



## Transport Select Committee

### Oral evidence: Surface transport to airports, HC 516

26 October 2015

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 26 October 2015.

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Members present: Mrs Louise Ellman (Chair), Robert Flello, Mary Glendon, Karl McCartney, Stewart Malcolm McDonald, Mark Menzies, Huw Merriman, Will Quince, Iain Stewart, Graham Stringer, Martin Vickers

Questions 1-121

#### Examination of Witnesses

*Witnesses:* **Darren Caplan**, Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association, and **Dave Haskins**, New Generation Transport Project Director, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, gave evidence.

**Q1 Chair:** Welcome to this afternoon's session of the Transport Select Committee. Could you give us your names and positions, please?

**Darren Caplan:** I am Darren Caplan, chief executive of the Airport Operators Association.

**Dave Haskins:** I am Dave Haskins, project director for NGT at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

**Robert Flello:** I want to declare an interest. A member of my staff is funded by the Road Haulage Association, and that may have an impact on the questions that I ask.

**Karl McCartney:** I personally know Mr Darren Caplan, but not biblically.

**Q2 Chair:** Do we know what preferences passengers have about how they want to travel to an airport, or is how they travel simply governed by what is available? Mr Caplan, what information is there?

**Darren Caplan:** Can I start with a statement, or should I go straight into the question?

**Chair:** Can you answer this one first?

**Darren Caplan:** Okay. What is their preference? There was a CAA survey in 2011 that showed that 55% of passengers chose an airport based on surface access and the cost and convenience of getting to an airport. That came only second to the availability of flight

routes. Fifty-six per cent of passengers chose an airport based on flight routes; so more than half—a lot of people—chose airports because of the cost and convenience of surface access for getting to the airport.

The AOA would say it is absolutely key that you have a good mix of transport modes for going to an airport: bus, coach, train and in London the tube. It is really important that you have that mix, in terms of both consumer choice and sustainability. To put one more factoid into the conversation, a survey in 2014, which the CAA released recently, showed that 40% of people used public transport for surface access to London airports and elsewhere it is 25%. It has gone up 6% in recent years. People are choosing public transport for surface access, so it is going in the right direction.

**Q3 Chair:** Is there any evidence that people choose which airport they fly from related to transport access, or is it more to do with the destination of flights?

**Dave Haskins:** It is a combination. If we look at examples in west Yorkshire, Leeds Bradford airport carries about 3 million passengers a year, up from about 1 million 20 years ago. Across the Pennines we have Manchester airport, which clearly offers a much wider range of destinations. While for some it is further and possibly more inconvenient to travel there, they still choose to go to Manchester airport. There is a greater amount of leakage, as we call it, of air passengers in west Yorkshire going to Manchester rather than using Leeds Bradford airport. Part of that is around flight availability, flight times and where they connect, but transport does come into play. We have the trans-Pennine rail links, which link well to Manchester airport from west Yorkshire, and the M62 motorway, whereas Leeds Bradford airport does not have the same range of connectivity. It is not that close to the strategic road network. It is in need of improvement and it is not connected well by public transport. People choose accessibility based on convenience. A range of other factors come into play as well.

**Q4 Karl McCartney:** Picking up on those two points, is there any data on what people would prefer to use? Obviously if there are only coaches or a train journey you take that to get to an airport, but from personal experience I think most people would prefer to be dropped off and picked up. Some airports go out of their way to make sure that does not happen or at least try to discourage it. How would most people rather travel?

**Dave Haskins:** Clearly Leeds Bradford, which is what I am talking about, is a smaller airport. It is instructive to look more widely in terms of European airports. Of the 30 largest European airports, 23 are rail-connected. That has risen significantly since the 1980s; more and more airports have become rail-connected because they recognise the importance in terms of choice. If we look at the mode shares for our local airports, 90% come by car to Leeds Bradford airport—the second highest in Britain. At the other extreme are airports like Schiphol in Amsterdam, where 45% come by rail. They have a vast range of connectivity there. It is really key to see the direction of travel and what people choose. There is a clear preference for rail-based modes of travel to airports.

**Q5 Karl McCartney:** You can force people to do things or you can lead them to do things. What I am asking about is what data you have on what people would prefer to do. I would say that for Manchester lots of people, not just in and around Manchester but from right across Cheshire and the north-west, would probably get a lift from somebody who drops

them off and then picks them up when they return. If you make it virtually impossible for people to do that freely, or to park very easily, you force them to use trains, coaches or another mode for getting to the airport. What I am asking you is whether you have data on what people would prefer to do.

**Darren Caplan:** The International Air Rail Organisation did a survey. They found that business customers tend to value speed, and leisure travellers or holidaymakers and people visiting friends and family tend to value cost. Those apply as contexts, but as I mentioned in the first answer you have to have that mix of choice. One of the key arguments we would make is that airports are not just private sector organisations making money for themselves; they are key enablers nationally and locally, so we should help people get to those airports. It benefits them and the local economy; it benefits everyone. If there is a lack of mix, that is where we should be directing our fire, to improve surface access in other areas. If you have good roads but not good rail, you need to look at that.

**Q6 Robert Ffello:** Can I follow that up in terms of the cross-Pennine routes? To what extent does the time of year and the weather have an impact on people's choices and preferences? For example, is the cross-Pennine preference that you were talking about impacted if the weather is particularly bad? Would people prefer to use a train, or does it work the other way round? Do you have any statistics or figures on that?

**Dave Haskins:** I do not have statistics on that particular thing. I was looking at some research in a wide-ranging literature review—it was actually a PhD thesis that I could supply to the Committee if it would be useful—which pulls together a whole range of evidence around what people like and want. It is a psychological analysis of travel behaviour and is really quite interesting. If people choose the car, why do they choose the car? If 90% choose the car, there has to be a reason for that: comfort, availability, flexibility, reliability or personal safety. Luggage comes out really strongly, and in some cases that works against public transport. There is also the low marginal cost because once you have a car you want to use it, and door-to-door journey times are usually better by car.

You are right that seasonality can come into play. Having said that, the M62 has probably only been closed twice in the winter in the last 20 years; it has been kept open. It comes back to perception. If you wake up in the morning and see fog, you start to think, "How am I going to get to the airport?" People want certainty, and very often they will take a belt-and-braces approach to travel to airports. They will plan how they are going to get to an airport quite meticulously at times, especially if they are infrequent flyers. It comes back to what you said—there are different carrots and sticks we can introduce. The airports clearly prefer carrots because they want to keep passengers. If there are too many sticks, they will use a different airport.

**Darren Caplan:** I would agree with that, although I do not have surveys or studies on that particular issue. One thing our airports would say is that things like the time of day are very instructive as to when people choose certain modes of transport. For example, in relation to rail, in order to catch the early morning wave at 7 or 7.30, you need to get a train at 4 o'clock in the morning. To get the last wave back, which might come in at 10.30, 11 o'clock or 11.30, you need a train that leaves at 12 midnight. In a lot of circumstances those services are just not available. It is not just the time of year but the time of day and the mix. We would say that, when rail franchises are looking at the processes and the frequency of the trains they are running and take into account that passengers at airports have particular needs, they do not actually mitigate against the rest of the network. If the

railway is empty at 4 o'clock in the morning and 12 o'clock at night, it should be easy to provide frequent services to an airport at those times of the day.

**Q7 Mary Glendon:** Obviously rail links are quite important, but what about buses and coaches? If you have existing roads but not rail links, how important is that mode of public transport and how would you encourage it—or would you?

**Dave Haskins:** I can give you an example at my local level. To get from the centre of Leeds to the airport there is a bus service that operates. It is subsidised by the combined authority, so an amount of money every year goes to support that service. The service also stops at intermediate stops because it cannot support itself unless it does so, with the limited subsidy it gets. That bus service takes about 30 to 40 minutes to do about 11 miles. If there were a rail link you would probably be able to do it in about 12 minutes. Competitive journey times make a significant difference, and people would not be subject, on rail, to the vagaries of the reliability of the highway network and congested corridors. Bus can do it in some cases, and does, to some airports. I have seen in Amsterdam that part of the mix is to serve it by bus, but people want reliability to come with it. At the end of the day Leeds has a 6% mode share by bus; only 6% of people come by bus to the airport overall, so it is still quite a low number.

**Darren Caplan:** Stansted, for example, has increased public transport usage from 34% in 2000 to 51% in 2013. A big part of that is coach transfer. At Bristol airport there is the Bristol Flyer, which takes about 16% of passengers from the city centre to the airport because they do not have a rail connection. It is a major part where you do not have the full mix; buses and coaches take up the strain.

**Q8 Mary Glendon:** There is also the idea of dedicated coaches. You often experience that when you travel in Europe; you can get a coach into the city centre from the airport. It seems a good idea, but is that a practical solution as part of the strategy?

**Darren Caplan:** It is an important part of the mix, but at the end of the day buses and coaches, dedicated or not, use roads, so you have to have good road links to airports. If you have roads that have congestion along the way and that are not going to enable fast transfer to the airport, that is something you have to look at. That is where the Government in terms of the DFT, the Highways Agency, the airport operator, the local authority and the local LEP all have to work together to improve surface access by road, whichever form is used on that road. It is part of the mix, but you still have to have good links to the airport.

**Q9 Will Quince:** I want to pick up on the point about buses. You mentioned Stansted, but that is not the best example. It is great in terms of buses and they have seen a massive increase, but part of the problem is that the train takes an hour to get from Stansted to London, which is a long period of time when compared with other airports serving London; it can be done a lot quicker, and I know there are potential ways that it could improve as part of a new rail franchise next year.

Focusing on rail, part of the trouble is that in this country we are very good at having vertical links but we have very poor horizontal links. I live in Essex myself. A lot of people have to go down to London and then come back out to Stansted. That is going to be a large

reason that puts off a lot of people. On the other hand, buses and coaches can go east to west and west to east very easily. The other problem with rail is that very often it is on a commuter route, as the Stansted line is, so at peak times trains are full of commuters and can be very congested. When you have luggage it can be pretty problematic. I would be interested to know what more can be done, in relation to not just buses but coaches. I know that Stansted has done a lot of work in that regard, partly from necessity and partly because they have focused on it. I would be interested to know who you think is doing that well and why.

