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Heathrow Airtrack
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Please reply to:
WLA Secretariat
C/o London Borough of
Hammersmith & Fulham
Room 107, Town Hall
King Street
Hammersmith
London W6 9JU
Tel. 020-8753 2785

22nd April 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

Heathrow Airtrack Consultation

The West London Partnership (WLP) comprises the borough council leaders and Chief Executives of the West London Alliance (Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow), directors of West London Business and representatives of the West London Network of voluntary and community organisations, the Learning and Skills Council and the health sector. On transport issues, WLP acts through the West London Strategic Transport Group (WLSTG), which brings together Borough officers and members, business interests, transport operators and other parties who have a strong interest in promoting the development of sustainable transport in West London.

Whilst some Boroughs and other WLSTG participants may offer their views to this consultation independently, this response provides a strategic perspective on behalf of West London transport interests collectively.

WLSTG has recently developed and published its "Ten Point Plan for Transport in West London", available through the WLA website at www.westlondonalliance.org (News Item 9th February 2008); included in this document is support for the Airtrack proposal in paragraphs 3.5.5 and 3.7.3.

WLSTG supports the Heathrow Airtrack proposals for several reasons.

First, the Airtrack scheme will improve transport access to Heathrow. The new link will allow many workers, airport users and those meeting and greeting passengers to have easier access to the airport by rail. Although the primary beneficiaries of this advantage are those seeking access from the south and west of the airport, there will also be advantages for travellers from other locations as some trips will divert away from existing routes which are overcrowded, including the Piccadilly Line and highways leading to the airport.

Second, the effects of these changes in transport conditions will have useful benefits for residents and businesses in West London. It should help to create more business-friendly conditions by reducing congestion and delay and making employee journey times shorter and more reliable. It will also help improve highway safety and related environmental conditions in West London generally.

Third, Airtrack will create the opportunity for improved access between West London and parts of the wider South East Region. At present public transport journeys between West London

and places such as Woking and Guildford (and beyond to Portsmouth and Southampton) must interchange via Waterloo or Clapham Junction. The Airtrack scheme opens up the possibility of through running for Heathrow Connect trains from Paddington via West London (e.g. places such as Ealing, Southall and Hayes) to Woking and beyond. This would be a significant improvement of accessibility and reduce the pressure on the busy interchanges at Waterloo and Clapham Junction. Whilst we strongly support the creation of through running, if this is not practicable for reasons of power source compatibilities, then interchange at either Heathrow or Staines would still provide important accessibility advantages for West London.

As a strategic transport organisation, WLSTG has no comments to offer on the matters of detailed planning and the route and design options outlined in the consultation document. However we would urge early and speedy promotion of the scheme such that advantage can be taken of any synergies with the Crossrail project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Kamath', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Suresh Kamath
Chair, West London Strategic Transport Group