

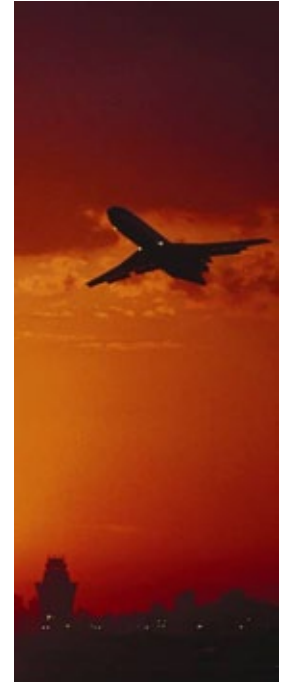
Sustainable Accessibility Concepts

Study on Innovative Bus Services to Regional Airports

Executive summary







Study on Innovative Bus Services to Small and Medium Sized Regional Airports

November 2012
Kent County Council



Executive Summary

Study Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council has commissioned this study into bus accessibility to small and medium sized regional airports in the North Sea Region of Europe. The study is part of the wider Green Sustainable Airports (GSA) Project, which is in turn part of the Interreg IVB North Sea Region (NSR) Programme within the European Union. GSA aims to develop strategies and solutions for a more eco-efficient, sustainable and green regional aviation.

Small and medium sized regional airports are considered essential for regional accessibility and competitiveness and it is therefore important that surface access enables the airports to function efficiently as part of the wider transport system. Airports have a concentration of activity that has the potential to achieve significant modal shift in favour of public transport. Increased activity at the airports will increase the demand for surface access.

This study follows on from market research conducted in 2011, which identified the surface access issues at each airport under consideration and provided recommendations for solutions to improve public transport accessibility. Small and medium airports need innovative and reliable public transport in order to survive and grow. The main aim of this study was to focus more closely on the options for bus services and to identify, in the context of Manston and Lydd specifically, what innovative and reliable bus services could look like. The outputs from this study, as well as a further proposed study into rail access, will then be used to inform a public transport accessibility model / blueprint for small to medium sized regional airports in the North Sea Region of Europe.

The two key objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To identify the options for bus services to provide improved public transport surface connectivity at the small to medium sized regional airports in the North Sea Region; and
2. To identify the steps needed to implement these options in order to provide improved public transport surface connectivity at the small to medium sized regional airports in the North Sea Region. This should include funding mechanisms to initiate and support these innovative and demand-oriented bus services.

The study focuses on Kent's two airports: Manston (Kent's International Airport) and Lydd (London Ashford) Airport. The study also benefits from exchange of knowledge and best practice with the following airports and their connecting public transport authorities, which provide a North Sea Region context:

1. London Southend Airport;
2. City Airport Bremen, Germany;
3. Sandefjord Lufthavn Torp Airport, Norway;
4. Groningen Airport Eelde, The Netherlands;
5. Billund Airport, Denmark; and
6. Kortrijk-Welvegem International Airport, Belgium.

Study Methodology

The study comprised 13 key tasks, as follows:

- Task 1 - Review of existing airport policy and accessibility;
- Task 2 - Analysis of how future bus services could be provided;
- Task 3 - Analysis of the most effective ways to integrate the airports with existing rail and any potential future parkway stations on the high speed rail network through bus-rail interchange services;
- Task 4 - Analysis of the potential for longer distance coach services connecting the airports to a range of destinations;
- Task 5 - Recommendations for other 'innovative', 'flexible' and other 'demand-oriented' public bus services;
- Task 6 - Establish the requirements of these bus services in order to be attractive to air passengers;
- Task 7 - Establish the requirements of these bus services in order to be attractive for airport staff journeys to and from the airport;
- Task 8 - Clear demonstration of utilising knowledge and best practice from the partner airports and their connecting public transport authorities, to inform the options that could be applicable to both airports;
- Task 9 - Analysis of options for each airport during the London 2012 Olympic Games if there is an increase in passengers from that one-off event;
- Task 10 - Analysis of the viability of all the bus service options;
- Task 11 - A summary of these results including recommendations of the best options for each airport;
- Task 12 - Recommendations for the timescale of implementing the different types of bus services as the airports grow; and
- Task 13 - An assessment of the universal applicability of these recommendations to the partner airports for inclusion in the public transport accessibility model/blueprint for small to medium sized regional airports in the North Sea Region of Europe.