**Darren Caplan:** It is difficult to go down a list of our airports and say who is and is not doing well with it. I would come back to the road point. A lot of airports have coach and bus services and will try to increase those, but there is pressure on airports to become more sustainable in how they deliver their surface access as well, which means trying to get people off the road and on to rail where possible. The aviation policy framework from 2013 says, "Greater use of low carbon modes to access airports also has the potential to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as leading to less congestion and improved air quality." These are major issues to do with airport growth that we are dealing with at the moment. While I would argue that none of our fantastic airports have bad links when it comes to coaches and buses, as I mentioned before, we have to make sure we have the roads in place. We also need to try to get some modal shift, because ultimately the cleaner we can become as a sector, the more we will have permission to grow.

**Dave Haskins:** As an international comparator, I have been to Lyon, where they had a coach link from the city centre to the airport which took about an hour. As a business traveller I would use it if I was in Lyon. In the last couple of years they have opened up what is called a tram-train link, which is effectively an extension of their tram network out to the airport, and takes about half an hour. I don't know anybody who would now think, "I am going to use the coach link." Everybody is using the tram-train link.

I was on the tram in Edinburgh the other week, which is a huge success. It was quoted to me, but it may not be the right figure, that 55% of its patronage is using it to go to the airport. That is not 55% of the total airport use but of people using the tram. It has a really key role to play in terms of emissions. Modal shift is significant because you want to get people on to public transport if you can, but the fact remains that in nearly all airports you are going to get up to three quarters of people coming by road no matter what public transport you have in place. The strategic links have to be there on the highway network and it has to be efficient.

**Darren Caplan:** That benefits not just customers but the local economy. I can give you the example of Birmingham airport. They say that a 15% improvement in road and rail investment for east-west journey times results in £63 million GVA and 1,600 jobs. That is just a 15% improvement in journey times, so they need to work with it because it is a major benefit to the airport and the local economy, not just to the passenger.

**Q10 Will Quince:** I completely agree about the need to improve the road links. Of course, that will encourage more people to drive, especially as airport parking seems to be relatively cheap and there are all sorts of providers around airports. The A120 around Stansted, for example, would make a huge difference. What work is being done to encourage people to use coaches? I take your point about trams and rail, but you are largely talking about cities. Of course, there are lots of people in this country who do not live in cities. You can live anywhere in Essex, but to get from Southend to Stansted you have to go via London.

You have to go down and then back up on yourself. What is being done at the point when you purchase the ticket for your flight to encourage you to bolt on a coach or bus ticket?

**Darren Caplan:** I do not have the information to hand. If I may, I could write to the Committee afterwards with further information. I do not have specific details. Would that be okay?

**Will Quince:** Yes.

**Q11 Martin Vickers:** Mr Caplan, you referred to early and late arrivals at airports and the lack of rail services to connect them. You are quite right—it is obviously a time when the network is fairly free and there are slots available. Where is the blockage? Who is preventing it? Are the rail companies just not interested in providing a service at four in the morning? Is the rail regulator not prepared to grant it? Is it the Department? What is the problem?

**Darren Caplan:** I think it comes back to the central question for this Committee, which is about an integrated approach and our various bodies working together.

**Q12 Martin Vickers:** But surely there is a limited amount of flexibility within the existing franchises, if a rail company wanted to have an earlier service.

**Darren Caplan:** We would argue that the DFT should take a strategic approach and work, potentially, with the national infrastructure commission that was announced in the earlier part of the year. If we could identify where the gaps in service are—such as 4 am and 12 pm—which could be around the country at a variety of airports, we could look to address it, but it needs that thrust at the top from the DFT and the potential national infrastructure commission. Once we have an indication from them about what the process is and what evidence they want for the importance of that particular service, you will have the direction you need. You then need to get buy-in from the local enterprise partnership and the local authority, at local level if we are talking about rail. A whole range of parties need to be brought in, but the central thrust has to come from the DFT at the top.

Our airports are not complaining about the way they are engaging with various bodies; it is about the speed and the lack of urgency in delivering these services. There is still a lack of integration, on two levels. First, in terms of the DFT, are road, rail and air—aviation—talking to each other? If you look at what is coming down the line, there is increased demand from passengers, and high-speed rail is coming in. Are there going to be linkages between airports, the national rail infrastructure and the national road network? That has to come from the top. We would strongly urge the DFT to take a leading role to get those gaps identified and filled.

**Q13 Chair:** What changes would you like the national infrastructure commission to bring?

**Darren Caplan:** We cannot see the detail. It is using a 30-year time horizon, so in our view it is important that it looks that far ahead and identifies all the surface access projects. At the moment I am not aware that aviation is part of the national infrastructure commission. I also believe that they are focusing on two areas of the country in the main; the north and London. If they are a truly national infrastructure commission, they should look nationally and identify priorities and how they can be delivered in that time horizon. I am not going to criticise them, because they are only just being set up. We will wait to see



the terms. We supported a national infrastructure commission in the last Parliament when it was first mooted under Lord Adonis. The key point is that surface access to airports is not a priority transport-wise at the moment in terms of the national strategic view. That is where we need to hone our lobbying, if you like.

**Q14 Iain Stewart:** Following on from that, I would like to use the access improvements to Leeds Bradford as an example of how the planning system works. I understand that currently you are looking at three possible link roads.

**Dave Haskins:** Three possible alignments, but we have not narrowed it down beyond that yet.

**Q15 Iain Stewart:** I agree. But the option of a rail link has been rejected because the business case is not strong enough, at the moment at least. However, Stuart Andrew—one of the local Members for the area—said that any of the link road options is just going to move the traffic problem elsewhere in the area, and that for long-term connectivity, particularly with HS2 coming and the potential business growth, we should really be looking at a rail link. That assessment is probably above your capacity to argue for as an organisation. What help could the national infrastructure commission, or someone else, give to make that case?

**Dave Haskins:** There are two things going on there that need to be joined up a bit; that is what we are looking at. You are right that some work was undertaken, commissioned by the DFT, to look at national hotspots around infrastructure. A study was undertaken that looked at both highway links and public transport links to Leeds Bradford airport. The highway link performed very well economically, as indeed many highways schemes do, and the recommendation was that that would be taken forward and indeed it is already being funded through the strategic economic plan and the growth deal that was devolved to Leeds city region.

The rail link did not perform as well. It was set out as a longer term ambition. The two are not mutually exclusive; as I said, we need to get people by road to airports. We need to resolve local issues of congestion around airports and around reliability in the strategic transport network. We need to provide that alternative because there are leisure users and business users for airports, and they have different needs. They are not mutually exclusive. Some leisure users would use public transport, but, generally speaking, business would certainly prefer public transport when they are international travellers.

What needs to happen next is more of a joining-up, in terms of looking at what wider benefits from the rail link are going to be delivered—wider than the study looked at previously. Some work is about to be commissioned to take that forward, as Stuart Andrew was suggesting. In the next few months, work will be going forward. The link that needs to be made is how that joins in with looking at the 25 to 30-year time horizon going forward, as we said. We welcome that longer term view. We also welcome the fact that one of the themes of the national infrastructure commission is looking at northern transport. That feeds in very well, but the fact that there is at present no single body that oversees all of this has been an issue. There are many things that we need to join up around Highways England, Network Rail, local authorities and the airports. Some of those connections are being made, but there is nobody overseeing them to make critical strategic decisions and to decide on the funding that comes with them at the end of the day.

**Q16 Iain Stewart:** If I can follow that up, in your view who should take the lead? Is it the LEP? If there is a city region with an elected mayor, is it them? Is it the national infrastructure commission? Who should be the driver of this?

**Dave Haskins:** I always think that, locally, you should be able to get the clearest handle on what your local problems and issues are, and also how they fit into the strategic picture. The issue is how that then feeds in and is driven across the country by the national infrastructure commission so that it is all joined up rather than a set of disparate decisions around a number of projects that do not have any coherence. A greater level of communication with the LEPs is needed to work out where the key priorities are; they sometimes sit outside what is possible with the local funding that has been devolved. Sometimes a greater quantum of funding is required to deliver strategic connections and the nationally important infrastructure that comes with them.

**Darren Caplan:** We would agree that the DFT needs to take a lead. Then it is for the LEPs, the local authorities, Network Rail and so on to deliver the scheme, but it has to come from the DFT. There is concern about the time it takes for delivery. Most of our airport members are fine in terms of planning and working with the planning system, but it is about delivering. At Stansted, which I used as an example before, it takes five years to get into one of the control periods and then another five years to plan what to do and deliver on that. You are talking about 10 years, if you are lucky, before you get movement on a scheme. That is just too slow if you have the DFT and the LEP as well as the local authority, the airport and everyone else agreeing. Ultimately it is Governments that build roads and railways. There has to be some push from them, but they have to engage early with all the other stakeholders so that they can move together and move quickly. Everyone would agree that the way it operates is just too slow.

**Q17 Chair:** Should Government be more involved?

**Darren Caplan:** Yes. The DFT needs to drive it forward a lot more. One of the basic points for aviation in the UK is that passenger numbers are increasing massively. We have roughly 240 million passengers now in the UK. By 2050, on central forecasts by the DFT in 2013, it will be 445 million passengers. Freight is set to increase sevenfold. Airports in the south-east and London will fill up by 2030. Airports outside London and the south-east will fill up from 2040, and that includes East Midlands, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and so on. With that huge increase in passenger and freight demand we have to deliver as quickly as possible. We are talking within the next 35 years about schemes that might take quite a long time to build. Look at HS2 and how long it takes to build that. Discussions need to be happening now, and there needs to be a real impetus in driving it forward. That has to come from the DFT.

