

High Speed 1 Visit Summary

Date: Wednesday 23 November 2016

Time: 13:30 – 15:00

Location: St Pancras Station

Attendees: Caroline Pidgeon AM
Florence Eshalomi AM
Joanne McCartney AM

Officers

Alison Bell

Georgie Wells

James Potts

Samira Islam

Stephen Morgan

The Transport Committee visited St Pancras Station to receive a briefing from Rob Holden (Chairman, HS1) and Wendy Spinks (Commercial Director, HS1).

The key discussion points are noted below.

New Trains

- New trains have a capacity of 1000 passengers and are more efficient to operate. The old trains have a capacity of approximately 750 due to power units at either end of the train.
- They are buying 10 new trains and are refurbishing 8 old trains.

Future plans & Crossrail 2

- At the moment HS1 runs 12 to 14 trains per hour (TPH) with plans to increase to 24 TPH. The increased capacity is projected to increase annual footfall by 30 million, to 80 million. HS1 is working on a master plan to accommodate the increase in passengers.
- Plans for the interface between the new Crossrail 2 entrance and the rest of the station were discussed. Work is being done to consider how passengers move around the station, and whether these behaviours can be accommodated better. HS1 is considering the mix of people using the station and their different behaviours - some will be regular commuters who are moving through the station, some will be slower-moving passengers with bags, and others will be there to use the retail facilities.
- The toilet facilities at the station are an area of concern. The station has poor connections with the sewers which cause regular problems.
- It was noted that the Crossrail 2 development would involve tunnelling under three Grade 1 buildings: the British Library, Kings Cross station and St Pancras International.

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Retail at St Pancras

- When the Arcade first opened in 2007 it only had a few food outlets. Gradually, the success of the stores (and Terminal 5 at Heathrow) encouraged other businesses. Now there is a waiting list for the retail units.
- 30 per cent of visitors to the station are visiting it as a destination. It is being used as a meeting place and is a minor tourist attraction.
- The redevelopment has been criticised as being similar to retail facilities at airports which do not benefit local communities and are geared towards those passing through.

Around the station

- St Pancras is a busy area for traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. HS1 is working with TfL and London Borough of Camden to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety is managed effectively. There were discussions about the cycle superhighway (which may run in the opposite direction of the 1-way traffic on Midland road), and HS1 is considering work to improve the crossings in front of the station on Euston Road.
- HS1 is part of Urban Partners which is a local business partnership. They launched a green walking route to get people to Euston via side streets and pathways that avoid busy main roads.
- There are two taxi ranks, one on the Euston Road side and one on Midland Road. There are times when taxis are queuing at one rank with lot of idle time while passengers are waiting at the other. Taxi drivers also complain that there are times when the rank is full of private hire vehicles.

Southeastern Platforms

- Trains currently operate with six carriages. High demand means that the high speed trains often only have standing space during peak hours. The trains are capable of operating with up to 12 carriages but the space around the platforms cannot cope with double the number of passengers.
- The East Midlands trains (which are diesel) are facing three problems: the train roofs get dirty from the fumes so the station has open sides to allow fumes to escape, which is not so pleasant for passengers in bad weather; the track 'wells' get full of oil; and the trains are noisy and do not turn off their engines which impacts on people who live near the station.
- The planned move to electric trains in 2019 will resolve these problems.

Eurostar & Brexit

- St Pancras Station does not have the infrastructure to undertake full passport control. The trains often arrive at the station in pairs which would mean processing around 2000 people at a time.
- The potential for Stratford to operate as an international station was discussed. It currently does not have facilities for immigration and passport control but space has been reserved on site for potential expansion. Stratford may become more feasible as a starting and terminating destination for Eurostar as the area develops.