

UK Project Management Round Up



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INTRODUCTION

This month's report comes to you from sunny Helsinki where I am attending the Finnish Project Management Association's Annual Conference. You can read Jouko Vaskimo's report on this elsewhere in this issue, so I will just say that it is being held in the same venue that IPMA used in 2007 for its World Congress and the weather is wonderful (today at least – more snow forecast but not till after I return to UK). It is with some pride that I can report that report is my 60th for PM World Journal. I have missed several months over the 6 years since we launched but hope some of you are still reading these notes – and so to business, reporting on the project world from UK.

Brexit still dominates press headlines, conversations in pubs and at the school gate. Like so many things in life, the impact of Brexit is all a matter of conjecture and everyone will be wise after the event, so I will not waste any more space on it until we are much further along in the negotiations. All I will say is that 'they' need a Project Manager to run the whole programme.

This month sees a series of transport related projects and programmes ranging from the re-opening of the Heathrow Third Runway Inquiry, the first public outing for Bloodhound SSC and something I would have commented on last month, the successful project delivery by Network Rail over the August Bank Holiday.

RAIL SUCCESSES

Network Rail has a very large portfolio of rail projects that cover everything from track improvements through updating signaling, replacing road bridges over tracks to replacing stations. Carrying out work on and around the tracks is a critical safety related activity so the opportunities are few and always require closure of the lines so Network Rail usually take the reduction of travel at Public Holiday weekends to carry out major upgrades. The August Bank Holiday weekend was no exception with work

taking place on London Bridge, Bolton and London Waterloo Stations as well as further High Speed 2 work related to Euston Station.



Work at London Bridge Photo: PA Images

As Simon Blanchflower, Network Rail's Major Programme Director said during the platform work in 2016, *"we try our best to minimise the impact on passengers and do most of the work behind the scenes, but there are big pieces of work that can only be completed when the railway is clear of trains and people"*.

London Bridge is the oldest major station in the capital. And has 54 million passengers travelling through it each year. Platform 6 is reckoned to be the busiest in Europe, with 18 trains an hour. London Bridge's new concourse covers an area greater than Wembley's pitch. Further work is expected at Christmas when major signalling upgrades are scheduled.

Elsewhere, HS2 preparation works at Euston station saw a new power supply installed as well as trackside and station clean-up and general maintenance. While further north, critical signalling, track, civils and electrification works were completed in the Bolton station area as part of North West Electrification programme. All this amounts to the largest programme of August bank holiday works ever undertaken and was delivered on time and as planned over the bank holiday weekend (Saturday 26 August to Monday 28 August), thanks to more than 17,000 members of the Orange Army working throughout the long weekend.

NEW TRAINS

Moving on to last month, the long awaited new Hitachi built high speed trains were seen on the track for the first time. The new Intercity Express train was scheduled to leave Bristol Temple Meads for London Paddington at 6am sharp but the Great

Western Railway service was 25 minutes late in departing because of unspecified 'technical issues'. It also arrived 41 minutes late. Problems were put down to HVAC failures causing a water-leak and overheating meant as well as a pantograph fault at Taplow much to the embarrassment of Transport Secretary Chris Grayling who was onboard. As if this was not enough, some of the ergonomic seats had to be sectioned off after an air-conditioning unit sprang a leak, exacerbating an overcrowding problem.

Hitachi Rail Europe Managing Director Karen Boswell said: *“Nine years of hard work has gone into making today happen, from creating a new factory and workforce, to establishing modern maintenance facilities from Swansea to London. We’ve delivered pioneering 21st century trains for passengers to enjoy and sparked a manufacturing renaissance in the North East.*

“I am, however, very sorry and disappointed that today’s first passenger train from Bristol encountered technical issues, causing a delay to the service and an air-conditioning issue which resulted in water entering the carriage rather than being discharged externally.”

HEATHROW THIRD RUNWAY INQUIRY

I had hoped we had heard the last of this matter when the decision to award the airport expansion to Heathrow but my hopes have been dashed. Like any good Project Management Office, the Department for Transport (DfT) published updated noise analysis and a new air quality plan as part of a series of fresh reports into the impact of expanding London and the nation’s only hub airport.

