to give users the ticket that suits them, whilst being comprehensible.

    - People need to know the services exist, and be encouraged to use them.

    - The more sustainable modes should be given priority.

- A checklist of aspirations is presented, which applies to all airports.

- There is the possibility of trains substituting for short-haul flights. Rail passengers could benefit from this, but the limited rail capacity must be used in the most effective way.

- There would be pros and cons for passengers if more freight were to be carried to/from airports by rail.

- Airports are increasingly becoming interchange hubs for surface travellers who have no business at the airport itself. The facilities should be planned with these users in mind too.

- Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, London City and Biggin Hill airports are reviewed in turn, with the Committee's aspirations given for each.

- The smaller airports and airfields that exist for general aviation have little in common with the large scheduled-flight airports, and require a different scale of response.

1 The importance of airports

1.1 In this shrinking world, ever fewer can escape for long an appointment with an airport. A week in Ibiza, Florida or some other sun-spot is no longer just for the privileged few. The holiday specials of bygone summers have given way to the perennial newspaper copy of the hours-late charter flight. International conferences and meetings are no longer the preserve of Chief Executives in company jets. Commerce and regulation are shaking off the limits of national or even continental demarcations. The high-level status of the London city-region in the global economic and administrative system puts London's airports at the forefront of business air travel.

1.2 And there is more to it than just the travellers. Accompanying them are meeters, greeters and sightseers. Airports (and the hotels that cluster around them) are popular locations for business meetings and conferences. To serve all this, airports have grown into big businesses, becoming major employers in their own right.

1.3 So travel to airports is an important part of the surface[1] travel market. To quote a mixed bag of statistics:

- Over eighty million airline passengers require surface access to or from London's airports each year.

- There are more air passengers requiring surface access to/from Heathrow than there are passengers on (for example) the whole of Thameslink or Silverlink.

- A franchised train operator (Gatwick Express) and an open-access operator (Heathrow Express) exist purely to serve airport travel.

- London City Airport reportedly has the busiest taxi rank in east London.

- Over 100,000 staff work at or around London's airports.

- The various firms at Heathrow alone employ 68,000 people.

1.4 The Committee, as a body representing *surface* transport users, takes no collective view in the debate as to whether civil aviation should, in principle, be encouraged or restricted, or on where airports should be located. We believe that, whatever policies are adopted on these questions, the surface access to and from airports must meet the requirements of airport users, and must be consistent with the general transport strategy for London and its region.

1.5 There are already a lot of good links and good practice, and many developments in recent years have been particularly beneficial to airport access. The Committee also warmly welcomes the very substantial commitments – both physical and financial – that are being made by airport operators themselves, local authorities and transport operators to improving surface access by modes other than the private car. The establishment of Airport Transport Forums (in which the Committee participates) and the progress of Airport Surface Access Strategies are also welcome developments.

1.6 However, there is still more to be done in order fully to provide the transport services that users expect and deserve, and particularly to generate modal shift from car use. And it is always vital for new and changed services alike fully to address the particular needs of the passengers they serve.

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[1] 'Surface' includes sub-surface (e.g. the Underground).

About this report

1.7 This report therefore sets out the Committee's aspirations for surface access to London's airports[2]. It begins with the principles that should be applied to the planning and management of surface access, and the aspirations that apply in equal measure to all airports. It then goes on to consider the wider transport issues that surface access must take into account. Finally, the report sets out the current situation, and the Committee's specific aspirations, in relation to each airport.

1.8 The aspirations are not set in stone, but are continuously evolving. Feedback that the Committee receives from transport users, and wider changes in travel patterns and the transport system, will reveal new needs, opportunities and problems. Not least, there are always economic, technical and social changes in society, which will generate corresponding changes in what users expect.

1.9 This report does not discuss those of the Committee's aspirations that apply to services generally, rather than specifically to airport access (for example, railway carriage design). Many of those aspirations are described in our other publications.

1.10 In parallel with the preparation of this report, the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has been undertaking (alone or jointly) studies into various into aspects of rail links to airports. The Committee looks forward to considering the outcome of these in due course, as part of our ongoing liaison with the SRA.

The consultation loop

1.11 As a statutory advisory body, the Committee expects to be consulted by operators, regulators and all bodies whose plans and policies impinge on transport users. Although this paper serves to explain the Committee's views and aspirations in relation to airport access, it is no substitute for consultation about individual proposals – not least because very often it is the finer details of plans that determine whether or not they meet users' needs.

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2 By which we mean the five principal airports within the Committee's area (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City), along with Biggin Hill. This is not the same as the Civil Aviation Authority's definition of London, which consigns Biggin Hill to the provinces and welcomes Southend Airport to the service of the metropolis.
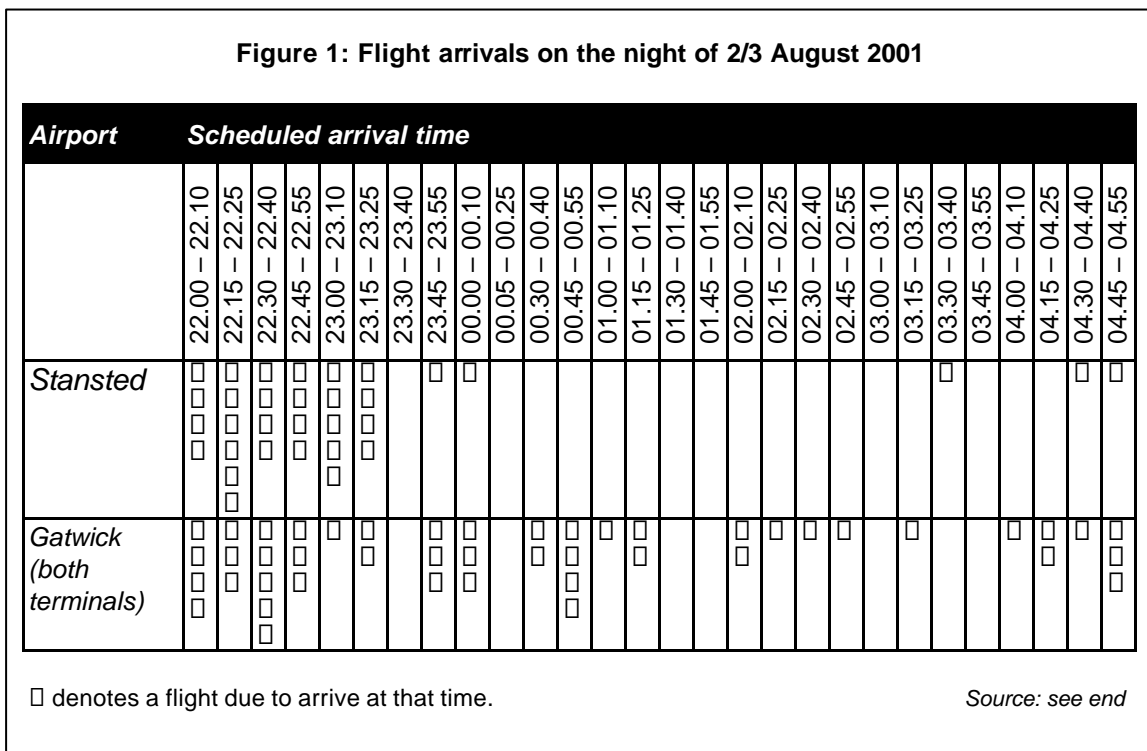
2   A look at the principles

Where are we?

2.1   Let us start with the reason why the surface access business exists: people have to get from their homes or their offices to the airport. Airports are few and (literally) far between. Many airline passengers have Hobson's choice of airport. Where a choice does exist, proximity to the departure airport is just one factor in the passenger's choice. The range of air fares and the choice of airports at the other end of the journey will loom just as large in the decision (particularly with the growth of low-cost airlines that often fly to secondary airports).

