

# **London Borough of Camden's response to National Infrastructure Commission Call for Evidence – London's Transport Infrastructure**

## **1. General comments**

This response has been agreed by Camden's Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning.

Answers are given below to Questions 1-3 in the call for evidence. Further evidence is set out under 'References' at the end of this submission.

## **2. Question 1 - What are the major economic and social challenges facing London and its commuter hinterland over the next two to three decades?**

Camden has a very successful and diverse economy and it makes a significant contribution to the UK economy (with the 5<sup>th</sup> largest GDP of any local authority district in the UK) and is a key part of Central London's economy owing to its concentration of businesses, retail and tourism (Camden's GDP is the third largest of any London borough after the City of Westminster and City of London).

The borough is forecast to grow from 229,700 residents (in 2013) to over 265,000 by 2031 and the number of jobs to increase from 286,000 to 375,000 by 2031. This builds on historic rates of high growth recorded in Camden. Between 2004 and 2014 residents numbers grew by 13% while employment levels increased by 30%.

The level of development activity attests to the attractiveness and dynamism of Camden's local economy. In the decade 2005-15, 7,493 homes were built and 689 schemes involving employment floorspace were completed creating 453,742 sqm of office/industrial/warehousing floorspace and 59,000sqm of retail floorspace.

The London Plan housing target for Camden is about 8,900 additional homes from 2015-25 however London boroughs are advised to achieve and exceed this target in order to close the gap between London's needs and the supply of housing. LB Camden's emerging Local Plan aims to deliver a minimum of 16,800 homes from 2015-30 (including over 11,000 self-contained homes<sup>1</sup>). A profound shortage in the number of affordable homes in London and the rapid growth in house prices and rents mean that more people are choosing to live outside the capital increasing the levels of commuting. A million people currently are commuting across Greater London's boundary every day into the capital. Without significant growth in the provision of affordable housing there is a risk that many businesses and the public sector will experience greater difficulty in attracting and retaining staff. Rising housing costs mean that residents are faced with spending an increasing proportion of their income on housing or living in cramped accommodation.

Camden's 'daytime population' already approximately doubles due to the influx of workers, let alone students and visitors travelling into the borough daily for a variety of purposes. Camden's night-time economy is also significant. In addition we have large numbers of people in transit throughout the borough. With population growth

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<sup>1</sup> Self-containment is where all the rooms in a household's accommodation are behind a single door which only that household can use.

expected in the region of 2,300 people a year until 2031, the challenge is to ensure that this is supported by healthy and sustainable transport choices. Camden's screenline counts show that between 2006-2014, trips by car reduced by 13% - a trend which is expected to continue as the proportion of households without access to a car continues to increase (from about two-thirds currently). A sharp increase in cycle journeys has also been recorded. In 2006, cycling represented about 7.6% of Camden's traffic flow but in 2015 it was 13.6%. This is expected to continue to increase as a result of major investment in the cycling network in Camden and London.

### **3. Question 2 - What are the strategic options for future investment in large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London - on road, rail and underground - including, but not limited to Crossrail 2?**

- How should they be prioritised, taking account of their response to London's strategic transport challenges, including their impact on capacity, reliability, journey times and connectivity to jobs?
- What might their potential impact be on employment, productivity and housing supply in London and the southeast?

#### ***Crossrail 2***

Transport for London consultation exercises have demonstrated that the 'regional option' of Crossrail 2 has greater support than the 'metro option' and is better suited to meet the needs of London's growing population and employment. It provides new connections across the London region directly into the heart of the capital and opens up significant regeneration opportunities, particularly by increasing the scope for new housing that London needs in areas such as the upper Lee Valley. Camden Council has recently provided a detailed response to the Crossrail 2 Growth Commission – call for evidence, which is attached to this submission.

