
Report of meeting from external body

Author : Mark Donoghue

Information Item (b)
TS016
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AirTrack Forum minutes 21 January 2009

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To record for information the proceedings of a meeting of an external body attended by a representative of London TravelWatch.

2 Information

- 2.1 The minutes of a meeting of are attached in the Annex. The Policy Assistant represented London TravelWatch at this meeting.
- 2.2 These minutes have been prepared by the AirTrack Forum, and London TravelWatch has no responsibility for their content or format.

3 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 3.1 Not applicable – report is for information only.

4 Financial implications

- 4.1 Not applicable – report is for information only

5 Legal powers

- 5.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the Committee to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the report is received for information.

AirTrack Forum

Notes of Steering Group meeting, 21 Jan 2009, BA Waterside.

Present – David Arquati, TfL; Poonam Tamana, London Travelwatch; George Burnett, WSP; Nigel Horton-Baker, SEEDA (for Detlef Golletz); Antony Powell, Highways Agency (for Paul Harwood); Mike Noakes, BAA; Simon Tarrant, Guildford BC (for Tim Pilsbury); Iain Reeve, Surrey CC; Daniel Wright, SCC; John Slaughter, SWELTRAC; Steve Smith, AirTrack Forum; Andy Mak, SEERA (for Richard Walker); Tim Williams, Runnymede BC; Richard Morris, CJ Associates; Jocelyn Pearson, Passengerfocus; David Milford, British Airways.

1 - Apologies/Introductions

Apologies received from - Richard Walker, SEERA; Tim Pilsbury, Guildford BC; Paul Harwood, Highways Agency; Detlef Golletz, SEEDA; John Faulkner, DfT; Tim Bellenger, London Travelwatch.

It was noted that Paul Ellis had left BA and agreed that, Given Paul's key role in the formation of the Forum, an appropriate "thank you" letter should be drafted and sent (**action SS/IR**).

2 - Notes of last meeting

One small correction required - Item 3, second set of bullet points, 3rd bullet point, "acquisition" [of dual voltage stock for HEX] should be amended to "conversion".

3 - 2008 Annual Meeting

Successful. Hotel facilities and catering very satisfactory. Attendance (approx 60) affected by HEX service interruption on the day (89 acceptances).

Following discussion, it was agreed that an Annual Meeting should be held in 2009, but timing and content would be very subject to TWA programme progress and consultation timetables.

4 - BAA/TWA Update; Initial report on 2nd Consultation

RM reported on TWA process:

- NR still looking at timetabling with the objective of gaining additional confidence that the proposed timetable will work, preparatory to access agreement.
- Halcrow were completing engineering work - some changes had been required following identification of differences in lines and levels from previous assumptions.
- TWA documents expected to be ready around early April, about 1 month later than originally hoped.
- Temple were completing the drafting of the environmental statement.
- SKL's work on the business case was delayed, but the statement of funding should be ready in time for TWA submission.
- Consultation with the DfT TWA orders unit had established that no delay in processing the submission was anticipated.

Autumn consultation exhibitions had been attended by over 860 people and over 1,000 written responses had been received - 80% of them on the matter of level crossings, partly as the result of a request from a Runnymede BC councillor which resulted in the distribution of 7,000 additional brochures in the Egham area.

DfT and SWT were also in communication re timetable - a primary concern was that there shouldn't be loss of existing services.

MN noted the release of the Secretary of State's decision on adding capacity at Heathrow which included the following statement "He [the SoS] welcomes the collaborative approach being followed by BAA in developing the AirTrack project and encourages all interested parties to participate in the consultation and the Transport and Works Act process, with a view to seeing that scheme implemented ahead of a third runway". TW noted particularly the encouragement for implementation ahead of any runway expansion.

IR suggested that this should be seen as a very strong signal that DfT wanted to see the scheme happen, given the bounds of impartiality which must be maintained in the light of the upcoming TWA process.

MN also drew to the SG's attention that, in addition to the R3 decision, the Secretary of State had made an announcement on setting up a new company "High Speed 2", under the Chairmanship of Sir David Rowlands, with other Directors drawn from NR and elsewhere. HS2 was expected to develop proposals for a new route to link London with the W Midlands as the first stage of a London-Scotland high speed line. The new company would be required to report by the year end on stage 1 route options (including such issues as Heathrow - spur or via?).

It should be noted that this proposal is not the same as the "Heathrow hub" concept being promoted elsewhere. The main differences being that "Heathrow hub" was postulated as being to the W of the airport, the NR proposals seem likely to propose a hub further east - eg Old Oak Common or Southall. The - different again - Greenguage proposals were associated with the Chiltern Line.

For information of SG members, **SS to include a link** to the DfT announcements when meeting notes sent out.

AM asked if the Forum could/should seek to influence the development.

5 - Other developments since last meeting/SCC implementation Group

IR reported that he had responded to the 2nd consultation document on behalf of the Forum (and also on behalf of Transport for Surrey and SCC). Whilst Surrey continued to support the concept and principle of AirTrack, following the identification of a number of concerns and conflicting positions in respect of AirTrack within the SCC orbit - eg as Forum Chair, within Transport for Surrey itself, the views of local members etc, it had been decided that a group separate from the Forum was necessary to seek to resolve concerns on crossings, the Staines chord and other issues around implementation at a local level.