2.2   So passengers can come from all across the South-East and beyond. These origins and destinations must all be catered for. Their journeys can be categorised broadly as follows:

- only as far as the airport's own immediate locality – particularly common for staff;

- to or via suburban London;

- to or through central London; and

- 'cross-country' - i.e. not via London.

2.3   Attention (and wall-to-wall advertising) is often focused on travel to and from central London, but other travellers currently have very patchy levels of provision. Services must provide adequately for the airport's entire catchment area.

Who are we?

2.4   Now consider the users themselves: business travellers, leisure travellers, 'meeters and greeters', and staff. They all have differing travel needs, differing price-sensitivities, differing levels of familiarity with the airport environment, and differing levels of familiarity with the surface transport system.

2.5   That said, there is a characteristic clientele. Airports attract large numbers of passengers who can be:

- unfamiliar with the journey;

- unfamiliar with the surface transport system,

- unfamiliar with the English language; and/or

- weighed down with luggage.

2.6   Inbound airline passengers can particularly feel disorientated on arrival at the airport, through jetlag, tiredness or simply the strange, bustling, culturally different environment. These passengers have a particularly strong need for clear and concise but full information. By contrast, regular passengers will be all too familiar with the journey, and just want to get through the system as quickly and smoothly as possible. At smaller airports with relatively few flights, passengers may be leaving in batches, rather than in a steady stream.

2.7   Services and facilities must be planned to reflect these issues, in order to provide all passengers with an acceptable travel experience.

Cometh the hour

2.8 Transport must be available at times that match the needs of each group of travellers. Flights come and go at most hours of the day and night – in some cases, at all hours. Figure 1 provides a snapshot of Stansted and Gatwick, where charter flights operate all night during the summer holiday season. Check-in horizons and arrivals formalities add to the hours for which surface access is needed. As airports operate around the clock, staff travel particularly requires access during unsocial hours.

2.9 Timetables must also allow for (reasonable) delays to late-evening incoming flights, to avoid passengers missing the last homeward service of the day. A long taxi journey is very expensive, and although an airport is one of the better environments in which to be stuck overnight, that is the last thing a returning holidaymaker wants. Contingency plans must be in place to deal with any arrivals after onward transport has shut down for the night.

Figure 1: Flight arrivals on the night of 2/3 August 2001

Airport	Scheduled arrival time																											
	22.00 – 22.10	22.15 – 22.25	22.30 – 22.40	22.45 – 22.55	23.00 – 23.10	23.15 – 23.25	23.30 – 23.40	23.45 – 23.55	00.00 – 00.10	00.05 – 00.25	00.30 – 00.40	00.45 – 00.55	01.00 – 01.10	01.15 – 01.25	01.30 – 01.40	01.45 – 01.55	02.00 – 02.10	02.15 – 02.25	02.30 – 02.40	02.45 – 02.55	03.00 – 03.10	03.15 – 03.25	03.30 – 03.40	03.45 – 03.55	04.00 – 04.10	04.15 – 04.25	04.30 – 04.40	04.45 – 04.55
Stansted	°°°°	°°°°°	°°°	°°°°	°°°°	°°°		°	°													°				°	°	
Gatwick (both terminals)	°°°°	°°°	°°°°°	°°°°	°°	°		°°°	°°°		°°	°°°°	°	°°			°°	°	°	°	°					°°	°	°°

° denotes a flight due to arrive at that time.

Source: see end

No weak links

2.10 The entire journey chain matters to users. This cannot be stressed enough. Both practical experience and entire libraries of research have shown this. One weak link is enough to put people off using that method of access – particularly in the complicated chain that is public transport. A high-quality bus is wasted if its passengers have to wait on a windswept airport forecourt or in a dingy undercroft. A bright airport station and modern train are wasted if the other end involves a trek up staircases with luggage, or a 59-minute wait for a connection. The easier and more seamless the journey can be made, the better.

2.11 So planning for airport access must take into account not just the facilities and services available at the airport end, but also those available at the remote origins and destinations (including interchanges). That is, of course, not to say that every station or bus stop should have flight information screens or check-in desks, but these should not just be confined to London termini. (Swiss travellers have as many as 125 railway stations at which they can check-in their luggage, albeit for a fee.)

Tickets to please

2.12　Ticketing systems must be sufficiently flexible to give passengers the ticket that suits them, whilst being comprehensible enough for them to understand the choice (if any) on offer.

2.13　Tickets should be bookable at the same time as the air travel – public transport needs to be seen as part of the overall journey package. Sadly, few travel agents want to cope with surface ticketing systems, which (to them) are complicated products with a high hassle factor but relatively little reward.

2.14　The opposite approach – making surface transport part of the airline ticketing system – is a partial solution that can be applied to some key flows, as Heathrow Express has done. (Connoisseurs of railway and airline trivia will be delighted to know that Paddington station is now officially an airport.) Web-based ticketing offers opportunities for links between airlines' websites and those of train operators (as easyJet and Thameslink have done). This is becoming increasingly important, with the growing use of the internet to book airline tickets. Selling train tickets to London on inbound flights or at check-in desks is another helpful practice, but only for passengers who have not made arrangements in advance. For example, Ryanair sells discounted single tickets to Liverpool Street (although not Travelcards) on its flights to Stansted.

2.15　But passengers touching down and wanting to travel onwards by rail should not be left with the impression that the only option is a 'ticket to London' and another queue at the terminus. Through tickets to other destinations (including Travelcards) are just as important, but are often under-promoted by airports and station operators alike. Too much emphasis is often placed on the 'headline' fare to London.

2.16　More fundamentally, though, fares must be affordable, particularly in comparison with the perceived cost of making the journey by car – especially parking charges. In some cases it is cheaper for two people to share a car to the airport than to travel by train, which is hardly an inducement to modal shift.

2.17　The Committee does not support charging unavoidable premium fares for airport services. These can discourage use of the service and add to the complexity of the ticketing system. They are certainly inappropriate, and particularly unhelpful, where airports act as interchanges for the surface transport system (see Section 4 below).

2.18　BAA has experimented with car parking charges and has found that there are upper limits to using higher charges as a means of reducing car journeys. There comes a point when travellers prefer to get someone to drop them off, rather than pay the parking charge. This increases car use, by requiring four car trips rather than two.

In the know

2.19　Once the services and facilities are in place, however, people need to know they exist and must be encouraged to use them. For passengers flying out of the airport, timely marketing is vital. The message must reach them at the point when they think 'how will I get to the airport?' Later is too late.

2.20　Passengers flying into the airport may have no idea where to go next, or may simply require confirmation of their next onward service, or may have specific information needs. Help is required. Passengers who are unsure about the mode they need to use often have to seek information from a number of mode-specific desks; a 'one stop shop' would be better. The ideal is a multi-modal transport information and ticket desk, with well-trained staff, open at all appropriate times. It should be treated as part of the airport information desk, and in a conspicuous location.

2.21   More generally, onward travel information should be precisely that, not just advertising. There is a tendency for operators to publicise only their own services, which can lead to confusion. Information ought to be available on a combined basis. Information leaflets in key languages may also be helpful.

2.22   In both directions, wayfinding and information displays must be clear and complete. It is surprising how often this does not happen.

2.23   Services from airports could usefully give information about the next leg of a journey (as Heathrow Express does, with on-train advice about what to do at Paddington).

In the mode

2.24   The new Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) puts an emphasis on public transport, cycling and walking as alternatives to the private car. The Committee wholeheartedly endorses this attitude. Airports and their approaches, like any other areas of concentrated and competing transport demands, need to prioritise the most effective and sustainable modes. Indeed, because airports are major demand generators (equivalent to town centres in their own right), policies aimed at modal shift in airport traffic can contribute substantially to wider traffic reduction aims.

