

National Infrastructure Commission  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

19<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Dear National Infrastructure Commission,

## **RESPONSE TO NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

Please accept this letter as London Borough of Brent's response to the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) call for evidence on the following three issues:

1. Improving connectivity between cities in the north of England
2. Large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London
3. Improving how electricity demand and supply are balanced

Brent appreciates the opportunity to contribute towards the NIC's work and the Borough supports the process currently being undertaken by the Commission. The following response has been prepared based on the questions put forward by the NIC for each issue.

### **ISSUE 1: IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CITIES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND**

Brent has no comment on the issue of connectivity between cities in the north of England. We support Local Authorities in the north of England who wish to comment on this issue.

### **ISSUE 2: LARGE-SCALE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS IN LONDON**

#### **Q1: What are the major economic and social challenges facing London and its commuter hinterland over the next two to three decades?**

Brent is facing many of the same economic and social challenges as London and the United Kingdom as a whole. Sustained high population growth is a challenge across many policy areas, including housing, transport and employment. Brent's population is projected to grow by 24% to almost 390,000 over the period from 2012 to 2036 compared to 22.5% growth London-wide over the same period<sup>1</sup>. This growth will place greater pressure on housing and services which are already straining to cope with record populations and usage, such as transport. In addition, it's a continuing challenge for the borough to support employment growth within the borough to provide jobs and economic stimulus for residents.

In recent years, the dynamic of these challenges has also changed, with greater focus on sustainable development. This trend is likely to continue in the future, with an increasing focus

<sup>1</sup> Office of National Statistics, 2015, *ONS 2012-based subnational population projections*, [Sourced from London Datastore] <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/ons-2012-based-subnational-population-projections/resource/dfdd7444-ea66-4a27-91ff-a95fdc9fe611#>

on car-free development and localised employment and services, thus reducing the need to travel, along with the provision of sustainable transport options, such as walking and cycling in addition to public transport.

In order to deal with these challenges, significant investment is required in local transport infrastructure, including resolving existing maintenance requirements on local road networks. At the same time, investment is also required in large both new large-scale infrastructure (such as the Crossrail/West Coast Main Line link) and the modernisation of existing infrastructure (such as the Bakerloo line modernisation).

**Q2: 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?**

Brent believes that the greatest opportunity for investing in transport infrastructure in London is not in the strategic network, but in the local network. It is local transport networks which are currently suffering from deferred maintenance and lack of investment due to funding cuts, while additional funding is being made available for strategic transport networks, which, while important, do not carry the vast majority of vehicles (either passenger or freight) and can not support economic growth without a well maintained local network. At the same time, we recognise that funding must be provided to the strategic network as well. We do not see the demands of the different networks as an 'either-or' scenario, rather investment must be directed towards both networks to ensure the delivery of high quality national transport networks which support economic growth and improve peoples' wellbeing.

At a strategic level (both nationally strategic and regionally strategic), there are a number of major schemes which Brent supports:

West Coast Main Line / Crossrail link:

This project is Brent's highest priority transport project, on the condition that Crossrail trains call at Wembley Central Station. This project will support substantial regeneration in Wembley, along with providing high speed, high quality access for residents and businesses to Central London, Heathrow and the rest of the nation via the Old Oak Common Interchange.

Brent continues its work with Transport for London (TfL) on this issue and we would encourage Central Government and any other stakeholder to support it.

Upgrade and extension of the Bakerloo Line:

In addition to supporting growth in southeast London, the Bakerloo line currently has the oldest rollingstock on the London Underground network, dating to 1972. These trains are in considerable need of renewal, in addition to the need to modernise track and signalling along the route.

An upgrade of the Bakerloo Line, completed in conjunction with an extension in southeast London would improve access to public transport, reduce car usage and associated emissions and congestion across northwest London. The extension would support regeneration in Wembley, South Kilburn and Old Oak Common / Park Royal, improve journey times and provide better connections, improving public transport capacity and passenger satisfaction along the length of the Bakerloo Line.

High Speed 1 / High Speed 2 link:

While this project has been excluded from the HS2 Hybrid Bill, currently before parliament, Brent believes it is essential towards achieving a comprehensive national High Speed Rail network in the future. At the same time, the previous proposal via the North London Line in Camden, impeded the capacity of this route and would have had a detrimental impact on local communities.

An improved solution needs to be developed now, so that other projects do not jeopardise the practicality and deliverability of this link in the future.