In summary, the Council supports the principle of Crossrail 2 because of the benefits that it offers to Camden residents, businesses and institutions and to London as a whole. Through increasing capacity and connectivity, Crossrail 2 would support the conditions for continued economic growth, bringing vital jobs and business activity to the borough. By reducing congestion on current transport routes the scheme could mean faster and less crowded train and bus journeys for Camden's residents and visitors. Without Crossrail 2 the Underground platforms at Euston, already operating close to capacity, would not be able to cope with the additional demand generated by High Speed 2 leading to the intermittent closure of Euston Underground station when demand related to HS2 and National Rail services peaks. This would be similar to the intermittent closure of Oxford Circus Underground station currently experienced.

The current plans for the Crossrail 2 station at Euston show that around 130 homes and 17 businesses may be directly affected by its construction. These proposals have come about as a result of uncertainty over the redevelopment of the current Network Rail station at Euston which fails to realise the opportunity to incorporate the

renewal of the 'classic' Network Rail station as part of the proposed build programme.

A large proportion of this impact – and cost - is unnecessary and could be avoided by re-locating the proposed Crossrail 2 station entrance within the footprint of a redeveloped Euston station. A comprehensive redevelopment of the station integrating Crossrail 2, High Speed 2 and the 'classic' Network Rail station would deliver ongoing efficiencies and a better passenger experience at the interchange in perpetuity and mean the full opportunities for development and growth can be realised.

### ***Euston Station comprehensive redevelopment***

The most significant barrier to the delivery of additional growth at Euston is the risk of failing to integrate and co-ordinate the redevelopment of the existing Euston Station in conjunction with the proposals for the High Speed 2 and Crossrail 2 stations. By co-ordinating projects there are opportunities to share worksites, speed up delivery, reduce land take and create a comprehensive redevelopment above an integrated jointly delivered transport interchange between High Speed 2, commuter lines, the Underground, buses and Crossrail 2.

The Euston Area Plan (EAP) is the agreed opportunity area planning framework for Euston, jointly prepared and adopted by Camden Council, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Transport for London (TfL) with HS2 and Network Rail providing technical support. It sets out the potential for transformational development and regeneration above and around the station with the potential to deliver 2,800-3,800 new homes (including the delivery of much needed affordable homes) and 7,700-14,100 new jobs. This vision encompasses a high quality development around a world class transport interchange, resolving the issues around movement between rail, Underground, bus and taxi services and would reconnect communities to the north, south, east and west. Links between the station and the surrounding street network are poor and the linear bus street at the front of the station is a barrier to permeability and provides a poor environment. Investment in the public realm and facilities for cyclists would help provide a more legible and safe environment and support non-polluting and healthier means of travel.

The Euston Growth Strategy (prepared by Camden Council, the GLA, TfL and Network Rail) indicates that a comprehensive redevelopment could generate a development value of circa £3bn, an additional £1.1bn of GVA per annum and return approximately £1.3bn to the exchequer up to 2060.

The lack of funding for the redevelopment of the classic Network Rail station puts the delivery of the shared strategic vision and development parameters set out in the Euston Area Plan at risk. Without a comprehensive approach to the station the significant growth and regeneration potential at Euston will not be fully realised. The benefits of much increased permeability, connectivity and ease of movement will be compromised and this uncertainty mars the prospect of harnessing developer interest in a comprehensive approach. Failure to bring about the timely redevelopment of the Network Rail station would prolong the severity and duration of

impacts on the local community which are already set to experience 17 years of construction disruption from High Speed 2

The existing station is no longer considered to be fit for purpose and fails in many respects. It provides an extremely poor station environment with limited facilities for passengers and is regularly overcrowded. Accessibility to the station and connectivity across its site between the track, concourse and surrounding street network is far below the standard which would be expected of a nationally important rail terminus and interchange and moreover one that is likely to become the UK's largest transport hub. There is an opportunity to create a station that the country can be proud of.

Growth in passenger demand from the West Coast Mainline on its own supports the redevelopment of the Network Rail station. Increasing congestion within the station building will worsen the experience of passengers using the station still further and be detrimental to its role as a key 'gateway' to London. Despite its strategic importance to London's economy, there is a sense that Euston station has been left behind as other London termini (King's Cross and London Bridge) have benefitted from significant investment to increase capacity and improve the passenger environment.

