MAWHINNEY RECOMMENDS HIGH SPEED RAIL LOOP TO HEATHROW.

Lord Mawhinney, in the report of his review of high speed rail access to Heathrow published today, concludes that the airport should have a direct high speed rail link, but only following extension of the high speed rail network to the North of England.

Lord Mawhinney said:

> "I am convinced that the nation should have a clear vision for the future high speed rail network, including when appropriate a direct link to Heathrow."

Lord Mawhinney identifies considerable benefits from enabling more travellers to access Heathrow by rail rather than by air:

- high speed rail services between Heathrow and the Midlands, the North and Scotland would allow those areas to have better access to Heathrow and enjoy the benefits of the wide range of air services which it offers, particularly to major business cities worldwide;

- frequent, reliable, fast and direct rail links to Heathrow would allow airlines to review services to those cities which are so served by rail, thus creating the possibility of freeing up runway slots for long haul flights, and improving the international connectivity of all parts of the UK.

Lord Mawhinney, whose review was commissioned by the previous Secretary of State for Transport, Lord Adonis, and confirmed by the present Secretary of State, Philip Hammond MP, recommends that the phasing of the high speed rail network should be carefully planned.

His assessment is that a publicly funded high speed link to Heathrow, in the context of a high speed rail network extending only to the Midlands, is not likely to provide a good return on the public expenditure entailed, but that as the network is extended the demand for access to Heathrow from cities in the North and Scotland might well make a direct high speed rail connection to Heathrow more viable and economically attractive.

Lord Mawhinney recommends that in building the high speed line from London to Birmingham, appropriate junction engineering works should be included to make it possible for a high speed loop through Heathrow to be built at a later date.

Lord Mawhinney also recommends that serious consideration be given to making Old Oak Common the initial London terminal for the HS2 high speed line, and that effective use be made of Crossrail and other rail and tube connections to provide access to passengers' final destinations including Heathrow.

More broadly, Lord Mawhinney calls for Heathrow to be made as accessible as possible by both high speed and traditional rail infrastructure, with a staged building approach in accordance with an agreed master plan, and recommends that the Secretary of State should commission a separate and independent review of this topic.

Lord Mawhinney prefers a site for a Heathrow high speed rail station at the airport's Central Terminal Area, to be of maximum utility to the maximum number of travellers, with rapid links to all terminals by automated people movers.

At various points in his report Lord Mawhinney makes it clear that he sees opportunities for funding from sources other than the taxpayer.

In total, Lord Mawhinney makes 14 recommendations; a copy of them is attached.

Notes to editors

1. The full report and supporting documents can be accessed at
   http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/lordmawhinneyreport

2. Lord Mawhinney was Secretary of State for Transport 1994-95.

Summary of Recommendations

1. I agree with those who think that it would be desirable to achieve a more integrated and greater range of local rail connections to Heathrow, with an indication of how they might be integrated with a high speed rail network as well as with other public transport. I recommend that the Secretary of State commissions a separate and independent review of this topic. (paragraph 19)

2. I also recommend that separately or as part of that review the potential for Heathrow to have some airport car parking at a distance from the airport, together with an efficient transfer system for passengers and their baggage, is examined. (paragraph 20)

3. I judge it to be important that Heathrow should be made as accessible as possible by both high speed and traditional rail infrastructure. In my view this is more likely to take place if a staged building approach is adopted, in accordance with a pre-agreed master plan. This also makes economic and financial sense. I so recommend. (paragraph 22)

4. I recommend that the phasing of the high speed network is carefully planned, and that this plan should be concluded and agreed within the next two years. (paragraph 23)

5. I recommend that serious consideration be given to making Old Oak Common the initial London terminal for the high speed line – and that in the early stages it be designated London–Old Oak Common (just as Euston would have been designated London-Euston) – and that effective use be made of the £16 billion Crossrail project and other rail and tube connections to provide access to passengers` final destinations including Heathrow. (paragraph 32)

6. I recommend that a requirement for efficient, quick turn-rounds at stations should become an integral part of government policy and contracts covering rail operators. (paragraph 34)

7. I have concluded and recommend that, in the early stages of a high speed rail network, there is no compelling case for a direct high speed rail link to Heathrow, and that a London-Old Oak Common interchange could provide an appropriate, good quality terminus and connection point to the airport. (paragraph 46)

8. In light of this conclusion, it is clear that changing the route of the main high speed line to run via Heathrow, at an additional cost of £2 billion to £4 billion, would connect Heathrow to HS2 at a point in time when this connection is not likely to represent value for money to the taxpayer or the train operator. In any event, such a route is not supported by the evidence of benefits. I recommend that this route should not be pursued. (paragraph 48)

9. However, as the high speed network is extended beyond Birmingham, the case for a more direct high speed rail link to Heathrow becomes more persuasive. As the network expands, and over time, there will be greater demand for access to Heathrow from cities in the North and Scotland, which might well make a direct high speed rail connection to Heathrow (which would be used by some trains) in addition to an airport connection to Old Oak Common, more viable and economically attractive. The evidence presented to me suggests that this would only be in prospect after the high speed network had been extended at least to Manchester and Leeds. I recommend that this option be given the most serious consideration. (paragraph 50)

10. I recommend that when the high speed line from London-Old Oak Common to Birmingham is built, appropriate junction engineering works should be included to make it possible for a high speed loop through Heathrow to be built at a later date. (paragraph 52)

11. I also recommend that early work be undertaken to enable rail/air through ticketing to be an integral part of any new high speed rail link to Heathrow. (paragraph 53)

12. I recommend that the Secretary of State gives serious thought to developing a more transparent, economically viable, user-friendly and competitive policy system of runway slot allocation. (paragraph 54)

13. I prefer a site for a Heathrow high speed rail station at the Central Terminal Area, which would complicate the engineering, but be of maximum utility to the maximum number of travellers. Rapid links to all terminals by automated people movers should be provided. One advantage of the CTA option is that it would be easier to provide short and rapid connections by people mover to all of the airport terminals. I so recommend. (paragraph 58)

14. Clearly it is for the Secretary of State to decide whether the original vision of a through train service from Scotland and the North East, the North West and the Midlands of England to Paris and beyond should become a reality. I recommend that further work on this issue be authorised urgently by the Secretary of State. (paragraph 61)