

## **OPERATION UNDERCOVER 4 (OP4) PROJECT UPDATE (AUGUST 2016)**

The construction of the framework and roofing for the maintenance road and the carriage storage shed has been completed, which leaves the frame and roof erection for the Heritage Skills Centre (HSC) to complete Phase 1 of the project.

The delay in the erection of the HSC on the eastern side of the storage shed is due to the requirement for 600 tons of material to be removed from the eastern side of the new building to level the original north-south ground-fall. This will enable completion of the HSC ring beam and frame erection, for which the original funding has been ring-fenced.

Timescales for this work are subject to some key interdependencies. The material to be removed from the new building will be used to build up the embankment at the south-east corner of the storage shed, which is required to facilitate the construction of the internal access road required for essential C&W maintenance vehicles between the north and south ends of the site. Before this material can be transferred for the embankment works, some trees need to be removed and foundations prepared.

In the interests of ensuring cost effectiveness in the use of our donors' money, it has always been planned for all of this part of the project to be undertaken by the Railway's Infrastructure Department rather than outside contractors. However, as significant funding has now been approved by the Capital Projects Review Group for essential track renewal and other priority infrastructure work, the Infrastructure Department team will be fully committed until Spring 2017 on these essential works.

As a consequence of this, it has been necessary to review the next stages of the Op. Undercover 4 project for the remainder of this year. However, priority will still be given to the following Op.4 work before this winter:

- ✓ Installation of underground drainage pipes and service ducts to provide effective rainwater drainage from the new extension roof (this work is currently in progress).
- ✓ Provision of safe and essential facilities for the carriage maintenance area within the new building to ensure carriage availability for service trains.

By restricting the OP4 project work in this way, it will ensure the Infrastructure Department resources can be concentrated on the track renewal work to secure full operation of our train services in the future.

Detailed planning is taking place for the next phase of the OP4 project, namely levelling the ground and laying the track in the storage shed, constructing the firewalls either side of the storage shed, and erection of the framework for the Heritage Skills Centre. This planning and costing work will be completed and communicated before the end of October.

The reprioritisation of the next phase of the OP4 project outlined above has been made with the wider interests of the Railway being the main focus. It is clear that the essential track work renewal, and the provision of the resource required to undertake it, is the main priority to secure full provision and reliability of trains for our visitors in the future. Together with this, we must also ensure we achieve maximum value for the funds being used for this work, as well as those for the OP4 project.

By the Operation Undercover 4 Steering Group