



13th IARO WORKSHOP

London, 23-24 May 2017

Meeting Report

Introduction

IARO's 13th Workshop took place on 23 and 24 May 2017. There were 27 participants, including Members and non-Members, with delegates attending from Austria, France, Norway, Switzerland, Italy and the UK.

The first day included visits to Luton and Heathrow Airports and London St Pancras and Paddington Stations. Day 2 took place at Heathrow Airport, with presentations and discussion covering a range of subjects on the theme of "What do good air-rail services look like?" Copies of the presentations are on the IARO website for Members and have been distributed to all participants.

Day 1 Visits

Luton Airport

The group met at London St Pancras and travelled on the East Midlands Train service to Luton Airport Parkway, transferring by shuttle bus to the Airport. Presentations were given by Oliver Jaycock and Alejo Perez Monsalvo of Luton Airport. The Airport is seeking to persuade the Government to specify that the next East Midlands Trains franchise should include 4 trains per hour stopping at Luton Airport Parkway Station, compared with 1 per hour at present. The East Midlands trains are non stop to London St Pancras with a journey time of 20 minutes, and complement the Thameslink service which also calls at Luton Airport Parkway Station 6 times per hour but takes between 35 and 45 minutes to London.

The Airport's owners, Luton Borough Council, are investing £200 million in a people mover from Luton Airport Parkway Station to the Airport to replace the current shuttle bus as part of a major upgrading of the airport's facilities, which participants were able to view. The rail mode share of air passenger journeys is currently 15% and it is hoped that the proposed increase in trains and the people mover will raise this to 36%.

Heathrow Airport

The group travelled to Heathrow and viewed the Pod system at Terminal 5 Business Car Park - and then travelled on them. These automated, battery powered vehicles connect the remote Business parking area with Terminal 5. They have been in operation for 8 years and provide a demand-responsive service from two stations in the car park to the terminal. The Pods were constructed as a test for the technology and could have applications for links between terminals and rail stations, as well as in other areas.

At Terminal 5, the group was able to follow the passenger route 'from plane to platform' where Heathrow Express is conducting an intensive marketing campaign to drive sales. This involves staff at various intervention points, advertising and signing, and sales points. Even though Heathrow Express is owned by the Airport, there are still potential conflicts in terms of the location of the intervention points and other activities.

London Paddington Station

Participants travelled on the Heathrow Express to Paddington where they could see the very busy station and how the Heathrow Express service interchanges with onward travel.

Day 2 Workshop

Participants were welcomed to Heathrow by Fraser Brown, Heathrow Express Head of Business and IARO President.

The first session of the Workshop reviewed and discussed the previous day's visits, and in particular on the role of people movers, such as that proposed at Luton and the Pods at Heathrow.

The second session included three presentations:

- Fraser Brown began by describing how Heathrow Express had evolved although its core proposition of a service every 15 minute and a 15 minute journey time remained the same as when it began in 1998. Marketing had always taken account of the competition from the Piccadilly Line and taxis and is now taking on board new challenges such as Uber and the Elizabeth Line.
- Matthew Lee from MTR Crossrail explained the Crossrail project which will become the Elizabeth Line when it opens in stages, with the first services to Heathrow in 2018.
- Mitchell Stirling from Heathrow Airport described a number of the other plans for additional rail services, including a western link, a southern link, connections to High Speed 2 at Old Oak Common, and the upgrading of the Piccadilly Line. Discussion focused on how these various links would complement and compete with each other and generally provide a significant better rail product, especially for those whose origins and destinations are not in London.

The first afternoon session included presentations by Liam Henderson of Transporting Cities and Richard Davies of Insitas Ltd. Both of these organisations are involved with Heathrow in seeking to understand more about potential rail customers. Liam's work includes identifying the route from plane to platform and viewing it from a passenger's perspective, noting that there are many points where a potential rail customer could divert and choose the default route of a taxi. Richard's work includes understanding the motivations of passengers in choosing their mode of transport, including their journey purpose.

Andrew Sharp of IARO dug into his extensive knowledge and the IARO's database to review a number of examples of good and bad practice throughout the world, which can then provide learning points for others.

The final session as led by Chris Joyce, Head of Surface Access at Heathrow Airport, focused on the surface access elements of the third runway plans. The UK government has decided in principle to enable this project to proceed, subject to Parliamentary approval. Chris described how the airport has grown significantly without increasing airport-related road traffic by a combination of improved public transport and various management measures. The plan is to continue this programme, to include the several new rail links previously described, and other measures in particular aimed at reducing staff related car journeys, to balance any increase in passenger journeys.

The presentations provoked questions and discussion about the role of rail and how to maximise its use and revenue generation, at a growing airport, with new competition and in order to facility major new capacity.

Fraser Brown concluded the day by thanking the speakers and delegates for their contribution to the day – and by thanking Paul Le Bond for moderating the sessions, questioning the speakers and encouraging active engagement from the participants.

Further IARO workshops in 2017

The next IARO workshop is to take place on 25 and 26 September 2017 with visits to both Malpensa and Bergamo Airports and a full discussion programme at Bergamo.

A further workshop is planned for 29 and 30 November in Frankfurt, Germany, again involving visits and discussion.