

To: Planning Inspectorate, Gatwick Airport Limited Northern Runway DCO application
From: Nigel Searle MBE MILT ACIRO, GTR Strategic Planning
Approved: Phil Hutchinson, GTR Head of Strategic Planning
Date: 12th March 2024

Issue Specific Hearing 4 on Surface Access

Post Hearing Written Representation

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) is a train operator providing the train service on the Brighton Mainline between the South Coast, Gatwick Airport and London and beyond as contracted by the DfT. As a management contract GTR is paid to provide the train service and all the revenue collected from passengers is paid to the DfT on behalf of the Taxpayer. GTR Strategic Planning Team use our knowledge and experience to maximise benefit for future passengers of the rail network.

GTR and Gatwick Airport are key partners for transporting passengers between the London and Southeast regions of England and International destinations throughout the world.

GTR is supportive of expansion of Gatwick Airport expansion with a Northern Railway. However, it can only proceed if railway capacity is increased to accommodate the additional passengers.

Applicant's Transport Assessment

GTR disputes the applicant's statement and conclusion on Page 103 of Transport Assessment "There is generally standing on services in both directions between East Croydon and London Bridge and London Victoria in 2029 and 2032, in the future baseline and with Project scenarios. The travel time for this section of the route is within the 20-minute threshold that DfT use as guidance for acceptable standing, as long as the standing capacity is not exceeded." Implying there is no standing from Gatwick Airport and a false conclusion that "The rail crowding assessment indicates that no additional mitigation is required because of the Project."

At the hearing the applicant stated "we did use GTR data to validate the model", However, their baseline was 2016 a time when passenger growth was stalled due to reduced capacity into London Bridge that was being rebuilt for the Thameslink project.

GTR shared 2013 passenger census with advice to uplift. We also shared the 2019 passenger census when it became available which demonstrated how passenger demand had bounced after the implementation of the Thameslink Programme with Passengers in Excess of Seats (PIXS) extending into the off peak.

The GTR consultation response, 1st December 2021, we challenged the applicant's assertion that no additional mitigation was required

- demonstrating that morning peak pre-covid there was 4.2% Passengers in excess of Seats (PIXS) departing Gatwick Airport on fast line trains (30-40 minutes therefore unacceptable standing) that became severe standing north of East Croydon 10.9% towards Victoria and 22.5% towards London Bridge.
- Concluding that as a minimum the applicant should provide funding to help secure the Brighton Mainline Upgrade Programme (BMUP), especially the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme (CARS)
- Advising to secure world class access to Gatwick Airport the applicant should work with investors to deliver a new railway as proposed to the DfT London and South Coast Corridor Study by GTR