High quality development is capable of being delivered above and around this station to make efficient use of this Central London location in a way which delivers clear benefits for Camden's residents and businesses. The Council has evidence which suggests that a level deck solution, where the tracks of the classic rail station are sunken alongside the High Speed 2 tracks, would maximise the benefits realised from a comprehensive scheme. It would facilitate additional and larger development plots within the station complex. The construction of a platform above the existing station is capable of accommodating significant levels of development without causing detrimental effects (e.g. on the designated viewing corridors).

Development at Euston is well placed to build on growing cluster of high tech and knowledge based industries and institutions in this part of Camden. Further expansion and growth of these knowledge industries is expected to occur over the next decade. This 'knowledge quarter' includes the British Library, University College London and University College Hospital. The construction of the Francis Crick Institute is nearing completion and organisations such as Google and the Alan Turing Institute for Big Data will be moving into this area. Euston station is also close to Camden Town and capable of supporting the growth and regeneration expected to occur there.

Camden Council asks that a recommendation is made by the National Infrastructure Commission to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to accelerate the process of bringing forward funding for the redevelopment of the Network Rail station so there is one integrated development of the station (i.e. NR and HS2) undertaken in the same timeframe, with Transport for London's plans for Crossrail 2 fully integrated into the scheme. We also suggest that Euston Station could form a case study for the Commission to consider in further detail.

### ***Improve orbital routes and provide new rail connections***

Since Transport for London took over responsibility for rail services on lines now comprising the Overground network ridership has increased markedly. The growth in ridership cannot be solely attributed to conventional elasticity factors such as increases in rail services levels and background growth factors associated with rising population and employment, but to other factors such as improved connections, marketing, information, wayfinding within stations, re-staffing of stations late at night and quality of rolling stock and improved performance (*London Overground Impact Study*, for Rail and Underground Panel, TfL, 16 November 2011).

The extension of the Gospel Oak Barking (GOB) line to Barking Riverside will also enable regeneration of this area and bring similar benefits as those set out above for Crossrail 2. Funding has been committed for the electrification of the GOB line and this is planned to be finished by 2017. The extension of the Northern line to Battersea will have similar benefits to the GOB extension.

The proposed 2 new Overground stations at Old Oak Common (at Old Oak Common Land and Hythe Road) will help transform this area into an important new transport hub, linking with High Speed 2 and Crossrail and the regeneration area there, although funding for these stations has not yet been fully identified.

In making improvements to orbital and other rail services in London particular consideration should be given to improvements that maximise the use of existing infrastructure (thereby giving good value for money), that involve new connections and as far as possible that can be made within existing rail lands so as to minimise objections and reduce costs. Examples include the West Coast Main Line to Crossrail link (which would extend Crossrail westwards making better use of the new Crossrail tunnels, and would facilitate the reorganisation of terminating rail services at Euston for the comprehensive development of that station as described above) and the four tracking of part of the West Anglian Main Line that recently became part of the Overground. These two examples are not yet fully funded and should be priorities for investment.

### ***Major works at selected Underground stations***

The growth of rail ridership on the Underground necessitates major works at certain Underground stations to increase capacity for passenger movements within these stations for a variety of purposes including improving operational safety and enabling enhancements to existing rail service levels. Examples of projects that are currently being investigated or seeking powers but are not yet fully funded include Holborn, Bank and Camden Town, and these should be priorities for investment.

The fully funded Northern line Extension to Battersea between the Charing Cross and Bank branches facilitates the separation of the Northern line; trains crossing one another to travel to different branches at Kennington and Camden Town reduces train frequencies so works at these stations ultimately enable greater capacity for the entire Northern line. Higher throughput of trains at Bank station on the Northern line threaten the operability of this station, hence the advance works being programmed for this station. The Northern line extension to Battersea includes the building of more cross-passenger tunnels at Kennington to facilitate interchange between the

branches of the line and it is imperative that funding is provided for this approach at Camden Town station for the same reason.

