

Airport Operators Association – National Needs Assessment: Call for evidence

Introduction – the need for aviation to grow across the UK

1. This response is submitted on behalf of **the Airport Operators Association (AOA)**, the trade association representing the interests of 50+ UK airports. The AOA is the principal body the UK Government, parliamentarians, and regulatory authorities consult with on airport and aviation matters.
2. The AOA has regularly made the case for **UK airports to have the freedom to grow**, to become better connected and for there to be a more integrated transport policy that will deliver better surface access to the UK's airports.
3. **Aviation is a major component of the UK's transport economic infrastructure.** Airports are the physical infrastructure supporting the aviation sector; their economic health and ability to grow has a direct impact on the country's economic prosperity. **Airports should be considered as crucial national infrastructure** and the National Infrastructure Commission should include aviation and its integration with other modes of transport as a key plank of its deliberations.
4. **The aviation sector is a key driver of economic growth**, helping the UK to create businesses and jobs. The sector contributes over £52 billion to the UK economy, supports a million jobs, and pays almost £9 billion a year in taxes. **Aviation connectivity is vital in facilitating trade in goods and services, tourism, business investment and innovation and productivity.**
5. **Demand for air travel forecast to increase 1-3% a year to 2050 and passenger numbers are predicted to increase to 315 million in 2030 and 445 million by 2050** ('constrained' forecasts)¹. The central forecasts suggest that all the South East airports would be at capacity at around 2030 and the larger airports outside the South East from approximately 2040, while in the high and central demand cases, a number of other airports are expected to reach capacity over the forecast period including Birmingham, Bristol, East Midlands and Manchester. **Unless action is taken to alleviate this capacity crunch there will be severe knock on effects for the UK economy.** This case is also set out in Sir Howard Davies' Airport Commission Final Report.
6. **The AOA welcomed the completion of the Airports Commission's Final Report in the summer**, and supported the assertions already made in the Commission's Interim Report regarding the need for both airport expansion and making better use out of existing capacity. **Despite the recently announced delay, we continue to call for the Government to respond fully to the Airports Commission recommendations as quickly as possible in 2016**, to maintain momentum, remove uncertainty and ensure the UK gets the additional capacity it so vitally needs as soon as possible.
7. **The AOA supports the creation of the National Infrastructure Commission and welcomes its political independence from government**, which will allow it to assess dispassionately and free from political influence, the future long term infrastructure needs of the country. Furthermore, the AOA believe the work of the National Infrastructure Commission over the coming years will demonstrate that infrastructure development is absolutely integral to the UK's future success, and the continued creation of jobs and growth.

¹ DfT Passenger Forecasts, Jan 2013

8. The AOA believes that all regions of the UK should be able to grow and while the AOA supports the National Infrastructure Commission plans to support development of infrastructure in the North of England and for large scale transport infrastructure improvements in London, **it also believes there is a need to support infrastructure development in all parts of the UK** and that in addition to improving transport links within regions, there is a need to improve connectivity between the different centres of economic activity across the UK.

The need to prioritise Surface Access in all parts of the UK

9. The AOA takes the view that in order for aviation to grow, **people and businesses need to be better connected to airports**. We support the statement made by Sir Howard Davies in his November 2013 letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on this same issue, that “**surface transport improvements can encourage more use of airports which currently have spare capacity, improve the passenger experience, and make airports more attractive to airlines.**” The letter also emphasised that “**serious consideration should be given to airport users when determining priorities for local transport spending**”. The AOA is concerned that despite this letter being written over two years ago, progress in acting on these recommendations has been limited.
10. The AOA has compiled a list of airports across the UK which require surface access improvement (at the time of writing). Please see the appendix attached to this submission.
11. **Airport development and surface access should not be considered independently from one another**; they should instead form part of an integrated transport strategy covering the entirety of the UK. The decisions around airport expansion and the routes provided by rail developments, including HS2, will have an impact on one another. **Surface access, including transport such as rail and highways, needs to provide accessible choices** so that passengers continue to gain from aviation and the economy can prosper from increased passenger numbers and improved connectivity.
12. **Transport links at airports influence passenger behaviour** when choosing where to travel to or from. Market research undertaken by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as part of its consultation on Information Powers found that the cost and convenience of getting to the airport was selected as a key reason for choosing an airport over other local options by 55% of respondents. This makes surface access a crucial part of the consumer journey, ranked second in the CAA poll (by only 1%) to the availability of flight routes which was chosen by 56% of respondents. **People need to be connected to infrastructure in order to use it and for the economic benefits of that use to be realised**. The Network Rail Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook (PDFH) also highlights the importance of reduced journey times and interchanges for passengers using rail to or from an airport.
13. Access to and from an airport is not only essential to people wishing to use an airport, but **benefits of good transport infrastructure also extend to the community living and working nearby**.
14. Surface access to airports also needs to accommodate a range of different consumers as there are **differences between business and leisure travellers**, and visitors and domestic passengers. For example, business travellers are more likely to choose the fastest route whereas cost is more

