



By email: [REDACTED]

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Freedom of Information
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21st April 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Information request

Reference number: FOI2017/00406

Thank you for your request of 26th March 2017. You requested the following information:

Due to the vulnerable nature of the Thameslink Core section (Blackfriars - Kentish Town), and the severe and widespread repercussions of a train failure following power changeover problems at City Thameslink or Farringdon, has any thought been given to the feasibility of an extension of the DC third rail to at least Kentish Town, with the power changeover being performed there? As Kentish Town has a reversible platform loop, this would allow trains to run unhindered in both directions, thereby mitigating the obvious risk a failed train poses to the rest of the network.

I have processed your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) as the information requested is environmental according to the definition in regulation 2 of the EIRs (section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) exempts environmental information from the FOIA, but requires us to consider it under the EIRs).

I can confirm that we hold the information you requested, the scheme of extending the DC to Kentish Town has been considered on several occasions previously, but has been discounted on the very high costs associated with the scheme and the impact that the construction would have on the services, as access would be required to implement any solution.

The reasons for the high costs are that infrastructure changes including the relocation of the AC/DC interface to somewhere north of Kentish Town station would be required with the additional creation of a new AC/DC interface on the East Coast Mainline (ECML), somewhere in the vicinity of Holloway. There would also be

extensive track circuit immunisation works required on the Midland Mainline (MML), ECML and possible North London Line (NLL) and High Speed (HS) lines.

The change would also need to instigate the need to modify the track in the tunnels to accept third rail fitments, as the arrangements that exist at the moment would not accept the installation of insulator pots for the conductor rails. In addition all the return current bonding would need to be removed and replacement with a system that would be compliant for DC operation. Both of these issues would need a substantial amount of time to implement, possible even a blockade of the railway to achieve the installation and commissioning work.

You refer to '*severe and widespread repercussions of a train failure following power changeover problems at City Thameslink or Farringdon*', it should be noted that this was considered and covered in the design of the infrastructure through the core area during the Key Output Phase 1 of the Thameslink programme. To put this simply, if there is a changeover problem with a train at either Farringdon or City Thameslink, then the trains will stay on whatever traction supply they are on and the services will be regulated to allow the train to use the crossover between the stations.

If you have any enquiries about this response, please contact me in the first instance at FOI@networkrail.co.uk or on 01908 782405. Details of your appeal rights are below.

Please remember to quote the reference number at the top of this letter in all future communications.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature block]

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Appeal Rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the FOI Compliance and Appeals Manager at Network Rail, Freedom of Information, The Quadrant, Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1EN, or by email at foi@networkrail.co.uk. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF