
Report of meeting from external body

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Information Item (c)
TS017
Drafted 30.9.09

AirTrack Forum minutes 27 March 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 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, 27 March 2009, BA Waterside.

Present – Richard Meeks, TfL; Daniel Nichols, TfL; ; George Burnett, WSP; Detlef Golletz, SEEDA; Johannes Augustin, SEEDA; Anthony Powell, Highways Agency; Mike Noakes, BAA; Simon Tarrant, Guildford BC; Iain Reeve, Surrey CC; John Slaughter, SWELTRAC; Steve Smith, AirTrack Forum; Nick Evans, SEERA; Richard Morris, CJ Associates; Jocelyn Pearson, Passengerfocus; David Milford, British Airways; Steve Ronald, BA.

1 - Apologies/Introductions

Apologies received from - David Arquati, TfL; Poonam Tamana, London Travelwatch; John Faulkner, DfT; Paul Harwood, Highways Agency; Tim Pilsbury, Guildford BC; Bob Etheridge, Runnymede BC; Richard Walker, SEERA; Daniel Wright, SCC; Andy Mak, SEERA.

2 - Notes of previous meeting

Agreed without amendment. DG complimented the clarity of the meeting notes.

3 - BAA/TWA Update; report on 2nd Consultation

RM reported on TWA progress:

- Work on pulling together documentation for the TWA submission was near complete. There were still minor changes to drawings taking place and the final environmental statement was in course of preparation.
- A draft order had been submitted to the TWA unit. Target date for completion of documentation by end March. Timescales for printing etc would then give an end April/early May date for submission of the application.
- One of the key documents, and a prime determinant of the timescale, would be the statement of funding. It was hoped that the necessary business case draft would be completed today (27/3).
- There would be no further public consultation prior to the formal processes, but the SCC-led technical and sub groups were still meeting. A meeting had also been held with Spelthorne to look in considerable detail at Staines Town Centre issues, including South Street works. There was considerable confidence that the scheme could be made to work.

MN noted that 100 sets of the formal documentation would be required. Printing costs alone would amount to some £200,000. BAA was now in a strong position to discuss implementation issues with DfT, NR and SWT. A series of meeting between DfT/BAA had been held about cost sharing. The AirTrack scheme is in the NR strategic business plan, but with no money allocated! There was more work to do with DfT.

With regard to timetabling, NR had a development timetable which shows how services could operate - both in a peak and off-peak hour. All concerns had been addressed and a step change in NR confidence had been noted. A paper had been taken to NR executive management and a draft agreement was anticipated.

ST asked if the plans still include only 1/hr service to Guildford in the peak hours. RM(orris) advised this was still the case at present, but discussions weren't necessarily at an end and improvement may be possible. SWT were now more fully engaged and it was hoped that this would help the prospects of improving things as a working timetable was built up. It was noted that better integration of HLOS and AirTrack might result in a more "joined up" plan.

RM(eeks) asked if a track access option had been agreed. RM(orris) advised that there might be other ways of securing access - eg with a variation to SWT's existing agreement if services were more integrated with SWT. There would be time to put a track access option in place before the anticipated Public Inquiry, if this was needed.

The meeting was reminded that the TWA was solely about the works required for the scheme and timetabling issues were not part of the submission. RM(eeks) asked if the development timetable could be made available to members to inform responses to the forthcoming consultation. **MN agreed to seek advice and revert.**

There were expressions of concern regarding the disruption of existing stopping patterns and assurances of "minimal impact". There were issues of confidence to be addressed. IR suggested that conferring properly with stakeholders was likely to give a greater level of comfort and minimise the possibility of objection.

MN advised that the business case was based on a 2 runway scenario and there was no link to R3. It was queried if it was going to be possible for members to see the business case. **MN advised that this would be for DfT to decide but again agreed to seek advice and revert.**

MN was asked if there were any significant changes to the proposals since the 2nd consultation document - especially in respect of level crossings. MN advised that there were some detailed changes in respect of the Feltham Depot and Staines Town Centre but nothing of significance new since Christmas and nothing new, in particular, about crossings, though work is ongoing in that respect. In advance of the application, an update will be sent to those who responded to the consultation. It was agreed that this summary could also usefully be distributed to all those on the Forum's contact list (primarily Annual Meeting invitees). **(Action MN/SS)**

TWA documentation will be available via BAA's website - it was felt that this would be a better source for members than a hard copy for the Forum. MN agreed to provide SS with a preview to enable the Forum website to be updated in good time to co-ordinate with TWA submission.

