

Brixton Micro Logistics Hub: 10 Project Learnings

- LAND
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1. FLEXIBILITY



LAND



Lesson Learned: 1. Flexibility

CRP found that the space required for setting up a micro logistics hub is more flexible than expected and identified critical criteria such as level access and adhering to city and property regulations.

Check out our handy guide for identifying Micro Logistic Hub sites
[Do I have the right space for a hub? \(crossriverpartnership.org\)](https://crossriverpartnership.org)

➡ What next?

Landowners, local authorities, and BIDs should embrace a flexible and creative approach to identify potential sites within borough boundaries and asset portfolios. The integration of micro logistics hubs into new developments and existing meanwhile space should be incorporated into planning and logistics policies and strategies.



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2. SHORTER LEASES



LAND



Lesson Learned: 2. Shorter Leases

The length of commercial real estate market lease agreements and time constraints of a grant-funded project presented challenges for a 6-month trial. The trial highlighted many lease agreements are for a minimum of 12 months, with landowners preferring 2+ years as a secure lease option.

➡ What next?

More flexible, shorter-term commercial real estate contracts with break clauses are needed to make more spaces across London suitable for micro logistic hub projects and trials. Enabling landowners to lease spaces to more businesses and engage with newer, creative organisations will enhance local impacts.



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3. PRIORITISE LAND FOR SUSTAINABLE LOGISTICS



LAND



Lesson Learned: 3. Prioritise Land for Sustainable Logistics

CRP found that the availability of appropriate sites in the defined search area, around Brixton and through much of South London, was at a premium and a strong focus was placed on retail and residential areas.

➡ What next?

The commercial viability of micro logistics hubs as a credible income source and sustainability benefits should be emphasised to the commercial real estate and landowner sector. Local authority planning policy should be developed to prioritise space for micro-logistics hubs and identify suitable sites within the borough.

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4. FLEXIBLE & REACTIVE BUSINESSES



ENGAGEMENT



Lesson Learned: 4. Flexible & Reactive Businesses
Businesses that could react quickly and flexibly were most able to unlock the potential of the scheme, such as florists, cafes, breweries and co-working spaces. CRP was able to work directly with these businesses as they were smaller and independently owned, with a strong knowledge and direct management of their supply chain.

➔ What next?

Local authority and BID business engagement for future schemes should focus on organisations that are able to make quick decisions, whilst corresponding with the decision-maker (owner or manager) as the best approach.

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5. WORD-OF-MOUTH



ENGAGEMENT



Lesson Learned: 5. Word-of-mouth
New businesses were more likely to sign up if they heard about the scheme from known and trusted business owners. CRP made use of local networks, such as the local BID, and attended the Brixton BID Enhanced Environment group to encourage more engagement with businesses. Thank you to our local champions for promoting this project!

➔ What next?

Local champions should be encouraged to share their own experiences and recommend other local businesses to participate in the project.

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6. MOTIVATIONS



ENGAGEMENT



Lesson Learned: 6. Motivations
In-depth phone and face-to-face business engagement developed strong relationships and trust with scheme users and revealed different motivations for joining. This ranged from environmental benefits, additional storage space, avoiding missed deliveries and cost-saving benefits of free deliveries and storage. A reluctance to change existing delivery processes was identified as the main barrier for business sign-up.

➔ What next?

When engaging with businesses, local authorities and BIDs should work to understand the motivations of different businesses and emphasise the most relevant benefits by talking directly to business owners, managers and staff.

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7. SUCCESS OF A STAFFED HUB



OPERATIONS



Lesson Learned: 7. Success of a Staffed Hub
Micro logistics hubs with staff present proved more successful. At the start of the project, deliveries were redirected to 200 sq. ft of space at Pedal Me's SE1 HQ, where staff were on-site to receive deliveries and act as a point-of-contact for multiple suppliers, parcel delivery couriers and businesses. This reduced ambiguity over the delivery address, increased businesses confidence and reduced requirement for CRP involvement.

➔ What next?

Local authorities and BIDs implementing a micro-hub project should consider selecting an already-staffed space for consolidation and onward deliveries for a number of businesses. Non-urgent deliveries could be made throughout the week to a cargo bike couriers hub, and then made 2 times per week to the local area by cargo bike in consolidated journeys.

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8. UNSTAFFED HUB PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION

OPERATIONS

Lesson Learned: 8. Unstaffed Hub Process Simplification

Unstaffed hubs require a simpler process. The hub moved to an unstaffed location Battersea for the 2nd half of the trial and the locked container and lack of specific point-of-contact to liaise between multiple suppliers, parcel delivery couriers and businesses proved challenging. Higher levels of involvement were required by CRP and Pedal Me including the installation of clearer signage and providing an out-of-hours contact number, however, issues with parcels being left in incorrect places persisted.

➔ What next?

Clear delineation of responsibilities between supplier, courier and local business is essential. Future unstaffed hubs should focus on working strategically with a small number of suppliers, with their own in-house logistics service, to enable a one-step delivery to the micro logistics hub. This will be followed by a single cargo bike courier delivering all parcels to the agreed local area and timescales of the supplier.

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9. CONNECTING LARGE WITH LOCAL

OPERATIONS

Lesson Learned: 9. Connecting Large with Local

There is a real challenge in integrating smaller, local projects with the processes of large delivery companies. This was exacerbated by the pay-per-parcel model, where there was limited incentive for drivers from large parcel delivery companies to follow the full delivery instructions to ensure safe deliveries to the unstaffed hub.

➔ What next?

CRP will continue to facilitate greater collaboration between private sector businesses (e.g. large parcel delivery companies) and public sector projects, to ensure that these small, local projects can work alongside organisations that deliver parcels with high volumes.

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10. TESTBEDS FOR THE FUTURE

OVERALL

Lesson Learned: 10. Testbeds for the Future

The trial has provided valuable learnings on the operation and next steps for shared, local micro logistics hubs in London. Trialling both staffed and unstaffed hubs highlighted different approaches to deliveries and emphasised vital next steps for realising future micro logistics hubs to address challenges of congestion, air quality and commercial viability.

➔ What next?

Check out our range of resources for future micro logistics hubs:

- [Do I have the right space for a Micro Hub?](#)
- [Mapping the Cycle Logistics Sector in London](#)
- [Lived Experience of a Micro Hub - A First-Hand Account](#)
- [Business Cargo Bike Guide](#)
- [Urban Logistics Hubs in London](#)