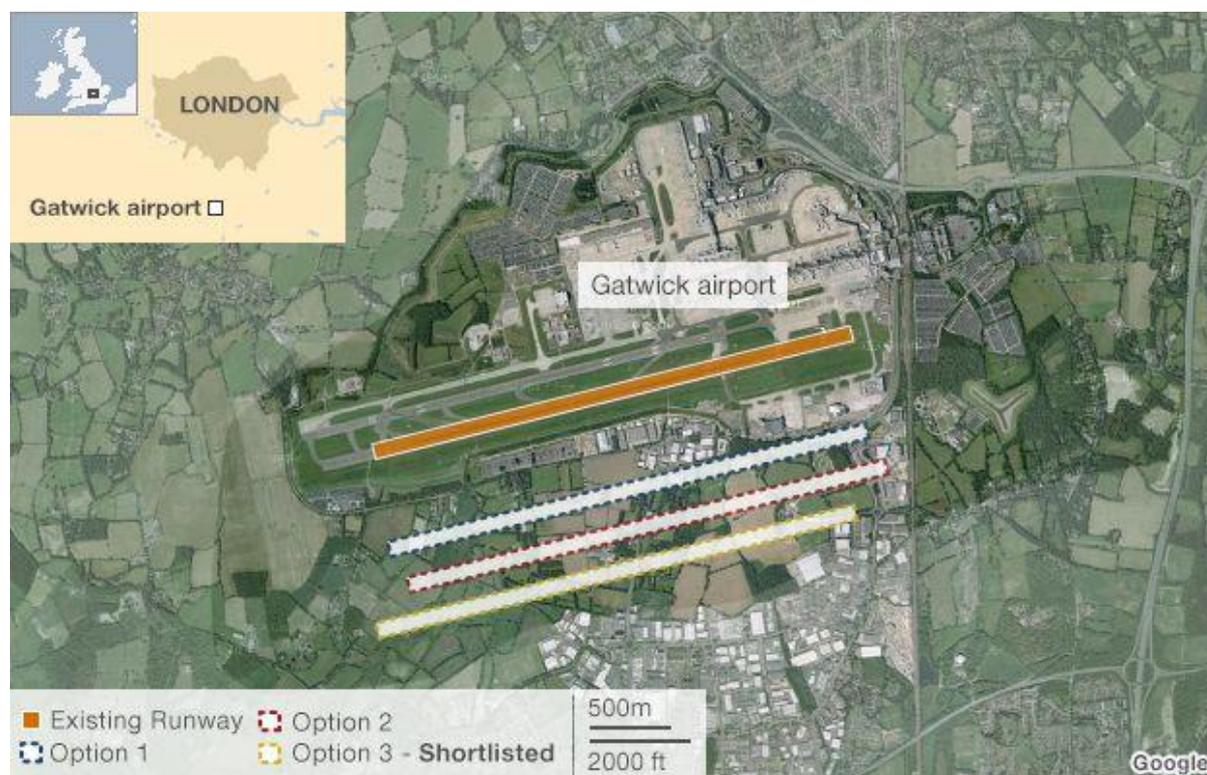
According to The Guardian, the government’s sustainability appraisal expects the plans to have a negative effect on air quality, noise and biodiversity. It also says that the Gatwick second runway scheme would cause less damage than either potential scheme at Heathrow. The plans will have to mitigate against any significant deterioration in air quality or the whole scheme could be thrown into jeopardy.

Other media outlets have homed in on the ‘new information’ aspects but The Times review centres on the evidence showing that opening a second runway at Gatwick, in West Sussex, would bring greater financial benefits to passengers and the wider economy than initially predicted. Total benefits range from £74.1 billion to £75.3 billion over the 60-year appraisal period compared with £72.8 billion to £74.2 billion predicted for Heathrow. It is interesting that the error range is only £2 billion when the accuracy of environmental management estimates remains uncertain.

There will be plenty of scope for the environmental lobby to reopen their arguments and campaign group the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF), claimed the "scale of this re-consultation" shows that the government's case for Heathrow expansion is "unconvincing".

The DfT's capacity estimate shows London London’s airports are forecast to be full by the mid-2030s with Heathrow already operating at capacity and Gatwick at

capacity during peak times. The reports will help to fuel calls for expansion at other airports in the South East. "It is clear that demand for further airport capacity in the South East continues to grow," a spokesperson for Gatwick said. "That's why we have today reiterated our pledge to government to build a second runway at Gatwick regardless of what happens at Heathrow."