**Q18 Huw Merriman:** My question touches somewhat on the point Mr Quince made. If I want to fly from Gatwick to Rome, the airline operator will try to get me to organise my private car hire via them, and then all of a sudden I am sucked in—I'm done. I find it somewhat frustrating, particularly when you talk about Government doing more, that the airlines do not try to suck in the consumer there and then, when booking the ticket, to say, "Book via public transport; here is a discount via public transport and here is the timing." For example, not many people in Bexhill, which I represent, know that there is a Stagecoach that takes you through the middle of the night to Gatwick. The airline operators are neither



signposting nor sucking you in to buy that ticket there and then. Do you not think airport operators, airports and airlines should do more on that?

**Darren Caplan:** It is a very good point—the idea of through-ticketing and a single online portal to plan and book your journey. They tend to do it in some countries. In Germany and France there are ways to do it, but there is only so much that Government can do. It has to come through the industry. Just to clarify it, we are not saying it is just the DFT that has to do this; we all have to work in partnership, but the lead role is the DFT's. On through-ticketing or a single online portal, we looked at that in our submission and we would agree with you that more work needs to be done on that.

**Q19 Robert Flello:** There is nothing new in any of this, is there? If you look back 20 or 30 years, particularly when some of the budget airlines started taking the very early morning or late evening slots, there was difficulty in getting to airports. In a way you could say that the habit of driving was because there was no alternative. Why do you think there is delay now from Government when this problem has been building up for many years?

**Dave Haskins:** I am not quite sure why there is delay. One thing is clear. Airports are growing in this country. Airport forecasts are significant, and land around airports becomes more precious in terms of what you do with it with ancillary activities. Ultimately, if nothing is done, car parking will take up more of that precious land. There are probably better ways to use that land to generate an economic return than car parking, albeit that car parking can be a valuable source of revenue to the airport. One stimulus has to be how we do something more efficient and more effective to stimulate economic growth, rather than to use the land for some other reason.

**Darren Caplan:** It is not all doom and gloom. There have been advances over the last 20 years, and there are advances now. As I said, it is about how we make things better going forward. Our whole focus is on what happens in the next 35 years. I guess the fundamental answer to your question is politics, and people change. We get new Governments every five years. We get new officials; there is quite a bit of churn there as well. I know about examples of officials from the DFT who were going in one direction on aviation policy and then the next minute they were doing a U-turn and going in another direction. There is no continuity. Until you get continuity over the longer term, you are always going to have that issue. Hopefully, that is where the national infrastructure commission will come in and play its part—to look at a longer term horizon, regardless of the changes. It is not just about politicians changing but about officials changing as well.

**Q20 Robert Flello:** Mr Caplan, are you saying that for the last 20 years the airport operators have been trying to get Governments of all persuasions to go in a particular direction and that they have not done so?

**Darren Caplan:** No. I am talking about aviation policy generally. They work with officials at the DFT on whatever schemes they are working on, whatever the issues are, whether to do with the improvement of roads or rail or in attracting trams, as in Edinburgh where they have the new tram system. There have been advances, but if you are asking why there has not been continuity on aviation surface access over that period, it is like any form of transport—continuity is very helpful. At the moment we have a Transport Secretary and an aviation Minister who have been in post for a few years. It is great that we have some

kind of continuity and progress on some of the things we are trying to do, but that is rare. There have been a lot of Transport Secretaries and aviation Ministers in the last 20 years.

**Q21 Mark Menzies:** I want to build on Mr Ffello's point. This is probably aimed more at Mr Haskins. You talked about Leeds Bradford airport, which is the one you know about, and the rail scheme there not being able to stack up financially. That was in reply to Mr Stewart's question. Taking Mr Ffello's question on board, when you are looking at a project, to what extent can you define how much of that finance is purely for the benefit of the airport as opposed to the wider community? In north Leeds you have a very large metropolitan area, where many would also benefit from rail connectivity to the city centre.

**Dave Haskins:** Indeed, that is one of the challenges. Over the years, in looking at the potential for rail links to the airport, you look at the problems, the issues and the possible solutions and then ultimately the funding, which is almost the last thing you look at. I would not say, "Give us certainty on funding straight away," but it is more helpful if you have clarity as to where, if you hit the right buttons, that funding is going to come from. It is far from clear to me. If we were to develop a link to the airport, it could be heavy rail or some kind of tram-train type link. Tram-trains have taken a long time to get moving through to a south Yorkshire pilot and that has been a hindrance to us in developing our ideas. We need some more certainty around that. We have potentially on-street running in Leeds, so that responsibility comes from money that could be coming through the growth deal. It could operate on Network Rail lines; there is an interface with Network Rail. Again, as we have just said, it is about getting the scheme to align with the control periods of strategies, and with funding and delivery, which is, it is fair to say, far from simple. Once you get off the rail line you are then dealing with potentially private land or airport land, so you have the airport interface to deal with. Within that there are different stakeholders, people and customers who are getting different benefits out of it. It is very hard to disaggregate. You can do some modelling and say that x% are going to be using the airport and x% are using this, but it is hard to disaggregate at an early stage.

**Q22 Mark Menzies:** As an observer, my frustration is that there seem to be so many cooks. Everyone has a view, whether it is a combined authority, the LEP, the airport operator, the DFT and so on. You almost need somebody with the ability to put their foot down and say, "This makes sense, these are the beneficiaries and this is where we will draw the funding from," and drive it through. Does anybody have a political stake that is big enough to drive it through?

**Dave Haskins:** That comes back to the point that was made earlier. In the ideas we are bringing forward there is nothing particularly radical or new. People have talked about a rail link to Leeds Bradford airport for the last 10 or 15 years. Within that we regularly meet the airport; there are surface access forums that meet and as an organisation we are part of that. The other districts in west Yorkshire and neighbouring authorities are part of that. I think even Network Rail is a part of it. All of the ideas and the direction of travel are pretty sound. People have worked out what is needed to solve the problems that exist. What has not happened is the ultimate unlocking and unblocking to deliver it. The growth deal and the devolving of money has started on the path of helping that, but again it will just be one chunk or slice of the pie in terms of the funding that is available and needed to deliver some of these projects, as other parties have shown.

**Q23 Mark Menzies:** I will come to Mr Caplan on this point in a second, but if I was somebody who was using Leeds Bradford airport as a business user or holidaymaker, or somebody who lived in proximity to it—I am talking about Leeds Bradford because you are from there—I would be really frustrated that there seems to be a will to make this happen and there are all these great ideas, yet it is all hyperbole and nobody is actually taking the decision yes or no and making it happen. This has gone on for 10 or 15 years and it seems like it could go on for another 10 or 15 years. That is just one example. What is stopping a decision being made to drive it through?

**Chair:** Who should decide?

**Mark Menzies:** Yes. Who is it?

**Dave Haskins:** In theory, it has become easier in the last couple of years. With the establishment of combined authorities and their alignment to the LEPs, the strategic economic plan for the region has really come together. Transport and economics are not looked at in silos, and that is really key. The consensus is much stronger now and the evidence base becomes much stronger for what you are going to do. Ultimately, yes, it has to go somewhere. Let's not forget that it costs a lot of money to develop those proposals to a state of readiness in the first place. There is a fine balance in developing proposals to that state without the money being certain at the end of it. There is a lot of politics involved in that.

**Q24 Chair:** Mr Caplan, from what you said before, am I right in saying that you will be looking to some combination of Government and the national infrastructure commission to deal with it?

**Darren Caplan:** Yes. It needs to be driven down. I agree that locally it is better that you are given joint spatial plans and that LEPs work with local authorities, but ultimately it comes from the Government and the DfT. There are two things I want to quickly read out to you that are key to this debate. 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”. We would argue that in all these schemes there is a range of beneficiaries. An airport does not just make money for itself to exist. There are passengers, commuters and business people—a whole range of people who benefit from the links you get to and from an airport. The Airports Commission interim report from a couple of years ago talks about a package of surface transport improvements being key to making better use of existing capacity. It mentions the enhancement of Gatwick airport in terms of Gatwick rail access. It talks about the improved rail link from London to Stansted, and about rail access to Heathrow from the south and provisional smart ticketing. You have documents now that can be used in order to back up the idea that the Government should be pushing this agenda forward. It is about making it happen and delivering on it. That is the issue.

**Q25 Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Apologies for my late entrance to the meeting. I want to ask a very quick question, picking up on what Mr Merriman mentioned. Mr Caplan was talking about through-ticketing and a single online portal. I think you briefly said that Germany was a good example.

**Darren Caplan:** I did not say a good example; it is an example where Lufthansa is doing some work.

**Q26 Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** Talk me through where the good examples are.

**Darren Caplan:** I am not saying there are good examples. I am saying it is something that we need to look at. I will give you an example. If you are in London and you go on to the TFL website, you can get through-ticketing from your door to where you are going. It can be walking, then on to rail and then a bus; it tells you how to do it. We don't have that for aviation, and it is something that we should definitely be looking at. It would make it easier for everyone. I think airports and airlines would now support it, but to come back to the point made earlier, who is driving it? It comes from the industry to a certain extent, but it would help to have the DFT and Government agencies working on it as well.

**Q27 Chair:** Would you say that generally the strategic road and rail networks take adequate account of airport-related traffic when plans are being made?

**Dave Haskins:** In my view, no. If we take Highways England as an example, they would have a set of objectives as to why they would invest and improve their infrastructure; why they would widen the trans-Pennine motorway to four lanes using smart widening. I am not close enough to it, but my understanding is that they would not necessarily take a wider view even of the impact it might have on the local highway network, in that an extra lane on the motorway would disperse an extra 33% of traffic on to the local highway network. That then spills over into the access to the airports in the north that I was talking about. We have people who are driving in one direction to Manchester and people who are driving within west Yorkshire trying to get to Leeds Bradford airport. I do not see investment around the strategic highway network taking that into account. I do not see evidence of it. It might be implicit somewhere but I have not seen it set out.

