

Case Study: Operational Readiness

London Bridge Station Redevelopment

Thameslink Programme is providing a significant increase in railway capacity through central London introducing new and improved stations, new track, new cross-London routes and new longer, more frequent trains.

London Bridge station has been redeveloped to support growth in passenger demand. It has been designed to accommodate future operations including a change from six-through and nine-terminating platforms to nine-through and six-terminating platforms, a new concourse at lower level, total reconfiguration of the Concourse (including Gateline) at upper level and new station entrances to improve integration with other transport routes.

To underpin the Station operations, new Station and TOC staff offices, meeting rooms and welfare facilities are being delivered together with the new Station Control Room, Station Reception, Ticket Office and Service Yard. London Bridge Station has remained operational for both trains and passengers throughout its transformation. This has been achieved through a significant amount of Operational Readiness activities and Stakeholder consultation.

This case study looks at how the lessons learned drawn from previous major projects, alignment of the project programme, forum and governance mapping, reorganisation of the project development teams and assignment of responsibilities helped contribute towards a successful operational readiness programme.



1. Background

Although Heathrow Airport's Terminal 5 can now be considered a success, the media coverage on the opening days focussed on the operational disruption which significantly impacted thousands of its customers. The result of this operational downfall was significant financial and reputational damage to the airport.

Lessons learnt from the Terminal 5 experience, and the subsequent Terminal 2 operational migration success, therefore were brought into the London Bridge Redevelopment Project as its Operational Readiness requirements were of a similar nature. An Operational Readiness Manager with experience from the Terminal 2 Operational

Readiness team was engaged to develop an Operational Readiness Strategy. Once complete, this was signed off by the Project Director and thereafter the following key elements were implemented.

2. Project Programme

Initially the Project Programme had a limited allocation of time for Operational Readiness. To assess the amount of time required to be incorporated into the Programme the Lean Six-Sigma DMAIC tool was used to timeline the requirements. As a result, six additional weeks would be required from construction completion to operational go-live for the Operational Readiness activities.

To incorporate six weeks into an already established Project Programme whilst not impacting on the operational go-live date was a significant exercise to achieve, which had to be driven by the Project Director. Once this requirement was confirmed, numerous discussions and presentations were made to the wider Project teams to heighten their understanding of why the Operational Readiness activities were required, potential risks of not allowing time for these activities and their consequential impact to the Programme.

The result of this was that the construction programme was brought forward by six weeks and Operational Readiness activities were inserted into the Programme for both staff accommodation moves, the first phase of the concourse opening and new Service Yard.

3. Forums and Governance

As with most projects, many meetings took place. It was essential to understand both the inputs and outputs of all the meetings to ensure the value and relevance of each and to also understand where and how Operational Readiness would fit into these. A Forums Matrix was therefore developed which highlighted some meetings which were being duplicated. These were subsequently removed. The Matrix more importantly highlighted that there was not a natural escalation route for any Operational Readiness issues, neither was there a natural forum for senior members of the Project and all Stakeholder groups to meet to discuss the Operational Readiness Plan or agree remedies for any issues. A monthly Strategic Migration Group was therefore established which was Chaired by the Project Director. The outputs from this Group were fed into the wider Thameslink Operational Readiness forum.

4. Development Team Organisational Structure

To carry out the Operational Readiness (OR) activities identified by the optimisation and analysis process, a reorganisation of the Project Development team took place which included recruiting additional temporary team members as experts in their areas of responsibilities.

4.1 Development Manager

The Development Manager (DM) role included the capture of Stakeholder requirements and ensured these requirements were fed into the Design team. They then liaised between Stakeholders, Design and Delivery teams to ensure negotiations and agreements on facilities were obtained. The DM therefore has an acute understanding of the areas they are responsible for. In the lead up to construction completion, as the majority of the design elements had been finalised, the role of the DM changed into that of a role which although continued to liaise with all parties, did so with a changed emphasis on liaising with the Delivery Leads to ensure all works were either complete before the OR activities were due to commence or to agree work-arounds with all parties in the event that construction timescales were not achieved for any reason. The DM became the key interface between the construction teams and the OR activities.

4.2 Business Change Manager

Due to the extent of both facility and cultural/behavioural change taking place for all staff operating within and interfacing with London Bridge Station, a Business Change Manager (BCM) was brought into the team to formulate and implement a Change Management Plan for all resource groups. The BCM's key objectives were to ensure the hearts and minds of every member of staff were ready for the upcoming changes and to liaise closely with the Programme Communications Manager and Training & Familiarisation Manager (below) in order to monitor the level of staff engagement being made which would inform any areas for concern and rectifications required. The BCM also:

- was instrumental in setting up a preview day of the new Concourse for staff and their families where groups were asked to find their way to various check points where feedback on wayfinding and facilities was captured.
- set up a series of drop-in centres for all staff which showed layouts of the new accommodation and all specific staff offices/welfare facilities with samples of their furniture etc. This also included walking routes from Station entrances to/from their place of work and welfare.
- designed, arranged for production and issued every staff member with fold-up maps with walking routes of the new accommodation and concourse together with key contact numbers. These maps were designed to be fitted on to staff lanyards.
- designed, arranged for production and issued every staff member with a London Bridge Project logo'd mug and pen as a welcome to their new accommodation.