of an issue than time to leisure travellers, whilst visitors are less likely to have a car and more likely to be travelling to a hotel than domestic travellers.

15. **With regard to rail, passenger demand for services to airports does not always fit easily with current timetables** – in order to catch the early morning wave of flights at 7am or 7.30am, one would need to take a train particularly early in the morning. In a lot of circumstances such services are simply not available. It is not just the time of year but the time of day and the mix. The AOA believes that the DfT should take a strategic approach and work with the National Infrastructure Commission. If we could identify where the gaps in service are, this issue could be addressed. However, there needs to be some direction from the DfT and potentially the National Infrastructure Commission. There also needs to be buy-in from the local enterprise partnership and the local authority, but the central thrust has to come from the DfT and National Infrastructure Commission at the top.
16. **Better rail links and better use of roads are also positive for the environment.** Improved public transport links and more efficient use of road and rail networks can enhance access to airports for passengers, airport employees and freight. **This would provide more sustainable travel choices, thereby helping to reduce airport related congestion and emissions.** Airports are working hard to deal with carbon emissions and local concerns about noise and air quality, and improvements in surface access are a crucial part of this work for many airports. **There are also economic benefits to improved transport links at major cargo airports.** High quality transport links are essential for the distribution of freight and mail (especially express freight that relies on next-day deliveries).
17. In written evidence to a House of Commons inquiry on Surface Access, **Sustainable Aviation² points out that improved surface access to UK airports would have substantial benefits for the economy. Some progress has already been made.** Since 2006 the percentage of passengers using public transport (bus, coach, train or tube) to access eight major UK airports (Birmingham, Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton, Stansted, London City, East Midlands and Manchester) has increased by 5.9%. On average about 40% of passengers in 2014 use public transport to access the five major London airports, representing a 3% improvement since 2006. Stansted has the highest percentage at 50%, followed by London City (46%), with Luton the lowest (29%). **Outside of the London airports, however, the figures drop significantly to less than 25%.** Of the regional airports, Birmingham had the highest proportion of passengers using public transport (23%) and East Midlands the lowest (7.4%)³.
18. To deal with the key international connectivity needs over the next 20-30 years, **the Government needs to put in place policies to enable airports in all parts of the country to grow.** To create a more integrated transport policy the AOA calls for an assessment of the level of public transport infrastructure connecting UK airports and identify where there are gaps in present and future demand; for measures to ensure rail capacity assessments and Highways Agency route studies include airport access and compare passenger growth assessments and their impact on transport infrastructure; and to set out, with the DfT, Network Rail and the Highways Agency, how decisions will be taken as to which surface access projects at airports will be prioritised in the Government's infrastructure plans.

² <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/transport-committee/surface-transport-to-airports/written/23387.pdf>

³ All figures are from the Civil Aviation Authority's latest passenger survey, published on 19 October 2015.

19. With respect to governance, **the AOA believes more broadly that ultimately some combination of Government and the National Infrastructure Commission is needed to deliver transformative infrastructure with the latter providing policy continuity and taking a longer term horizon, regardless of changes in government.** While it is better locally to have joint spatial plans and for the LEPs to work with local authorities, ultimately most decision making will come from the Government and the DfT.
20. In terms of funding, the **aviation policy framework of 2013** says that developers—usually the airport—should pay the costs of upgrading or enhancing road, rail or other transport networks, and that the **Government will only become involved to consider the need for public funding where there is a “range of beneficiaries”⁴.** In the vast majority of surface access schemes, there are a range of beneficiaries — a whole range of people who benefit from the links you get to and from an airport. **There also needs to be clarity from the DfT about the process for prioritising surface access schemes and guidance to airports on the evidence required to support their case.** Ultimately, there is a need for airports to know how they can get DfT support and funding and how they can go about doing it and what the criteria are.