2.25   The development of new infrastructure should be prioritised with this in mind, and existing infrastructure should be managed on the same basis. The layout of terminal forecourts should make the most sustainable modes the most convenient ones. In an environment full of cars and taxis, it can be all too easy for pedestrian and cycle routes to become afterthoughts – but for people who live locally or have business nearby (particularly staff), these can be the easiest way to reach the airport. Bus stops should always be more conveniently placed than car parks. Within the terminals themselves, the easiest, most obvious routes should be those towards the more sustainable onward modes.

2.26   In circumstances when conventional public transport cannot be justified, taxis are clearly a better alternative than car use (and the resulting acres of car parks). Some tour operators provide shared taxis between local pick-up points and the airport. Hotel coaches can be useful as public transport, but the fares must be appropriate.

2.27   Some adventurous souls take their bicycles by plane, for which the hardest part can be the surface access – if you can't cycle all the way, you will usually need to take a train, but operators vary as to how accommodating they are. In some cases the bicycle is unwelcome; in others, you must book a space in advance, which can be tricky if you are coming back from abroad.

2.28   Local access, particularly by bus, is important for airport staff commuting to work. Some airport operators have been pro-active in developing staff discount and staff travelcard schemes (covering local buses, long-distance buses, trains or taxi concessions), and in sponsoring increased frequencies. These represent very welcome good practice.

3 A checklist for surface access

The following aspirations flow from the principles described above. They apply to all airports and their transport operators. Some locations and some routes are closer to meeting this than others.

Getting there (and back)

a) Full information on transport links to be made available to arriving passengers during the flight, and to departing passengers before their journeys to the airports.

b) Progressive improvements to accessibility for people with impaired mobility – particularly where services link in with facilities that are already accessible. All new services and facilities to be fully accessible. Step-free access between platform and train at airport stations and other principal stations served.

c) Facilities and services at key feeder stops/stations into airport rail and bus services (as well as the airport stops/stations themselves) should consider the specific needs of airline passengers. In particular, passengers with luggage may require lifts or porters.

d) Secure luggage check-in to be available at key stations on routes to airports.

e) Connecting services to be well planned, so as to maximise network synergy.

f) Trains from airports to central London should convey information to assist passengers upon arrival at the terminus (e.g. advice on where to go next).

g) Contingency plans to be in place for dealing with onward travel for passengers on delayed flight arrivals.

Facilities

h) A porterage service to be provided at airport stations. If a charge is made for this service, it must be a reasonable amount. On suitable routes, train staff should canvass en route and phone through to ensure that sufficient porters meet the train.

i) Where dwell times at airport stations need to be kept short for pathing and punctuality reasons, staff should be available specifically to assist with transferring luggage between trains and platforms.

j) Sufficient luggage trolleys at airport stations to meet demand. Trolleys to be transferable between terminals and stations.

k) Sheltered, high-quality waiting areas to be available for passengers waiting for services from the airport. The departure lounge should be the benchmark for quality.

Ticketing and information

l) Airlines to sell public transport tickets pro-actively.

m) Airport services not to impose premium fares.

n) Arrivals areas and railway/bus stations to have clear explanations of the surface transport routes and ticketing systems, in suitable languages. Where a variety of tickets are available, leaflets explaining the options should be available in English and appropriate other languages.

o) A multi-modal transport information and ticket desk in each airport terminal, open at all times when passengers are arriving or leaving. It should be treated as part of the airport information desk, and in a conspicuous location.

p) Travelcards should be promoted equally with other tickets.

q) Carnet-type tickets for key flows to be available for frequent travellers.

4 Synergy at the airport

Substitution

4.1 London's airports – particularly Heathrow and Gatwick – are under pressure for slots, and short-haul flights might get squeezed out in favour of more profitable long-haul flights. The Government's recent consultation paper on aviation policy has floated the idea of high-speed rail services substituting for the short-haul flights, and the SRA has been investigating the scope for this[3]. There is also the potential for passengers transferring between airports (for example, from Heathrow to Gatwick) to use rail services, although research has suggested that this market is limited[4].

4.2 There could be benefits to rail passengers if this substitution were to happen:

(a) The increased numbers of rail passengers would strengthen the rail industry, which in turn would justify better facilities and services for all rail passengers, setting up a virtuous circle.

(b) If the services were treated as connecting 'flights', airlines might put pressure on the railway industry to improve the elements of rail service quality that they believe their passengers would not put up with (for example, compare the typical station environment with the typical airport environment).

(Of course, the downsides of air travel, such as check-in times, should not be imported to the railway as well.)

(c) Additional services could provide more travel options for existing rail passengers, with the potential for a wider choice of routes, connections, times, operators or fares.

(d) Any new infrastructure could also be useful for other services, whether airport-related (e.g. trains aimed at airport staff) or not (e.g. the airport becoming a hub for interchange on other journeys).

(e) From a wider point of view, trains are less environmentally damaging than aeroplanes.

4.3 The potential cost is the possibility of sub-optimal use of limited rail capacity. The lines radiating out of London are mostly operating at, or close to, full capacity. As a result, many of the train operators' (and the Committee's) existing aspirations cannot be fulfilled.

4.4 The Committee is particularly concerned that whilst long-distance and intra-regional services have generally been boosted to more acceptable frequencies in recent years, the shorter-distance services often remain inadequate – especially where they ought to be fulfilling a turn-up-and-go 'Metro' function. The Committee therefore generally believes that where there are conflicts that cannot be resolved, priority should be given to the shorter-distance services.

The impact of freight

4.5 In principle, the Committee would support an increased use of rail for freight, partly because it would lead to a stronger rail industry overall, which would be good for rail

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[3] The '*Regions to London and London's Airports*' study. See '*The Future of Aviation: The Government's consultation document on air transport policy*' (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000), paragraph 259.
[4] See '*The Future of Aviation*', paragraph 254.

passengers, and partly because a reduction in non-essential road traffic (and associated roadspace reallocation) would improve conditions for other road users.

4.6   However, there are practical limitations at present. Some of the key capacity constraints are on the lines which would otherwise be best placed to attract airport freight: the London-Brighton main line (through Gatwick), the Great Western Main Line (the northern access to Heathrow), the south-west London suburban network (the southern access to Heathrow), and the single-track tunnel at Stansted. As demand for train paths (hopefully) grows, there will be more locations that have conflicting bids for the last few remaining paths. So in the long-term, new capacity may well be needed if more freight going to/from/between airports is to travel by rail. There will be instances in which this new capacity can also create (or free up) paths for passenger services; the Committee would welcome those.

4.7   In the shorter-term, and where choices have to be made over the best use of rail capacity, the Committee would unquestionably prioritise passenger traffic over freight traffic, for the following reasons:

(a)   Passenger railways, thanks to the time savings that they bring to travel, make possible lifestyles and personal travel opportunities that would otherwise be impossible (especially for people who cannot drive). There are few such *direct* lifestyle benefits from rail freight transport.

(b)   For passenger trains, intermediate stations are as important as the origin and destination, and so the chosen route is vital to the service pattern. With freight, rarely do more than the origin, destination and journey time count. Passenger travel is therefore more route-critical.

(c)   Passenger services generally require a high frequency, and therefore a high critical mass of paths, if they are to be used and useful. This is less acute with freight.

4.8   The silver lining is that air freight characteristically involves low-volume, high-value goods, rather than high-volume, low-value goods (e.g. minerals). These goods have scope for using the specialist high-speed freight or postal vehicles that have recently been developed. Their speed and acceleration characteristics sit better with passenger services than (even modern) conventional heavy freight trains do, and so they have less of an adverse impact on line capacity than the latter.

