

Why not use consolidation centres?



Peter Jacobs
MD, logistics solutions
Wilson James

There's an easy way to dramatically improve air quality in London – better organisation of construction deliveries.

Instead of having thousands of HGVs making deliveries to numerous sites, why not consolidate those deliveries on the outskirts of the city and use fewer vehicles to deliver to multiple sites?

These facilities, together with the associated technology to run them, already exist. They are called construction consolidation centres (CCCs). Yet they are only being used by a handful of projects.

Engineering cleaner air, a report by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), which was published in October 2017, placed the use of CCCs at the top of a list of 10 recommendations for improving London's air quality. It cites the London CCC in South Bermondsey, a TfL trial project, which reduced construction traffic to the four major sites it served by between 60% and 70%.

The London CCC, operated by Wilson James, still exists, albeit in a different location, in Silvertown. There are others too. A 2016 TfL directory of CCCs lists 12 locations, although

some of these are less consolidation centre and more remote storage yard.

A CCC is run using a sophisticated blend of logistics and analytics, booking and tracking deliveries, measuring miles travelled between factory and site, and managing conflicts between different trades and projects. The most mature example of such a system is the Colnbrook Logistics Centre, which serves Heathrow Airport's £50m-a-month construction activities.

The reason why CCCs are not more widely used is that the construction industry in general works with fragmented, and sometimes ad hoc, supply chains. This makes it hard to allocate the cost of such systems to those who benefit from it most.

The solution is simple, however – London's planning and transport authorities must mandate CCCs. The City of London Corporation has already shown leadership, making the use of consolidation centres during construction a condition of planning for some developments.

The ICE has urged City Hall and TfL to follow the City's lead. If cleaner air is a priority, this can't happen too soon.

UPTIME REDEFINED



FTA's Brexit criticism will fall on deaf ears



Christopher Walton
Editor in chief
Motor Transport

Ten years ago, when I started reporting on road transport, it was the height of the 2008 fuel strikes. The BBC reported: "On the second day of the walkout over pay, demand for fuel was up 25% and more than 100 [petrol] stations closed because of shortages."

It came a year after the RHA had organised a rolling roadblock in Scotland over the high price of fuel. Tensions were high.

In the past decade the two associations have been a little more subdued in their lobbying efforts over major issues affecting the industry.

It's not been to the detriment of success (freezing fuel duty for the past seven years is a big win) but they've stayed away from being so... dramatic.

Earlier this month the FTA shocked me. It really laid into the government over its approach to Brexit, and not before time too.

The indomitable deputy chief executive of the FTA James Hookham accused the government of wanting to "destroy the businesses" of international hauliers, adding that "logistics

businesses simply cannot answer their customers' questions about how they will move goods after Brexit".

He said that "real, legitimate concerns" of operators were "simply being dismissed". He also accused the government of having a "reckless attitude" and said it was "playing chicken with crucial parts of the British economy".

Successful lobbying relies on reasoned debate between lawmakers and lobbyists, but it appears that since 23 June 2016 reasoned debate from lawmakers has disappeared out of the window as they wave the flag for the nationalist revolt that is Brexit.

It's marvellous for road transport that the FTA has finally said these things. It's disastrous that the government won't pay the blindest bit of notice to them.

■ See page 10 for more on the Brexit issue.

Got something to say?

If you would like to contribute to MT's Viewpoint, email steve.hobson@roadtransport.com

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