

Airtrack

Airtrack is a £670m rail scheme being promoted by Heathrow Airport Limited. It includes 2.36 miles of new track in Staines town centre and leading up to Heathrow.

The Airtrack service would involve two trains an hour each from Guildford, Reading and Waterloo to Heathrow and two Heathrow Express trains an hour from the airport to Staines.

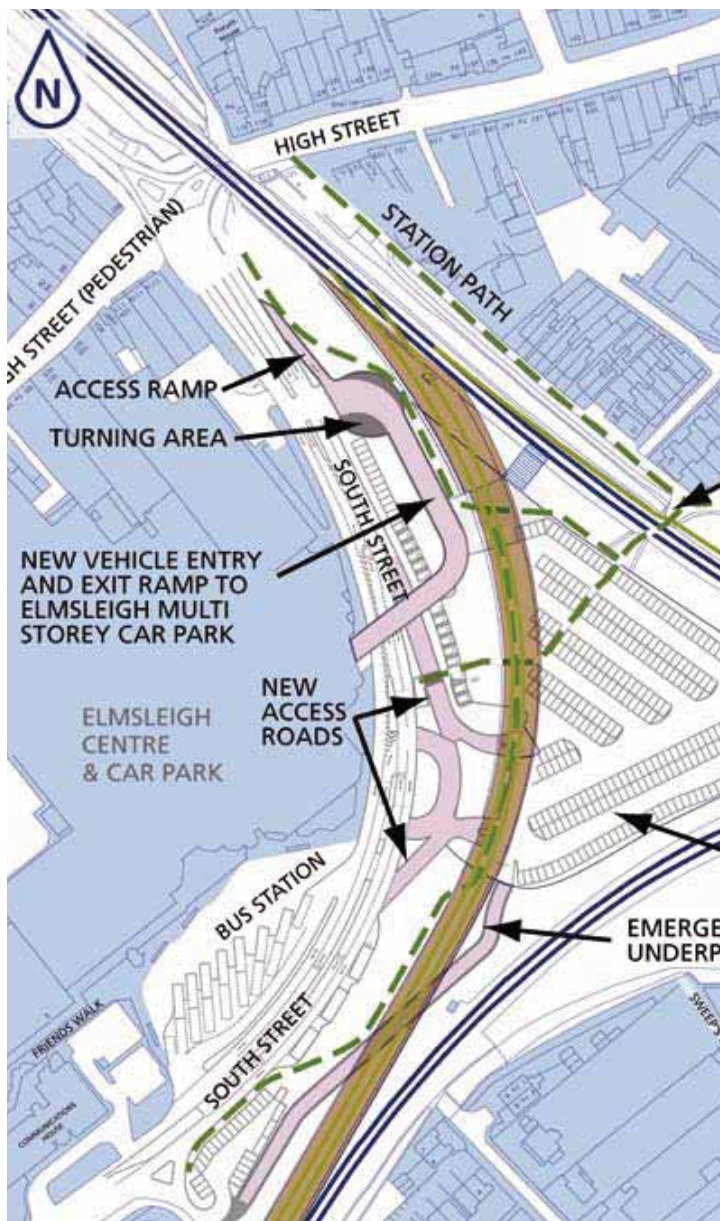
Whilst the scheme is intended to promote the use of public transport, its construction would cause massive disruption to the Borough as well as some significant long term impacts.

These include:

- disruption to Staines town centre by constructing a new rail 'chord' parallel to South Street (linking the Windsor line to the Virginia Water line) leading to loss of parking, more congestion, noise, poorer air quality and adverse visual impacts
- a new third line and platform at Staines station would cause further disruption
- significant impacts on Staines Moor (a Site of Special Scientific Interest)
- impacts on Stanwell Moor
- added congestion around Staines due to increased level crossing delays at Thorpe Road in Egham

Public consultation on the scheme ended in September and the Council has raised a substantial number of objections. These will be heard at a Public Inquiry likely to start next spring.

 Further information on this scheme can be viewed at www.heathrowairport.com/airtrack



South Street, Staines - as it looks now



South Street, Staines - as it would look



Fighting the floods

Nearly 4,500 homes in Spelthorne could benefit from recent proposals by the Environment Agency to reduce flooding as part of a £300m package of engineering works and other measures. The Agency is currently consulting on these plans and will seek government funding if approved.

The proposals cover the stretch of the Thames from Datchet (near Windsor) to Teddington. The engineering works include three new diversion channels averaging 50-60 metres wide.

The channels are:

- east bank of the Thames from Datchet to Staines - this will relieve Old Windsor and Wraysbury
- west bank of the Thames from south Staines to Chertsey Lock - this will relieve south Staines, Chertsey and Laleham
- east/north bank of the Thames from Chertsey Lock to Shepperton - this will help relieve Chertsey and Shepperton

The proposals also include widening the Desborough Channel, near Walton, by three to four metres. Below Walton Bridge there is no scope to construct diversion channels but Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington weirs would all have their capacity increased.

When complete the number of homes with a high risk of flooding in Spelthorne would fall from 4,500 to around 2,000.

The engineering works could take up to five years to design and then, subject to funding, take a further five to six years to build. When complete the number of homes with a high risk of flooding in Spelthorne would fall from 4,500 to around 2,000.



Photo: Spelthorne Council

The strategy also includes proposals for continued strict control on development in areas of flood risk, effective emergency planning for floods and small scale community-based protection measures.

The Council supports the principle of a comprehensive package of measures to deal with flood risk in the Borough and will respond to the current consultation.

All members of the public should seek as much information about the strategy as possible and then make their views known by 4 December directly to the Environment Agency at: **Lower Thames Strategy, Environment Agency, Swift House, Frimley Business Park, Frimley, Surrey GU16 7SQ.**

This scheme will not be built for some years to come, and only if funding is fully secured, so in the meantime please ensure you take all reasonable precautions against flooding.

 You can follow the advice from the Environment Agency at www.environment-agency.gov.uk and provided by Spelthorne Council at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/flooding_advice



Above map and illustration are courtesy of Heathrow Airtrack