**Q28 Chair:** Mr Caplan, do you agree with that?

**Darren Caplan:** I would be slightly more optimistic. I think it is a bit of a mixed bag: £19.5 million was awarded to Luton Borough Council to improve access from the M1 to Luton airport; and £80 million was awarded to Doncaster Borough Council for a link road between Doncaster and Robin Hood airport, so there are some examples. If you look at the example of Bristol, which I mentioned earlier, they have a single-lane carriageway going through to their airport and there are certain times of the day when there is congestion. Why not try to address those? We need to look at surface access generally and identify what the priority schemes are. There are some specific examples where there has been good work going on, but not enough. As I said, with passenger demand increasing going forward this becomes more of a priority, because roads and rail will get more congested as more passengers go to and from airports.

**Q29 Chair:** Do you think that road and rail investment strategies should be more specific about where they think investments should take place?

**Darren Caplan:** We would argue that the DFT needs to be clear about the process for prioritising surface access schemes. They need to give guidance to airports on the evidence required to support their case. Ultimately, if you are going to get DFT support

and funding of some kind, you need to explain to airports how they go about doing it and what the criteria are. I do not think there is clarity about that. Once you have that, they can put forward their schemes and work with LEPs, local authorities, Network Rail, the Highways Agency and so on, and get progress, but there needs to be more clarity about what constitutes a good process and good evidence to get the support they need for their schemes.

**Q30 Chair:** Do you agree with Heathrow and Gatwick airports when they say that the already planned investment will be adequate to deal with expansion at either airport?

**Darren Caplan:** I am afraid we are not commenting on the Airports Commission. We have various members of the AOA and I won't be commenting on the Airports Commission.

**Q31 Chair:** You won't give us any thoughts on that at all.

**Darren Caplan:** No.

**Q32 Chair:** What are your views on state aid in relation to funding access improvements related to airports?

**Darren Caplan:** The UK is blessed with fantastic private sector airports. In most other parts of the world airports are state-owned, so where there is public investment in UK airports it tends to be of a smaller order than you get in Europe or America. We would argue that the DFT needs to engage with the European Commission early on to see whether funding or specific schemes adhere to state aid rules. We also need to ensure that there is a level playing field between airports so that the same rules are applied and you do not have discrimination, where one airport gets support but another doesn't. Provided the DFT and the European Commission engage early on about whether a scheme adheres to state aid rules, we would support it.

**Dave Haskins:** I concur with that. Going back to the previous point, it is how we draw a distinction as to what funding is leading to particular benefits; for instance, an access road to a local airport, such as is being proposed in Leeds at the moment, has wider objectives and benefits than just getting to the airport and helping the growth of the airport. State aid has to play a part in that and we have to understand where it fits in.

**Q33 Chair:** Are there any problems at the moment with working out where it fits in?

**Dave Haskins:** We have not reached that stage yet, so I could not comment on that.

**Q34 Chair:** You don't have any general concerns about state aid rules.

**Dave Haskins:** It is not that I don't have any concerns. There may be some but I am not aware of any.

**Q35 Chair:** Mr Caplan, are you aware of any concerns about state aid rules or how they are interpreted in relation to funding infrastructure access?



**Darren Caplan:** No, I do not think there are concerns, provided it is a level playing field and provided that airports feel there is fair treatment and the rules are being adhered to. As I said, most of our airports are private sector funded so the order of investment, in terms of that which is effective state aid or subject to state aid, is much smaller than airports overseas.

**Q36 Chair:** You both referred to problems in getting plans implemented in relation to infrastructure investment and the different bodies involved. Are there any examples where airport development has been impeded by delays in planned investment for access? Perhaps routes have left or have not come, or passengers have not come.

**Darren Caplan:** I have not come across that but I can check with my members and come back to you, if that is helpful.

**Dave Haskins:** I am not aware at local level either, no.

**Q37 Chair:** So although you have both talked strongly about the importance of having adequate surface connectivity, and you have outlined the current problems in securing that, you are not aware of any problems where it has not been secured.

**Dave Haskins:** In the case of Leeds Bradford, I do not think the level of car use coming to the airport has been an issue to date, or the fact that we would prefer people to travel by a different mode. Going forward, realising the business plans and the level of growth in the DFT forecasts—from 3 million up to 7 million and ultimately 9 million passengers for Leeds Bradford airport—will be impeded unless there is adequate access. That access cannot all come by highway. I am quite clear, going forward, that there will be issues in terms of the way growth will be impeded. There is spare capacity at the moment at the airports, but the constraint will become one of access over time.

**Q38 Karl McCartney:** On the specific question of airport capacity at the moment, with no improvements to surface access to airports, how quickly would the various airports that you have mentioned already hit their capacity for passengers?

**Dave Haskins:** I would have to come back to you on that in the case of a local example.

**Darren Caplan:** The point is that we are looking at what happens going forward. It is very hard to measure how current surface access is preventing things. For example, Edinburgh airport recently had trams. That came in last summer. Passenger numbers are going up, but is that because of surface access or was it there before the tram came in, when you had to take a cab ride of 45 minutes or an hour from the city centre? It is hard to gauge that. Our contention is that, because growth is going to be so significant going forward, we have to deal with that and there will be problems down the line. Similarly, I am more than happy to have a look at it and come back to the Committee.

**Q39 Karl McCartney:** You talked about state aid to improve surface access, but from my point of view surely you should let the market decide. If airports are under pressure because they are not going to be able to deal with the growth that they want because they do not have the surface access, surely they then need to make sure that they get the surface access improved.

**Darren Caplan:** I would come back to the point about what constitutes a wider range of beneficiaries. It is not just airports that would benefit from that growth; it is a whole range. The local economy, the wider regional economy and the national economy benefit from it. It does not help the UK to have people finding it harder to get to airports. It helps the UK if people can have an integrated system where you can get to airports. The discussion shouldn't be private sector or public sector. Airport operators always put money into schemes that benefit their airport in some way, but you have to have a range of funding for it as well, because a lot of stakeholders benefit.

**Q40 Karl McCartney:** You have trumpeted Luton as an example, but Luton is local money decided by local government rather than national Government to ensure that that growth should continue because it is great for their area. Fair play to them for doing that, but that is slightly misleading because not all airports are in a similar position, nor are they majority-owned by the Spanish state.

**Darren Caplan:** It is a fair point. On Luton, you could argue that the airport benefits from the M1 widening and that link. You could also argue that people going up and down the motorway who have nothing to do with the airport benefit from it. Most surface access schemes benefit a wider range of beneficiaries than just the airport, and that is the key point.

**Dave Haskins:** It should not be forgotten that an airport is not just about passengers. There is a wider range of businesses that locate near airports and there is a significant number of workers at airports as well. They all need access to the airport on that valuable land that I was talking about, and it adds significantly to the local economy. Leeds Bradford airport is adding £100 million to the local economy. Some of that is through jobs growth, which is what we are looking at.

**Darren Caplan:** Freight is a big part of it as well. We have talked about passengers' needs so far, but freight contributes 40% of UK imports and exports by value, £14.3 billion in GVA and £282,400 million in terms of wider impact on the UK economy. We need to make sure that freight is considered when looking at surface access. The key thing is that if we do not get it right other countries will benefit from the fact that we haven't got it right in the UK. It is passengers and freight that we should be looking at.

**Q41 Chair:** Is it easy to distinguish the different beneficiaries: the airport, the businesses and the local area?

**Darren Caplan:** Every airport will have its own mix. You have the airport operator, passengers, commuters, businesses and freight users. A whole range of people benefit from it, and the local economy benefits from strong airports that are well connected—

**Q42 Chair:** But is it easy to differentiate who the beneficiaries are in relation to who should pay?

**Darren Caplan:** You have to look at each individual case and see who is benefiting the most.

**Q43 Iain Stewart:** I want to ask about the air freight side. In planning generally and for individual developments, does freight get a fair share of input into what decisions are made?

**Darren Caplan:** It certainly does not get a fair share in terms of the airwaves and the political discussion, although it should, given the figures I just gave you. It comes back to this point. If you have the DFT and the national infrastructure commission looking at it long term, they must make sure that they do not forget the strategic importance of freight—the importance of getting goods quickly from airports to other parts of the country or, in the case of express services, to the customer. It is a massive issue and it must be considered.

**Q44 Iain Stewart:** But it is not at the moment.

**Darren Caplan:** I don't think freight has as much bandwidth in terms of discussion as passengers do. I would argue that, yes, we should have more discussions about freight and it should be considered more as part of the national infrastructure commission's deliberations in the months and years ahead.

**Q45 Robert Flello:** I am glad we have moved on to freight. Looking at it from a slightly different point of view, with all the potential for further congestion if nothing is done, it is not only going to affect passengers, as we heard, but also the ability for freight operators to get to and from airports either to take goods to be flown elsewhere or to bring goods in. There will also of course be the knock-on; if there are other services in the vicinity of the airport and the roads are clogged up with people trying to get to and from the airport as passengers, there will be a knock-on effect on their businesses as well. Here we are at the very beginning of National Lorry Week—I thought I would try to get that in—so has the AOA done any work, or has any work been done, to quantify the sort of impact on the wider economy of congestion affecting freight to and from airports, or indeed freight in the vicinity of airports? If not, do you think perhaps that needs to be done urgently?

**Darren Caplan:** It is worth having a look at. I know York Aviation have done some recent studies on the issue of freight. I think they were looking at the Airports Commission but they also have passages on the national situation. It is not just Heathrow and Gatwick; it is also East Midlands, Stansted and Belfast—a range of airports have freight. How that integrates with passenger surface access is not something that has been looked at, as far as I am aware, but we can take it on board and see if there is some work that we or a research company could do.

**Chair:** Thank you both very much.

### Examination of Witnesses

*Witnesses:* **Dr Matthew Niblett**, Director, Independent Transport Commission, **Richard de Cani**, Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London, **Paul Harwood**, Strategy and Planning Director, Network Rail, and **Ginny Clarke**, Executive Director, Strategy and Planning, Highways England, gave evidence.