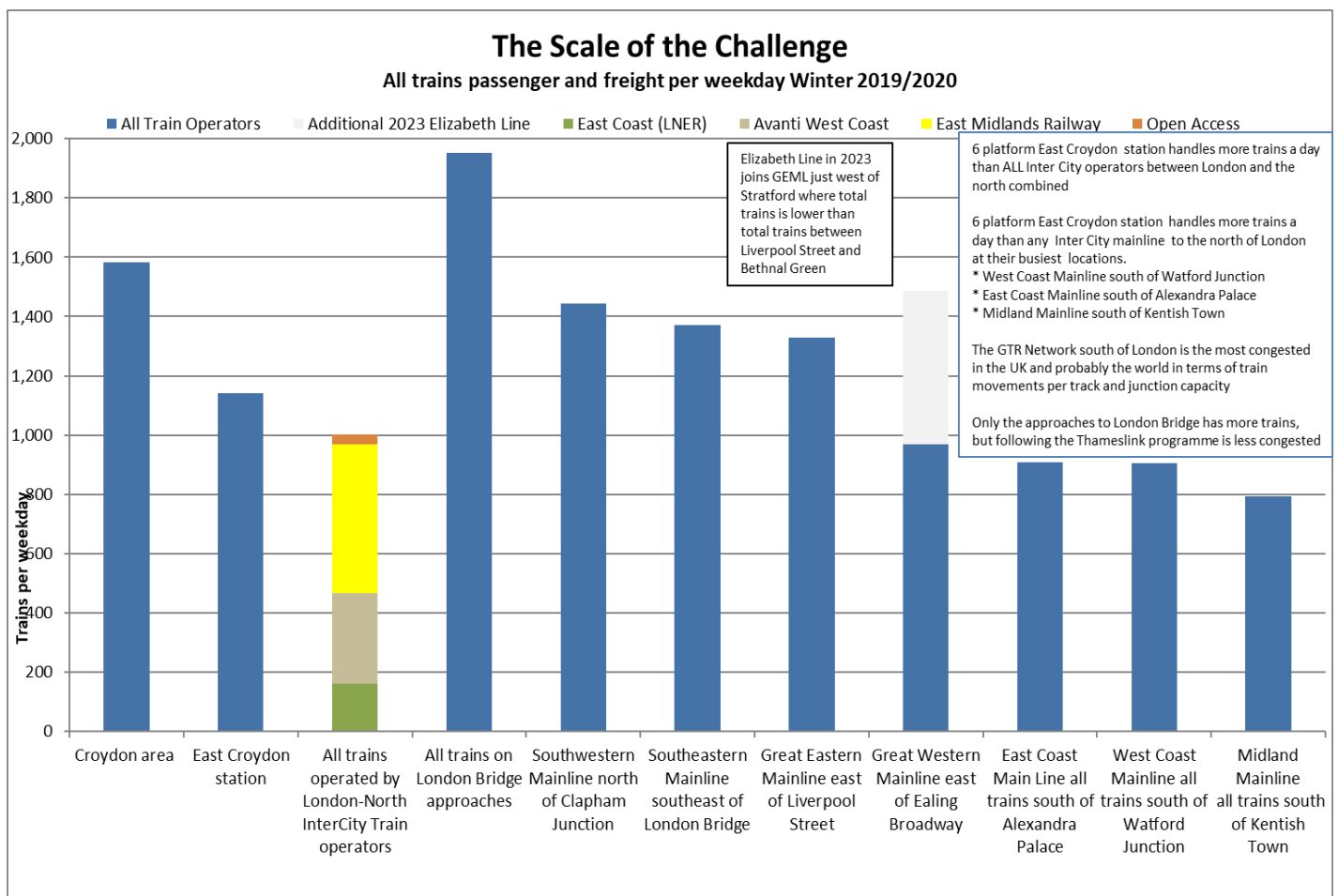
Track Capacity utilisation

As explained at the hearing, pre-pandemic the railway between Gatwick Airport and Central London was making the maximum robust use all available track capacity peak and off peak, and squeezing any additional trains would inevitably result in small delays causing widespread disruption. The Croydon area handles more trains than any other railway in the UK except the approaches to London Bridge, and East Croydon station handles more trains than the total of Inter City trains between London, the Midlands, North and Scotland to/from Euston, St Pancras and Kings Cross combined.

Subject to funding the pre-covid level of train service can operate which is 5 more paths in the busiest peak hour, and 2 more paths off peak paths and increasing 8 car trains to 12 car. However, growth will result in that level of train service being full by the 2030's with passenger journeys peak and off peak becoming more uncomfortable as demand continues to increase.

Without additional capacity, to accommodate the additional passengers some people will choose not to travel by train to Gatwick Airport e.g. may choose to travel by taxi, or use another airport.

Inevitably if Gatwick Airport funds road network expansion, while the railway remains capacity constrained, there will be modal shift away from rail to road making sustainable travel targets unattainable a trend made even worse as passenger expectations are increasing with people becoming less tolerant of travelling in discomfort.

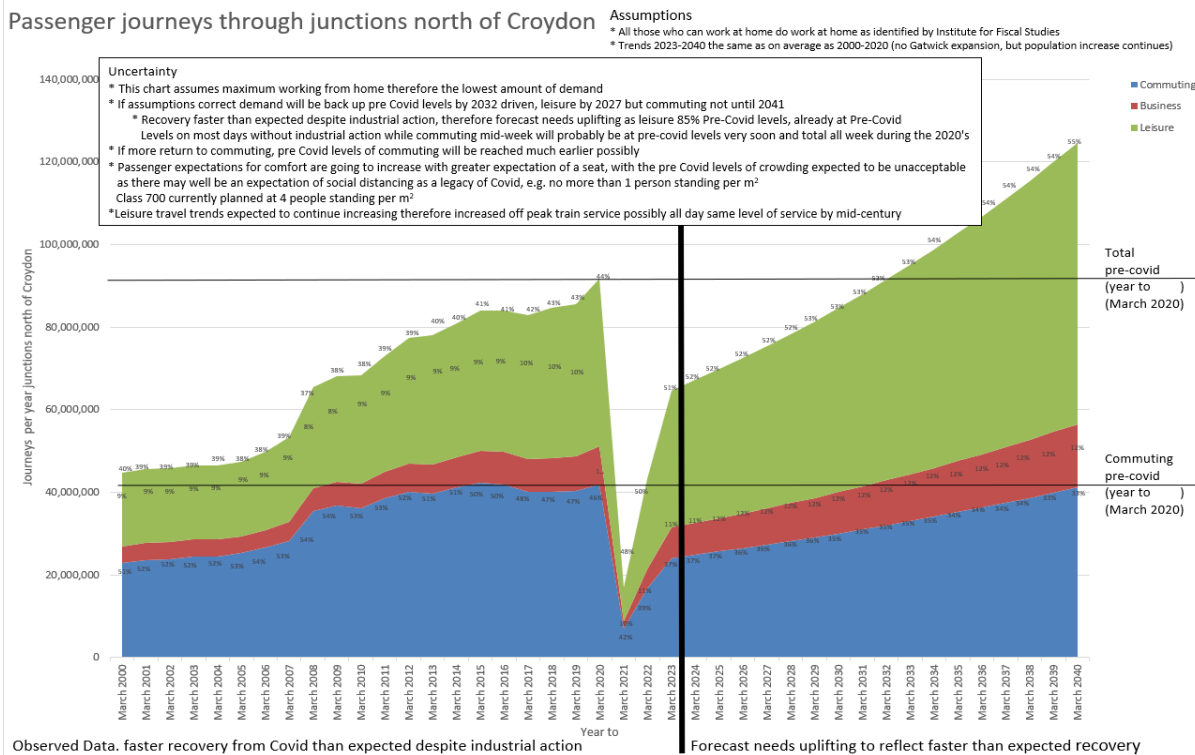


Future Growth

Growth driven by economic activity, population growth and airport growth has resulted in full track utilisation and crowded trains peak and off peak on the Brighton Mainline through Gatwick Airport to London. Although Covid set passenger demand back and has changed the way people work, passenger demand has bounced back faster than expected, and will continue to grow so that even without additional airport capacity, by mid century rail use will be far in excess of what the current Brighton Mainline can accommodate.

Even once the train service restored to pre-covid levels, the maximum the infrastructure can accommodate, growth by mid-century is expected to

- cause discomfort for passengers
- result in people choosing not to travel, or find a different way to travel
 - with more airport passengers using road to access the airport
- suppress economic growth.



Required to accommodate additional airport passengers:

- Increased rail capacity to accommodate additional air passengers.
- As a minimum, a reasonable proportionate contribution as Network Rail suggests towards increasing rail capacity to accommodate increase of airport passengers
- Gatwick Airport should
 - not treat this as a cost to get their DCO approved,
 - but consider it an investment to enable their customers to access air travel in reliable comfort.
 - Failure to invest will -
 - undermine the viability of airport expansion,
 - condemn the travelling public to uncomfortable unreliable travelling conditions.
- Gatwick Airport should be as visionary about accessing the airport as they are about expansion and improving the airport.
- GTR contribution to the London and South Coast Corridor Study
 - demonstrated that even CARS and BMUP was not sufficient for the long term,
 - presented a visionary transformation for the BML and access to Gatwick Airport with a very strong business case,
 - Gatwick Airport 15 minutes from central London every 5 minutes
 - Gatwick Airport should look at this contribution “New London Gatwick Sussex Railway” and work to make this transformational surface access for Gatwick Airport become a reality.