- produced and positioned in each mess room a staff directory which included maps, walking routes, contact numbers, instructions on how to use dishwashers, zip-taps etc.
- arranged Project staff to be at strategic points within the new accommodation blocks during the first week of opening to direct them should this be required.

4.3 Project Communications Manager

An internal Project Communications Manager (PCM) was employed to firstly be the key project liaison with the Network Rail Central Communications Team, who would ensure key milestone and success information, as well as crucial dates, were shared with the central team for them to include within their updates to the wider community. Additionally, it was the role of the PCM to liaise with the TOC Communications teams to ensure that full engagement with the TOC staff was taking place. The key objective of the PCM was to bring to life key dates, events and activities through:

- regular attendance at Station and TOC staff team meetings to promote training/familiarisation etc.
- the regular distribution of briefing notes.
- advising any changes to previous communications.

4.4 Training & Familiarisation Manager

To capture all training and familiarisation requirements for all staff, a Training & Familiarisation Manager (T&FM) was engaged to liaise with all staff groups to understand the what, how and when of all T&F along with any materials required. Additionally, it was the responsibility of the T&FM to arrange and carry out the required training and familiarisation sessions.

Integration into the new Control Centre was an essential element within the new Concourse and accommodation moves. This was crucial in order to maintain the train timetable and passenger movements as well as security and maintenance monitoring. The T&FM was instrumental in setting up a Control Centre Simulator where it was arranged for members of the Control Room staff to undertake their training and familiarisation on the new systems and layout.

4.5 T&F Bookings Clerk

Once all T&F requirements were known, it was essential that all staff attended their respective T&F sessions. This was a complex undertaking as these sessions needed to be set up to compliment each member of staff's working shift pattern. A T&F Bookings Clerk (BC) was therefore also engaged to work along-side the T&FM and the TOC/Station Managers to ensure all staff booking on to the respective sessions were recorded and their attendance at these sessions were tracked to understand when 'no-shows' occurred in order that the staff member could be contacted and re-booked on to a future session.

Access Control swipe cards were required to be issued to every member of staff and for these to be programmed with the relevant swipe access level for that staff group as previously agreed with Station and TOC management. The BC programmed each card and issued these to each individual at their familiarisation tour whilst ensuring the staff member completed a swipe card audit form to comply with NR Security requirements.

4.6 Resilience & Mitigations Manager

A Resilience & Mitigations Manager (R&MM) was employed to understand the risks associated with the failure of new assets both within the new accommodation, Concourse and Service Yard areas. Once these were understood, mitigation plans were agreed with all relevant parties and then documented, to be acted upon in the event of any issues arising.

The R&MM also carried out a series of table-top exercises with all relevant parties in order to test operational resilience plans.

4.7 Operations Readiness Planner

To ensure all the requirements and activities being carried out within the roles above were captured within the Project Programme, an Operational Readiness Planner (ORP) was engaged to liaise between the Project Programmer and the team members to produce an Industry Plan which integrated within the overall Programme.

The ORP held Industry Plan meetings every 2 weeks with all Stakeholders and members of the Development Team to ensure their activities and those of their 3rd parties were on track or to understand where any issues had arisen for which activity adjustments would be required.

5. Stakeholder Organisational Structures

From the outset of setting up the Operational Readiness Plan, and at regular intervals during the implementation of this, Stakeholder presentations took place to ensure all were aware of how the Project was setting themselves up to achieve a smooth and seamless migration from old to new accommodation and Station. During these sessions it was emphasised that the success of the migration was also dependent on the Stakeholders themselves becoming operationally ready.

Both Station and TOCs subsequently prepared their own Operational Readiness teams to be the key liaison with the Development Team organisational structure.

6. Responsibility Assignment Matrix

To fully agree and document who would be accountable/responsible etc. for carrying out each element of the OR Plan, a RACI matrix was developed with all Stakeholder teams which documented each activity against each Project and Stakeholder team member. This was reviewed monthly to understand and rectify any areas for concern.

7. Outcomes and Benefits

The high level of collaboration and teamwork which took place between all the teams was an integral part of the migration success of London Bridge station.

During 2018 the station has won several industry Awards, including Major Station of the Year at the National Rail Awards 2018. Reacting afterwards, Network Rail route stations director Ian Hanson said: *"We have worked hard to protect customer service whilst the project works have gone on and I would like to thank all our customers for their patience over this time. Winning an award such as this can only happen with a great team, so we accept this with our partners GTR and Southeastern."*

About the author

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Further information

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