

LCC/SRBC3
Appendix 22
WCML Report

Rail Freight & the West Coast Main Line

West Coast Main Line - Key Corridor for Rail Freight

The West Coast Main Line (WCML) is one of the key corridors for rail freight. It is a vital corridor that provides a link between the deep-sea ports in the South and South-East and large conurbations in the West Midlands, North West and Scotland. Trains for major retailers rely on the WCML to move everyday goods from the Midlands to Scotland, London and into Wales, and services from Europe via the Channel Tunnel join the route at Willesden.

It is also an important route for transporting construction materials from quarries into the city regions, conveying finished cars to ports, and moving letters and parcels for Royal Mail. There are a significant number of rail freight terminals adjacent or linking to the WCML, as well as several other new terminals being developed by the private sector, expected to come online in the next few years.

Rail Freight Growth

90,000 freight trains per year already use the WCML and rail freight growth forecasts show strong demand for additional services on the route particularly in the deep sea and domestic intermodal, automotive, and construction markets. Providing this capacity alongside passenger growth is challenging, but HS2 provides a unique opportunity to do this, if all parties work together towards a shared solution.

90%

of all intermodal trains use the WCML for part of their journey

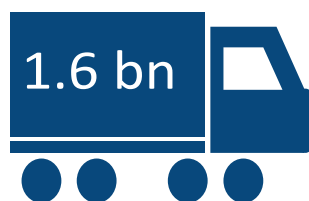
90,000

freight trains per year use the WCML



Benefits of Rail Freight

Rail freight delivers significant benefits to the UK economy. It moves goods that we all buy every day, as well as materials to build houses and roads, alongside raw materials and finished goods to support UK businesses. The productivity gains for Britain's businesses, reduced congestion on the road network, and the environmental gains are valued at £1.2 bn per annum to the UK economy. Already significant, these benefits to the UK plc will increase further if rail freight is able to grow.



Fewer HGV km a year



Less CO₂ emissions per tonne transported by rail rather than road

Glasgow

Mossend
Coatbridge
Grangemouth

Shieldmuir

Carlisle

Shap

Preston

Warrington

Liverpool:
Ditton
Widnes
Garston
Seaforth
Halewood

Crewe
Manchester
Trafford Park

Peak District
Quarries

Birmingham:
Hams Hall
Lawley Street
Birch Coppice
Castle Bromwich

Daventry

Bletchley

Watford

Wembley
Willesden

London

Glasgow

Rail Freight and HS2

Mossend
Coatbridge
Grangemouth

HS2 provides a once in a generation opportunity to provide extra capacity on the classic network for rail freight. To deliver these key benefits, we need to ensure that the 2026 timetable meets the reasonable needs of all users. The West Coast Partnership, working with government has a key role in delivering this, and if necessary, in promoting targeted investments to ensure there is capacity for all users.

Shieldmuir

London - Birmingham

On this key section, released capacity from the opening of Phase 1 can support an additional 3 freight paths per hour in each direction:

Carlisle

- 1 additional freight path per hour each way north of Camden Junction off-peak

Shap

- 1 additional freight path per hour each way north of Bletchley off-peak

Preston

Warrington

- 1 additional freight path per hour each way north of Nuneaton

Liverpool:
Ditton
Widnes
Garston
Seaforth
Halewood



Crewe
Manchester
Trafford Park



Birmingham - Crewe

Phase 2a is essential to meet the future needs of freight and passenger services on this section. Until it is complete, there should be a staged approach to the introduction of new services, to achieve a balance for all users.

Peak District
Quarries

At Crewe we support proposals for a new Hub station which removes the need for platforms on the Independent Lines, which would affect freight capacity and performance through Crewe, and access to Brasford Hall freight site.

Birmingham:
Hams Hall
Lawley Street
Birch Coppice
Castle Bromwich

Rail transports goods worth over
£30 billion each year

North of Crewe

Between Crewe and Manchester, and Crewe and Scotland, there must be a solution which enables reasonable freight growth alongside the new HS2 and other franchise services. In some locations, additional network investment may be necessary to achieve this, alongside operational choices.

Daventry

Bletchley

Working Together

Accommodating aspirations of all parties requires collaboration and cooperation. The rail freight industry is committed to working with the West Coast Partnership and Government to help achieve a solution that works for everyone. Supporting a successful economy and moving more people and goods by rail will bring benefits throughout the UK.

Watford

Wembley
Willesden

London

Contact us to find out more:

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