4.9   In relation to the London area in particular, the Committee believes that there are so many inter-related issues about freight and distribution (and their relationship with other demands for roadspace and railway paths) that a London-wide freight and distribution strategy, covering all modes, is needed. Air freight, and its related warehousing and distribution facilities, have an impact on both rail and road traffic volumes, and thus contribute to the need for such a strategy.

Serendipity airport

4.10   Whether by accident or by design, airports are increasingly becoming interchange hubs for surface travellers who have no business at the airport itself. This includes people for whom the airport is a convenient access-point to/from surface public transport. Interchange facilities must accommodate this (and indeed the additional patronage may add to their viability), although the Committee accepts that interchange should not overwhelm the *raison d'être* of the airport itself.

4.11   The facilities should ideally be planned from the start with all transport needs in mind, not just those of airport users. Transport terminals must provide easy interchange with each other, and allow passengers easily to reach the 'outside world' from the airport complex.
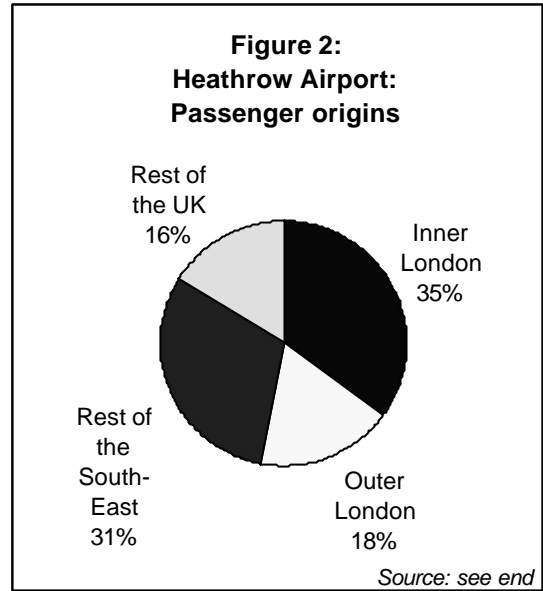
Non-airport-related interchange is also a reason why airports should have well-balanced service patterns, not just catering for the prime markets for air travellers. Likewise, premium fares should be avoided.

5 Heathrow

5.1 London's airports are heavyweight, and Heathrow is the heaviest. It is the world's fourth busiest airport, with 43 million passengers per year (excluding transfers), a figure which exceeds that of most franchised train operators. Figure 2 shows where they come from, and Figure 3 shows how they all get there.

5.2 There are 68,000 staff on site. Some 10% of them start their shifts between midnight and 06.00, representing a substantial need for night-time transport. The airport's effects on West London's employment market have implications of their own for transport providers, but that's another story.

5.3 The Central Terminal Area (CTA) boasts Britain's third busiest coach station, rebuilt a few years ago, and one of London's most important local bus stations. There are also bus stations at Terminal 4 and Hatton Cross. The airport operator, BAA, has recently been addressing the deficiencies in bus signage and information, and the Committee plans to assess the results in due course.

Figure 2:
Heathrow Airport:
Passenger origins

Rest of the UK 16%
Inner London 35%
Rest of the South-East 31%
Outer London 18%

Source: see end

5.4 The CTA is inaccessible by foot, and BAA sponsors a free travel zone for local buses within the airport and around its perimeter (as well as supporting enhanced local bus services). Heathrow Express provides free travel between the CTA and Terminal 4. Buses that connect the CTA with places to the south of the airport have to follow a circuitous route around the perimeter to enter the CTA from the north. Re-opening the cargo tunnel to buses would eliminate this diversion, leading to much faster access, but this is being refused for security reasons.

5.5 The orbital bus route 726 is the only direct connection between Heathrow and much of south London. Some time ago, it was saved (in a reduced form) after strenuous representations by the Committee's predecessor, but its future is not guaranteed. The Committee is also concerned about the more recent reduction in commercial bus services to/from points west of the airport.

5.6 Improved bus access is needed to Terminal 4 and Hatton Cross from the north (both during the day and at night) and from across the London boundary.

5.7 Heathrow's rail access has been surprisingly limited, which is part of the reason why coaches do a good trade (notably along the M4 corridor). The Piccadilly line has long offered a slow route to central London, although it reaches the principal hotel belts

Figure 3:
Heathrow Airport:
Mode of surface access

Rail 8%
Hire car 4%
Private car 34%
Under-ground 14%
Bus / coach 14%
Taxi / minicab 27%

Source: see end

directly and also benefits airport staff who live along its route through Hounslow. Since 1998, however, Heathrow Express (HEx) has revolutionised access to central London. In
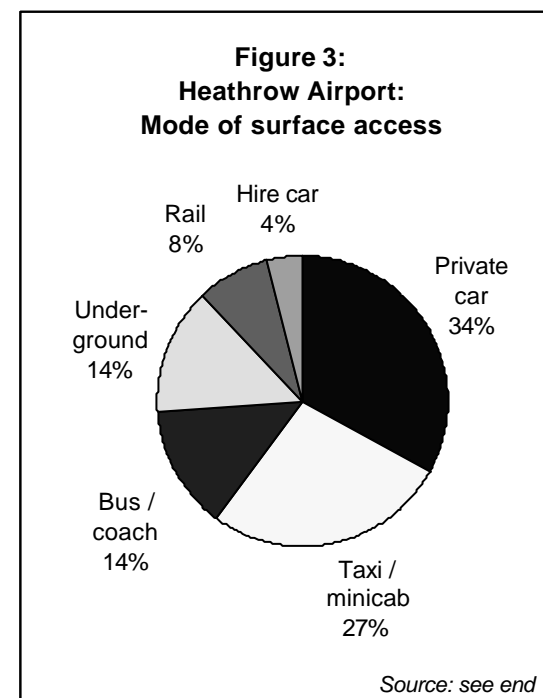
further developments since it opened, departing passengers with the major airlines can now check-in themselves and their hold luggage at Paddington. Arriving passengers can even have their luggage delivered direct to certain West End hotels.

5.8 Rail connections in other directions involve 'Railair' coach links from Watford, Woking and Reading, and bus links from Hayes & Harlington and Feltham, each offering a wide range of connections and through fares.

5.9 The Feltham link was introduced recently, with high hopes, but has performed below expectations. In the Committee's view, this link has been under-marketed. The Anglia Railways CrossLink service (from Hampshire and East Anglia) has added to the value of the Feltham link, but this too seems under-marketed. The Committee has reluctantly agreed to the replacement of the T123 bus route by an upgraded route 285 as being the only realistic option for the time being, but also feels that Terminal 4 ought to have a direct service from Feltham.

5.10 The Committee believes that a new coach link from Slough should be considered, to supplement the Reading link. This could potentially be a more reliable coach journey than from Reading, and might be able to take pathing pressure off Hayes & Harlington as an alternative railhead for the airport.

5.11 The focus for rail now needs to turn to local and orbital access, which remain limited. On the north side, the proposals for a HEx spin-off service seem to change every so often, and HEx has seemed curiously loath to inform the Committee of developments (let alone consult). The most recent plan seems to have been for a half-hourly shuttle to Hayes & Harlington and Ealing Broadway, starting in 2002, as the first stage of a more frequent service to St Pancras. The first stage is complicated by pathing difficulties on the Great Western main line, and the full service would have to wait until 2007, when St Pancras ceases to be a building site. The Committee believes this service needs to maximise its local and connectional journey opportunities at every stage.

5.12 However, the Heathrow to St Pancras plan now appears to be on hold, with BAA taking more of an interest in the proposed Paddington to Liverpool Street tunnel (the successor to the CrossRail scheme). There is a question mark over whether this should serve Heathrow. The Committee will be considering all aspects of the scheme, including this issue, in due course.

