

Construction in the UK Transport Industry

West Coast Mainline

At a cost of £8.6bn the upgrade of the West Coast mainline is one of the largest infrastructure projects seen in the UK.

Since the start of the planned upgrades in 2003 a number of key projects have been completed, including a 'flyover' at Nuneaton, platform extensions (to accommodate longer trains) between London & Northampton, track renewals and several new junctions to facilitate 125mph running between London and Glasgow.

There is significant work still planned and underway with a target date for final completion in 2008. This will include the redevelopment of stations at Rugby & Milton Keynes, complete redevelopment of Nuneaton station at a cost of £16m and 8 new crossovers being added to the existing layout.

Crossrail

Potentially the most significant development in the transport infrastructure in the UK is the current proposal for the London Crossrail project. This is a joint project between Transport for London (TfL) and the Department for Transport (DfT) with a view to create two rail links across London. In 2001 the Government provided Crossrail with a budget of £154m to carry out a feasibility study for both lines.

The first would link Shenfield to Maidenhead, with a tunnel running east to west from Stratford to Paddington (a link would also be established through to Heathrow). Such a project would effectively enable passengers to travel from East Anglia across to west London and beyond without having to change.

The second route would run from north east London through to south west London at Clapham.

North-South High Speed Rail Link

London & Continental Railways are currently seeking a meeting with the DfT to present its ideas for a line capable of slashing the 5 ½ hour journey time to Edinburgh or Glasgow to under 3 hours.

It would cost between £12bn and £19bn, depending on the route. This would be decided by the Government, which would have to weigh up whether to go on the west or east side of the country.

The DfT has already examined the feasibility of a high speed North-South route and believes it is worth pursuing.

If approved there will be significant infrastructure developments and the requirement to further develop the route to accommodate the new high speed rolling stock. This would include a mixture of upgrades & new build for stations, bridges and tunnels as well as expansion of the existing routes.

The 2012 Olympics

The Government has confirmed details of the new high-speed trains that will link central London to the Olympic Park.

The DfT had announced plans to build 30 new high-speed trains which will operate the 'Olympic Javelin' the shuttle service at the centre of London's transport plans. The trains will run between central London and the Olympic Park for the duration of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Olympic Park will be served by one train every 15 seconds. The new trains are planned to come into operation by 2009, and will be capable of reaching speeds of 140mph while operating on both domestic railway tracks and the new high-speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).

The CTRL (now virtually complete) would itself require examination, not only is it central to the transport infrastructure to service the Olympic site. It has been an extensive feat of engineering which included the boring of 18.5 km of tunnels under the capital and the total re-development of St Pancras station.

By 2007 journey times between Paris and St Pancras will average 2 hours and 15 minutes. By 2009 high speed domestic services will reach Kent Thameside from St Pancras in 17 minutes.

In addition to the work on the DLR and East London Line (cited earlier in this document) Transport for London is also investing £91m in the North London Line between 2006 and 2010. Work will include increasing the power supply to the line and extending the platforms as well as refurbishment.

Developments in Transport Infrastructure

"Network Rail has handed the Government an £8bn shopping list of projects it says are needed if Britain's rail infrastructure is to cope with a predicted 30% growth in passenger numbers and freight in the next 10 years".¹ With such a massive investment there is an obvious 'knock on' effect in the construction industry. A fact not lost on those construction industry commentators who

¹ Rail Magazine 19th July 2006

reported that, "Contractors are eyeing new transport projects in the wake of proposed Network Rail spending plans".²

Listed below are a number of developments in the transport infrastructure that have or will increase demand and output in the UK construction & contracting industry. It is not an exhaustive list but provides a brief overview of several key developments. Not all are currently on this reported 'shopping list' and most will or do require additional funding from the private sector.

Docklands Light Railway

A number of construction companies are currently competing for the contract to upgrade London's Docklands Light Railway (DLR), worth an estimated £180m.

The deal will involve the winning bidder installing the essential infrastructure required to increase the number of cars on each DLR train from two to three.

This will involve extending platforms at the majority of the stations on the network, along with the strengthening of viaducts and other structures on the system to cope with the additional weight.

The winning contractor is expected to be chosen in January 2007 with work starting on site in March, with completion scheduled for early 2010.

East London Line

To co-ordinate with the expansion of the Docklands Light Railway, plans are currently being drafted for a £1bn East London Line extension to London Underground.

This work will include an interchange between the DLR and East London Line at Shadwell as well as refurbishment of 6 stations between Whitechapel and Surrey Quays. This development will facilitate the proposed regeneration of Dalston, including plans for housing and commercial developments both above and in the vicinity of the station.

Kings Cross

Network Rail has now submitted a planning application for the £400m revamp of Kings Cross station. The project is planned to start in 2008 and will see significant changes to the current layout, including expansion of the current concourse and platforms, new escalators and a new 'twin barrel' roof.

Waterloo

Network Rail will be contributing £400m to the planned redevelopment of Waterloo station and is seeking a business partner to increase the funding for the project to £1bn.

² Construction News 6th July 2006

Work, which is due to start before the end of 2010, will include a high rise development above the concourse and an increase in the number of platforms.

It seems unlikely that this work will be delayed past 2010 as the latest research suggests that, if the current growth in passenger numbers is maintained, the station will be at full capacity within 4 years.

Paddington

As part of the redevelopment of the Paddington basin, work has recently been completed on the £62m Bishops Bridge. It has taken 2 ½ years to complete and spans 14 tracks, 2 underground lines and the Grand Union Canal.

The structure is 175 metres in length, weighs 5,400 tonnes and is expected to carry 2,000 vehicles an hour.

Thameslink

Planning permission is currently pending on the overhaul of Thameslink, needed to increase track capacity and add 20,000 seats on the cross London route.

Once given the go ahead work currently valued at £3.5bn will proceed including the complete redevelopment of London Bridge station, a railway bridge at Blackfriars and the replacement of buildings in and around Borough Market.

The North West

Network Rail is due to invest £12m in four stations around Manchester. Burnage, East Didsbury, Gately and Mauldeth Road are all due for a 'makeover in 2007.

Work will include the installation of new steel platforms, modern waiting shelters, new lighting, access ramps and the demolition of redundant buildings.

Birmingham New Street

On the 25th July 2006 the DfT approved the £500m refurbishment of Birmingham New Street station.

Work will see virtually a complete rebuild of the station, to include increasing the size of its entrance, a new transparent roof, new escalators & lifts, concourse redevelopment and expansion of the platforms.

Edinburgh Waverley

Work is currently underway at Edinburgh Waverley station, two additional platforms are being constructed at a cost of £53m. This is part of an overall development to upgrade the platforms, tracks and signalling.

As part of the wider development (if funding is agreed) £380m worth of work will go ahead to provide rail-airport links from both Edinburgh and Glasgow stations.