Other considerations for improving connectivity

21. Airspace is the **transport infrastructure of the skies and it is equally as important as physical infrastructure on the ground.** Airspace above the UK is some of the busiest in the world and without better use of the ‘infrastructure of the sky’, we cannot grow infrastructure on the ground.
22. The **overall objectives should be the safety and efficiency of the air traffic system** and its ability to deliver real capacity gains and improvements for airspace users.
23. **Benefits which can be delivered from investment in the modernisation of the airspace system include increased access to UK airspace; removal of “hot spots”; dynamic use of airspace; and cost savings through the use of robust new Air Traffic Management (ATM) technology and procedures.**
24. **Safety in ATM must be the overriding priority.** Environmental matters are important and it is worthy of note that UK airports have been particularly active in addressing their environmental impacts and in promoting environmentally sensitive procedures. However in relation to a future airspace change there must not be a presumption that environmental matters or improvements are given primacy over the need to maintain and improve safety and deliver capacity.
25. **The DfT, and perhaps the National Infrastructure Commission, should be providing more strategic leadership with respect to the overwhelming need for airspace change, ensuring that Ministers are making the case publicly** as to its importance and enabling airports to be more effective in talking about the issue and engaging with communities. Other benefits to such an approach would be to allow for proper time horizons to be put in place and providing certainty to local residents.
26. In addition to the need to improve surface access and bring about airspace change, the **AOA calls on the Government and the Infrastructure Commission to consider all other policy tools**

⁴ Aviation Policy Framework 2013, DfT (point 5.12)

at their disposal to enable airports in all parts of the country, with spare capacity, to grow – for example, through policies on planning and a reduction in APD rates.

For further information, please contact AOA Policy Manager Peter O’Broin on 020 7799 3171 or peterobroin@aoa.org.uk.

Appendix – Summary of UK airports’ required surface access improvements

Below is a summary, via the AOA members and the International Air Rail Organisation, of rail surface access schemes linking to UK airports, to improve sustainable travel opportunities and make better use of existing capacity (i.e. not including additional runway capacity). Like IARO, the AOA does not comment on the arguments for or against growth at any particular airport.

Birmingham

Birmingham Airport’s proximity to Birmingham International Station provides a significant advantage to its existing operations, with 20 per cent of its passengers in 2014 accessing the airport via rail services. While the growth of the airport is not constrained by rail services, it would be improved with extended rail services during early mornings, evenings and weekends.

HS2 will serve Birmingham Airport, resulting in a significant improvement in accessibility from a wider catchment area. The airport says that connecting HS2 with the West Midlands’ transport infrastructure will be essential for maximising the investment, and is calling on the National Infrastructure Commission to develop a strategy for integrating road, rail and aviation across the UK.

Phase 1 of HS2 is due to be complete in 10 years, and this will see high speed services shrinking the travel time between London and Birmingham to 38 minutes. This will support the growth of businesses around the Interchange and Curzon Street HS2 stations as well as increasing the catchment area of Birmingham Airport into London, supporting passenger growth and the airport’s route network. These developments will create the opportunity to establish a new economic hub around the Airport and the HS2 Interchange station, connecting local businesses with the wider region, central London and international markets. It is estimated by Steer Davies Gleave that 15 million people will be within one hour of the airport following the completion of Phase 2 of HS2. A report by York Aviation in October 2015 entitled, “The West Midlands aviation opportunity – An analysis of the economic value and potential of Birmingham Airport”, says that when complete, HS2 can enable Birmingham Airport to attract around 750,000 additional passengers.

To support this, Birmingham Airport wants to see the development of a seamless transport hub between the airport, HS2 and the existing station via an efficient people mover. It is also suggested that changing the name of the existing rail station from ‘Birmingham International’ to ‘Birmingham Airport’, as well as the introduction of integrated ticketing across transport modes, would be beneficial to the public. Other proposed improvements in access include improved connectivity between the east and west of the midlands, and the provision of Metro services from Birmingham City Centre to the airport. If Midlands east-west journey times to Birmingham Airport were improved by 15 per cent via new road and rail investment, passenger numbers at the airport could, according to independent analysis, increase by 900,000.

