
Report of meeting from external body

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Agenda item : (a)
Paper TS031
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AirTrack Forum steering group meeting 16 October 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 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the report is received for information.

3 Information

- 3.1 The minutes of a meeting of are attached in the Annex. The Policy Officer represented London TravelWatch at this meeting.
- 3.2 These minutes were prepared by the AirTrack Forum, and London TravelWatch has no responsibility for their content or format.

4 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 4.1 Not applicable – report is for information only.

5 Financial implications

- 5.1 Not applicable – report is for information only

6 Legal powers

- 6.1 Section 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users 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.

AirTrack Forum

Notes of Steering Group meeting, 16 Oct 2009, BA Waterside.

Present – David Arquati, TfL; Garry Frostick, Highways Agency; Richard Morris, CJ Associates; Matt White, BAA; Iain Reeve, Surrey CC; John Slaughter, SWELTRAC; Steve Smith, AirTrack Forum; Poonam Tamana, London Travelwatch; David Milford, British Airways; Nick Evans, SE Regional Partnership Board; David McKibben, SEEDA.

1 - Apologies/Introductions

Apologies received from - Bev Hindle, Bracknell Forest BC; George Burnett, WSP; John Faulkner, DfT; Detlef Golletz, SEEDA; Jocelyn Pearson, Passenger Focus; Tim Pilsbury, Guildford BC; Richard Walker, SE Regional Partnership Board; Paul Turrell, Runnymede BC.

2 - Notes of previous meeting

Agreed with one amendment - first sentences of paragraph 3 of item 3 (BAA/TWA update) to be corrected to read "Work on costs was continuing and the business case was still to be finalised. Network Rail had been contracted re a framework agreement".

3 - BAA/TWA Update

IR commenced by advising the meeting that SCC's formal response to the TWA application would be delayed until about mid-December for procedural reasons, including the necessity to get approval from full Council and advertise its discussion. The proposed letter of support from the Forum had not been sent, following legal advice to IR. It was noted that, as opposed to the lodging of objections, there was no restriction on the timescale for letters of support. It was therefore agreed that the secretary would write to appropriate organisations/individuals on the Forum's contact list encouraging them to express support for the scheme. MW would send SS a similar letter that BAA had distributed, to assist with drafting.

RM reported that objections were still coming in. There were no surprises to note. Of 1420 received so far, around 75% were related to the Egham level crossings, with the next biggest issues the Feltham Depot, Staines Moor and the SSSI. Next step would be analysis and response. MW noted that intensification of the use of the line by SWT and the consequent effects on crossings could, in fact, happen tomorrow, without any need for consultation.

Timetabling was a key issue. Discussions were continuing and were likely to add another couple of months to the programme. The current "development timetable" would be expanded to a full day, including Waterloo and the pm peak. NR had been commissioned to undertake the work. To ensure consistency, barrier downtime models to be rerun, but no significant changes were expected. It was assumed that the PI date would go back a couple of months or so - perhaps to around mid-April. A six week duration was anticipated. There could be problems with the probable General Election date.

JS asked if SWT had been invited to participate in the timetabling as it was understood that they might have alternatives to propose. It was suggested that engagement with SWT could be useful.

IR queried whether NR had clarified proposals for Waterloo. It was understood that a model suitable for the timetabling work (but not necessarily what would eventually happen) had been made available. DA noted that NR were required to deliver proposals to the ORR [?for/by] 2012.

MW advised that the plan is to engage with major objectors and seek resolution.

Returning to the issue of crossings, JS queried whether NR could work more efficiently to reduce downtime. It was believed that minor improvements might be possible, and emerging technology was under discussion. Underpasses were being considered in one or two key locations.

DA queried whether the inspector could impose a downtime limit and what the position was with traffic counts. RM advised that the answer to the first point was not known. On the second, counts and surveys had been done in the Egham area. Those in the Richmond area had been delayed by utility works, but may now have been done. Results could be shared with TfL.

JS reported that he understood that SWT now "had an eye" on the Feltham Depot site.

4 - Other developments since last meeting/SCC implementation Group

IR reported that at the Conservative Party Conference, Theresa Villiers' speech had contained no reference to either AirTrack or the third runway and therefore did not give any further clues to the party's intentions. MW advised that BAA believed that they saw AirTrack as part of the "better not bigger" Heathrow vision. Noted that David Wilshire, the current Spelthorne MP and a key supporter, was not seeking re-election.

DA advised that the Mayor's Transport Strategy contains qualified support for AirTrack. The SE Board continues to support.

DM raised the matter of Spelthorne's 79 point objection. There was detailed discussion of some of the issues, including the High St Station.

IR noted that work on the DAST studies (Delivering a Sustainable Transport System), due for preparation by 2102 and delivery beyond 2014, didn't freeze existing proposals. The SW quadrant element covered the M25 J7-14 area.

5/6 - Annual Meeting/other activity for 2009

It was agreed that at this stage, an Annual Meeting would be a slightly strange event as it would bring together supporters and objectors in a Forum where it would be impossible to debate the issues. It was therefore felt that an Annual Meeting should be delayed until after the PI. This could then include information on how objections were being addressed.

DMcK enquired if there was anything that could be done to help the cause in the interim? There was some discussion on the possibility of using the Forum to correct misinformation. The letter referred to in para 1 of item 3 above could be supplemented by a more comprehensive bulletin circulated around Christmastime.

7 - AOB

MW advised that the BAA Heathrow Airtrack web page would be updated. Text to be provided to SS so that the Forum website could be brought in to line.

8 - Next Meeting

Not before the New Year - dependent on PI timetable - perhaps early February? (*post meeting note now fixed for 0930 Tuesday 9 March - to be hosted by BAA at Compass Centre*)

SS 24/02/10