Further information on the study methodology is contained in Section 2 of this report.

Policy Context

European and UK national policy is generally supportive of the aspiration to grow small to medium sized airports in Europe to help to solve the existing capacity crunch at some of the larger airports. As part of this, it is expected that the accessibility of such airports would be improved, in order to cater to the demand for travel to the airport from staff and passengers. It is acknowledged that currently, small and medium sized airports do not have comprehensive surface access and gaps in service provision exist, particularly in terms of rail and bus/coach access.

There is much support for the growth and expansion of Manston Airport at the airport, local and county-wide policy levels. The forecast passenger throughput for the airport contained in its Master Plan is 2.2 million passengers per annum (mppa) in 2018, rising to 4.7mppa in 2033. There is also an aspiration to

improve the surface access provision in line with the additional demand from staff and passengers created by this growth; in particular, the creation of Thanet Parkway station, which would link the airport directly to the high speed rail network. This is a proposition supported by the airport operator, Kent County Council and the local rail operator.

Lydd Airport is currently the subject of a planning application to extend the runway and deliver associated terminal improvements. The airport's aspiration is to increase passenger numbers to two million per annum by 2015. Whilst this level of growth is unlikely in the short term, if planning approval is granted, surface access improvements will be implemented to cater to the increased demand from passengers. This will include a dedicated shuttle bus service between the airport and Ashford International rail station. District level policy is supportive of the aspirations to grow and develop the airport. Kent County Council is supportive of the provision of the dedicated bus / coach link between Lydd Airport and Ashford International.

Review of Existing Accessibility

A review was undertaken into the existing accessibility of both airports, with a particular focus on existing bus and coach services. Accession analysis was undertaken to illustrate the catchment area of the airport in terms of the areas that are within a 60 minute journey time by all public transport services and by bus and coach specifically. This information was supplemented with information gained from stakeholder interviews carried out with the airport operators, local bus and coach operators and Kent County Council. A preliminary gap analysis was then undertaken to identify where the key gaps in service provision lie that could potentially be addressed through new bus and coach services or enhancement to existing services.

Manston Airport is currently served by three local bus services, which operate at a peak frequency of one bus per hour from Monday to Friday. Two of these services operate on Saturdays, at a similar frequency. No bus services operate to the airport on Sundays and there are no evening services in operation on weekdays. One of these services provides a connection to Ramsgate rail station; from which high speed rail services to London can be accessed. However, due to the hourly bus service and lack of integration between bus and train timings, passengers currently face a lengthy connection time. There is also limited bus infrastructure at the airport. No coach services directly serve the airport; the closest coach service is a National Express service that operates to two coach stops in Ramsgate. Services generally run four times per day to London. However, passengers also face difficulties in using local bus services to connect with these services.

Lydd Airport has very limited public transport accessibility; the closest bus stops are situated approximately 1.5km from the terminal building and are only served by one bus service, with a frequency limited to once per hour during peak times. As with bus services to Manston Airport, there are no evening services and no services on Sundays. There are also poor bus links to the rail network. These issues mean that currently, travelling by bus is an unrealistic and unattractive option for staff and passengers. There are also no

scheduled coach services that serve the airport; passengers currently need to take a taxi from the airport to Hythe, from which National Express services operate.

Best Practice Case Studies

Best practice analysis was undertaken into bus and coach service provision at partner airports and other comparable worldwide airports, in order to feed into the development for appropriate schemes for Lydd and Manston Airports. The table below summarises the key features of each service examined and the lessons learnt that are applicable to Manston and Lydd Airports.