5.13 On the south side, the Airtrack scheme involves a new railway from Staines to the proposed site of Terminal 5 and on to the CTA. Railtrack and BAA are currently working up the details. The Committee supports this scheme, but believes that its operation must include local stopping services to south-west London, in order to serve the local demand from passengers and staff. Subject to this, Railtrack's indicative plans for longer-distance through services (e.g. from Southampton and Manchester) suggest that Heathrow could eventually be on the inter-city network at last.

5.14 It is at Heathrow that air capacity limits are greatest, and therefore that the impetus for replacing short-haul air services with rail services is likely to be strongest. In any case, short-haul flights serve only a limited proportion of the needs for travel between Heathrow and the regions, and enhanced inter-city rail access is required in order to better address those needs, regardless of substitution issues.

5.15 Although the Committee's primary aspiration is for adequate local access, our secondary aspiration is for Heathrow to have inter-city links to its entire catchment area. A combination of surface access improvements and substitute 'flights' could go a long way to meeting this aspiration. We have in mind two corridors in particular: providing services to/from Reading and onwards to/from the north and the west, and services through the Channel Tunnel and onto the continental high-speed rail network. In combination with domestic routes, the latter could also provide international services

from the regions. However, there are limits to the number of paths that Heathrow can accommodate, and trade-offs may therefore be necessary between the various possible services. (For this reason, the Eurostar Joint Sub-Committee[5] is not currently pursuing the option of international services to Heathrow.)

5.16   Research has suggested[6] that the market for a high-speed Heathrow-Gatwick rail service, catering for transfer passengers (who currently travel by coach), would be too small to be viable. However, the Committee believes that a Heathrow-Gatwick *local* service may be worthwhile, to serve west Londoners going to/from Gatwick as well as south Londoners going to/from Heathrow.

5.17   Although night flights to and from Heathrow are limited, there is still demand at night from flights (a handful of which are not currently catered for by rail services) and especially from staff access. We are keen to see night bus services to/from Heathrow enhanced. These currently run to central London (N97, due to be replaced by the N10), Harrow Weald (N140) and Kingston (N285, a recently-introduced, and welcome, service). Increased night bus frequencies during the early part of the night might also be worthwhile, to cater for delayed arrivals. The Committee is exploring, with the operators concerned, the feasibility of an all-night Heathrow Express service, and a later close or earlier start of the Piccadilly line service.

5.18   There are two particular problems with taxis from Heathrow. Firstly, fares to places outside Greater London are not set on the normal metered tariff, but are negotiated with the driver. Heathrow's location, on the edge of London, means that many users are faced with very high fares for short journeys across the border. The Committee is currently involved in a review of this issue. Secondly, some drivers are reluctant to undertake local journeys. However, progress has recently been made on both fronts. Special fare arrangements are in the process of being trialled for journeys to Spelthorne, and these arrangements may be extended to cover other local destinations. The Committee will be taking a close interest in whether this resolves the situation.

5.19   **Aspirations**

BUS ISSUES

a)   Re-opening of the cargo tunnel to buses.

b)   Re-invigoration of the Feltham bus link.

c)   Bus network planning to retain (and enhance) the level of accessibility formerly given by Airbus A1.

d)   Retention of orbital bus route 726, with an increase to half-hourly and better promotion.

e)   Improvements to night bus services to/from the airport. Services should be considered on route 105 to Southall and Greenford, on route 726 across south London, and via the Cargo Area.

f)   Improved bus access to Terminal 4 and Hatton Cross from the north (both during the day and at night) and from across the London boundary.

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[5] This is a Joint Sub-Committee of LTUC, the Rail Passengers Council and the Rail Passengers Committees. It represents the interests of users of Eurostar in the UK.
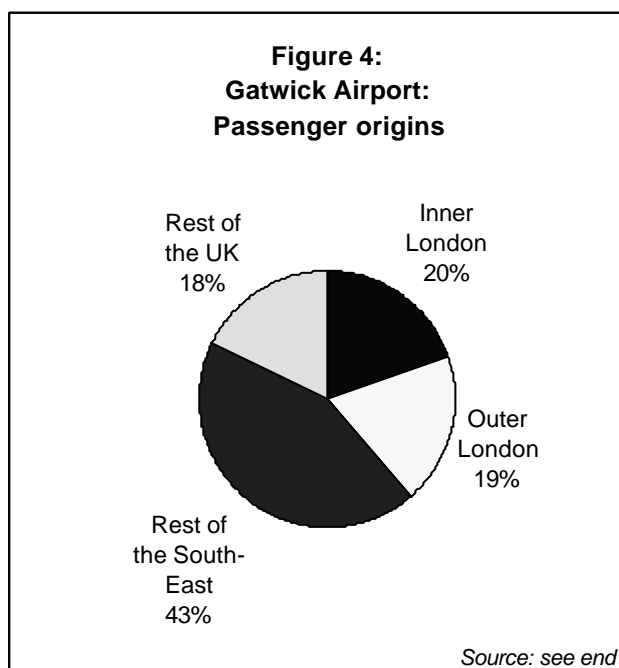[6] See 'The Future of Aviation', paragraph 254.

g) Resolution of the problems for taxi users making short journeys and cross-boundary journeys.

RAIL ISSUES

h) Refurbishment of the CTA Underground station, which has been delayed by the Underground's financial constraints.

i) Heathrow Express to give a discount to period Travelcard holders (especially appropriate considering that period Travelcards are now acceptable (to the extent of their validity) on both Gatwick Express and Stansted Express).

j) Support for the proposed stopping Heathrow Express service to St Pancras. It should call at West Hampstead, so as to maximise interchange potential, as well as Ealing Broadway and Hayes & Harlington.

k) Support for the Airtrack scheme, but it should include a good service to local stations in south-west London, to serve the substantial local catchment of passengers and staff. Longer-distance Airtrack services via Woking, although welcome, should not involve deterioration of existing local services.

l) Consideration of a possible Heathrow-Gatwick local rail service, to cater for local access to both airports.

m) Consideration of a possible new coach link from Slough. This would provide a more reliable coach journey than from Reading, and might take pathing pressure off Hayes & Harlington. First Great Western should take the lead on this, in collaboration with the other train operators on the route.

n) In view of this airport's great importance, there should eventually be inter-city rail links available to the airport's entire surface access catchment area. However, local access must get first priority.

Figure 4:
Gatwick Airport:
Passenger origins

Rest of the UK 18%

Inner London 20%

Outer London 19%

Rest of the South-East 43%

Source: see end

(page 17 refers)

17

6 Gatwick

6.1 Gatwick is the second busiest of London's airports, with 24 million non-transfer passengers last year. Unlike Heathrow or Stansted, fewer of its passengers have origins/destinations in London than in the rest of the South-East (Figure 4, above). Five million passengers came or went by train (Figure 5). The airport is handily located for rail services on the London-Brighton main line, in the heart of the relatively dense Kent/Surrey/Sussex network. The South Terminal adjoins the station, with the North Terminal a short transit-ride away.

6.2 Gatwick's passengers have a choice of London termini, with a good night-time service to London. There are daytime services from as far afield as Bournemouth, Reading (connecting with points west), Rugby (connecting with the West Midlands) and Bedford (connecting with the east Midlands). A couple of Virgin CrossCountry services each day allow a particularly hardy passenger to travel direct from Birmingham, Manchester or even Edinburgh.

6.3 But the services are not as good as they could be. They are caught up in the capacity problems of the Brighton line, which is running at (or even above) capacity. The refranchising of SouthCentral is likely to include work to address this, including two extra platforms at Gatwick Airport station.

