



Cargo

CRICKLEWOOD - THE UK'S FIRST NET ZERO RAIL FREIGHT TERMINAL

DB Cargo UK has transformed its rail freight terminal at Cricklewood, Northwest London, into the UK's first net zero rail freight terminal, setting a new standard for sustainable logistics and green industrial solutions.

The terminal acts as a hub for the construction industry in London and the Southeast, removing spoil from major projects such as HS2 and the Brent Cross redevelopment, while bringing aggregates and building materials into the heart of the capital. Handling around 250,000 tonnes of spoil each year, Cricklewood helps avoid approximately 12,500 individual HGV journeys with backloaded journeys ensuring optimum efficiency and further reductions in heavy road traffic.

Home to one of Europe's largest green acoustic barriers, Cricklewood demonstrates how greening industrial spaces can significantly reduce emissions, pollution and noise, while maintaining high operational performance and minimising local environmental impact.

Delivering net zero at Cricklewood

Our journey began with a clear ambition: to create a greener, cleaner, and more efficient logistics hub that actively contributes to London's sustainability goals.

Key initiatives:

- Installed one of Europe's largest green acoustic walls; covered with over 3,500m² of native evergreen foliage, the south facing wall is a living structure which acts as natural carbon sink, sequestering around 10t CO₂e each year
- The wall was designed with an automatic watering system which uses collected surface water from the site avoiding mains water consumption
- Employees received Green Skills training, which has empowered and incentivised staff led environmental sustainability continuous improvements
- Installed advanced dust suppression systems, and a brand-new wheel wash machine, both of which use recycled water capture and reuse systems, significantly reducing mains water consumption
- The site monitors noise, air quality and dust in real time using advanced monitoring and rapid alert sensors
- The wider carbon footprint of the site has been reduced by switching to 100% REGO-verified renewable electricity, incentivising low emission business vehicle use, and introduced sub-metering for more accurate energy accountability
- Invested in newer, more efficient MHE, including a hybrid loader that replaced older, less-efficient models and meet current Euro emissions standards
- Rewilded unused land with native trees and hedgerows, enhancing biodiversity and increasing the terminal's natural carbon capture potential



Together, these initiatives have turned Cricklewood into a model of operational sustainability, where innovation, circularity, and teamwork deliver real, measurable environmental impact.

Nature at the heart of Cricklewood

At the heart of Cricklewood's sustainability story stands Europe's largest green acoustic barrier wall – a living structure that acts as a natural carbon sink while improving air quality, reducing noise, and enhancing local biodiversity.

Key features:

- South facing, planted with 3,520m² native foliage
- Naturally filters pollutants and sequesters approximately 12t CO₂e per year
- Mitigates the Urban Heat Island effect through evapotranspiration
- Absorbs and deflects sound, reducing noise pollution
- Enhances local biodiversity by providing a thriving urban habitat
- Designed with a recycled surface water irrigation system

Achieving operational net zero

Cricklewood has achieved a significant reduction in operational emissions across Scope 1 and 2, demonstrating the impact of its net zero initiatives. The terminal's net zero baseline is set at +12.7 tCO₂e, reflecting the contribution of its on-site natural carbon sink. This figure accounts for carbon sequestration from the green acoustic wall, rewilding efforts, and the planting of native trees, which actively absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Together these initiatives form a core part of our overall carbon reduction strategy, helping to offset residual emissions, support biodiversity and establish Cricklewood as a benchmark for sustainable rail freight operations.



Contact Us

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