**Q46 Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Transport Select Committee. Would you give your names and organisations, please?

**Ginny Clarke:** I am Ginny Clarke, and I am director of strategy and planning for Highways England.

**Richard de Cani:** My name is Richard de Cani. I am the managing director of planning for Transport for London.

**Paul Harwood:** I am Paul Harwood from Network Rail, strategy and planning director.

**Dr Niblett:** I am Matthew Niblett, the director of the Independent Transport Commission.

**Q47 Chair:** Thank you very much. Dr Niblett, you have described the information on the implications for surface transport of an expanded Heathrow or Gatwick as “worryingly limited and inconsistent”. Are you still of the same opinion?

**Dr Niblett:** I have spoken with Professor Ryley, the author of the report, and with my colleagues. The belief is that there is now more evidence, but we could still do with additional work on future demand, particularly more robust work on modelling the implications for national networks.

**Q48 Chair:** I am not very clear if you are satisfied with the current position or not. You said that there needs to be some more work.

**Dr Niblett:** We think there needs to be some more work.

**Q49 Chair:** In which area should that work be?

**Dr Niblett:** We would like to see more work on future demand modelling and on the implications for national networks on road and rail.

**Q50 Chair:** Ms Clarke, could you tell us what your views are about the impact of air travel on demand for road transport?

**Ginny Clarke:** We take it into account in terms of the forecasts that we use from the Department, which include traffic as a result of all sorts of generations, whether through airports, ports or urban development. I noticed from the previous session that people asked whether we had taken enough account of airports. Certainly two years ago we did, for the first time, look at our network on the basis of routes, and invited all the people who might have an interest in looking at future planning for those routes. Those were the basis for the first roads investment strategy that Government produced at the end of 2014. That was the first time we actually gave everyone the opportunity, and a number of airport authorities took that opportunity, to give the picture. They probably felt it was the first time they had the opportunity to talk to us about the future—the greater than five to 10-year horizon—rather than on issues where they would have dealt with us on a day-to-day basis, say about the resilience of our network. We are taking more account of surface access, and how that looks in the longer term from a Highways England perspective.

**Q51 Chair:** Mr Harwood, Network Rail seems to have gone even further and said that rail passengers travelling to airports “do not represent a game changer for rail demand at the busiest time of day”. Do you think that passengers on the Brighton main line would agree with that?

**Paul Harwood:** The comment was related to the volume of demand for airport passengers. In demand at the highest usage area of the day, which is the morning peak period—the morning hour effectively is the key point, between 8 and 9 o’clock—the percentage of demand for airport traffic is very low. While we recognise that there is significant usage of the rail network serving airports and they are an important part of it, with different product types and so on, in terms of the overall quantity the main driver for justifying rail investment, particularly around the busiest time of the day, is commuter or business traffic.

**Q52 Chair:** Are you seriously saying that there is no real impact from aviation travellers—people trying to get to or from airports—on the rail system, and that it is not a problem for anyone? Is that what you are saying?

**Paul Harwood:** No, not at all.

**Q53 Chair:** What you have spoken about is highly generalised. I need to get it down to individual travellers trying to get to an airport, or away from it, as well as commuters. Surely you are not saying that there is no impact.

**Paul Harwood:** No, not at all. We have a long-term planning process and we work very closely with the relevant airport owners and operators about their demand predictions and what their specific customer needs are, because they can be quite different from those of other users of the rail network and other service users. We try to factor that into the planning. Some of those needs almost conflict at times, so it does have an impact, but, in terms of the overall capacity requirements, the justification for upgrading the rail network and providing more capacity is generally driven by the other users of the network rather than airport users.

**Q54 Iain Stewart:** I want to use one example—the proposed western access to Heathrow. Has that been planned to relieve congestion or to achieve a modal shift for passengers coming from the west of England and the Thames Valley corridor, to get them off the congested M4? What is the primary objective of that?

**Paul Harwood:** That specific scheme is predominantly to encourage more people to use rail as the mode of accessing the airport from the west. It is then planned as a wider capacity upgrade for the rest of the network, but the primary aim is to improve services and the attractiveness of those services from the west.

**Q55 Iain Stewart:** How do you co-operate with Highways England on that? You are trying to achieve a modal shift, so how do your two strategies interact?

**Paul Harwood:** We use a lot of the same data sources in a sense—the same as the Government—especially in terms of population growth, demographic changes and employment growth. We use that information. We consult regularly on all the activities that we are planning, and also through the airport operator, because they will have the



surface transport model, and significant changes to that model can affect the choices of passengers as to which mode they want to use. We use that in a joined-up fashion to get as good a co-ordinated plan as possible.

**Q56 Graham Stringer:** You talk about demand, but how many of our airports are connected directly to main railway lines?

**Paul Harwood:** I do not specifically have the figures about how many, but I can find out. Some of them are connected.

**Q57 Graham Stringer:** Is it four?

**Paul Harwood:** It depends whether you include things like Luton, which has a link from a station to the airport. There are varying degrees, but in terms of direct links the main ones are Stansted, Gatwick and Heathrow.

**Q58 Graham Stringer:** Isn't that one of the reasons why there is no demand? It is because there is no railway line.

**Paul Harwood:** People have a variety of different ways that they can get to the airport. There are options.

**Q59 Graham Stringer:** There is no rail option if there is no railway line, is there?

**Paul Harwood:** Sure. In terms of the two Scottish airports—Glasgow and Edinburgh—we are working to use tram as the intermediary between rail access and the airport, so rail can be part of the journey but it is not taking you directly to the destination.

**Q60 Graham Stringer:** Don't you think that in a modern economy, where people are concerned about air pollution of various sorts, it should be a strategic objective to have all of our major airports linked to the main rail routes?

**Paul Harwood:** There is no doubt that it is a good objective. It is quite expensive sometimes to make that connection, and it depends on the balance of demand. If there was a specific initiative to have a modal shift, as we mentioned earlier, it would make sense to do that. But in some cases it is a very expensive shift for a relatively small likely demand.

**Q61 Graham Stringer:** Can you explain the methodology for how you would go about measuring demand where there is no current railway line?

**Paul Harwood:** It is based on a predictive model, which admittedly gets harder the more changes there are in options for people. One of the things to add is that when you build new—

**Q62 Graham Stringer:** If you put that into plain English, it means that you don't assess objectively where there is no current rail link.

**Paul Harwood:** The long-term planning activity that we now undertake has a projection of what service would be ideal based on the perceived economic benefits of that rail

connection, so we are promoting the link you talked about earlier in terms of an aspiration. We then match that against the cost of achieving it.

**Q63 Graham Stringer:** I would like to move on to Gatwick next. It is going to lose out in your methodology, isn't it, in competition where there are already busy lines, so you never end up extending the rail system to include our strategic airports?

**Paul Harwood:** It needs additional justification, but we have a process for doing that.

**Q64 Graham Stringer:** Can you tell us a bit more about Gatwick? You seem to imply the opposite of my experience when getting on the Gatwick Express. Sometimes you cannot get on for passengers and suitcases. You imply there is sufficient capacity for people wanting to get from London to Gatwick. It doesn't seem like that to me.

**Paul Harwood:** The Brighton main line is probably the route at the highest capacity in London and the south-east at the moment; there is no doubt about that. The changes that we will implement when Thameslink comes on-stream in terms of additional services and length of trains will make quite a significant difference. As I mentioned earlier, we have plans, which are predominantly driven by commuter growth on the route anyway, for accommodating additional services beyond that. There is also the commitment to change the train fleet that is currently operating there, because it is not ideal for the mixed use of commuters and airport users.

**Q65 Graham Stringer:** What is the schedule for that plan?

**Paul Harwood:** The trains are coming in over the next two years or so. It is a franchise commitment. The Thameslink service is coming in at the end of 2018, and then in control period 6—our 2019-23 period—we are promoting additional significant investment on the Brighton main line.

**Q66 Graham Stringer:** I have one last question on Stansted. When your new chief executive was here, he said that he was going to halve the time between London and Stansted. When is that going to happen?

**Paul Harwood:** Ultimately it probably requires Crossrail 2, which is a different subject in its own right. To enhance capacity on that corridor, there needs to be a combined package, moving some of the services into the Crossrail 2 service that we are promoting jointly with Transport for London. That will be combined with some of the four-tracking work that we can do sooner. The first step can be taken again in control period 6, which is 2019-24, but you need to work towards the 2030 timeline for Crossrail 2.

**Q67 Graham Stringer:** What will that do for scheduling on the line and the capacity of the line? How much will the journey time reduce, and how many more passengers will be able to get to Stansted?

**Paul Harwood:** I can't remember the exact numbers it will reduce it by on the Stansted route at the moment; it will take a significant proportion off the journey time. I know Stansted has an aspiration for a 30-minute service. I think we will get close to that, but whether it is actually down to that—

**Q68 Graham Stringer:** Can you send us a note on that?

**Paul Harwood:** Yes, absolutely.

**Q69 Chair:** Would any of the other witnesses like to comment on forecasting demand in relation to rail links and how it might be approached?

**Richard de Cani:** From a London perspective, it is really important that we look at demand forecasting for airports in the context of what is happening in the surrounding area. The challenge we have in London is the rising population of the city and the need to factor that into the work we are doing on airports, where you have rising demand as well. When you look at the totality, the proportion of demand from airports might be relatively small; when you look at the overall size of the pot, for a city like London it is a very significant element of the pot because everything is so crowded. If you start to look at airports in isolation from background growth, you underestimate the overall demand that you will have on some of those lines. When you look at the main airports surrounding London, with the exception perhaps of the Heathrow Express, all the rail lines are also providing a very important other purpose for people living and working in the city and travelling around the city. It is really important that you factor in that demand alongside the airport demand. You cannot look at it in isolation.