Graphics: BBC Map: Google

BLOODHOUND SSC LOW SPEED TRIAL

For many people, Bloodhound SSC is simply a project to extend the Land Speed Record to 1000 mph. To Project Director, **Richard Noble**, it is much more and he thinks it is a programme with a range of benefits. The complex engineering is a test bed for many emerging technologies but is also intended to get more women into engineering and to reignite interest in engineering in schools. A glance at the website (www.bloodhoundssc.com) shows how the team engage worldwide with sponsors and schools so last week's low speed run at Newquay Airport was a major milestone.

BLOODHOUND SSC made its second set of public runs at Cornwall Airport Newquay, reaching speeds of over 200mph. The enthusiastic crowd of 3,500 spectators were treated to a repeat of Thursday's exciting performance, with driver **Andy Green** making two runs down the runway at what was RAF St Mawgans, powered by the Rolls-Royce EJ200 jet engine. Press reports indicated that there were some mechanical problems with the breaking system and video images show a startled driver realising that the 5 tonne beast was not slowing fast enough. It did

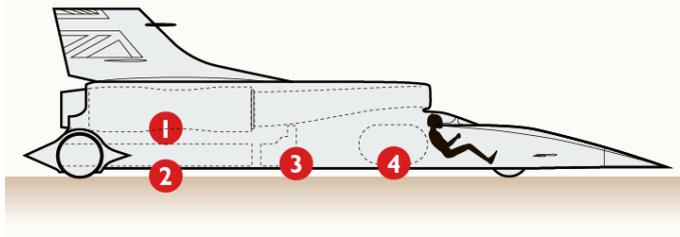
stop safely and the issue was identified as the warm up time needed for the carbon fibre brakes. “We’ve had some interesting times working out how carbon brakes work, because they do take a while to warm up,” said **Mark Chapman**, Bloodhound’s chief engineer.

The jet and rocket-powered car using its EJ200 Eurofighter engine on the Cornish airport’s main runway and pushing it to maximum reheat - or afterburner - phase. The two runs have been used to evaluate the car’s steering, brakes, suspension and data systems, while also measuring the efficiency of the air intake that feeds the EJ200 jet engine, sourced from a Eurofighter Typhoon.

The Bloodhound project was launched at the Science Museum in 2008 and is expected to exceed 1,000mph in a South African desert in two years’ time.

Bloodhound

- 1 Rolls-Royce jet engine
- 2 Rocket
- 3 V8 engine used as fuel pump
- 4 Hydrogen peroxide fuel tank



The car will have three engines as shown in The Times graphic left. The V8 engine is from a Jaguar car and acts as the fuel pump, the Rolls-Royce jet engine powers the car up to speed to allow the rocket motor to fire up at after-burner speed

With the successful low speed runs complete, the plan calls for the car to be shipped to a specially prepared track in north-western

South Africa where the first of two high-speed campaigns take place next year. The team plans to use the 11-mile track at Hakskeen Pan track, but told *Autocar* that it would be open to using another location, should any new sponsors request it. For this run, the car will be driven to more than 600mph.



Wing Commander Andy Green before the low speed run. Photo: BBC

And that concludes a very brief look at the UK project world. Engineering is alive and well, long may that continue!

About the Author



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Miles Shepherd is an executive editorial advisor and international correspondent for PM World Journal in the United Kingdom. He is also managing director for MS Projects Ltd, a consulting company supporting various UK and overseas Government agencies, nuclear industry organisations and other businesses. Miles has over 30 years' experience on a variety of projects in UK, Eastern Europe and Russia. His PM experience includes defence, major IT projects, decommissioning of nuclear reactors, nuclear security, rail and business projects for the UK Government and EU. Past Chair and Fellow of the Association for Project Management (APM), Miles is also past president and chair of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). He is currently a Director for PMI's Global Accreditation Centre and is immediate past Chair of the ISO committee developing new international standards for Project Management and for Program/Portfolio Management. He was involved in setting up APM's team developing guidelines for project management oversight and governance. Miles is based in Salisbury, England and can be contacted at miles.shepherd@msp-ltd.co.uk.