



Your reference

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The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
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Dear the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SOUTHERN ACCESS TO HEATHROW (SAth) PROGRAMME

I am writing to you as the leader of Rushmoor Borough Council to express disappointment that the Guidance on the Southern Access to Heathrow: strategic objectives, published in November 2019, identifies that your Department does not expect any proposals to be in place prior to 2030. In addition, the Council is concerned that there are no clear timescales for when the procurement exercise to select a preferred option will be undertaken.

At the local level the Council wishes to see some early certainty that the SAth programme will provide direct connectivity from at least one of the Borough's mainline railway stations to Heathrow Airport. Direct connectivity from one of the Borough's mainline railway stations and additional stations in Surrey and Hampshire to Heathrow Airport (and potentially other transport hubs) will:

- Reduce congestion on radial routes (such as the M3 and M25) and therefore have benefits for improving air quality.
- Support the sustainable growth of the South Eastern regions economy and has potential to significantly increase GVA. Farnborough as one of the hubs of a key growth sector - Aerospace is a strategic location which due to the nature of its businesses needs to connect more efficiently to Heathrow
- Support the Borough's ambitious Town Centre Regeneration programme being delivered by the Council, the Rushmoor Development Partnership and other stakeholders.

The Council is not aware of the detail of the full range of options being considered by the Department and is unable to be specific about a preferred option. However, of the four proposals that are in the public domain following the 'market sounding' undertaken by the Department in 2018, the Council considers that the Heathrow Southern Railway Limited proposal best aligns with the Council's aspirations for the early delivery of a direct, fast and frequent service from the Borough to Heathrow Airport and other transport hubs such as London Paddington and is capable of delivery by 2026.

I look forward to further detail being published by the Department in the near future and a commitment to the early delivery of a Southern Access to Heathrow that will deliver economic, environmental and social benefits to a wide geographic area that includes Rushmoor Borough.

Regards
Councillor David Clifford
Leader of Rushmoor Borough Council