Location	Service	Lessons Learnt
London, UK	<u>Gatwick Flyer</u> - pre-booked shuttle service along a series of core routes to areas north and east of London. Demand responsive in terms of drop-off points, departure times from the airport are fixed.	Manston and Lydd could seek to provide a similar service, although one which would be more flexible in terms of departure times from the airport.
Honolulu, USA	<u>SpeedyShuttle</u> - demand responsive shuttle bus service providing links to the surrounding area. Dedicated customer 'hosts' to assist with enquiries, ticketing and baggage. Signage is in place at the airport to publicise the scheme.	Would require a reasonable level of passenger throughput to make this kind of scheme commercially viable; thus is more of a medium or long term scheme for Manston and Lydd. The availability of customer 'hosts' reinforces the image of a quality service.
London, UK	<u>National Express Dot2Dot</u> - former demand responsive service providing links to destinations from both Heathrow and Gatwick airports, with particular appeal to tourists and business users. Operated using purpose built vehicles with the aim of providing customers with greater comfort and luggage space at a more affordable rate than taxis.	To provide a service similar to Dot2Dot it would be expected that some support would be required from the Airport Operator to support the initial capital investment. Additionally a level of subsidy would potentially be required to sustain the service to a reasonable standard. The demand responsive element would work well at Manston and Lydd, due to the irregular flight times.
USA	<u>Veolia SuperShuttle</u> - operates across more than thirty airports in the USA and has been in existence since 1987. It defines itself as being a 'shared ride' service which operates on demand. Key features include the provision of exclusive bus bays, visible signage, dedicated staff for information and ticketing and management of boarding.	Manston and Lydd Airports could look to operate a similar service in the medium term. The key features that make the Veolia service attractive to passengers would need to be considered carefully in order to attract sufficient patronage.
Rotterdam, The Netherlands	<u>RandstandRail Airport Bus Service</u> - In December 2010 a high quality bus service operated by RandstandRail was introduced to provide fast and easy access between the airport and parts of the city. Destinations from the airport include Rotterdam railway station and various parts of the city. Services operate from early in the morning to late in the evening. The service makes use of smart ticketing, which draws repeat users. 20% of passengers now use buses to access the airport.	If services to the airport are dedicated (for example, a shuttle between Lydd and Ashford International rail station), they need to have a strong brand and effective marketing. The provision of early morning and late evening services makes the service more attractive to staff, especially those who work shifts.

Location	Service	Lessons Learnt
Bristol, Cardiff, Southampton & Heathrow Airports	<u>Checker Cars</u> - Checker Cars is the leading taxi operator at Bristol, Cardiff and Southampton airports and has an additional base at Heathrow. With over 1,000 vehicles, the 24 hour service is operated 'on demand' and can be booked either online or at a service desk at each of the airports. Hybrid cars have been introduced into the fleet in order to reduce the carbon footprint of the service.	This is a service that provides flexibility for passengers and staff for journeys to and from the various airports. A hybrid fleet requires less direct investment and infrastructure than electric vehicles, whilst also allowing a degree of flexibility in the length of journeys rather than relying on battery power.
Heathrow Airport, UK	<u>Electric pods</u> - a system launched in September 2011 to provide a link between the Terminal 5 car park and the main building. The service runs only on demand and enables users to select their own destination. The driverless vehicles provide flexibility to passengers as there is no fixed timetable. The vehicles are battery powered and the system emits zero emissions.	Although this scheme is not viable at either Manston or Lydd at present, it provides an insight into the types of schemes larger UK airports are developing to improve the customer experience, whilst reducing carbon emissions. A scheme such as this would involve a high amount of capital investment.
Boston's Logan International Airport	<u>Hybrid vehicle technology</u> - 50 diesel-electric hybrid / CNG buses are being brought in to replace the existing fleet of diesel vehicles. A new 'green depot' is also under construction that will support the operation and maintenance of the new fleet. Between June and September 2012, a pilot programme called 'On Us' was run, which enabled passengers to travel without charge on the Silver Line bus service to South Station. The route is served by eight clean-fuel buses.	At present, bus/coach services to both Manston and Lydd Airports are very limited. Therefore it would not be appropriate at present to consider the implementation of services that use clean fuel technology, due to the higher cost of implementation compared to buses that use regular fuels. However, as each airport develops and additional bus services are put in place, the use of hybrid technology could be something to consider in future.
Leeds Bradford International Airport, UK	<u>Direct, frequent bus services</u> - services run between the airport and Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate and Otley on a half hourly/hourly basis, on weekdays and weekends. The vehicles are designed with airline passengers in mind and the ticket price is costed so that it is less than the price of a day's parking at the airport. One of the services links directly to Leeds station.	The services have been designed to be attractive to both staff and passengers in terms of the destinations served, ticket prices, links to the nearest mainline rail station and the type of vehicle used. These are all important things to consider when designing new bus services.
Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany	<u>Move About</u> - a car sharing service that enables customers to rent an electric vehicle from one location and return it to another location. Pick-up and return locations are currently fixed and all have electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The scheme operates in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany and there are now almost 100 vehicles in operation. The vehicles have a range of approximately 70 miles, making them ideal for city use.	This is an example of a service that could be put in place at Manston and/or Lydd Airport. As the vehicles have a range of approximately 70 miles, this would be sufficient to serve the main catchment area of each airport i.e. one hour's drive time. Such a scheme would require a number of vehicles to be located at the airport, with others located in nearby towns.
Southend, UK	<u>Rail station in close proximity to the terminal building</u> - completed in 2012, the new station provides a link from London Liverpool Street directly to the airport. This not only connects Southend Airport to London by rail, but also	There are already plans to create Thanet Parkway station, which would link the airport directly to a rail station providing train services into central London. In the short term this would likely require a demand responsive shuttle bus

