

Heathrow Strategic Planning Group
St Martins Place, 51 Bath Rd,
Slough, SL1 3UF

Date: 19th February 2019

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DR

Dear Chris,

RE: HSPG Support of Southern and Western Rail Access to Heathrow Airport

I am writing to you in my role as Chairman of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG) with regard to the proposed Southern and Western Rail links to Heathrow, now that the Market Sounding reports have been published. This letter requests that Government;

- set out a timescale for the next stages of delivery for both projects, providing a clear commitment to their funding and delivery; and,
- engage more closely with HSPG on the requirements and delivery of both schemes.

HSPG is an organisation of local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Colne Valley Park CIC¹ that was formed in 2015 to proactively shape the expansion of the airport, to ensure it is well planned with sufficient infrastructure, and to maximise the benefits and minimise the negative impacts of that expansion.

HSPG and its member organisations are strong supporters² of both the Western and Southern Rail Links to Heathrow airport. Both rail links are essential to support sustainable growth and will radically improve access to the airport from many areas, including those adjacent to the airport where there are major connectivity issues. Improving access to the airport from such areas will help both distribute the economic benefits of the expanded airport as widely as possible, as well as help ensure that the airport can meet its obligations on traffic and air quality.

We therefore welcomed the Government's undertaking last year of a market sounding exercise to assess how the private sector can contribute to the delivery of both schemes. Although we would like to see a greater commitment from Government on the funding and delivery of the Western Rail scheme, we are

¹ HSPG members consist of: Buckinghamshire County Council, South Bucks District Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Ealing, London Borough of Hounslow, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Slough Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP, Enterprise M3 LEP, and Colne Valley Park CIC.

² The Colne Valley Park CIC are opposed to some options for Southern and Western Rail Access in terms of their impact on the Colne Valley Regional Park.

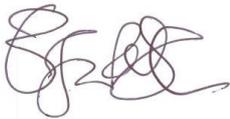
pleased to see that there is now a clearly stated preferred option which will be taken to DCO later this year.

On the Southern Rail Link a key conclusion from the recent market sounding exercise was that Government needs to take responsibility for defining the minimum requirements and objectives of a Southern Rail Link, whatever form it might take. As such we would welcome Government setting out a timescale for how it intends to assess and develop the various options into a preferred scheme, which funders and stakeholders - such as the HSPG - can then rally behind and support. We believe that, with the right support and funding, the delivery of a Southern Rail Link could and should be expedited, and therefore better aligned with the opening of a new runway.

HSPG remains ready and willing to work with you and your Department on the future assessment and development of a Southern Rail Link to Heathrow airport, and would welcome your views on how we can best support the Department in rapidly progressing this vital infrastructure. HSPG outlined principles in its submission to the market sounding exercise that we ask to be applied when considering any Southern Rail Link options. Similarly, HSPG is ready and willing to work with DfT and associated organisations to assist in ensuring the successful delivery of Western Rail.

In essence we wish to deliver a high quality, sustainable and integrated transport system to and around the airport that improves productivity to grow our economy and compete in the global marketplace. HSPG and its members are available to meet with your staff to discuss how we can help in taking these schemes forward.

Yours sincerely,



Brendon Walsh
Chair of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group