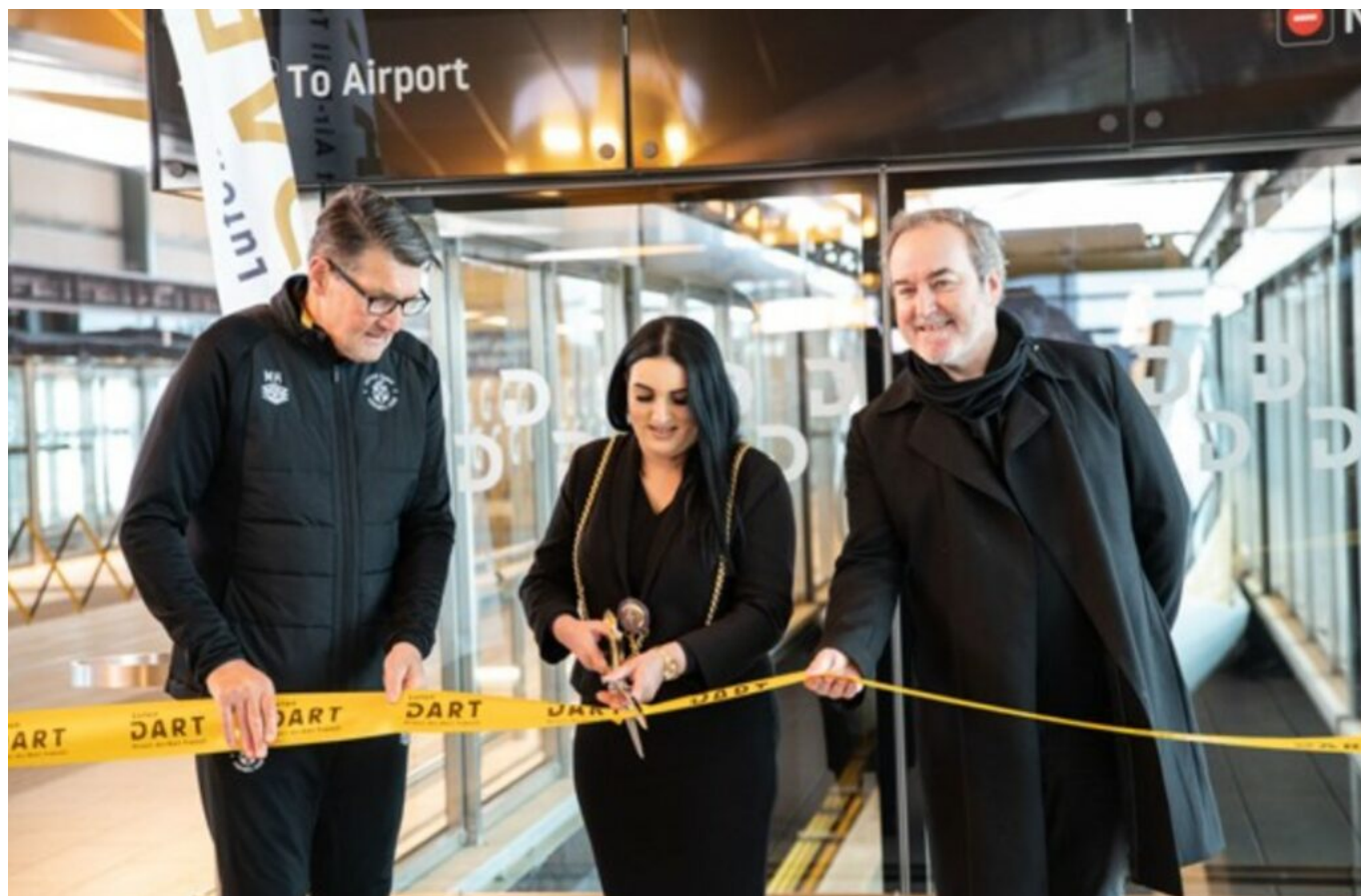


Official opening date announced for Luton DART

March 23, 2023



The Luton DART connecting London Luton Airport with national rail services in under four minutes will officially open for business on Monday 27 March.

The announcement was made by Councillor Hazel Simmons MBE on behalf of Luton Council and Luton Rising, its company that owns the airport and has built the new automated people mover.

