

15 September 2025

Submission on Temple Mills Access decision

Dear Office of Rail and Road,

I write following the roundtable meeting I convened for Temple Mills stakeholders on 11 September.

Our objectives were to:

- Increase the profile of this agenda and the critical importance of Temple Mills in enabling it;
- Encourage participants to explicitly commit to working together on these infrastructural issues in the coming months and years, even while they compete on services;
- Gather inputs for this submission;
- Start the conversation about the strategic planning considerations that will bear on the second stage of expansion.

The consensus of stakeholders was clear – capacity at Temple Mills is the most immediate and significant barrier to investment in the expansion of cross-Channel rail services. As we know, this is an agenda of vital national importance, with the promise to boost economic growth and support modal shift to greener rail transport across the near continent. It is essential to making good on the government's international agreements, including those with Germany and Switzerland.

The benefits of a successful expansion of Temple Mills will be no less significant for my constituents in Leyton and Wanstead, as an essential component of the growth agenda shared by the London Borough of Waltham Forest and neighbouring east London boroughs. The existing depot employs 450 people directly at present in a variety of skilled roles, and all of the train operators have made clear to me that their plans would include an expansion in employment benefitting local people. I intend to engage with the future operators at the site, whoever you decide to include, to encourage them to see their investment as an opportunity to engage with our many STEM-skilled and ambitious local young people who lack only connections into industry.

On the substance of your forthcoming decision, it has become very clear that there is more that can be done to ensure that the existing depot infrastructure at Temple Mills is fully utilised. Some international comparisons suggest that the IPEX report received in March 2025 could represent a significant underestimate of potential capacity. I was interested to hear that some depots on the continent consistently maintain 6-10 sets per road, while sustainably managing several train operating companies within a single depot.

This contrasts poorly with an aspiration to achieve a Normal Depot Set Capacity of less than 2 sets per road in the IPEX report. I understand the importance of using conservative assumptions, but not to the extent that this holds us back as a country. Instead, I believe we should take a national interest approach and seek to be ambitious in maximising both the short- and medium-term benefits of cross-channel rail expansion, and I will continue to do everything I can to support this.

It was therefore very encouraging to hear a commitment, from the senior representatives of all train operating companies and infrastructure operators represented at my roundtable, to work together within Temple Mills should they be given access to this national asset by your decision.

While there are important planning decisions to be made in parallel to deliver the long-term expansion in depot capacity that will be required, I believe we must not allow this to interfere with creating the near-term confidence that investors need to commit, for example to rolling stock orders. Enabling this must be our immediate priority, and a rapid and rapidly communicated decision on access to Temple Mills is the most important step in doing so.

Thank you for your work on this complex but highly important decision. I will copy this letter to roundtable participants and to the Rail Minister for their information.

Yours sincerely,

Calvin Bailey MBE MP

Member of Parliament for Leyton and Wanstead

Ben Bessey

**Senior Parliamentary Assistant to Calvin Bailey MBE
MP**

Member of Parliament for Leyton and Wanstead

House of Commons, Palace of Westminster, London
SW1A 0AA