Figure 5:
Gatwick Airport:
Mode of surface access

Bus / coach 10% Hire car 3%
Taxi / minicab 16%
Car 49%
Rail 22%

Source: see end
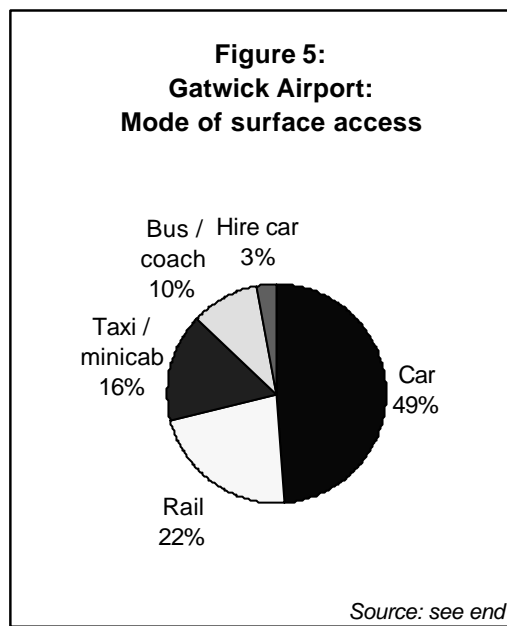
6.4 An improved service is needed to/from local stations as far as Purley (which have particular potential for staff travel), as well as improved frequencies to points north and west of London. There are substantial gaps in direct services between the airport and points southwards to Kent, Hampshire and Dorset, which can make journeys to/from parts of those areas impossible or unattractive. Our colleagues at the Rail Passengers Committee for Southern England aspire to improvements in these. From 2003, Virgin's recast timetable will include a very welcome hourly CrossCountry service to the north-west, mostly via Guildford due to pathing constraints. The Committee would have preferred the service to run via Kensington Olympia, and continues to press the issue.

6.5 In 1998, the Committee reported on the ludicrous ticketing regime for travel between London and Gatwick. The main problems stem from the multiplicity of tickets. The stumbling-block to rectifying this seems to be the current requirement to promote competition. But in this particular case, the ticketing system not only is a nuisance but also hinders informed consumer choice, thus making competition less effective. The Committee will continue to press the issue.

6.6 At the station itself, displayed information about fares is very poor, but the booking office sells tickets accurately. Departures information has been improved considerably by the new screens, which at last show intermediate calling points at platform level, but not all the Committee's recommendations for these have been implemented. The recent re-signing and other improvements to the station are welcome, and further accessibility improvements are planned. However, a major rebuild is needed if the station is to cope with future demand and to provide the quality of service that it should.

6.7 For local staff access by bus, the recently-introduced 'Gatwick Direct' scheme has been very successful. This provides frequent bus services to the airport between 5 am and

midnight. The 'Fastway' scheme will add bus priorities, guided sections and other improvements, and is planned to start operating in 2002.

6.8 **Aspirations**

<u>RAIL TIMETABLE ISSUES</u>

a) Improved service to/from local stations from Purley southwards (by whatever operator or combination of operators is most sensible).

b) The SouthCentral Brighton-Rugby service to become half-hourly over the core Gatwick to Watford Junction section, with good connections at the latter into Virgin West Coast services. (This does not mean that the Committee necessarily supports curtailment of the service at these points.)

c) Improved service frequency to the North via Birmingham (by whatever operator or combination of operators is most sensible).

d) Improved peak SouthCentral service between the airport and points north.

e) The RPC for Southern England aspires to improved direct services between the airport and the counties to the south.

f) More Gatwick-Reading trains to be extended to Oxford.

g) Consideration of a possible Heathrow-Gatwick local service, to cater for local access to both airports.

h) Services to and from East Croydon and Clapham Junction, as well as Central London, on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

<u>RAIL TICKETING ISSUES</u>

i) A simplified ticketing structure for the Gatwick-London corridor, with operator-specific tickets replaced by inter-available tickets (travel on Gatwick Express incurring a supplement).

j) Gatwick Express to accept one-day Travelcard extension tickets (with a supplement).

<u>STATION ISSUES</u>

k) Short-term improvements to accessibility and waiting facilities at the station.

l) Rebuilding of the station in the longer-term, to provide a high quality service. To include up and down escalators, fixed stairs and at least two lifts to each platform at both ends of the platform, to allow easy exit to both terminals.

m) Improved display of fare and ticketing information (including Travelcards) on the station concourse and at the ticket machines. Explanatory leaflet to be available.

n) The information desk in the ticket hall should be staffed at all times.

o) More conspicuous A-Z timetable posters at concourse level, along with an indicator showing first trains to Brighton, Redhill, Reading, East Croydon and Clapham Junction.

p) 'First train to...' indicators for key destinations should be provided at platform level and in the southern overbridge, to cater for passengers interchanging between

trains. A train indicator should also be provided near the top of the stairs to each platform, showing the trains at that platform.

7 Stansted

7.1 Stansted has grown rapidly in the past few years, but fortunately not like Topsy. Users benefit from a well-planned interface between the terminal building, the station and the bus stops. Last year, there were over 11 million non-transfer passengers, of whom one in three arrived by train, bus or coach (Figure 6). The origins are relatively dispersed (Figure 7). The airport has planning permission to accommodate 15 million passengers (including transfers) per year, and has just applied for permission for further developments to accommodate 25 million (which would be equivalent to Gatwick's current throughput).

7.2 The airport has the basis of a good service on its existing rail connections. The fast Stansted Express service to London is now every 15 minutes in the weekday inter-peak and on Sundays, but further frequency improvements are needed, and its day-to-day quality and performance are less than would be expected from what is essentially a premium service. The hourly Central Trains service to the Midlands is a useful cross-country route that deserves to be improved.

Figure 6:
Stansted Airport:
Mode of surface access

Bus / coach 7%
Hire car 3%
Taxi / minicab 10%
Private car 52%
Rail 27%

Source: see end

7.3 The main capacity constraints are the single-bore tunnel on the airport branch, which is fully utilised, and the Lea Valley line. Schemes for addressing these are in Railtrack's and the Strategic Rail Authority's (SRA's) wish-lists, and the Committee strongly supports them.

7.4 There is also a need to improve links to Stratford and other local stations in east London, in order to capture interchange opportunities at Stratford and to serve the airport's strong recruitment and passenger base in east London better. The withdrawal of Airbus route A7 earlier this year has left the area without a direct link to Stansted.

7.5 Tottenham Hale is a very useful suburban access point, but the recent works there have still left the London-bound West Anglia Great Northern Railway (WAGN) platform without step-free access.

7.6 The relative lack of orbital rail links in the northern Home Counties means that (unlike at Gatwick) east-west access often relies on express buses. There is a bus link eastwards to Colchester, no longer sponsored by Anglia Railways but run commercially (with through tickets available but not part of the rail timetable). Other east-west bus connections (not linked into the rail timetabling or ticketing systems) also exist. In view of Stansted's increasing importance, and its role as East Anglia's international airport, the Committee supports the longer-term ambition of reinstating a rail route to Braintree (which would also provide an alternative link to London in case of problems on the Lea Valley route).

