

What makes a good railhead?

To be effective interchange terminals must:

- Be on an existing railway line – this sounds obvious but as building new railway lines in London is extremely expensive there is little chance of new lines for freight
- Have good road access suitable for HGVs – full –size lorries need to be able to serve railheads safely and with minimal impact on other road users.
- Be of sufficient size – today's freight trains are often over 500 metres in length, modern handling methods safe working areas and value-adding activity (storage, processing, re-packing) need space. There are however examples of small profitable terminals such as Bow Midland.
- Be capable of 24 hour operation – a requirement of many customers, which often means that activity at railheads must be able to take place outside these times. Residential property in the vicinity should be designed so that sleep is not disturbed.

As well as needing new terminals it is important to push for expansion at existing sites also.

What makes a good freight route?

- To serve freight customers effectively freight trains should use routes with capacity which provides time-tabled pathways for predictable, consistent and reliable train operation.
- Clearances to take the type of wagons and intermodal units that the customer demands.

Further research

The SRA is also identifying railway land as a separate exercise.

SRA Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy March 2004

This document outlines the need for, the form, function, operating characteristics and role of Strategic rail freight interchanges