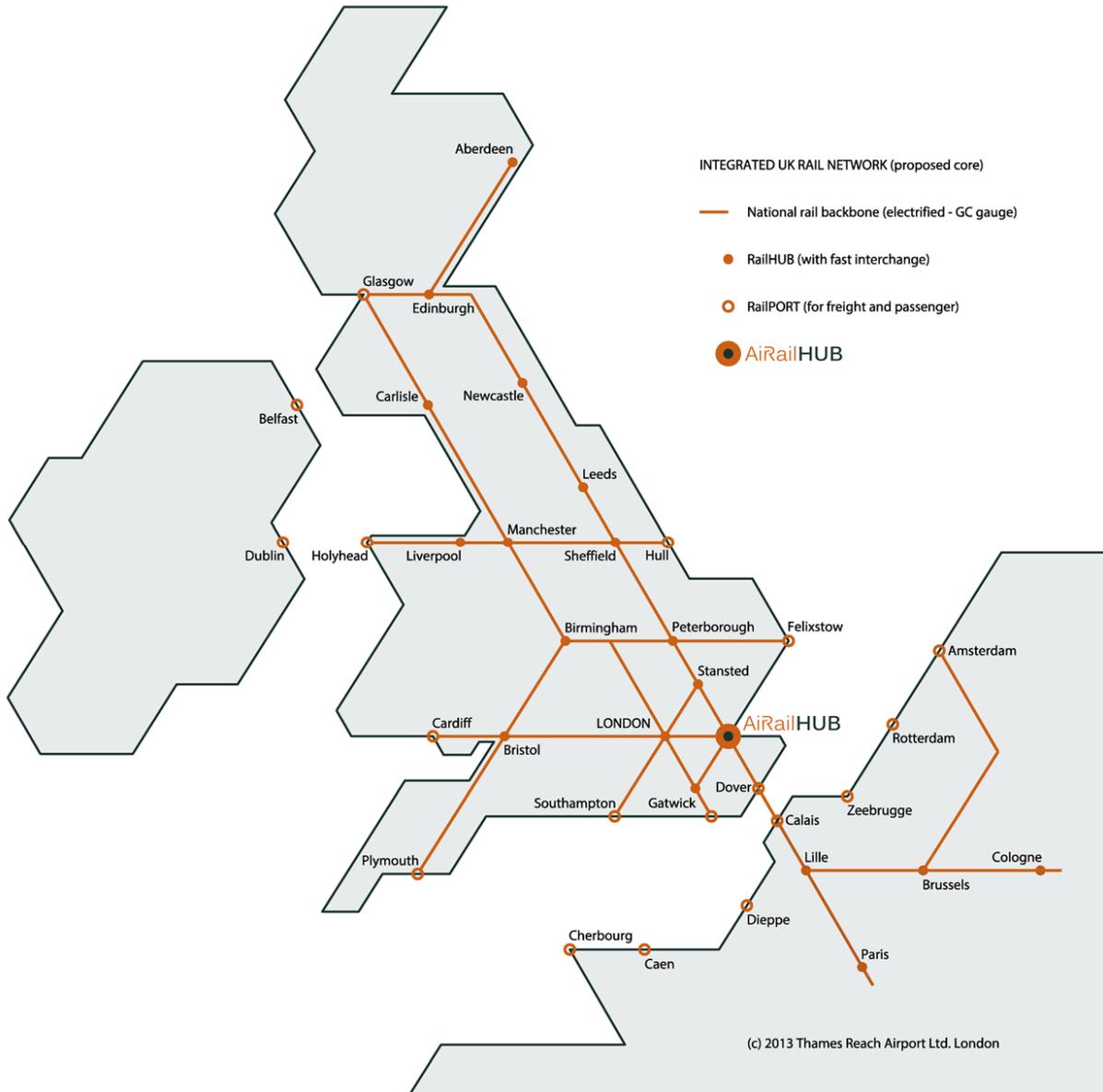


Thames Reach Airport – STATEMENT in response to Discussion Paper 04: Airport Operational Models



1. Do you consider that the analysis supports the case for increasing either hub capacity or non-hub capacity in the UK? Is there any additional evidence that you consider should be taken into account?
 - a. **AIR-RAIL hubbing.** To maintain connectivity and reduce overall aviation demand by shifting feeder traffic from air to rail, it is vital that a new hub location is closely integrated with a national rail network – see above diagram.
 - b. The aviation market will use any capacity provided, irrespective of hub or point to point airport – it is only the regulator or government to determine the degree of hub or focal airport use.
 - c. Clarity and longevity of the decision taken by central government is very important. The private sector or market cannot decide extend or location of a national “champion” or focal airport.

2. To what extent do the three potential futures outlined in Chapter 2 present a credible picture of the ways in which the aviation sector may develop? Are there other futures that should be considered?
 - a. An efficient aviation system will always consist of hub and point-to-point traffic and airports are operating at varying degrees as focal or non-focal airports – where Heathrow is currently uncharacteristically less of a focal airport, compared to its competitors, due to capacity constraints.
 - b. European hub airports will always be acting as entry points into Europe for their respective “hinterland”: London for North America, Madrid for South America, Frankfurt for the East, Paris for the South).
3. How are the trends discussed in Chapter 2 (e.g. liberalisation, growth of low-cost carriers, consolidation of alliances, and technological changes) likely to shape the future of the aviation sector? Do they strengthen or weaken the case for developing hub versus non-hub capacity?
 - a. There is an opportunity by the government to integrate rail stronger and therefore reduce feeder flights up to 1000km distance, reducing flights possibly up to 10-20%.
4. What are the impacts on airlines and passengers of the fact that the wave system at Heathrow operates under capacity constraints?
 - a. Longer transfer times – Heathrow currently does not operate as an expressed hub.
 - b. Waves require high peak runway capacity for clustered arrival patterns of aircraft – i.e. 3 wide-space runways, a short taxiing and an efficient satellite layout – currently not provided at Heathrow
5. How does increasing size and scale affect the operation of a focal airport? Is there a limit to the viable scale of an airport of this kind?
 - a. 3 wide-spaced runways, 24h operation and a closely integrated intercity rail network should be sufficient and efficient for the next 50-100 years for the South East – with optional expansions to 4 or more runways if required.
6. Would expanding UK hub capacity (wherever located) bring materially different advantages and disadvantages of expanding non-hub capacity? You may wish to consider economic, social and environmental impacts of different airport operational models.
 - a. Larger focal airport capacity will attract more airlines, away from non-focal airports nearby, i.e. Stansted and Gatwick, in case of Heathrow.
 - b. An AirRailHub with wider national rail integration will rationalise the network and share out the benefits to the regions via direct rail access. Regional non-focal airports will continue to cater for leisure and feeder flights to alternative focal airport locations.
7. Do focal airports and non-focal airports bring different kinds of connectivity and, if so, which users benefit the most in each case?
 - a. Generally focal airports cater for more long-haul destinations, whereas non-focal airports offer fast and local access to short-haul destinations.
8. What would be the competitive effects (both international and domestic) of a major expansion of hub capacity, and what are the associated benefits and risks?
 - a. London is in a unique situation with a large origin and destination market - due to its island position and extensive overseas links, and can therefore leverage a stronger focal airport – by mutually reinforcing demand.