Bournemouth

Bournemouth Airport is focusing on measures to improve and increase road access, as there is little or no prospect of a direct heavy or light rail connection to the airport. Efforts are being made to free- up existing or create additional capacity on the existing highway, to fully integrate the Airport into the local bus network and developing coach links, and to develop greater public transport journey time reliability. The airport is also working to ensure cross mode through ticketing is introduced.

Bristol

Although Bristol Airport does not have a direct rail link, a 14 per cent public transport share is achieved through a range of bus and coach services. In particular, the Flyer Express operates up to every eight minutes at peak times between the Airport and Bristol Temple Meads station, carrying more than 750,000 passengers last year. Combined train/Flyer tickets are available, providing easy access to the UK rail network. Regular bus services also operate to and from Bath, Cardiff and Weston-super-Mare.

Planning permission for development of facilities to handle up to 10 million passengers per annum (from 6.4 million passengers per annum in 2014⁵) is accompanied by significant commitments to enhance surface access. This includes contributions totalling more than £4.7 million to the construction of the MetroBus rapid transit network in the West of England, including the South Bristol Link which will enhance access to Bristol Airport from the north, east and west once completed in 2016.

However, further improvements will be required over the next decade to maintain and improve convenient access from across the Airport's growing catchment area. The design of the MetroBus network enables its guided bus lanes to be utilised by the Flyer Express and makes future extension of the network to the Airport and beyond possible. Other priorities include increasing capacity on the A38 and improving links to the M5.

Cardiff

Cardiff Airport is linked by shuttle bus to Rhoose Station. Although this is not entirely satisfactory, improvements are unlikely to make a significant difference to the ability to use the airport's spare capacity.

East Midlands

East Midlands Airport is the UK's largest pure freight airport and the UK hub for major express freight integrators. The airport's cargo business relies on its connectivity to the national motorway network (M1, A42/M42), which is essential in ensuring that almost 90% of England and Wales is within a four hour truck journey of the airport. East Midlands Parkway rail station provides rail services to London and regional destinations, with a pre-booked shared taxi service that provides direct connections to the airport. Derby Station also provides access to the rail network and is connected to the airport by a Skylink bus service that operates every thirty minutes. The electrification of the Midland Mainline will deliver speed and service improvements to both East Midlands Parkway and to Derby; it is scheduled to be completed in 2019. HS2 is planned to run beneath East Midlands Airport to the East Midlands Hub, ten kilometres away. There is an opportunity for additional regional rail capacity at East Midlands Parkway and for public transport connections to be provided between the airport and the East Midlands Hub at Toton.

Edinburgh

The effect of the Edinburgh Tram – which opened in 2014 – on the air passenger mode share is difficult to predict. Edinburgh's Airport's outbound market is dispersed and the tram journey will take 30 minutes to the city centre. There will be a tram/train interchange at Edinburgh Gateway Station. Buses and coaches already provide a significant public transport service and the addition of the tram will

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https://www.caa.co.uk/docs/80/airport_data/2014Annual/Table_01_Size_of_UK_Airports_2014_Comp_2009.pdf

mean that some passenger growth can be accommodated. However, it is probable that road access will remain a potential constraint on growth.

Gatwick

Current rails services at Gatwick Airport are in the process of transition with a new operator and the ongoing effects of the substantial Thameslink Programme upgrade works. This £6.5bn investment in refurbished stations, improved track work, signalling and new trains is due for completion by 2018. A new fleet of trains on services via London Bridge will begin operations in 2016. New infrastructure will extend the range of destinations served directly from Gatwick to Peterborough and Cambridge. Rail mode share has steadily increase to 37% and airport passenger growth appears unaffected. Gatwick continues to provide rail and bus access 24/7.

The Thameslink Programme will provide much needed extra capacity to relieve peak period crowding on services into and out of London. Network Rail's Sussex Area Route Study has set out a plan for further enhancement of the route which would allow 24 hour stopping at Gatwick in each direction, to and from London. This would provide sufficient capacity to cater for projected growth at the airport with a single runway, or expansion with a second runway, until at least 2045 and allowing for an increase in rail mode share to 50%.

