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RAILWAY STUDY FORUM

Visit to Romford Control Centre

On Friday 17th November, the Railway Study Forum organised a fascinating visit to the Elizabeth Line Route Control centre at Romford Rail Operating Centre (ROC). This is a £32 million Network Rail Operation and Training Facility opened in 2015 which controls the eastern section of Elizabeth Line and the Anglia rail network.

Attendees met at Ilford station concourse on crisp and sunny November morning and walked the short 5 minutes to Romford ROC where Network Rail and Elizabeth Line are co located. Due to the popularity of the visit, the event was oversubscribed. Therefore, once signed in, the CILT group of 22 was split into three groups to visit the Elizabeth Line control room while the Customer Manager answered questions from the other attendees in the atrium. All attendees got the chance to ask questions about railway operations, fleet operations, crew shift controllers and customer information functions providing

a complete overview of every aspect of the line's minute by minute performance with lots of questions asked.

As the most recent large-scale railway in the UK and flagship scheme connecting London from east to west, the Elizabeth Line interacts with no less than 11 TOCs from three different signalling locations (Romford, Liverpool Street and Didcot) while maintaining headway of up to 24 trains per hour through Central London. The MTR Crossrail stakeholder manager explained that the level of stakeholder management is significant which can be a challenge during disruption. The phrase used often during the visit was 'a railway like no other' given the complexity and intricacies of integrating into a number of different signalling systems.

The fully branded Elizabeth Line control room is on the second floor of Romford ROC with support teams from Rail for London (RfL) and Alstom (train supplier)

in the room, while Network Rail control is on the first floor. The control room is dominated by a large screen showing the entire route of Elizabeth Line allowing tracking of trains in real time and to identify issues at a glance. Apparently this is the most common picture taken by visitors to the control room and I have to admit I did follow the trend with taking the photograph.

The CCTV is extensive and of high quality linking into the control. So much so that when the royals have been travelling on the Elizabeth Line, most recently with Prince and Princess of Wales during the coronation celebrations, it was possible to track the progress of the Royals from West Acton entrance to their exit at Tottenham Court Road.

Thanks to CILT Railway Study forum, MTR Crossrail and Network Rail for organising such an informative visit.

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