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22. Bexley Route Section – Environmental Baseline and Assessment of Impacts

22.1 Overview of Bexley Route Section

22.1.1 The Bexley Route Section comprises track widening on the North Kent Line for about 1200 metres to the east of Abbey Wood Station where the south-eastern branch of Crossrail will terminate. The proposals involve the widening of the existing railway from two to four tracks. This is to accommodate Crossrail and existing Network Rail services. Crossrail services will not actually run on that section of the North Kent Line within London Borough of Bexley.

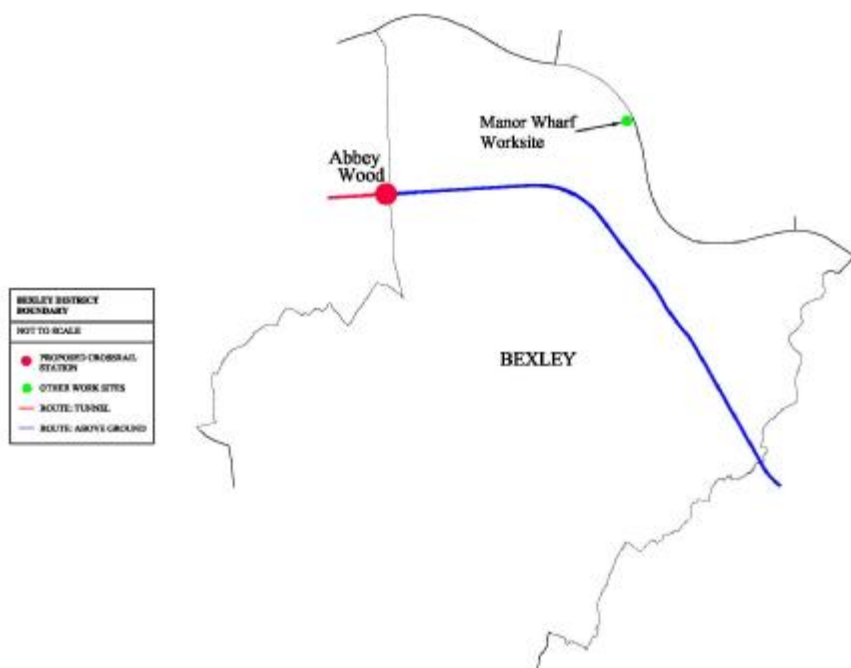


Figure 22.1: Location of worksites in L.B. Bexley

22.1.2 This route section also includes a remote worksite at Manor Wharf in Belvedere. This wharf will handle spoil that is removed from the Thames tunnel works in Woolwich and Plumstead. The jetty will be adapted to handle excavated material which will be loaded onto barges and transferred to landfill. The works may also require dredging in the River Thames to enable vessels to serve the jetty.

Statutory Development Plan

22.1.3 In Bexley, the statutory development plan comprises the saved Bexley Unitary Development Plan (adopted April 2004) and the London Plan (adopted February 2004).

22.1.4 This report has also taken into account the London Plan Implementation Report titled "Safeguarded Wharves on the River Thames" published in

January 2005. This not part of the statutory development plan but is a material consideration.

22.2 Policies relevant to Manor Wharf Worksite (Window SE6A)

Significant Characteristics of Site and Surrounding Area

- 22.2.1 The site lies in a riverside industrial location. The site forms part of the former Belvedere Power Station and is currently open. It was previously used for vehicle storage. To the west of the site is open flat grazing pasture. To the east is open and disused industrial land.
- 22.2.2 The site is accessed from Norman Road which is linked to the Thamesmead to Erith Spine Road.

