

The need for London's Construction Consolidation Centre



The London Construction Consolidation Centre (LCCC) is the first construction consolidation centre in the UK to service multiple clients at multiple locations. It is owned and managed by construction logistics specialist Wilson James. Stephen Robbins, Operations Manager responsible for the LCCC, talks to *Focus*.

How does the LCCC work in the context of the last mile?

It is a specialist distribution facility that provides just-in-time deliveries of construction materials to projects. Materials are delivered to the 12,000m² centre in relative bulk, prior to being called off to site in the quantities needed for the following day's productivity.

How has business been over the last few years?

Despite the economic downturn many of the larger main contractors that have used the LCCC before have come back to use the service again on new projects. The concept is now widely recognised across the industry as a key component in delivering a major project in a constrained environment where control and co-ordination is important.

What are the main benefits of the LCCC for contractors?

The main benefit is the advanced level of control and co-ordination over logistics. When combined with good onsite logistics management, we are able to get the right material to the right place at the right time.

What services does the LCCC offer? Is it more than just a last mile solution?

Yes, it can be used for a number of activities. We can provide a vehicle holding area, where deliveries for site go via the LCCC and are despatched in a controlled and co-ordinated manner. We can also provide space for contractors to build mock-ups or quality samples, or for offsite fabrication.

What proof do you have that using the LCCC reduces congestion and CO₂ emissions?

The TfL report: *Rethinking deliveries* stated: 'The implementation of the LCCC demonstrated the number of vehicles travelling directly to the construction site reduced by 68%.' A report produced by WRAP also showed that as a direct result of the reduction in vehicles there was a reduction of CO₂ emissions of about 75%. This is very important to contractors, particularly on BREEAM projects.

How does the LCCC improve the recycling of waste material?

The LCCC can be used to facilitate reverse logistics, where items that retain value to the supply chain, such as cable drums, metal stillages or specialised timber crates, can be returned to the supplier for reuse. On many construction sites that don't have the benefit of a consolidation centre and where there is a lack storage space, such items are often written off and placed in skips, causing unnecessary waste and expense. Research by Anglia Ruskin University showed that on a project at Bart's Hospital that by using the LCCC: 'Material waste was reduced by between 2% and 5%. The volume of waste recycled was maximised – 97.22% – and the volume of waste sent to landfill was minimal – 2.78%.'

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How does using the LCCC improve the safety of other road-users?

First, a fundamental objective of a CC model is to reduce the number of vehicle movements to site. In doing so, we are reducing the risk to vulnerable road-users. Second, all of our vehicles are FORS Gold accredited and CLOCS compliant. Third, our drivers undergo extensive training aimed at ensuring they are more aware of vulnerable road-users and through the nature of their role they are highly familiar with the routes into London, including accident hotspots.

Why is cost the most frequently mentioned factor against using the LCCC?

Construction contracts frequently transfer risk – such as the efficient delivery of materials – to the tier 2 and 3 contractors, of which there are many. A supply chain on a £100 million project can involve over 300 companies who have priced their logistics into their bid. In other industries they use logistics as a margin improver. Construction has yet to separate its site logistics costs from its supply chain delivery costs. The opportunity for cost reduction is significant, but it requires a different approach and current forms of contract restrict that opportunity.