### ***Step free access at rail stations***

In recent years works that provide step free access from the street, through a station and onto platforms has been undertaken in numerous stations in London including Camden. This has opened up rail services to those with ambulant difficulties, bringing economic and social benefits. These benefits increase more than pro rata as additional stations are improved, widening the network of stations that can be used. This programme of improvements should be continued, with priority given to well-used stations and those stations that are important hubs within London's transport networks. For example, the Thameslink and Overground stations in West Hampstead are being made step free, so if the Underground station at this location were made step-free the benefits would be wider than those that would be attributed to this station alone - given the wider network that would accrue by passengers interchanging onto the other very nearby stations at this location.

### ***Rail station improvements and relationships to the surrounding urban realm.***

The provision of new rail lines or improvements to particular stations should not be looked at in isolation. The urban realm outside stations should also be improved to provide better interfaces with connecting modes and to land-use developments that will be encouraged by rail improvements. The integration of transport and land-use planning improves public transport ridership and regeneration potential creating a virtuous circle of change. For example, the Council has been working with partners to harness the benefits of the new Crossrail station at Tottenham Court Road through 'The West End Project'. This is intended to transform the public realm, improve movement through the area and boost business activity.

### ***Improving cycling infrastructure***

Currently Camden is making substantial additions and improvements to its cycling infrastructure. By the end of 2015, Camden has doubled the amount of segregated cycle lanes in the past two years and by the end of 2016 Camden plan to have over 10km of new and improved segregated cycle lanes in the borough linking many of the boroughs town centres to each other and to the West End and City. The rapid development of cycling facilities (whether segregated or not) is resulting in a marked growth in cycling – by 2% from 2014 to 2015 alone to bring the cycle market share to 13.6% borough-wide for daytime traffic flows. South of Euston Road cycling accounts for more than 23% of daytime traffic. This supports sustaining increased levels of investment in cycling infrastructure for all types of rider.

#### **4. Question 3 - What opportunities are there to increase the benefits and reduce the costs of the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme?**

The comprehensive redevelopment of Euston Station would provide opportunities to reduce the cost of delivering the Euston-St Pancras Crossrail 2 station and increase the benefits of the proposed scheme. This would be unlocked through aligning the Crossrail 2 programme with the redevelopment of the classic Network Rail station at Euston, and a commitment to the funding of both projects. Uncertainty over the redevelopment of the current Network Rail station and lack of a comprehensive plan for Euston Station has resulted in the current proposals which would lead to the demolition of over 130 homes, 17 businesses and community facilities. The costs of acquiring this property and providing adequate compensation to landowners adds significant unnecessary cost to the project. The impact on residential property at Euston is greater than at any other proposed Crossrail 2 station.

Both the cost and impact on residents and businesses in the Euston Area could be significantly reduced by a comprehensive approach to the station encompassing High Speed 2, the redevelopment of the classic Network Rail classic station and any new Crossrail 2 station. This would allow for re-location of the proposed Crossrail 2 entrance to a site within Euston station, the opportunity to share worksites, speed up delivery and reduce land take. This would avoid the highly detrimental consequences of demolition in the area north of Grafton Way to allow for the construction of a new station entrance and box.

The Tottenham Court Road Crossrail 2 station is currently proposed to have a southern entrance in Shaftesbury Avenue and a northern entrance on Oxford Street at Rathbone Place – both wholly within Westminster. At this early stage of the project the details are under discussion, however the Council is seeking a northern exit on Tottenham Court Road itself as this would build on the regeneration benefits in this area which are starting to be realised through the West End Project and the increased capacity of the Northern and Central line ticket hall. Transport for London is aware of this possibility and is looking at options.

As part of its representation to Transport for London on Crossrail 2, the Council has highlighted the significant impacts on Camden residents living in close proximity to the proposed Rathbone Place entrance (in Westminster). It is likely that this entrance would become a major pedestrian trip generator and may not be the optimal location in terms of pedestrian wayfinding and connectivity to the wider area. For this reason and the potential adverse impacts of the construction works on Gresse Street residential property, we have asked TfL to fully investigate alternative sites.

#### **References:**

Euston Area Plan (adopted by Camden Council 2015)

<https://www.eustonareaplan.info/>

Euston Growth Strategy (November 2015)

<http://www.eustonareaplan.info/documents/> : under 'Other Documents'