Location	Service	Lessons Learnt
	Southend to Stansted Airport via Liverpool Street. The close proximity of the rail station to the terminal building also appeals to staff who cannot or do not wish to drive to work.	as it would not be within walking distance of the airport terminal. Train times and shuttle bus hours of operation would need to have a degree of integration. Although there are no plans for a rail station to directly serve Lydd, it may be possible to provide a shuttle bus service to connect the airport to Ashford International station, from which high speed services run into London.
Billund, Denmark	<u>Shuttle bus service</u> - the airport-funded shuttle bus links the airport with various hotels and tourist attractions, operating at a frequency of every 45 minutes. The service is integrated with the flight schedule. Patronage levels are high and continue to increase. A second shuttle bus links the airport parking areas with an on-site hotel and the terminal. This service can be called by passengers at bus shelters.	The integration of shuttle bus operating times with flight schedules increases the attractiveness to passengers. Subsidy would be required to run a free shuttle bus service, or at least a level of capital expenditure until it became commercially viable. A shuttle bus service from Manston or Lydd Airport should also connect the airport with the closest mainline rail station.
Sandefjord Lufthavn Torp, Norway	<u>Rail station shuttle bus service</u> - a shuttle bus links the airport with the closest rail station, which is 3km away. Shuttle bus timings are linked to train timetables and the cost of using the shuttle bus is included in the rail ticket.	The integration of shuttle bus timings with train timings enhances the attractiveness of the service to passengers. In addition the integration of the shuttle bus cost with the rail ticket makes it easier for passengers to shift between modes. Such a service would need to be branded and marketed effectively in order that passengers are aware of the service and its benefits to them.
City Airport Bremen, Germany	<u>Bus services designed to cater to passengers using low cost carriers</u> - Public Express, Flyer Reisen and Bus2fly focus on the low cost carrier passenger market, with early arrival times and low fares. All operate on a commercial basis. Bus2fly operates between the airport and central Hamburg and the schedule is set to match most Ryanair arrivals and departures. Public Express offers services from Bremen Central Station to Groningen via the airport.	The integration of bus timings with the flight timings of low cost carriers and the low fares mean that these types of bus service will be attractive to passengers and also convenient for them. Such a service would need to be branded and marketed effectively in order that passengers are aware of the service and its benefits to them. For example, passengers could be offered the opportunity to purchase their bus tickets when purchasing their flight tickets, or on board the flight.

Gap Analysis

The results of the analysis into existing accessibility were used to undertake a gap analysis for the two airports. This highlights the key gaps in bus and coach service provision and provided the basis for scheme development. The table below summarises the gaps for each airport.