In response to questions, RM indicated that Hounslow had some concerns about the depot, but were also very aware of the benefits. No alternate sites were being considered. The impacts would be fully evaluated in the Environmental Statement and concerns could possibly be addressed by planning conditions and/or through the ES.

Scheme total costs as in the submission were of the order of £520m for capital works, plus £120m for rolling stock. There would be no indications of cost sharing proportions BAA/DfT - this would come later as the necessary degree of clarity had not yet been established.

4 - Other developments since last meeting/SCC implementation Group

DG reported that he was leading a group looking at western access to Heathrow. The need to improve surface access had been identified as a key issue stemming from the support by 9 RDA's for Heathrow expansion, subject to environmental and access considerations. The Berkshire Strategic Travel Forum (unitary authorities plus businesses) had been revitalised and was moving ahead to create an alliance on the principles of improving Heathrow access. This work would look at the issue from an economic perspective, addressing the Eddington principles and seek to develop a framework to prioritise interventions and packages of work. AirTrack has been raised as part of this work and is seen as an integral component of an access strategy which also includes M4 corridor developments, Reading Station improvement and western chord rail access. Principle concerns included the Staines SHARP project (concerned with development opportunities) and project funding.

A discussion followed, which included the following points:

- Importance of looking beyond the engineering to achieve better understanding of the economic and urban design factors.
- Importance of ensuring that proposed solutions were not incompatible with AirTrack.
- International comparisons and comparative lack of awareness of opportunities outside the immediate airport area - CDG and AMS provide examples.
- Concern that this might be "another MMS" for Thames Valley.

MN noted that ACTVAR has commissioned Atkins to look again at another "Western Connection" scheme, and are seeking to align energies and initiatives. Atkins has consulted BAA and their work will be fully compatible with AirTrack.

IR advised that a refresh of the regional funding advice - "Refuelling the Engine of the UK's Economy" - gives a resounding welcome to AirTrack. Another block of work was also under way in the context of "Regional Challenge" bids. This differed from the previous format (which sought to identify the best bids) by seeking to identify problems and finding solutions to those. Thanks to SEERA, AirTrack is high on the list as a solution to the problem of Heathrow access.

It was noted that wef from 1 April, SEERA ceases to exist and becomes a strategy unit to support the SE partnership board. NE would supply SS with explanatory note and organisation diagram to circulate with the notes of the meeting **(Action SS/NE)**.

Concern was expressed about possible difficulties resulting from the 2M (anti-Heathrow expansion) group pushing for an alternative rail access route via Wimbledon. Stephen Hammond (MP for Wimbledon) was also unsupportive of AirTrack on the basis that it didn't serve Wimbledon. SS noted that the Forum had had a previous exchange of correspondence with Mr Hammond on this and would provide copies to MN - **Action SS**. It was noted that whilst the TWA would not fully address all possible alternative routes, nothing in the present proposals excluded the possibility of services over and above the core scheme being added at a later date. It was acknowledged that such potential conflicts reinforced the importance of AirTrack being kept independent of the R3 proposals.

IR reported that the SCC implementation group continued to examine concerns including crossings and rights of way. The three groups (Main, Staines sub-group chaired by Spelthorne and crossings sub-group chaired by Runnymede) had met approximately 12 times in total. Much detailed work had been accomplished. This had or would include listing of concerns and identification of opportunities for resolution, crossing surveys and modelling with a view to identifying possible solutions.

RM(orris) advised that crossing surveys in Richmond were delayed by ongoing Thames Water work creating non-standard traffic conditions. However, completion before the anticipated PI was expected. It was unlikely that easy solutions would emerge, but BAA would continue to work with relevant local authorities and it was hoped that objections to the TWA would be avoided. MN noted that Philip Hammond (MP - Runnymede) - who was supportive provided the crossings issue could be solved satisfactorily - was to meet with Transport Minister Lord Adonis. RM(eeks) said that TfL Surface Transport were very keen to be involved - **RM(eeks) and RM(orris) to liaise directly.**

5 - Forum objectives and activity for 2009

IR suggested that we should aim for the Annual Meeting to co-ordinate with the PI process - focus on informing and engendering support from supporters for the PI process. It might be seminar style and perhaps smaller than usual. It also might be necessary to hold the meeting earlier than customary, depending on the timescale which eventually emerges following the submission.

An alternative activity might be for the Forum to seek to lobby ministers. Influencing the GLA might also be of importance. RM(orris) noted that for the foreseeable future, preparation for the PI would need to take priority for BAA/CJ.

6 - AOB

None

7 - Next Meeting

To be fixed - end May/early June. *(post meeting note now fixed for 2.30pm Tuesday 16 June at BA Waterside)*

SS 22/04/09