Description of the Proposals

- 22.2.3 The proposed works within the route window comprise the refurbishment of Manor Wharf at the site of the former Belvedere power station. This will be required in order create a barge loading facility, at which excavated material, removed from Plumstead portal and the intervention shafts at Arsenal Way and Warren Lane, will be loaded onto barges for transport down river to landfill in Rainham, Essex.
- 22.2.4 This site will be operational for 2½ years from the start of construction. Works will require the replacement of fendering to the jetty, with works undertaken from boats, and some dredging of the wharf to enable barge access. A conveyor will be constructed to allow excavated material to be loaded onto barges. At peak construction of excavated materials loading of barges may be required 24 hours per day. The conveyor will run from an excavated material handling point on the shore within the former Ford car park (disused), south of the River Thames, north of the wharf where it will connect to the barge loading point. Excavated material from Plumstead portal works will be delivered by lorry to the material handling point on the shore within the disused Ford car park south of the River Thames, where a small stockpile will be maintained and conveyor loading facilities, and lorry turning area will be provided.
- 22.2.5 Site access for the construction of the conveyor and the refurbishment of the jetty will be via the new private access road to the Iron Mountain storage area. Once the handling site is in operation, excavated material will be brought to the site along Norman Road.
- 22.2.6 For a period of 12 months the average lorry numbers accessing the site will be 240 per day. During this time there will be a peak period of approximately three months when the lorry numbers will be up to 260 accessing the site. At peak this equates to five or six 1,000 tonne barges moored at any one time.

Significant extant planning permissions & proposals

- 22.2.7 There are no significant extant planning permissions on the site although the site has a history of proposals to develop a energy from waste station. There is an outstanding planning application for an energy from waste plant and this is before the Secretary of State for a decision following a public inquiry in 2003.

Assessment of Impacts

Archaeology

- 22.2.8 The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Search as defined in the Bexley UDP. The site has a high potential for archaeological remains both on land and the foreshore. The site has been subject of an archaeological evaluation and the proposals include mitigation measures, as a result of the works on land and dredging at the wharf, to preserve any remains by record. This reduces any significant impact and the proposals therefore accord with policies G24 and ENV54 of the saved UDP.

Natural Environment

- 22.2.9 Land to the west of the sub-station on Norman Road is designated as part of River Thames Nature Conservation Site of Metropolitan Importance. The Crossrail ES has identified a number of important animal species that may be present on the grazing pasture, foreshore and inter-tidal zone. With mitigation measures that are contained in the Crossrail ES, there will be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the works. The proposals therefore comply with policies G24 and ENV23 of the saved UDP.

Land Use

- 22.2.10 The Council and the Mayor of London support the use of river-based transport and will safeguard all wharves on the Thames (policy TS23, saved UDP, policies 4C.14, 4C.15, London Plan).
- 22.2.11 The London Plan Implementation Report (January 2005) recommended that Manor Wharf be added to its list of Safeguarded Wharves. Policy 4C.15 of the London Plan specifically protects safeguarded wharves for freight-related purposes. The Mayor also encourages the temporary use of vacant safeguarded wharves.
- 22.2.12 The re-use of the wharf to transport tunnel and other construction spoil is in accordance with planning policy.
- 22.2.13 The saved plan allocates the site as a Special Industrial Zone. Policy E13 sets out which uses are acceptable in such zones. Amongst these is waste processing. As it is proposed to use the site to handle waste material associated with the construction of Crossrail this accords with policy.

22.3 Policies relevant to Abbey Wood Station Worksite (Window SE8)

Significant Characteristics of Site and Surrounding Area

- 22.3.1 The existing North Kent Line runs mainly at grade through suburban residential areas that lie to the north and south of the track.
- 22.3.2 The North Kent Line is a busy suburban rail line linking Dartford to Woolwich and Central London.

Description of the Proposals

- 22.3.3 Most the Abbey Wood Station works lie to the west of Harrow Manorway Bridge within London Borough of Greenwich. Abbey Wood is the proposed terminus of the south-eastern branch of Crossrail. The works in the London Borough of Bexley comprise the widening of the track from the Borough boundary eastwards for a distance of about 1050 metres to create four new sidings. East of Abbey Way elevated walkway there will be a 2 metre high noise barrier on the south side of the rail corridor to the end of the works.
- 22.3.4 Overhead line electrification will be installed in this section.
- 22.3.5 Subject to possession planning requirements and excluding final commissioning, the construction of Abbey Wood sidings will take approximately three and half years to complete
- 22.3.6 A worksite will be situated to the east of the existing railway line off Fendyke Road, and will be used for works associated with the four-tracking beyond Abbey Wood station. Access will be by rail on the existing railway lines.

Significant extant planning permissions & proposals
- 22.3.7 There are no significant extant planning permissions at this location.