Future growth at the airport and increase in rail mode share will place considerable additional pressure on Gatwick's railway station, which is integrated with the airport's South Terminal. Gatwick railway station suffers from heavy congestion during busy airport peaks, which has increased following the introduction of ticket barriers at the station in 2011. A major project to replace the current concourse and improve vertical circulation to platforms has been approved, with the estimated £120m cost shared by Network Rail, DfT, Gatwick Airport and the Coast to Capital LEP. This will transform capacity and the passenger experience at the station delivering over twice the concourse space and providing operational benefits by spreading passengers along the platform, so reducing dwell time. The construction is to start on site in 2017 and be completed by 2020.

Glasgow

Glasgow Airport's rail link project was cancelled in 2009 although many stakeholders are seeking to revive it in one form or another. Public transport share is low at Glasgow (around 10%) and the access roads are congested, so it is probably the case that the growth of passengers at the airport would be constrained if there were not some form of rail link, although the precise timing of the need is difficult to establish.

Glasgow Prestwick

Glasgow Prestwick Airport is well served by its rail stations and has in the past achieve a rail share of over 30%. Rail access will not be a constraint on the better use of this airport's capacity.

Heathrow

Several rail infrastructure projects that support better surface access to Heathrow are currently under development or construction. These projects are important as they will provide more choice and reliable alternatives to the car for passengers and staff. The strategy of adding Crossrail, a Western Connection, an upgrade of the Piccadilly Line and an interim connection to HS2 at Old Oak Common will provide a good range of rail services to Heathrow Airport, provided that Heathrow Express

is maintained as a dedicated premium express service. In the longer term, the addition of a southern rail connection and a direct link into HS2 will ensure that Heathrow is properly integrated into the national rail network.

Bus services connect Heathrow with local catchments, and are particularly well used by staff. Heathrow already supports early morning services and connectivity around Heathrow through the Free Travel Zone. The airport is working with local stakeholders and operators to develop the bus network. Stakeholders have already identified six potential projects which, subject to agreement, will need to be evaluated in more detail before progressing.

For passengers who live outside London, coach services provide a direct public transport service to the airport and an alternative to travelling via London. Heathrow is currently working with operators to develop Heathrow's coach network.

Leeds Bradford

Connectivity and improved transport links are an important element in the development of the airport and to achieving economic growth in the Leeds City Region. Improved transport links between LBIA and Leeds City Region is key to the delivery of wider economic objectives, providing businesses with improved access to international markets, which will support inward investment, promoting the growth of exports and growing inbound tourism.

There is currently no directly rail access to LBIA, however the Leeds – Harrogate rail line is less than 1km from LBIA. The introduction of rail access could accelerate growth at LBIA and delivering a rail connection to LBIA is a firm ambition which could be transformational. Various plans for a rail link to Leeds Bradford Airport have been put forward which would make the airport more attractive to visitors to Leeds or Bradford, compared with the situation where the airport relies on road access. However, the proposals would require significant new rail infrastructure which is unlikely to be possible in the short and medium term.

Liverpool John Lennon

Liverpool John Lennon Airport is linked to the local and regional rail network by nearby Liverpool South Parkway rail station, with bus services calling at the station en-route to the airport. However the dedicated non-stop shuttle bus to the airport stopped in 2013 due to lack of continued available subsidy from the Passenger Transport Executive (PTE). Ways to improve public transport links between the airport and this station continue to be explored.

The 'Halton Curve' is a scheme that would reinstate a section of single track railway between Frodsham and Runcorn allowing trains to travel from Liverpool and the airport to North West Cheshire, Chester and onwards to North Wales in both directions. There are currently no direct public transport links to the airport from these areas. The scheme has now received 'in principle' funding of £10.4m as part of the Government's Local Growth Fund, subject to business case approval and is highlighted as a key project in the Liverpool City Region's Long Term Rail Strategy. It is also a project that has the keen support of the Welsh Government and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

London City

London City Airport's growth will need to be considered in terms of the impact on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR). It may be possible to increase the frequency of trains serving the airport, although this may require a reduction in frequency on other routes.

London Southend

London Southend Airport has some spare capacity in the short term and potential for more in the medium term. The current rail service is adequate in terms of capacity but needs improvement in quality and operating hours. Improved rolling stock and timetable changes can be included in the new Greater Anglia franchise from 2016 and better connections will be available on completion of Crossrail in 2018.

Luton

London Luton Airport (LLA) benefits from rail connectivity with the Capital and beyond, with a combination of fast (EMT) and stopping (GTR) services - the fastest services reaching London in as little as 19 minutes. However, there is still a significant opportunity to increase the number of passengers accessing LLA via rail.

