

# Crossrail update August 2017 - further delays

**Crossrail is coming (but very slowly)!** It will run from Reading and Heathrow in the west through central London to Essex (Shenfield) and Kent (Abbey Wood) in the east. It will use 200m long mainline style trains with air-conditioned carriages. At peak times, 10 trains an hour (in both directions) will stop at Ealing Broadway. Some of these will also stop at West Ealing, Acton Main Line, Hanwell and Southall. Crossrail is being run by Crossrail Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Transport for London. Work on the tracks and stations on the existing surface railway (such as at Ealing Broadway) are being carried out by Network Rail, or by their contractors.

Overall, the Crossrail programme is now about 80% complete, with work on the shiny new stations in the central section well advanced. The new service will be introduced in stages with the part through central London due to open in December 2018. A "Crossrail" service from the current Paddington station to Heathrow will replace the Heathrow Connect service in May 2018. The through service from Ealing Broadway to central London and beyond is planned to be the last to start in December 2019.

However, in contrast to the on-schedule progress being made on the central section progress on the western overground section of the route is slipping seriously. For 3 long years Crossrail reported that their designs for Ealing Broadway station were always just 3 months away from publication. When they did eventually emerge, they were roundly condemned. SEC coordinated the campaign that secured some improvements as they now appear on the [Ealing Broadway](#) page of the [Crossrail website](#)

Key features of the new station will be:-

- A large new canopy running across the whole frontage of the station and the Villiers House frontage.
- A much bigger, street level ticket hall.
- Almost double the number of ticket gates than there are now.
- Four lifts to provide step free access from street level to the platforms
- Improved staircases to platforms 2/3, and platform 1 (not normally used).
- New toilet facilities
- Platform extensions to accommodate the longer trains and some canopy changes on the platforms.

The new design was approved by the Ealing Planning Committee in August 2014 in the face of SEC's objections that it would provide a station that remained unfit for purpose.

Meanwhile, back in 2011, it had been agreed to accelerate work on Ealing Broadway Station in advance of the needs of Crossrail. This was because the station was already overcrowded and there was no step free access to the platforms, despite the large number of people using the station. The number of people entering and exiting the station has increased from 12.8 million per year in 2003 to 18.6 million in 2016.

Some work at Ealing Broadway Station eventually started in late summer 2015, with the takeover of the shops on the forecourt, a works compound on Haven Green and a compound on College Court at the eastern end of the station. Crossrail said work would be substantially complete by the summer of 2017. At first, things seemed to go well. An escape footbridge at the east end of the station was soon constructed. After that things slowed. Hoardings remain around the forecourt, but nothing is happening behind them. Some work is still going on to extend the platforms and do other minor works on them.

Following an exposé on BBC London News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-40458246>, Crossrail eventually told us what had been going on. They had done more work on the detailed design of all the station buildings in west London and to complete this work on the current contract with Taylor Woodrow would have been very expensive. It seems highly likely that they had known about these issues for several months, if not over a year. They now declared that they should be able to get the station buildings done cheaper by re-tendering the work. This process was expected to complete in the autumn with practical work starting early in the New Year. The completion date for building work was now to be December 2019.

Some 7 weeks after the meeting with Crossrail, there has still been no public comment from them about the reasons for the delays and the re-tendering. There is no sign of the new tenders being issued, nor any announced date when they will be issued. There is also the suspicion that those who screwed up the original contract are involved in setting the terms of the new one.

Meanwhile, we have concerns that changes to passenger flows will now happen at Ealing Broadway earlier than expected. Once the central London Crossrail service starts in December 2018, a lot of people may decide to use it and continue their journey to Ealing Broadway by changing to the (much improved) surface trains at Paddington. It is difficult to see how the current stairs and passageway from Platform 3 would cope with all the people.