Accordingly a new "implementation group" had been set up. This had met twice, with further technical sub groups meetings having taken place - one chaired by Spelthorne, looking at the chord, station, bus station, etc; the second, chaired by Runnymede, to look at crossings. IR emphasised that this was purely a technical partnership. An issues log had been set up and a 'manageable' list of issues identified.

It was agreed that the TORs of the new group should be circulated with notes of the meeting - **SS/IR to arrange**. (*post meeting note - these TORs are appended at the end of this document*).

JS noted that Richmond were in a similar position.

RM commended more detailed study on the effects of crossings.

TW outlined a number of key issues which should guide future work:

- It was essential to separate anecdote from fact and data.
- It was clear that there were long-standing issues with crossings already, stemming from a NR change of protocol following a past incident.
- It was essential to identify all the issues which impact on downtimes - eg staffing at the Feltham signalling centre.

IR noted that NR could change train timetables and/or introduce additional service without any requirement to consult on crossings! MN confirmed that in the past, there had actually been more trains run than are proposed even with AirTrack. RM advised that NR were on the sub-group.

SG was advised that once the TWA had been submitted, there would be a 42 day period for objection. MN advised that BAA would seek to resolve objections in advance where possible.

A number of other developments and forthcoming activity were noted, including:

- DA reported that TfL were participating in a Richmond street study.
- AM reported that the refreshed RTB regional funding priorities would re-emphasise the priority for funding for access to Heathrow and IR said that it would include a bid from Surrey for the 'Staines hub'.
- AP re-emphasised HA concerns about the development of "glorified park and ride" facilities in association with AirTrack.
- TW noted that 'interceptor points' were part of the original plan and local planning policies reflect this.
- GB reminded the SG that although there had been a retreat from park and ride, the original ideas were always for sites outside the M25. P&R was still a part of the ARL Bracknell scheme.
- It was noted that there had been changes in traffic patters since the original P&R ideas. AP suggested Surrey should do modelling for its own roads.

6 - Website update, Forum activity and funding for 2009

SS reported that the website had been comprehensively updated to reflect the content of the second scheme consultation document. A further major review would obviously be needed when the TWA was launched. It was suggested that links to supporting documentation from the TWA might be included in a refresh.

There was a wide-ranging discussion on the future direction of the Forum in the light of the impending TWA submission. Points raised included:

- What should the future role of the Forum be?
- Is a change of role required?
- Do we need to concentrate more on influencing Government?
- What added value can the Forum bring - can we do a lot more?
- Several members re-emphasised the great importance of the collective message, liaison and information exchange facilitated by the Forum.

It was generally agreed that a change of emphasis might be appropriate but there was a continuing role for the Forum in seeking to influence Government.

Influencing travel planning could also be a future role.

TW noted that the remaining "show stopper" for the project is the public sector funding contribution and influencing is much more likely to be effective as a Forum.

IR suggested that the success of the Forum to date could be continued beyond the TWA submission through activity lobbying decision makers.

GB suggested that there was an important political and technical role for the Forum over the forthcoming 18 months.

It was agreed that funding for the Forum would need to continue, but at a reduced rate. It was agreed that the requested contribution for 2009/10 would be half the 2008/09 level. *(Post meeting note - the 2008/09 contribution was originally agreed - Oct '07 SG - at £7,500. However, this was based on assumptions about activity - eg a Spring Conference - which we did not proceed with. Chairman's executive decision subsequently approved a reduced contribution request of £5,000 for 2008/09. The contribution for 2009/10 will therefore be £2,500).*

IR suggested that a new leaflet might be appropriate once the TWA submission was public - perhaps focussing on the benefits the scheme can deliver. It could be made available in a downloadable form. Press releases might also be considered. We would need to decide whether the Forum should focus activity before the period for objections expires or after the anticipated Public Inquiry and before the minister's decision. Early 2010 might be the most appropriate time for a more political response, to link in to an overall lobbying approach.

7 - AOB

DA advised that the Mayor of London had been briefed on AirTrack in preparation for anticipated questions at a "People's Question Time".

TW advised the SG that he would shortly be retiring after 40 years service, so this would be his last SG meeting.

8 - Next Meeting

To be arranged for mid-end March so that the SG might be brought up to date with the TWA submission before this goes in. *(Post meeting note - fixed for Fri 27 March, at BA Waterside, starting at 1400).*

SS 04/03/09

APPENDIX to Notes of AirTrack Forum Steering Group meeting, 21 Jan 2009

Terms of Reference for the Airtrack in Surrey Technical Partnership:

"The AIRTRACK (IN SURREY) TECHNICAL PARTNERSHIP will:

- Impartially investigate the implications of Airtrack for residents and businesses of Surrey, particularly focusing on areas of disagreement about the impacts.
- Assist BAA to identify and develop mitigation /remedial measures and solutions, in a manner that relates to the Transport and Works Act planning process.
- Advise the partnership about which mitigation measures should be in place.
- Develop an action plan for the implementation of mitigation measures and, if the scheme proceeds, coordinate the delivery of these measures.
- Co-ordinate the activity of all those contributing so that all partners are aware of the current developments with respect to the scheme.

The partnership will not offer opinions on whether the scheme should be supported or opposed. Membership of the partnership does not imply that individual organisations support or oppose the scheme. It will be for each organisation to decide on its stance towards the scheme."