Figure 7:
Stansted Airport:
Passenger origins

Rest of the UK 8%
Midlands 7%
East Anglia 14%
London 42%
Rest of the South-East 29%

Source: see end
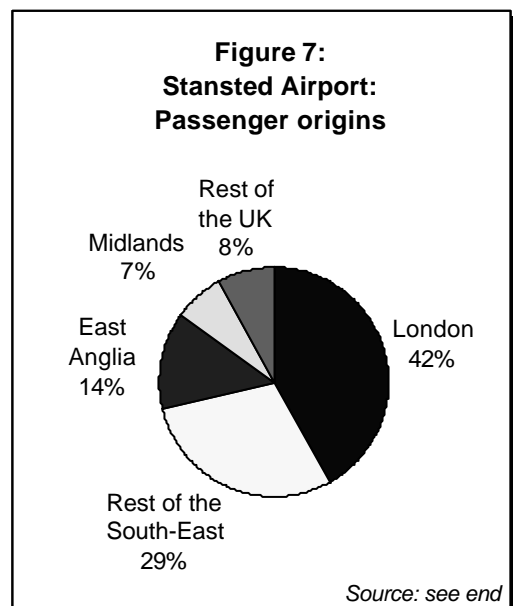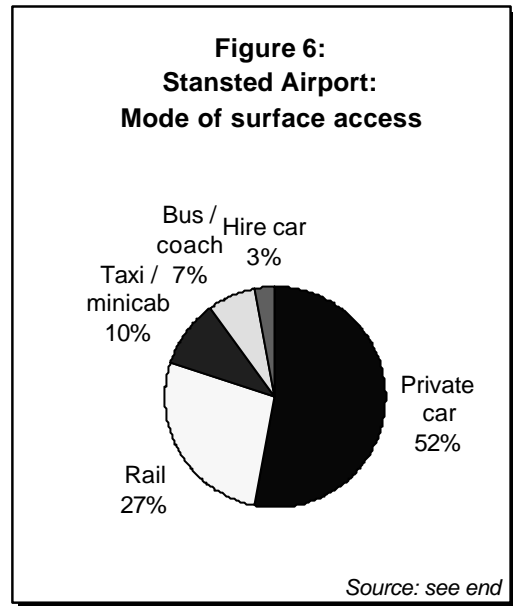
7.7   **Aspirations**

a)   Four fast trains per hour from Liverpool Street to Stansted, all day every day. Two trains per hour should stop at Bishops Stortford, and all four should stop at Tottenham Hale.

b)   Two all-stations trains per hour from Liverpool Street to Stansted. These should ideally call at Stratford and other stations in east London, in order to serve the Airport's strong recruitment base in East London better, and to connect with the Docklands Light Railway and the Jubilee Line. However, there may be knock-on effects of this that would need to be considered.

c)   A half-hourly Central Trains service to Cambridge and the Midlands, with improved journey times.

d)   The RPC for Eastern England aspires to an 06.00-midnight service, and improved reliability, on the Central Trains route.

e)   The last train departure from Stansted to London in the evening should reflect the last flight arrival, and should be held if the flight is delayed. Once the upgrade of the West Anglia line is completed, an all-night service should be provided.

RAIL SERVICE QUALITY ISSUES

f)   Central Trains services to be operated by a higher standard of unit, more suited to the particular needs of long-distance airport traffic, offering more spacious seating and improved luggage space.

g)   Central Trains services to have buffet counter facilities, supplemented by at-seat service of the full range of buffet products. (This is to provide a more comprehensive range (suitable for long journeys) than a trolley can offer, while maintaining at-seat service for people with impaired mobility. This should not be difficult to organise on short trains. We envisage that trains would be lengthened in order to accommodate the buffet facilities without loss of seating capacity.)

h)   Full canopy protection to be provided for the Central Trains platform, to provide a sheltered route from train to airport.

i)   Full accessibility at Tottenham Hale.

RAIL TICKETING ISSUES

j)   Vouchers offered by airlines for discounted London-Stansted tickets, which are currently only redeemable at Liverpool Street, should also be redeemable at Tottenham Hale.

OTHER ISSUES

k)   Improved inter-regional bus links to/from the west (e.g. Oxford and Milton Keynes). This axis is currently difficult for rail passengers, and bus links could provide greater assistance.

l)   Support (in principle) for the longer-term aim of a rail route to Braintree (partly using the route of the former Bishops Stortford to Braintree line), so as to link in with Great Eastern and Anglia services to east Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk.

8 Luton

8.1 The new terminal building is a sign of Luton's current growth rate, given impetus by the development of the low-cost airline sector. Six million passengers per year now use the airport, many of whom are travelling to/from London or the counties surrounding the airport (Figure 8 opposite).

8.2 The recent opening of Luton Airport Parkway station (LAP) has made using the rail-bus route to the airport (which used to operate via Luton station) much easier. As well as an intensive Thameslink service, a number of Midland Mainline trains now call there, providing direct links with the east Midlands. The station now sees 17% of the airport's passengers (Figure 9 opposite).

8.3 LAP is the only airport station in the Committee's area at which a National Rail Penalty Fares scheme operates. The Committee, although supporting Penalty Fares in principle, is keen to ensure that they are sensibly applied. Airport stations have a particular clientele who may often be unfamiliar with the ticketing system. The Committee has therefore made representations to the SRA for the situation at LAP to be reviewed.

8.4 The dedicated bus link from LAP is now fully accessible for passengers with impaired mobility. The route itself is not quite direct, and it can suffer from traffic congestion, so in the longer-term the Committee would like to see a fixed link.

8.5 Virgin Trains sponsors an hourly RailLinks bus service from Milton Keynes to the airport. WAGN has just begun to promote the Jetlink service to/from Hitchin station, with through tickets from certain origins. Other east-west bus connections exist, although not linked into the rail timetabling or ticketing systems.

8.6 **Aspirations**

 a) Southbound Midland Mainline trains to call at LAP in the morning peak (there is a gap in these arrivals from 07.37 to 10.09).

 b) Improved information at the airport about the bus link to LAP.

 c) Real-time running information to be provided for the bus link to LAP.

 d) In the longer term, a 'people mover' or other fixed link between the station and the airport.

Figure 8:
**London Luton Airport:**
Passenger origins

Rest of
the UK
11%

East
Midlands
8%

Rest of
the East
9%

Rest of
the South
East
11%

Greater
London
28%

Herts.
15%

Bucks.
(includes
Milton
Keynes)
8%

Beds.
(includes
Luton)
10%
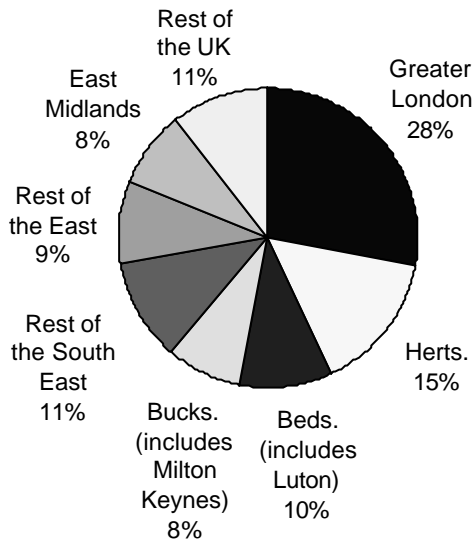
Source: see end

(page 21 refers)

Figure 9:
London Luton Airport:
Mode of surface access

Taxi
8%

Bus /
coach
13%

Rail
17%

Car
62%
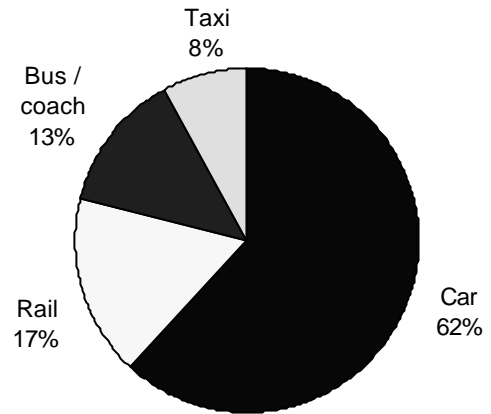
'Rail' denotes shuttle bus
from Luton Airport Parkway.
Source: see end

(page 21 refers)