Airport	Mode	Gaps in Service Provision
Manston	Bus	<p>Only three services serve the airport, to limited local destinations.</p> <p>Lack of services to/from the airport after 6pm.</p> <p>Limited services on Saturdays - the last service is mid-afternoon.</p> <p>No services on Sundays.</p>

Airport	Mode	Gaps in Service Provision
		Service frequency is once per hour or less often on Saturdays. Lack of covered walkway / bus shelter from the bus stop to the airport terminal.
	Coach	No scheduled local or long distance coach services serve the airport. Lack of opportunities to link to National Express coach services from Birchington and Broadstairs through the use of local bus services.
	Other	Lack of integration between bus and rail services - the number 38 bus service serves Ramsgate station, which provides high speed trains to London; however bus frequency is only once per hour on weekdays and less often at weekends and timings are not aligned to train timings. No demand responsive services operate from the airport e.g. that serve local rail stations. There is no guarantee that there will be taxis available to meet incoming flights. Limited marketing of the bus services.
Lydd	Bus	No bus stops within the airport complex; closest bus stops are on the B2075, over 1.5km from the airport terminal. Airport is not directly served by bus; two services operate in the vicinity, which stop 1.5km and 3km away from the terminal building. Service frequencies are limited - once per hour or less often. No services on Sundays.
	Coach	No scheduled local or long distance coach services serve the airport. Lack of opportunities to link to National Express coach services; the closest service stops in Hythe, which is 13km away from the airport.
	Other	Lack of integration between bus and rail services - the number 100/101/102 bus service serves Rye station, which provides rail services to Ashford International and Brighton. However, this bus route does not directly serve the airport and has an hourly frequency. Rail services also run at an hourly frequency, meaning that the combined journey time is long enough to discourage passengers from using them. No demand responsive services operate from the airport e.g. that serve local rail stations. There is no guarantee that there will be taxis available to meet incoming flights. Limited marketing of the bus services.

Recommendations for Future Service Provision

Based on the results of the gap analysis and from the information gained during the stakeholder interviews, a number of new schemes and enhancements to existing schemes for the two airports are proposed, for the short, medium and long terms. These are set out in the table below.

Airport	Timescale	Recommended Schemes
Manston	Short term	Improve the availability of taxis at the airport terminal and encourage a local company to provide taxis to meet all flights. Demand responsive shuttle service between the airport and Ramsgate rail station.
	Medium term	Coach service from central London via Manston as part of another route, for example Margate / Ramsgate to London. Fixed timetable shuttle bus service to Ramsgate rail station (until Thanet Parkway

Airport	Timescale	Recommended Schemes
		shuttle bus service is brought into operation). Demand responsive shuttle bus to Thanet Parkway (medium – long term).
	Long term	Fixed timetable shuttle bus service between Manston Airport and Thanet Parkway station. Coach service between Manston Airport and central London. Demand responsive shuttle bus service between Manston Airport, Manston Business Park and Ramsgate (including Ramsgate rail station). Dedicated fleet of demand responsive shuttle buses.
Lydd	Short term	Improve the availability of taxis at the terminal and encourage a local company to provide vehicles to meet all flights.
	Medium term	A demand responsive bus service to coastal resorts and major towns within the south of Kent to meet scheduled flights. Demand responsive shuttle service to connect the entrance to the terminal building to the external road network to connect with existing bus services. A shuttle service from Lydd Airport to Ashford International rail station.
	Long term	Coach service from Lydd Airport to central London.

Business cases have been developed for each of these schemes, along with approximate costings. These are set out in detail in Section 9.

Bus Service Requirements for Staff and Passengers

Consideration was then given as to the features of these proposed schemes that would make them attractive to staff and passengers. As different groups of staff and passengers have varying requirements in terms of surface travel by public transport, they were segmented into the following basic groups:

- Passengers:
 - Scheduled airline passengers;
 - Low cost airline passengers;
 - Charter airline passengers; and
 - Private aircraft passengers.

- Staff:
 - Professional shift workers e.g. pilots and air traffic control;
 - Professional non-shift workers e.g. management and administrative staff;
 - Non-professional shift workers e.g. cleaning and maintenance staff; and
 - Non-professional non-shift workers e.g. those who work in airport shops and lower grade administrative staff.