**Q70 Chair:** Is it difficult to separate the two sets of demand?

**Richard de Cani:** No, not specifically. As Mr Harwood said, the airports tend to have their own forecasting models which are driven by what is happening with the airlines, because demand for airports tends to be a function of what the airlines are doing in terms of their routes and their utilisation of those services. We have our own forecasting models for what is happening in London. You don't always get an overlap in the peak periods, although in London you tend to, so it might be in a different direction. It is relatively straightforward to build up the overall demand profile by looking at the London demand and then putting the airport demand on top. But you are reliant on good information from the airports to do that.

**Q71 Chair:** Dr Niblett, do you have any views on this in general, going outside London?

**Dr Niblett:** It is important to remember that smaller airports particularly are often heavily car-dominated in terms of the mode of choice to go to them. It will be very important to look at each airport case individually and understand what the hinterland is for the customers who actually use the airport. That will result in a different profile for the customers of each airport.

**Q72 Chair:** Do you think that assessment is done effectively in relation to individual airports?

**Dr Niblett:** I think so, yes.

**Q73 Robert Ffello:** Dr Niblett, you mentioned choice, and I want to come back to a point my colleague was making—that for a lot of people there is no choice. For example, in

my city of Stoke-on-Trent, we could say that it was wonderful, because within about an hour's car journey you could get to four international airports: Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and East Midlands. But if you try to get to any of those by train you might as well go to London, because the journey time, if you could actually get to them by train, is ridiculous.

Mr Harwood and Ms Clarke, in terms of the work going on between your departments, if you say, "Hang on, the projected growth at airports is this," so for example, users of the A50 to get to East Midlands airport will double, triple or whatever on a two-lane carriageway into the airport, how does that factor into the work that you are doing, Mr Harwood, in terms of saying, "You know what, East Midlands needs to be served by some sort of railhead"? I am curious about at what level, if any, that sort of discussion goes on.

**Ginny Clarke:** I mentioned route strategies, because that is the basis going forward, not a lot in history but certainly going forward. We are not just looking at the demands for road travel but at the potential developments that would use other transport modes as well. In your example about routes connecting in the region of Stoke and those journeys, we would be looking at the forecasts for the airport and what they are saying their growth potential is over 10 to 20 years. We would be looking at other operators and their plans. Effectively that would be where we would try and marry up those forecasts against the generalised forecasts.

Taking the previous question, we work from the top down, from national forecasts, and disaggregate down to the local level. We say, "This is the generalised growth. What is it in these local areas where the trips might be different?" They might be affected by particular local growth or particular emphasis on freight. That is when we would model those differences. We take account of the rail modelling. It assumes that the rail and airport sectors have those forecasts available. We don't create them for them, if that helps.

**Paul Harwood:** Increasingly, we are effectively looking for alternative options to one problem and to work out the best investment opportunity, if one is necessary. There are a number of different routes where road and rail are effectively trying to serve similar groups of markets, but it might be increasingly sensible to try to differentiate to get investment in the right place for the right market. We are getting better and better at working on that, particularly through things like the local enterprise partnerships. They bring a good business and community focus on what solution people want. We work together to try to find the best investment option.

**Q74 Robert Ffello:** But the reality is that for my constituents in Stoke-on-Trent, who perhaps have a business that takes advantage of the fact that we are alongside the M6 and have the A50 linking down to the M1, it would be a marvellous location were it not for the fact that the roads are clogged up with people trying to get to airports they can't get to by train.

**Ginny Clarke:** That brings in the question about the network in those locations, and other locations where we are very close to capacity. Whether it is about airport growth or industrial parks or whatever, the longer term planning that the Department introduced in the five-year roads investment strategy and the 20-year strategy that goes with it is bringing us to look at these things in terms of a longer forecast. We then have a better option for looking at the options for investment. The reality is that that came up with lots of opportunities to invest in the strategic road network to reduce congestion. There are a lot of opportunities for doing that. It is where those priorities are matched against other

levels of investment that, by working more closely together, we can perhaps put together that evidence more effectively.

**Q75 Robert Ffello:** Are you saying that you are working out a joint approach and lobbying for that, or are you lobbying for more investment to improve the M6 corridor, and you, Mr Harwood, hopefully, are lobbying for better connectivity and train lines to our airports?

**Paul Harwood:** We should be lobbying for the best solution.

**Q76 Robert Ffello:** I know what you should be doing.

**Paul Harwood:** We intend to do that. We will work to try to find the best option to solve the problem and improve.

**Robert Ffello:** You will be doing that.

**Paul Harwood:** Absolutely.

**Q77 Chair:** You said “intend to”.

**Paul Harwood:** As Ms Clarke said, the 20-year plan is starting to come together. We are in a better position now and it is giving us both the grounding to look at long-term requirements.

**Ginny Clarke:** Other bodies are also making us, and they will hold us to account for that. The LEPs are a good example of where we have those sorts of discussions in longer timeframes, with local planning groups as well. That is certainly what I have seen change over the last few years, let alone the ambition for us as the strategic highway authority, and Network Rail, I am sure, to want to work more closely because we will get a better solution from it. We are all facing quite congested networks in many of our areas, so the best picture is one where we can help Government see where the best levels of investment are going to get the best returns.

**Q78 Chair:** Do the timescales that you are working to align to the airlines’ needs? Mr Harwood, you don’t look very sure.

**Paul Harwood:** I think so, because the relevant airport owner has a robust and fairly long-term plan for their own surface transport plans. Putting those things together, we have the timescales lined up.

**Q79 Chair:** Does that mean yes?

**Paul Harwood:** Yes.

**Q80 Chair:** Ms Clarke, is it all joined up?

**Ginny Clarke:** I am not sure I can speak for all the airport operators as to whether they would feel it was, certainly from the strategic road perspective. If it is not, we are offering the opportunity to be engaged a lot more actively in a longer term planning horizon. Certainly for the strategic road network the move to a five-year cycle is not just about the

next five-year investment in terms of the second period, which is 2020 and beyond. It is also to look strategically for a much longer period beyond that at the sorts of things we should be preparing in the next five years, which we will be delivering in the five years after that. It is a much stronger strategic perspective.

**Q81 Chair:** But does that include looking specifically at airport operators and what their needs might be?

**Ginny Clarke:** Yes. I would agree that when you talk to individual operators they have longer term plans, so it is us being more receptive to seeing that and how it fits within the cycle of planning for the longer term.

**Q82 Chair:** And are you actually doing that now?

**Ginny Clarke:** Yes. When we start the next cycle of route strategies, which will be early 2016, those are the sorts of people we will be inviting to the forums. It will be about us listening and not just telling people, which is probably how the perception might have been in the past.

**Q83 Huw Merriman:** To use the example of the Davies Commission, did both Highways England and Network Rail submit a shopping list of requirements that would be needed for one of those airports to be able to expand?

**Paul Harwood:** Absolutely. We engaged with the Airports Commission throughout, from the very early stages, to help understand what the implications of any of the options were.

**Q84 Huw Merriman:** Just to take an example, would Network Rail have looked at the Brighton main line and taken the view that, as you said, the line is already full to capacity with the existing size of Gatwick and, therefore, if Gatwick is to expand significantly, you potentially need a contribution for a second Brighton line to be able to cope with the capacity? Is that the type of submission that you would have made?

**Paul Harwood:** Sort of, but within the context of a relatively small percentage at the point of maximum usage of the rail network. The commuter growth is predictably way in excess of the growth that the airport is providing in numbers terms. The percentages are big from the airport but the numbers are still relatively small compared with that morning peak period. We factor that into it and it reinforces the case for investment that is there already.

**Q85 Huw Merriman:** But do you make it almost in the same way as local authorities do when they are looking for a section 106 application for funding from developers? They really fight hard. Could you take the view, "This really gives us a good opportunity to improve our network here at the same time"? I am not suggesting you put a gun to anyone's head, but none the less you could really use it to your advantage.

**Paul Harwood:** Absolutely. Gatwick airport itself is a joint project being developed with us, the Department for Transport and Gatwick Airport Ltd to jointly fund the station enhancement, which again is a mixture. It is needed anyway because the station is reaching capacity, so Gatwick has a part to play in that, noting that some of the usage of the station is also for non-airport users in the local area. That case is planned to grow if Gatwick expanded the airport.



**Q86 Huw Merriman:** In that case has your request—not demand—been that there is a need for a second Brighton line if Gatwick expands?

**Paul Harwood:** Gatwick will benefit more from the investment on the existing line. That is the headline. We have investment plans to remove most of the main bottlenecks on that route and enhance services there. The second Brighton line—the BML2 debate is linked to that—is more about the resilience of operations on the existing route, but that is not so focused on Gatwick because it will effectively miss Gatwick. It is more around the resilience of the Brighton services, but it is all part of the same plan.

**Huw Merriman:** I am surprised that you have not pushed for that.

**Q87 Chair:** Is your planning related to needs at different times of day, or are you just looking at one type of demand?

**Paul Harwood:** We look at operations throughout the day and at what airports need throughout the day. The case is predominantly driven for the investment, and then you can use the capacity provided for that investment in different ways or at different times of the day, but we examine demand across the day.

**Q88 Mary Glindon:** Has surface access to airports been given the important status it might need in planning projects such as HS2 and Crossrail?

**Paul Harwood:** I would say so. Crossrail in particular is quite heavily linked to serving Heathrow, so it is a very important part of the service for Heathrow going forward. HS2, in the conversations as to how it serves Birmingham International, is relevant; indeed, the opportunities it opens up for Birmingham International are quite significant as well. We look at all the implications because we look at all the users on the route.

**Q89 Martin Vickers:** Ms Clarke and Mr Harwood, you have both spoken about strategy and working together, which is understandable as you are both arms of Government in one sense. But of course it is Government policy to devolve more power down to combined authorities or regions. Is that going to lead to more confusion, or do you anticipate that the devolved administrations of various kinds will be able to put in a local perspective and give you better information on which to make your decisions?