To achieve this LLA is working with GTR (through a Strategic Partnership Agreement) to secure the operation of rail services 24 hours a day, 7 days per week through timetable improvements. Further benefits are also being delivered through passenger way-finding improvements, upgrading the rail-air bus transfer and simplifying rail information. Simplification of ticketing – through the extension of the Oyster card system to cover both Luton Airport Parkway station and the rail-air bus are also being sought.

The new EMT franchise in 2017 offers a significant opportunity to deliver an 'Express' styled service to Luton Airport Parkway, whilst simplifying and offering an improved passenger experience through greater alignment between the GTR and EMT rail operations.

Manchester

Manchester Airport has good road and rail links direct to the airport. A 4th rail platform is now complete and due to be opened which will increase the capacity enabling additional services to reach areas currently not served by direct rail services. This is part of the Northern Hub project and the full benefits, with an increase in links across the wider region, will be realised when the remaining projects are complete. The Metrolink extension to Manchester Airport opened 12 months early and currently terminates at Cornbrook pending the second city crossing. It principally serves current airport staff and the expected 15,000 jobs being created by the Airport City enterprise zone. This will also help to moderate the demand for road and car parking capacity.

In terms of road access, work on the A6 and Manchester Airport relief road (SEMMS) has now begun with completion expected in October 2017. The M6 - M56 link road is now on site as a Highways England major scheme. It will by-pass the congested A556 and improve access for passengers from the south and west. This will be complemented by the M56 (J6 -8) programmed 'smart' motorway upgrade.

However while the proposals and schemes under way will improve the current surface access to the airport, delays to the electrification of the railway are a concern and it is vital that proposals currently planned and under way are completed.

In the longer term, there are plans for a HS2 station at the Airport and in the emerging longer term

it is important that the planned improvements for connectivity East-West, dubbed 'HS3' connect all of these vital points up at the airport which is the global gateway for the region in order to achieve the integrated connectivity that is needed for the region to prosper.

Newcastle

Newcastle International Airport benefits from dual carriageway trunk road and Metro light rail access. It enjoys a strong sustainable transport modal share and has plans in place to further improve this. The Airport has played a key role in making the case for regional transport improvements, and its priorities at present include on-going capacity improvements to the A1 Newcastle/Gateshead western bypass, the renewal of the Tyne and Wear Metro system, including the Airport Metro Station and the replacement of Metro rolling stock. In addition, the Airport is playing a key part in the roll out of electric vehicle charging points.

Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield

Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport has significant unused capacity and is close to a rail line where a station could be built in the short or medium term. The challenges here would be because the station would still require a shuttle bus to the terminal and currently the rail service is not very frequent.

Southampton

Southampton Airport's rail station is very close to the terminal and achieves a 15% rail mode share. The airport has potential for growth as indicated in its master plan but this will probably require a further increase in the rail share if the airport is not to be constrained by road access. This will require Southampton Airport Parkway Station to be served by more trains from both local stations and the wider region. This could be achieved through the franchise process, but the franchise specification will have to be clear that new services to the Airport Parkway Station will have to be given priority over other demands.

Stansted

Stansted Airport has a public transport mode-share of 51%, the largest of any major airport in the UK. However, current train services and journey times of nearly an hour provide a constraint on the use of Stansted's significant spare runway capacity. Although the Stansted Express has benefited from new trains, the journey time is long and reliability is a problem on the line to London. At peak times, trains are also full as they serve commuters from Harlow and Bishops Stortford. The premium fare on Stansted Express and the lack of an alternative rail service means that coach services are particularly successful and account for nearly 30% of mode share. If Stansted's spare capacity is to be fully used, it will be necessary to provide a faster, more dedicated rail service; a report Stansted released with London First calls for an enhanced Stansted Express with a journey time of less than 40 minutes.

Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan suggests that the full 4-tracking of the Upper Lea Valley is not value for money in the short or medium term although it did recommend improvements to line speeds in a recent route study. The Mayor of London's aspiration is for better local services on this line to help regenerate the Lea Valley and capitalise on economic growth along the London-Cambridge corridor, which may bring forward the case for infrastructure improvements. Airlines would be attracted to make better use of Stansted's capacity if Stansted Express trains had shorter journey times and were more dedicated to air passengers. Such services would also contribute more to tax revenues through higher franchise premium payments resulting from premium fares.