Assessment of Impacts

Transport & Traffic Management

- 22.3.8 The Crossrail ES reports that passengers travelling to and from Abbey Wood station will experience quicker journey times to the West End and City. The Crossrail proposals accord with Policy T9 of the saved UDP which states that the Council will promote and support the maintenance and improvement of public transport, subject to an environmental impact assessment where appropriate. Policy T9 specifically supports new public transport links across the river downstream of Greenwich. Crossrail significantly contributes to this objective.
- 22.3.9 The Crossrail ES contains a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) for both the construction and operational phase that has identified the likely significant impact. This complies with Policies T2 of the saved UDP. The TIA has identified traffic management and other mitigation measures to reduce the identified impacts.
- 22.3.10 The proposals will result in the temporary loss of approximately 240 station car parking spaces during construction and approximately 75 spaces permanently. Some of these spaces lie within London Borough of Bexley. This is identified as a significant adverse temporary and permanent traffic and transport impact. Policy T22 specifically opposes the loss of railway station car parking and the proposals are therefore contrary to policy. The proposals may also be in conflict with policy T20 of the saved UDP which discourages on-street car parking.
- 22.3.11 The proposals will also result in a reduced highway capacity on Harrow Manor Way during the partial reconstruction of the Harrow Manor Way Bridge. This will result in significant adverse impacts on road users including, buses. Buses will need to be diverted at various points during the construction works which is also a significant adverse impact. The bus diversions will also have a significant impact on passengers seeking to interchange between rail and bus. The proposals are therefore in temporary conflict with policies T6 (Optimising the Use of the Existing Transport

Network) T12 (Bus Operators and Passengers in Public Transport Capacity) of the saved UDP.

Amenity (e.g.: Noise, Vibration, Air Quality)

22.3.12 As explained in the Greenwich-wide section above, temporary significant residual construction noise impacts are contrary to planning policy. A number of properties in the following locations will be affected by such impacts: -

- § Fendyke Road;
- § Rushdene;
- § Sydney Road;
- § Buckwheat Court;
- § Hatfield Drive;
- § Blackmore Way;
- § Coptefield Drive;
- § St Benet's Roman Catholic Church
- § Wilton Road; and
- § Florence Road;

22.3.13 The Crossrail ES states that no significant residual permanent noise or vibration impacts are predicted to occur.

22.3.14 No significant impacts on air quality are predicted to occur as a result of construction or operational activities.

22.3.15 The Crossrail ES has concluded that the track widening between Plumstead (in the London Borough of Greenwich) and Abbey Wood will have adverse impacts on visual amenity for a large number of properties near the railway. This is contrary to the general intent of saved plan policy ENV39 which seeks to protect the built environment. This impact will be reduced as tree planting matures.

Natural Environment

22.3.16 The proposals will result in the loss of rail-side vegetation between Plumstead Portal (in the London Borough of Greenwich) and a point approximately 1,000 metres east of Abbey Wood station (in the London Borough of Bexley) to accommodate the track widening. No designated nature conservation areas are affected by the works but the Crossrail ES has identified a significant cumulative adverse ecological impact. While the loss of vegetation in the London Borough of Bexley is not significant it contributes to the cumulative significant impact along this route section.

22.3.17 This is contrary to policy ENV26 of the saved UDP which seeks to enhance the value of linear routes in the Borough, such as railways, for nature conservation, amenity or landscape interest.

22.4 Summary of Significant Planning Policy Benefits and Conflicts within Bexley Route Section

22.4.1 The proposals give rise to the following significant planning policy conflict during construction: -

- § **Traffic and pedestrian movement** – the proposals are potentially in significant conflict with UDP policies that seek to protect road users including buses and cyclists and pedestrians as result of the works at Abbey Wood
- § **Noise** – the proposals are in significant conflict with policies to minimise the impact of noise generation on local amenity as a result of the track widening works on the North Kent Line.

22.4.2 The proposals give rise to the following permanent significant planning policy benefit: -

- § **Transport** – the proposals will significantly improve public transport infrastructure at Abbey Wood which is supported by planning policy
- § **Visual Impact** – the proposals will result in a visual impact on nearby properties as a result of the works at between Plumstead Portal and Abbey Wood. However these impacts will be mitigated over time as replanting matures