**Paul Harwood:** I think it is the latter. We work very well at a local level. The information is richer and the understanding of what improvements are wanted going forward is richer. From a rail perspective, it often needs to be at a fairly aggregated level because the services cross a number of different boundaries, but that is where local enterprise partnerships, for example, are a very effective way of working with local authority and local business perspectives. I think it works very effectively.

**Ginny Clarke:** I think it is working well. Certainly the indications with Transport for the North, but equally in the west midlands and some of the other geographic areas, show that the sense of devolution to local level has made those local areas think more collectively. It is not just about going down to the lowest level where views can be expressed, because we have mechanisms for taking those views. It is more that the aggregation of those local views, whether on sub-regional or regional level, then starts to make strategic sense of some of those local views. One of the biggest difficulties, particularly from a road

network—I can only speak from the strategic road network—is the many different and varying views one can get locally about what needs to be done, whether it is around the M1, the M25 or whatever else. The sense of having more ownership, of coming to a consensus in those local groups, aids us quite considerably. Equally, we also have to recognise the place, even down to parish level for some of our roads, where they are not motorways but all-purpose trunk roads. We need a level of representation at all levels to make sense of some of the decisions that need to be made. Some are still quite local, and even with regard to airports some of them are about local issues of access as much as they are about facilitating strategic economic growth. We have to recognise that in a road network sense.

**Q90 Chair:** Mr de Cani, how do you see the position in London?

**Richard de Cani:** We have been working in that devolved way for some time now. We have the combination of strategic planning, the strategic highway authority and the rail network. We have been working closely with airport operators since we were set up 15 years ago. I think it gives you the opportunity to combine the demand generated from the airports with the demand generated from the urban area. Clearly not all the demand is derived from that particular location. There is a national demand as well that you need to factor in, but it enables you to have a comprehensive look ahead at the scale of demand that you need to accommodate and how best to do that.

**Q91 Martin Vickers:** I want to follow up something that Dr Niblett said a short while ago. You said that in the case of smaller airports it is mainly the car that people use to get there. Does that mean there is a case, where costs are containable, for providing rail access to some of our existing smaller airports, because that would actually ease the burden of getting people to the major airports?

**Dr Niblett:** It could, but we need to reflect on the fact that most of the smaller airports very much have a rural hinterland, and therefore the benefits that would arise from extra rail access may not encourage as much modal shift as if that hinterland was much more urban in character.

**Q92 Mark Menzies:** I want to put a question to Ms Clarke. You talked about all the things that go well when you are working with LEPs and combined authorities and so on when you are planning alternative road schemes. But where does it go wrong?

**Ginny Clarke:** That is a very good question. It goes wrong if we are not clear about what the objectives are. If we are initiating an exercise, as we would with the route strategies I was explaining—Highways England initiating the discussion about future investment options for the roads—it goes wrong when we misunderstand what we are trying to achieve. Whether it is our fault and we are not clear about the objectives of building these route strategies, whether we misunderstand local authorities and what they want or whether it is LEPs or whatever, we minimise that by having discussions all the time. The route strategies are to some extent pulling those together in a timeframe that serves the building of the second roads investment strategy for the second period.

It goes wrong when we don't have ongoing debate. When we talk with local authorities, and even with Network Rail, as an example, when things have not gone smoothly you can

usually track it back to us not having maintained that ongoing debate. I take the point that we are all seeking to drive towards getting a five-year cycle of investment now, certainly in the strategic road network. We have had the experience of the very first one of those in the road sector. We can see whether we can improve it, so that in the second one people get a sense that they have had a genuinely fair hearing. I am not sure it will leave everybody contented because, as I said, on the strategic road network the demand for investment far outstrips supply, as we saw in the last investment cycle. You are right that not everything is perfect, but we are certainly working towards solutions that will have a lot more buy-in and consensus from those who have contributed to the processes.

**Q93 Mark Menzies:** Mr Harwood, the Government made it clear that as part of their strategic priorities for control period 5 they want to see improved rail connectivity, but that really relates to Heathrow and Gatwick. To clarify something that was said earlier, what steps are you taking as Network Rail to influence improved rail connectivity to airports other than Heathrow and Gatwick?

**Paul Harwood:** There are relatively straightforward examples like Luton, which will benefit significantly from the completion of the Thameslink project. The service starting up there will improve the amount of connectivity directly because people will be able to access Luton. I understand that there is then a journey to the airport, which goes back to the point about whether rail serves it directly or indirectly, but a lot more people will be able to get to Luton with no journey change at all, because the number of different services going through on to the midland main line will enhance—

**Q94 Mark Menzies:** Can I pause you there? Is there somebody within Network Rail who as part of their job is tasked with looking at your railways and our medium-to-large airports and thinking, “We need to put a rail spur in here,” or, “We need to adjust the timetable in this way and build an additional connecting line”? Is anybody doing that work at the moment for Network Rail?

**Paul Harwood:** Our long-term planning process requires that conversation at a fairly local level with each airport, and indeed every other user.

**Q95 Mark Menzies:** But is anybody actually doing that work?

**Paul Harwood:** Absolutely—my team leading on the long-term planning process. That is a key part of it.

**Q96 Mark Menzies:** When will that information become something that we as a Committee, or those who are actively involved in this, can get sight of?

**Paul Harwood:** Our route studies are published. We have published three already, relatively recently. It has been an ongoing process for the last 10 years or so, and we try to improve it all the time. The latest iteration has been trying to improve the vision so that it is not constrained by the existing network; it is trying to look at step change and what you would need to do to deliver that step change. Right at the top of the list, one of the key things is a specific aspiration for certain levels of connectivity to airports for all the major conurbations that those airports serve. That goes straight on there as an aspirational output and then we try to work out what we need to do to deliver it. Indeed, it informs the conversation about whether rail is the best way to deliver that for all the different users.

**Q97 Will Quince:** I want to touch on interchanges. On the basis that rail is limited—we have probably established that it is in relation to airports—we have buses, trams, coaches and cars. What is being done to work together to ensure that the whole process is as seamless as possible? I am referencing things like single ticketing and promoting interchanging—if you are going to take the car, fine, but there are rail, coach or other routes that mean you do not have to drive right into the airport or city centre.

**Paul Harwood:** Again there are lots of local discussions. Gatwick is the best example. We are developing a multi-modal hub in the new station that we are working on with Gatwick Airport Ltd. That will be as good, in a sense, for other modes coming in, rather than necessarily airport users. Our planning for the stations and the access point for the airport should always be around all the different modes, such as the bus, coming together. A lot of them act as a local transport hub in their own right rather than just as an airport station. That is at the heart of it. On land use planning particularly we try to work out the best way to make that interchange easy.

**Q98 Will Quince:** Gatwick has reasonable rail access, but what about airports that have very poor rail access?

**Paul Harwood:** The best examples are probably the two Scottish ones, where we are working very closely on tram-train options in Glasgow and the existing tram in Edinburgh. There are other stations, and we have even had conversations about new ones at Lydd and Manston, for example. Southend has good access now, because that was a relatively straightforward scheme; the railway already went past, so put in a station and you have a good service. There are varying degrees as to whether it is other transport modes or rail directly.

**Q99 Will Quince:** Southend has good access to London, but I am not sure that it has good access to anywhere else.

**Paul Harwood:** That's true.

**Q100 Will Quince:** London is not the be-all and end-all.

What is being done to raise customer awareness around the various surface access options that there are?

**Paul Harwood:** From a rail perspective?

**Q101 Will Quince:** Across the board; not just from a rail perspective.

**Paul Harwood:** The marketing quite often becomes increasingly integrated in terms of the offer, trying to communicate to people what offers there are and working with the airport operator because they usually have a good range and good communication, but then bringing some of that communication to the rail side too. Sometimes there is a feeling that you become totally rail-centric when you enter the rail premises, but again it is often working with the train operating company.

**Q102 Will Quince:** Do you think that the airport operators have got it right in terms of the pricing for drop-offs and parking, which is a large chunk of their revenue, versus encouraging people to use other modes of transport to get to and from the airport?

**Paul Harwood:** I probably should not judge because it is so different, depending on which airport we are talking about. It clearly has a big impact on people's journey choices. It changes the dynamic but I could not judge whether it is the right solution or not. It depends what you are trying to achieve.

**Q103 Chair:** Mr de Cani, what do you think could be done by Transport for London and the Government to simplify ticketing between London and Heathrow and Gatwick?

**Richard de Cani:** The easiest way to do that is to roll out Oyster and contactless payments across a wider area. With the exception of the Heathrow Express, Oyster is already the way that most people would choose to access ticketing to get to the airport. Through work with the DFT we have recently announced that Oyster will be rolled out to Gatwick. We are looking at the other airports outside the London boundary as well. For people who are starting or ending their journey in London, which is not everybody but it is a sizeable proportion of the people going to those airports, Oyster is the best proposition for them. We want to roll that out as far as we possibly can to make it the most accessible form of ticketing and the ticketing that offers the best value. We also work with the other urban areas and the new combined authorities, talking to them and seeing what advice we can offer in their thinking around new ticketing products for their areas. For us, Oyster and contactless is the best tool that we need to improve and simplify ticketing to the airports.

**Q104 Chair:** What improvements do you anticipate in terms of extending the system?

**Richard de Cani:** At the moment Heathrow, Gatwick and City airport are fully accessible by Oyster ticketing. We would like to extend that to Stansted and Luton. Work is under way looking at how we can do that. That involves agreement with the DFT and the rail operators. That is the process we have just been through in getting the agreement for Gatwick. It takes some time to do that, but it is important from a passenger perspective. It is also important for employees that Oyster is available to them for their journeys. Our focus would be extending that to all airports within easy striking distance of London.