The Luton DART seamlessly and sustainably connects the airport terminal and the mainline railway at Luton Airport Parkway station where there are direct services to more than 60 stations.

The journey from London St Pancras International to London Luton Airport terminal will take as little as 32 minutes on the twice-hourly, non-stop Luton Airport Express, connected by East Midlands Railway (EMR), and from around 40 minutes on Thameslink's frequent services.

The Luton DART replaces the existing bus service, which will be terminated, and the transfer is included in any rail ticket where customers choose 'Luton Airport' as the start or end point of the journey.

Tickets are available now from all national rail retailers.

Using EMR's advance tickets a family of four will be able to secure travel between St Pancras International and the London Luton Airport terminal for as little £48.60 and individual tickets start from £10.

All passengers holding a concessionary bus pass, such as pensioners, people with a disability or acting as companion travellers, will be entitled to register to use the Luton DART for free, along with Luton Airport staff.

Residents of Luton are also entitled to register for half-priced travel.

For all these concessionary fares, go to www.lutondart.com and register at least 72 hours before travel.

Cllr Hazel Simmons MBE, Leader of Luton Council, said: "It was as long ago as 2014 that we first began thinking about how we could improve our airport's rail passenger transfer, how it could be a world-class experience to tempt people away from their cars, and how it could be future-proofed to support onward growth. Here we are now, on the cusp of an exciting new era for our town, our airport, and the people of Luton who benefit from its success."

Cllr Javeria Hussain, Chair of Luton Rising, said: "Since 1998 Luton Rising has already earned its position as by far the most socially impactful airport owner in the UK, providing the council with more than £300m for the front-line services that local people rely on, and the charitable sector with a further £180m that supports some of our most vulnerable residents. The Luton DART helps secure this support, and the economic and employment growth of the airport, for future generations.

"We also want to be known as an environmental exemplar, and the Luton DART is significant evidence of the environmental thinking that has also led to our development of a unique Green Controlled Growth framework for the airport's long-term proposed expansion."

Graham Olver, Chief Executive Officer of Luton Rising, added: "The Luton DART provides new speed, reliability and convenience for rail passengers. In improving the connectivity between the national rail network and our airport system, it's also a game-changer for our airport's competitive position in the London and UK aviation systems – and that secures and enhances prospects for everyone who relies on our airport for their own prosperity."

At the launch celebration, Mayor of Luton Councillor Sameera Saleem was joined by Luton Town Football Club legend Mick Harford and Grammy Award-winning Luton-born film composer David Arnold to cut a ribbon.

The highly-acclaimed Luton Youth Funk Orchestra serenaded guests with live performances of 'Come Fly With Me', immortalised by Frank Sinatra, on the Luton DART.

Alberto Martin, CEO of London Luton Airport, commented: "The DART is a transformational development for London Luton Airport. Luton Rising's investment in the DART will fundamentally enhance the simple and friendly passenger experience we work hard to deliver each day – offering a faster, more convenient

airport transfer for rail passengers and supporting our commitment to deliver enhanced connectivity to the airport.

“But the impact of the DART will go beyond the enhanced ease and convenience for passengers. It will also be instrumental in the airport’s plans for future sustainable growth, encouraging passengers away from their cars and onto public transport. We look forward to welcoming the many thousands of passengers who will choose to arrive at our terminal via the DART.”

Simon Pready, Commercial Director of East Midlands Railway, said: “The DART represents the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Luton and we are proud to be part of such an environmentally and economically important project.

“EMR’s Luton Airport Express will provide customers travelling from the capital and the south, a convenient, fast and environmentally friendly way to get to the airport – with a trip taking as little as 32 minutes and costing from just £10 – it’s a great option.

“I’m personally looking forward to speaking to our customers to find out where they are jetting off to.”

Keith Jipps, Infrastructure Director for Govia Thameslink Railway, said: “DART is great news for Luton and for our customers. It means we can offer a faster, more frequent, easier and more environmentally friendly airport transfer. And with up to eight Thameslink trains an hour, passengers have direct links to and from our airport station with five central London stations and 50 local stations between Bedfordshire, Sussex and Kent.

“Rail is the most sustainable public transport available, yet just one in five trips are made by train. With DART, working closely with Luton Rising and the airport, we hope to grow that number significantly for everyone’s benefit.”

Photo credit: Luton DART