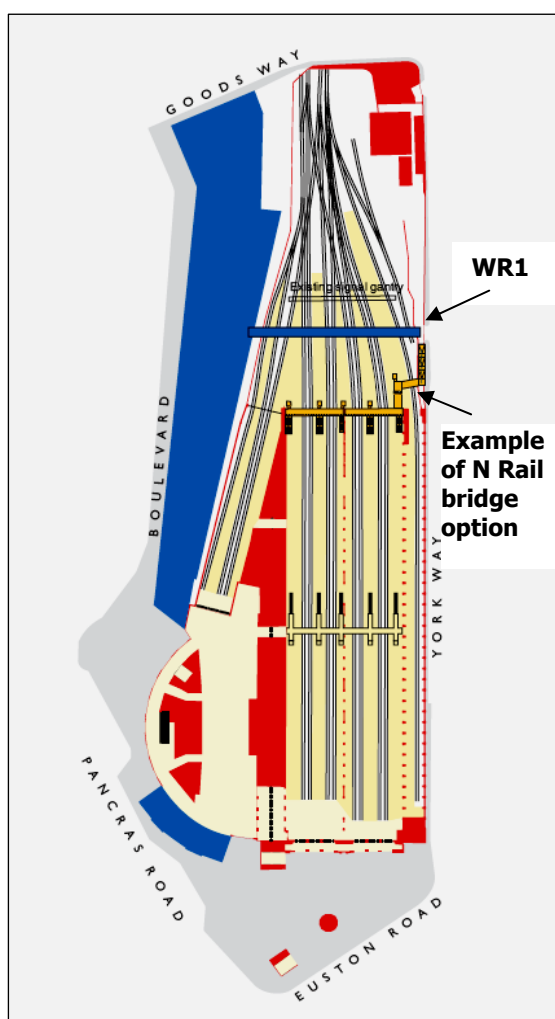


WCRSAG BRIEFING NOTE – SEPTEMBER 2008

Update on King's Cross Station – feasibility of a new bridge crossing

In 2004, the Kings Cross Opportunity Area Planning and Development Brief prepared jointly by Camden and Islington identified the possibility of a pedestrian/cycle bridge linking York Way and the King's Cross Central development across the tracks out of King's Cross Station. Preliminary studies from 2006 suggest this is feasible, with a bridge alone cost of £7-9m.

In 2006 the King's Cross developers agreed via the King's Cross Central 106 agreement to provide for the bridge, identified as WR1, on their site. This would support an east-west link that improves local permeability and committing significant funds to delivery on their land. They are not prepared to go further in the absence of a clear business case.



In April 2007, the DC Committee considered the major proposals for King's Cross Station, including a new platform within the trainshed on the eastern (York Way) side. This new platform will mean closing the existing informal access to platform 1 and onwards through the station via the north end Cab Road on York Way.

Members heard local concerns about permeability between the east and west of the site. Network Rail were clear that bridge option WR1 was of no benefit to them and beyond their remit, but proposed undertaking a feasibility study into providing bridge access between York Way and Platform 1. The Committee wished the study to be as wide-ranging as possible and to include bridge access across the whole of the site.

The Heads of Terms for the S106 were amended to reflect this resolution. NR further agreed to assist in seeking the necessary railway licenses and approvals for bridge option WR1 should committed funding come forward within the timeframe (2012) agreed under the King's Cross Central permission.

CURRENT POSITION

Arup gave the technical feasibility study and strategy to Camden in June. The study examines a wide range of bridge options in various locations, accessed by three possible routes from York Way. The options examined include a simple link from York Way to Platform Y/1, a bridge under the northern glazing at the end of the train shed in the same position as a pedestrian link removed in the 1970s, and an east-

west route across the platforms towards the western concourse. Most options could be extended to make a connection to King's Cross Central.

Arup conclude that a bridge link between York Way and the station platforms would be technically feasible. However, when the operational, heritage and management issues are included in the assessment 'the overwhelming evidence does not support the construction of a Northern Footbridge entrance and exit at York Way'.

Camden then asked transport, planning/urban design and economics consultancy Colin Buchanan Ltd (CB) to do an independent review of Network Rail's feasibility study. They consider that the Arup report "could have been presented in a clearer way" but find that the study "has investigated in detail all of the likely options for such a footbridge". CB agree with the conclusions drawn by Arup and conclude that "the analysis undertaken and reasons presented are sound justifications for not constructing a footbridge from a York Way access point. "

CB consider that the study documents "clearly demonstrate that a footbridge that gives access to York Way would not be of overall net benefit to the station or passengers" and "any access to York Way would not be practical, cost effective or reasonably able to be implemented". The key reasons for this are broadly: the costs compared to the benefit; the safety risks arising from opposing pedestrian flows; the practicality of building the bridge and the additional operational requirements of managing extra access points and gatelines. The future introduction of fully gated access to the platforms considerably diminishes the potential benefit to users of the existing platform 1 route through the station.

Current status

The CB review finds that "the documents meet the requirements of the Section 106 agreement". Officers therefore conclude that Network Rail's chosen strategy is acceptable and have discharged the relevant obligation on Network Rail in the normal manner. In pursuing this option Network Rail will contribute an additional £250,000 towards local urban realm improvements, bringing the total to £1M.

The bridge appraisals so far determine that while it would be possible to span the tracks from York Way to the King's Cross Central development, there are operational and other disbenefits to the railway station from providing direct platform connections. The remaining alternative is to examine the Wharfdale Road option in detail. With support from Camden officers, Islington is preparing to tender for a business case assessment of the WR1 pedestrian and cycle bridge. This aims to establish the full case and feasibility for a bridge across the railway, tested against projected demand in 2020 when the King's Cross/St Pancras interchange and King's Cross Central development are substantially complete.

In the meantime, Urban Initiatives are drafting design proposals for York Way environmental improvements. The proposals include footpath widening, enhanced street lighting, improved and additional York Way crossing points and other changes to the public realm which would improve the experience of the users of York Way. These will be consulted on in October and taken forward alongside Network Rail's works and Islington's wider public realm study.