



CROSSRAIL INFORMATION PAPER

E6 – FREIGHT OPERATIONS

This paper sets out the affect Crossrail will have on freight operations and the policy on the freight use of the Crossrail tunnels.

It will be of particular relevance to those interested in the operational aspects of Crossrail.

This is not intended to replace or alter the text of the paper itself and it is important that you read the paper in order to have a full understanding of the subject. If you have any queries about this paper, please contact either your regular Petition Negotiator at CLRL or the Crossrail helpdesk, who will be able to direct your query to the relevant person at CLRL. The helpdesk can be reached at:

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E6 – FREIGHT OPERATIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Crossrail network will consist of new tunnels to be constructed under central London to link into existing Network Rail surface lines to the east and west of London.
- 1.2 On the surface sections, Crossrail will have an affect on freight operations and depots during construction and share tracks with them once operations commence.

2. Background

- 2.1 Freight operating companies (FOCs) operate under open access agreements with Network Rail to serve existing freight terminals and to develop new traffic flows to new (or reopened) facilities. Access agreements are entered into within the framework of a route utilization strategy, but for many flows these access rights are becoming more long-term (normally up to 10 years) and the degree of flexibility to alter varies from flow to flow. Access rights cannot be altered unilaterally and once they are agreed by the Office of Rail Regulation¹ (ORR) they cannot normally be varied.
- 2.2 Freight movements in relation to Crossrail fall into two categories; transit traffic that uses existing routes which will be used by Crossrail trains and access to facilities served by connections off such routes.
- 2.3 The level of freight services on the Network Rail routes over which Crossrail services will run varies greatly. There are significant flows (up to three freight trains per hour in each direction) between Shenfield and Stratford, and Maidenhead and Acton. Freight flows on the eastern side of London are subject to change because of port development and changes in the regional pattern of freight movements resulting from freight enhancement projects approved for Transport Innovation Fund support.

3. Effect of Crossrail

- 3.1 Although the Crossrail Bill includes numerous freight facilities within Bill limits, as a general principle the Promoter does not seek to extinguish any freight terminals unless unavoidable, and is working with the freight operating companies (FOCs) to minimize both permanent and temporary effects of construction.
- 3.2 The Promoter will work with Network Rail and the FOCs to devise an excavated materials disposal strategy to maximize the use of rail freight and will endeavour to bring manufactured and raw materials to site by rail where space permits and it is economic and practical.
- 3.3 The Promoter will operate a greater level of passenger train service than is currently provided over many sections of its route. This will require freight

¹ Note: the ORR is the economic regulator of the railway industry. Its principal function is to regulate Network Rail's stewardship of the national rail network. ORR also licenses the operators of railway assets, approves agreements for access by operators to track, stations, and light maintenance depots, and enforces domestic competition law.

services to be re-timed. The Promoter is working with Network Rail and the FOCs to minimize the impact by developing proposals for infrastructure alterations and enhancements that would permit freight services to operate at no less than their present level once Crossrail is operational.

3.4 The Promoter proposes to provide new infrastructure facilities to integrate freight services with the more intensive passenger service:

- a new third line will be proposed between Langley and West Drayton, a distance of three miles to significantly increase the capacity of the route by joining the existing freight loops (a section of track allowing freight trains to be bypassed) and making it accessible to trains in both directions. This is to permit slower trains to be overtaken by faster services, particularly during perturbed operations;
- at Hanwell, a loop is proposed to be relocated to ease access for freight trains to the Brentford branch. This is required because a more frequent passenger service on the relief lines in the area results in restricted durations available to cross all lines from the existing loop;
- at Slough a relocated loop is proposed to provide an emergency reversing facility for Crossrail services and give greater flexibility for freight services;
- at Acton Yard the Promoter has undertaken to build a new dive-under to allow westbound freight trains to leave, without delaying passenger services towards London; and
- A long loop from Chadwell Heath to Goodmayes is proposed to be provided; this will give a greater opportunity for freight trains to be operated over the main lines and thus reduce the level of conflict at Stratford when crossing to the North London Line.

3.5 Train plans for Crossrail are being prepared on the basis that after the introduction of Crossrail services, freight services will continue to operate at broadly existing levels and that arrival at and departure from freight terminals with connections to and from the tracks used by Crossrail trains will be during off-peak periods. Freight enhancement projects approved for Transport Innovation Fund support will reduce the potential there would otherwise have been for interaction between freight operation and Crossrail services on the Great Eastern Main Line.

4. Use of Crossrail Tunnels

4.1 The Crossrail tunnels are designed for passenger trains with electric traction. Conventional freight is not compatible with the planned step-free platform access. Also the gradients, ventilation and power supply have been planned around passenger trains. Since conventional freight can cross or avoid London using the existing rail network, use of the Crossrail tunnels would be an expensive alternative for freight operators given that it would require investment in specialised rolling stock to take a limited range of freight. The probability is, therefore, that the only non-passenger train activity will be custom built maintenance trains operating during night hours.