The features required for each scheme to meet the needs of each group were then identified. Essentially, the more affluent groups tend to be most concerned with the quality of service provided, as well as service timings and frequencies. Less affluent groups are more influenced by the cost of the service and the value for money that they receive. One of the key factors that motivates all groups was found to be the availability of information on the features of that particular service. Research shows that a lack of information is often a key barrier to the use of sustainable modes of transport; therefore any new scheme or change to an

existing bus service needs to be promoted effectively to staff and passengers. Integration is another key factor across each of the different groups. For bus and coach services that link with rail stations or other local bus services, it is essential that the timings are integrated such that staff and passengers do not face unnecessarily long journey and interchange times. Staff who work shifts also require services that enable them to travel to and from work in accordance with their shift patterns.

Business Case for Proposed Bus Services

Outline business cases have been developed for the bus services proposed for both airports. In order to calculate the indicative costs of each service, a combination of cost rates from suppliers and bus operation modelling data have been used. Those schemes which will operate to a fixed timetable have been run through BusOps, which is a model that provides annual costs incurred through the operation of a service, by considering journey times, length of route and frequency. The approximate costings for those schemes that do not operate to a fixed timetable i.e. Demand Responsive Transport schemes have been developed by considering the number of vehicles required and applying a typical annual cost factor based on staffing requirements and the type of vehicle.

It was found that the majority of schemes proposed for Manston Airport have approximate costs of less than £250,000 per year (excluding staffing costs) and are relatively simple to set up and operate. Costs for those schemes proposed for Lydd are higher, mainly due to the distances required in connecting the airport to the local road and rail network. The schemes that were found to be most viable and attractive to passengers are those which connect the airports to the local rail network. If a local operator is willing to introduce such a service, initially on a Demand Responsive basis, then in the medium term there may be sufficient passenger throughput and associated patronage of the service to make the service commercially viable and to consider changing it to a fixed timetable service. For Manston Airport in particular there is a clear progression from Demand Responsive Transport to fixed routes that serve both Ramsgate and Thanet Parkway rail stations.

The cost of running a wider demand responsive network from Lydd Airport to coastal resorts will require a certain level of passenger throughput; therefore such a service would have limited patronage in the short term. However, there is a need to connect the airport with the local road network (Romney Road), from which passengers could access existing local public transport services. Such a service could be operated by a local taxi company or a minibus/bus operator. This would be a much more justifiable and cost effective solution in the short term to providing a demand responsive network.

Due to the types of vehicles and distances involved coach travel is the most expensive options of all the proposed schemes. Both airports are a significant distance from central London; therefore the level of competitiveness compared to rail is not likely to be high. A coach service between Lydd and central London is not likely to be commercially viable until passenger throughput increases significantly; however at Manston Airport there is the potential to alter one of National Express's existing services to call at the airport. This would mean that in the medium term, passengers could make use of the existing network

without the need for heavy subsidy. The operation of dedicated coach services to either airport is too costly to justify based on current and proposed passenger forecasts. The two airports need to consider the potential of providing either revenue / funding support for services, or investigate the viability of approaching a private operator with a view to encouraging them to serve the airports on a commercial basis.

Olympics Impact at Lydd and Manston

London was the host city for both the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and the Department for Transport forecast that 50,000 members of the Games Family and sponsors as well as 500,000 spectators would visit London during this period. Although the main London airports have significant capacity available for handling this level of passenger demand, smaller airports in the south east such as Lydd and Manston are under-utilised and were therefore considered to have significant spare capacity to cater to some of this passenger demand.

Interviews were carried out with the two airport operators to determine the additional demand expected and to identify any changes to surface access provision that are being made to meet passenger requirements for onward travel. Manston Airport did not anticipate a significant increase in the number of flights during the Games. It did anticipate that a small number of private charter flights associated with the Olympics would make use of the airport; however the organisations that booked these flights made their own arrangements for onward travel from the airport. Manston Airport acknowledged that other airports have more convenient onward travel connections to the Olympic Park.

The Airport Operator at Lydd anticipated that Lydd Airport would be substantially busier during the Games, with the majority of flights likely to be private jets catering for VIPs and corporate clients, with some day / overnight visitors travelling in private light aircraft. Those people who travel by private jet are unlikely to choose public transport as their preferred mode of onward travel from the airport and are likely to travel by car. Therefore the airport is taking steps to provide a range of means of onward travel based on client preferences, including private VIP cars, taxi services and minibuses which would transport passengers to Ashford International rail station to connect with High Speed Rail services to London.