**Q105 Chair:** Are there any particular obstacles to you succeeding in doing this? Is it just a matter of time?

**Richard de Cani:** There have been some lessons from the experience with Gatwick about the time it has taken to—

**Chair:** Order.

*Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.  
On resuming—*

**Q106 Mary Glendon:** This is quite an important thing. How is access being improved for airport passengers who may have lots of luggage or have mobility problems? It is a big issue, particularly if there are short trains and people are on them with lots of luggage.

It is bad enough if you are able-bodied, but if you are disabled how do you manage to negotiate the train or any other form of transport? I just don't know how people can possibly do it.

**Paul Harwood:** The airport stations themselves are usually fairly good, but it is often the origin station that is the difficult bit. The prioritisation of our Access for All programme, which is continually rolling out better access at stations, is influenced in part by the people who are likely to be using the stations. Where there is a significant proportion of airport demand it affects the prioritisation. We are trying to improve accessibility across the board anyway, but the prioritisation of that is influenced by whether there are airport users. It is a mixture of that and improving signage and staff presence at stations. It is a mixture of different things.

**Q107 Mary Glendon:** It is probably not just restricted to people trying to access airports by train. Buses and coaches can probably accommodate luggage, but they often have high steps. Buses need to be properly adapted to enable people to have more luggage space for the ease of passengers. It puts people off using public transport when they think, "How can I get my luggage from home to the airport without having to encounter lots of obstacles?"

**Richard de Cani:** It is a good question about buses. One of the challenges we have in London is making sure we have enough capacity to provide the space for people to access airports, as well as for people travelling on buses to get to work, to go shopping or whatever. All the buses in London are accessible, in terms of access from the bus stop to the vehicle itself. We need to make sure that the capacity we need to accommodate the airport demand plus the demand from people living and working in London is sufficient. If it is just too crowded, either because you have too many people with bags going to the airport and that makes it difficult for other people to board or vice versa, it just does not work. It is about making sure that we have the right capacity.

We have a particular bus route in London which accesses Heathrow. The X26 is a specific airport express service, so the vehicles have been designed with airport passengers in mind. There is a lot more luggage space than you would normally have on other TfL buses. What we find at Heathrow in particular is that the majority of people using buses to access the airport are actually working at the airport. The vast majority of people travelling round Heathrow are there for work rather than being passengers for the airport. We have to make sure we have enough capacity for their needs, as well as for passengers alongside that.

**Q108 Chair:** Dr Niblett, does ease of travel for passengers come within your remit?

**Dr Niblett:** Indeed. When Professor Ryley wrote the report, part of it was based on something called the ABC project, which looked at the needs of airport travellers. The two most important issues were cost, perhaps unsurprisingly, and quality of journey, which included how many interchanges one had to make and the ease of carrying luggage across the length of that journey. Obviously on public transport you have more interchanges by definition, but on rail, for instance, we would certainly encourage that lift access was available for airport passengers as far as possible. I know that Crossrail will have that facility, but one would hope that plans will be in place for other routes to have it as well.

**Q109 Chair:** What powers and influence do you have to ensure that journeys are made more comfortable and that it is easier for people to use different forms of transport,



when looking at changing from one mode to another? Is your work built into the planning processes of Network Rail or the Highways Agency, or is it something entirely separate?

**Dr Niblett:** Alas, no. We are an independent organisation, but our influence is in a soft capacity, if you like. We speak with the Network Rail and TfL leadership from time to time on issues that matter. These are issues that we will draw to their attention, but unfortunately we do not have a formal role in the planning process.

**Q110 Chair:** What changes would you like to see to make your involvement more effective—although it may be very effective—or to make the people directly responsible pay more attention to what you are saying?

**Dr Niblett:** That is a complicated question to answer. At the moment we know of course that the national infrastructure commission that has just been announced will have some role for national planning. We would like to have perhaps an advisory role in terms of strategic policy making, both with it and with some of the national agencies.

**Q111 Chair:** Is that something that you are discussing with the commission now or something that you are planning to do?

**Dr Niblett:** It is something we are planning to do when we can do so with Lord Adonis.

**Q112 Chair:** Are there any other specific changes you would like in order to see more results coming from the work you are doing?

**Dr Niblett:** We are very pleased at the moment with the discussions that we have had at senior level within Network Rail and TfL. Obviously if there is a role for us more formally within the planning process that would be terrific, but we would like to see that dialogue maintained throughout the current planning period.

**Q113 Chair:** Can the rail franchising framework be used to require or incentivise good public transport to airports?

**Paul Harwood:** Absolutely. It is a mechanism through the actual service provision—the trains that are operating the service and the frequency of the service. It is probably one of the prime ways of delivering it, on top of any infrastructure enhancements that we provide.

**Q114 Chair:** Should there be more dedicated services for airport users, either by rail or road?

**Paul Harwood:** From a rail perspective, sometimes it is a balance of issues of conflicting demand. It causes problems to the network and can reduce the amount of capacity you have for all purposes. Where we can do it, yes, absolutely. Sometimes there is a decision to make about how you are using rail capacity to its best and how you can benefit more people, and freight as well. There is that constant conundrum. It is an opportunity for maximising it—absolutely.

**Q115 Chair:** Ms Clarke, what are your views?

**Ginny Clarke:** A road network is an open network. There is no priority dependent on use. It comes back to the point about looking at the impact of whether it is an airport, a port or

an urban area and what things are best served through the open service that the strategic road network provides. I do not think we see a particular benefit in prioritising freight, because 60% of road freight already travels on our network. It is about the facilities that you want to enable where that development is particularly focused. The large freight depots that have been built around the M1 and on the motorway network are an example where you could say that they have been prioritised. We worked with those developers to try to find the best route from the strategic road network, because that is where they want to be.

How you choose to prioritise within an airport context is a more general point. I am not quite sure how we would make that work, other than making sure that the facilities were suitable and did not disadvantage, say, freight access to the airports that we have been considering. I believe that that is what we do.

**Q116 Chair:** Mr de Cani, do you have any views on dedicated access?

**Richard de Cani:** On the whole, in a London context, it does not necessarily make sense to have dedicated airport services, because we are catering for a whole range of different trips and journeys. When you look at the size of some of the airports and the distribution of some of the trips, you do not necessarily have single corridors where you can operate a dedicated airport service. Clearly we have that with the Heathrow Express; that takes a fast connection to central London and it works. Broadly speaking, we need airports to be better connected across the whole of London and the south-east. We need to provide the connections for people living and working there, as well as visiting the airport.

**Q117 Graham Stringer:** In relation to your answers about there being domestic demand and that outweighing demand for the airports, aren't you really avoiding a conflict between the wishes of people in London to travel, quite reasonably, on commuter lines and bus services with the national imperatives of having major airports in the south-east? There is a conflict. You cannot get out of that. It is not just about demand, is it?

**Richard de Cani:** I do not disagree. You need to look at the particular issue you are trying to solve. People who are living and working in London and people who need access to airports are generally travelling on services that are not just serving the airport but doing a number of things. There may also be a case for having more dedicated services from outside London to some of London's airports for the reasons you have described. High Speed 2 will do an element of that by bringing people in quickly to Old Oak Common with a fast connection to Heathrow. In a London context, which is my area of focus, it is difficult to see how you would dedicate finite capacity for people just going to an airport.

**Q118 Graham Stringer:** I understand that. I am asking about a slightly different point. What I am saying is that you cannot really square that circle, can you, because there is genuine conflict between national priorities and demand for London services? You are not the best person to answer that question, are you, because your priority is to look after London commuters? It is other people's priority to look after national priorities like Gatwick and Heathrow.

**Richard de Cani:** Yes, but when you look at who is travelling on our services to access airports, many are coming from outside London to get into London and then travel out to the airport. On the Piccadilly line, for example, we have people who are connecting at

King's Cross. Your point is right. My focus is looking at how London is connected to airports, but a large proportion of people accessing Heathrow come through London.

**Chair:** Mr Merriman?

**Huw Merriman:** Actually, Chair, you asked my questions to Dr Niblett, so I feel he has covered that well. Thank you.

**Q119 Chair:** To what extent do you think that the Department for Transport is providing clear leadership on modal shift and surface access to airports? Should they be doing more? Who would like to comment on that? Dr Niblett, do you have a view you want to tell us about?

**Dr Niblett:** We are working with the Department for Transport to try to help and improve their forecasting methodology for road and rail travel. As those in this room will be aware, the forecasts have left something to be desired over the last 20 years or so. It would be helpful to see more work on surface access requirements from the Department. We particularly need to build in and think about population and demographic changes in the UK. Some of the projected secular demand shifts are very dramatic, particularly in the south-east. At the moment it is not entirely clear whether we have the information or the modelling required to properly understand what the impact of that is going to be on airport usage.

**Q120 Chair:** Would anyone else like to offer a view?

**Richard de Cani:** We have the new aviation policy framework, which has a very clear emphasis on modal shift away from private car to public transport. From our own perspective that is reflected in our strategy for London, where we have a clear shift away from car use to public transport. Through that new policy framework we get clear guidance as to where the Government want to go in terms of airport access. Clearly that has to be matched by commitment to investment to deliver that for airports across the UK, but I think the policy is clear. It is encouraging a shift to public transport.

**Ginny Clarke:** In looking at all developments, whether for airports or not, there is a real onus on Highways England as a statutory consultee to look for and exercise the modal opportunities in any development. That would be true of airports as much as anything else. I think there is a clear steer. The presumption is that we will test developers in terms of not just their road access but what they are doing to minimise the impact that roads can have and look at what opportunities there are. In general terms, the steer is quite clear.

**Q121 Chair:** Are you saying that that is now built into the work you do?

**Ginny Clarke:** Yes, and it is built into planning guidance. It has been for two or three years. We have just updated our planning guidance to take account of Highways England rather than Highways Agency as the body, but it is still exercising the same guidance on planning.

**Paul Harwood:** We work very closely with the Department for Transport through all the route study work, and our input to that will include considerations for modal shift, as evidenced by the western access and southern access to Heathrow conversations. It is well supported throughout.

**Chair:** Thank you very much, everyone, for coming to answer our questions.