Figure 10:
London City Airport:
Passenger origins

City of
London
21%

Rest of
the UK
40%

City of
West-
minster
15%

Docklands
24%
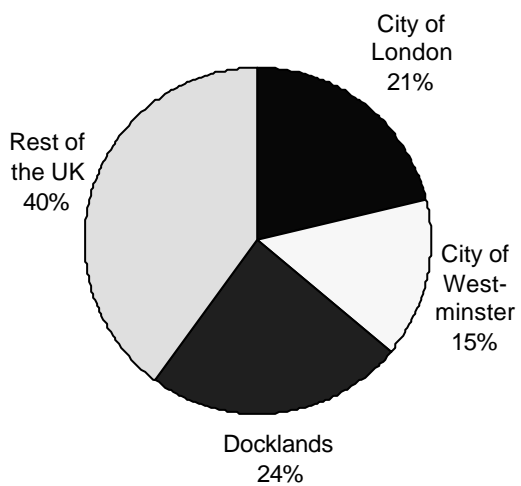
Source: see end

(page 23 refers)

Figure 11:
London City Airport:
Mode of surface access

Other
5%

TfL bus
2%

Shuttle
Bus
21%

Taxi
47%

Car
25%
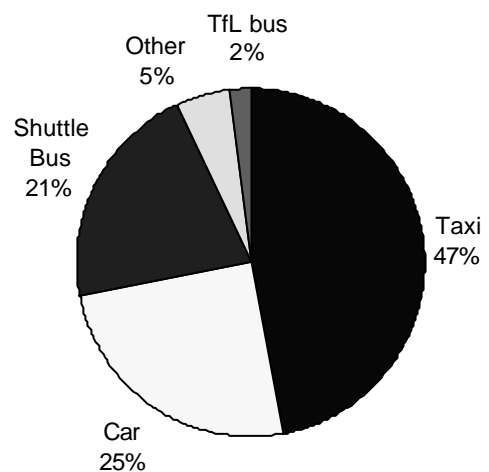
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(page 23 refers)

9 London City

9.1   London City Airport positions itself firmly in the market for central London's business travellers (Figure 10 above), although it is also benefiting from its proximity to several university campuses. It currently has 1.5 million passengers per year, and has applied for planning permission to expand its capacity to 3.5 - 4 million.

9.2   Although it is easily the closest airport to central London, how to get to it from anywhere is not always easy to explain. Bus routes 69 and 473 stop outside the front entrance, offering connections with the Underground and National Rail at Canning Town, Plaistow and Stratford. The airport operates shuttle buses to Canning Town (for several interchange options), Canary Wharf and Liverpool Street. Silvertown station is a short walk away, and a longer walk (or short bus ride) brings you to Prince Regent station on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR). Taxis bring in almost half of the passengers, with another quarter arriving by car (assisted by the generous Docklands road network) (Figure 11 above).

9.3   The Committee supports the proposed DLR extension to the airport, at last giving it a direct rail service. Bank will be 21 minutes away, and services to Lewisham are planned for a later date. The Committee was pleased that Transport for London has agreed to provide two lifts at the airport station, rather than one as originally proposed for this important station. (Failure of a single lift is a common cause of inaccessibility to or from the DLR.)

9.4   The Cinderella route to the airport is via Silverlink Metro services on the North London Line to Silvertown station. The frequency, reliability and quality of this service have given cause for complaint. The problem is a combination of restricted infrastructure east of Custom House, where the line becomes single-track, the waterlogged state of Connaught Tunnel (causing frequent equipment failures), and the very heavy passenger demand on the north London stretch of the line; Silverlink has understandably concentrated services on the latter.

9.5   The long-term future of this line is tied into the wider issue of new east London river crossings. There are options for heavy rail and/or DLR tunnels under the river to Woolwich and perhaps beyond. The latter may also involve the DLR taking over the entire Stratford to North Woolwich route from Railtrack. (The Committee reserves its position on any closures that might arise from these developments, because it has a quasi-judicial role in the statutory closure application process of reporting on any hardship that would be caused.) The Committee supports the principle of improved cross-river links, which would considerably assist access from the south.

9.6   **Aspirations**

   a)   Better promotion of the full range of public transport access options, including conventional buses.

   b)   Improved frequency and reliability of services to Silvertown station (though taking into account the needs of other parts of the North London Line).

   c)   Improvements to the quality of the service on the Silverlink line.

   d)   Construction of the proposed DLR extension to the airport, with direct trains from the City.

   e)   Support, in principle, for improved access from south of the river.

10 **Biggin Hill**

10.1 Biggin Hill has a relatively low level of activities, catering mainly for general aviation (i.e. private business jets and leisure flying). It is remote from the rail network, and so surface access is by bus, car or taxi. A dedicated coach to Victoria connects with the scheduled flights to/from Blackpool.

10.2 The airport has expansion plans involving mainstream passenger services, and forecasts that its passenger throughput will increase from 50,000 per year in 1999 to 1.3 million per year in 2015. (As a comparison, the latter is not far short of London City Airport's current throughput.)

10.3 The Committee has no opinion, at this stage, on the merits or otherwise of this. But if it does happen, the airport's access requirements will have to be re-assessed. Public transport improvements should be provided in time to meet the demand – rather than lagging behind it and allowing car-based habits to develop. The proposed new terminal would be a chance to create a showpiece integrated interchange.

10.4 For the moment, and in the early stages of any expansion, Bromley is the obvious target for improved links. However, a route to (or via) Hayes (Kent), where the connecting train service is now at a useful 15-minute frequency, is equally important, allowing passengers to avoid the road congestion between there and Bromley. Bus journey times between Biggin Hill and Bromley can vary from 20 minutes to over an hour because of congestion, but the journey to Hayes should take no longer than 15 minutes.

Aspirations

10.5 These aspirations are in the context of the airport's expansion proposals.

  a) The new airport terminal should include a purpose-built, comfortable bus passenger lounge, with an information desk (which could sell bus and rail tickets), and with staff available to help passengers with impaired mobility.

  b) Bus routes R2, 246, 320 and 464 should serve the new terminal.

  c) Route 464 currently connects into Tramlink (at New Addington) at 30-minute frequencies. Increasing this to a 15-minute frequency should be considered.

  d) Rail-link bus services should be provided. These should accept Travelcards and through bookings from the rail network (as per the Heathrow-Feltham service). These routes should be considered:

   i) to Bromley South (for Victoria, the Medway towns and the Kent coast);

   ii) to Hayes (Kent) (for London Bridge, Charing Cross, the Underground via New Cross, and the DLR via Lewisham); and

   iii) to Orpington (for similar destinations, and for the Kent and East Sussex coasts). This service could start at a later date.

  e) Investigation of bus priority measures on the routes to/from Bromley South (in particular) and Hayes. Shorter (and more predictable) journey times would add to the attractiveness of the bus services.

  f) In the longer term, consider extending Tramlink from New Addington to Biggin Hill via Biggin Hill valley and (as a further extension) to Hayes (Kent) station.

11 A word on airfields

11.1   Last, and indeed least, are the various smaller airports and airfields that exist only for general aviation[7]. Although some of them have relatively high numbers of aircraft movements, these are often single-seater or two-seater aircraft, thus generating low numbers of passengers, travelling individually rather than in groups. The clientele is unlikely to be suitcase-wielding, jetlagged or disoriented.

11.2   Some of these airfields (such as Elstree) have more in common with other rural leisure attractions than with the major airports described earlier in this report. Their relatively isolated nature means that provision of traditional public transport is perhaps not realistically justifiable. Others (such as Northolt or Battersea Heliport) are part of London's myriad range of miscellaneous passenger destinations.

11.3   In both categories, there may be scope for improving surface access in the context of Green Travel Plans, covering both staff and users, which could include measures such as taxi-sharing or demand-responsive services. If ideas develop to significantly expand the use any of these sites, the transport impact will need to be considered, and the proposals evaluated in the light of this.

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[7] General aviation includes activities such as flying training, leisure flying by private individuals, and use of aircraft owned or chartered ('air taxis') for business. It includes both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

Sources and credits

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