Best practice analysis of the experience of Southend in catering to additional flights associated with the Olympics shows that, where there are convenient rail connections to the Olympic Park, rail is a mode of surface travel that will attract high levels of patronage.

Contact was made with each airport after the conclusion of the Paralympic Games to establish the actual impact of the Games on passenger numbers and any associated changes to surface access that were made. Manston Airport did not experience an increase in flight / passenger numbers and thus did not make any changes to its surface access arrangements.

Lydd Airport experienced a 17% rise in flight arrivals and departures during the Games period; this was due an increase in flights operated by flying schools, who wanted to avoid the restricted area over London, and also flights operated by new operators. Therefore the airport did not put any specific Games-related surface transport arrangements in place for the Games period.

Southend Airport experienced an increase in air passengers on domestic routes and the Amsterdam - Schiphol route during the Games period. The only changes made to surface access arrangements during the Games period were that Greater Anglia increased the provision of late night train services from Stratford. However, this had no direct impact on the airport as the last flight departures are much earlier in the evening.

Based on the experiences of the three airports both prior to and during the Games period, the key lesson learnt is not to plan for a forecast increase in flight / passenger numbers too far in advance, in case the forecast increase does not materialise. Forecasts can be wrong; thus smaller regional airports need to have a flexible approach with regard to major international events, where they play a supporting role to the key gateway airports. There is benefit in smaller regional airports developing a contingency plan that can be put in place at relatively short notice, in the event that increases to flight / passenger numbers do occur.

Applicability of Recommendations to the Partner Airports

During the previous study carried out under the GSA project, gaps in bus and coach service provision were identified for each of the partner airports. This study explores in more depth the gaps in bus and coach service provision at Lydd and Manston Airports, and identifies potential schemes to overcome those gaps. It then examines the applicability of the types of scheme identified to each of the other partner airports. The types of scheme considered include Demand Responsive Transport, enhancements to local bus service provision, long distance coach service provision and shuttle bus services to nearby rail stations.

It was found that, although some of the partner airports are more developed in terms of their public transport provision, there are still lessons that they can learn from the findings set out in this study in order to improve their bus and coach service provision. For example, few offer a shuttle bus service to a nearby rail station, which means that any passengers who wish to travel to and from the airport by rail can face an arduous, long journey, due to a lack of integration between bus and rail services. Any improvements to surface access are however dependent on the airport achieving sufficient passenger throughput to provide sufficient demand for these services and justify the expenditure required. There are also lessons that Lydd and Manston can learn from each of the partner airports; case study examples of best practice are presented in Section 5 of this report and were used to help develop the recommended schemes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research undertaken during the course of this study shows that existing bus and coach service provision to Manston and Lydd Airports is limited in terms of service routes, frequencies and

weekend/evening timings. Lydd Airport is particularly difficult to access via bus as no bus services directly serve the airport. Neither airport is directly served by any scheduled coach services.

In the short term, it is recommended that schemes are implemented that connect each airport with the local bus and rail system; for example, a shuttle bus service that connects Manston Airport with Ramsgate rail station and subsequently the new Thanet Parkway station. Whilst passenger throughput remains low, it is appropriate to introduce these services as demand responsive services rather than operating to a fixed timetable. If passenger throughput increases as a result of airport expansion, these services can then be developed into commercially viable timetabled services, if demand is sufficient to attract the interest of a local operator.

The proposed coach schemes are the most expensive option of all the proposed schemes. It is possible that existing services can be diverted to serve the airport, particularly Manston Airport, over the medium to long term, but again this would require sufficient demand and the support of National Express as the local operator. The provision of dedicated services between either Manston or Lydd Airports and central London is unlikely, even over the longer term.

The recommendations arising from this study are therefore to investigate the potential to provide demand responsive services in the short term that can address the key gaps in the public transport accessibility to both airports. These include linking Manston to the high speed rail network at Ramsgate station and then Thanet Parkway station once operational and linking Lydd Airport to the bus network and Ashford International rail station. If passenger throughput increases and thus patronage of these services increases, there may be a case in the medium to long term to operate these services on a commercial basis according to a fixed timetable.



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