



# Luton DART (Direct Air-Rail Transport) Part I: A Planner's Perspective

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Analyse

Communicate

## Luton DART

Luton DART (Direct Air-Rail Transit) is a £225m scheme constructing a double-shuttle, fully-automated people-mover to transport passengers between St Pancras and London Luton Airport in just 30 minutes. The latest system technology and design innovation is capable of operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week with a cable-driven system that is energy efficient and environmentally friendly - and driverless! Complementing the airport operator's recent £160m transformation programme, the scheme will deliver a truly world-class passenger experience at London Luton Airport.

Two of the UK's leading engineering and construction contractors VolkerFitzpatrick and Bedfordshire-based Kier have formed a joint venture - VolkerFitzpatrick-Kier (VFK) - as the lead contractor responsible for building and completing civils works for the state-of-the-art Luton DART. Works include the Luton DART Parkway and Luton DART Terminal stations, the Gateway Bridge over Airport Way, a viaduct leading out from Luton DART Parkway Station along with a tunnel and approaches to the airport terminal. A world class engineering project requires world class planners and engineers!

## Zainab's Story

As a Senior Planner on the project, Zainab is responsible for both breaking down the complex 3 year programme into short-term, deliverable targets that as well as tracking the performance of the works. With a complex

engineering project such as Luton DART, where the engineering team are always focused on the next technical challenge, Zainab has a real challenge in both finding ways to communicate the master schedule and keep track of the real causes of deviations.

Historically, Zainab would manually review the master schedule and transcribe the short term targets to spreadsheets for the different construction teams. The engineers (like her colleague Ryan) would separately build out individual lookaheads and send them back via email. As one would imagine, with so much concurrent and interdependent work, even the best of the best would produce lookaheads filled with errors in sequencing and clashing plans and ultimately work that couldn't be delivered. As for Zainab, the whole process would take a huge amount of time every week with numerous back-and-forth rounds of editing.

With Planner, Zainab can import or add the upcoming work from the master programme and the engineers can build out their detailed plans in a common environment. Demand for resources and space can be mapped and seen by all the users so Zainab doesn't need to manually collate plans any more.

**“The process of maintaining an updated plan is far more efficient. By no longer updating their work in silos, teams can easily identify and resolve issues in seconds.”**

As for tracking of progress, the performance of the key deliverables and the causes of any slippage are automatically taken care of by Planner. Now, when Zainab completes the monthly master programme update, any delays are recorded by Planner on the specific short-term activity on which it occurred. This data helps the team both in identifying areas for improvement and in protecting contractual rights for the project.