Electrification of transport networks (road and rail):

Brent supports the electrification of transport networks (including both road and rail vehicles) for both freight and passenger services. While rail electrification works are planned with lengthy lead-in periods, the electric vehicle market is less certain, and as these vehicles become cheaper and more widely spread, there is a risk that domestic energy consumption could rise considerably for these vehicles. This could potentially require additional infrastructure to support these vehicles.

Increasing the uptake of electric vehicles in commercial fleets and household vehicles is predicated on having sufficient charging infrastructure to give people the confidence to switch to a hybrid or fully electric vehicle. Domestic infrastructure, coupled with nation-wide charging infrastructure is essential to ensuring that the nation's homes, offices businesses are prepared for zero-emission vehicles of the future.

Freight transport networks:

An essential requirement of any strategic infrastructure is the provision for freight to utilise the network. Pursuant to this, where possible, Brent strongly supports the relocation of freight from road haulage to rail, given the impacts on local amenity of poor air quality, traffic noise and safety risk of freight vehicles. We also support maintaining and/or improving access in the form of service slots and sidings for freight to rail networks, such as the West Coast Main Line, Dudding Hill Line and the Midland Main Line.

Cycling infrastructure:

While cycling infrastructure has generally not been considered to be strategic infrastructure, with the addition of high-capacity cycling infrastructure currently being constructed and/or planned across Greater London, along with the demand for greater cycling provision means the scale of infrastructure and popularity of cycling is increasing. The greater number of cyclists will generate additional demands on strategic road networks and for regional cycling infrastructure. These considerations should be taken into account both for strategic planning and in assessing individual traffic schemes.

Resolution of London's air capacity issue:

In February 2015, Brent Council wrote to the Davies Commission to recommend that of the three options being considered to increase London's air capacity, Brent's preferred option was the Heathrow Northwest Runway. The Davies Commission agreed with this and recommended the government move forward with this option. A final decision on how the government will proceed has been delayed several times. Ongoing uncertainty regarding whether an additional runway will be built at Heathrow or Gatwick Airports, or not at all affects the planning and transportation decisions being made by Brent, other Local Authorities and TfL. Resolution of this issue needs to be a priority in consideration of national infrastructure.

**Q3: What opportunities are there to increase the benefits and reduce the costs of the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme?**

Brent understands that Transport for London has already undertaken considerable work to evaluate and increase the benefits of the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme. In spite of not being located on the route for Crossrail 2, Council officers have been kept abreast of the project's evolution as there are potential long-term impacts for the borough in relation to connections to Crossrail 1 (at Tottenham Court Road) and HS2 (at Euston), along with the interchange between these two projects at Old Oak Common.

Given that the opportunities for increased benefits will come with greater demands on local authorities along the route, Brent will reserve contribution on this question to those authorities.

**Q4: What are the options for the funding, financing and delivery of large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London, including Crossrail 2?**

Brent supports the funding arrangements for Crossrail 2, as currently outlined by TfL. We believe that it is fair and reasonable that large-scale, transformative infrastructure projects (including Crossrail 1 and Crossrail 2) should be funded by a combination of Central Government funding, Greater London Authority (GLA)/TfL funding, S106/Community Infrastructure Levy development contributions and localised business rates supplements for beneficiaries of the scheme.

A key consideration of equity which must be addressed for Crossrail 2 and future regional schemes such as this is the disparity of power for enforcing localised contributions between local authorities under the GLA and those located in the Home Counties. It certainly is achievable to come to negotiated settlements on funding agreements with these local authorities, however the Mayor of London does not have any authority to enforce them outside of the terms of the agreement. This will be of particular concern for Brent in support of the Crossrail / West Coast Main Line link, which will travel through the London Boroughs of Brent and Harrow, before continuing through Three Rivers District, Watford, and Dacorum Councils, which are all located outside of Greater London.

**Q5: How have major metropolitan areas in other countries responded to similar challenges and priorities? Are there any lessons to be learned and applied in London?**

No specific comments on this question.

**ISSUE 3: IMPROVING HOW ELECTRICITY DEMAND AND SUPPLY ARE BALANCED**

We have no specific recommendations for action on this issue, however we would note our concern regarding the challenge of ensuring continuity of electricity supply (across both the high voltage and low voltage networks) given projected population and employment growth, particularly in areas designated for regeneration, such as Old Oak/Park Royal. Of interest to the Council is how these services will be accommodated; particularly where they are proposed within the public highway and may affect transportation networks, other services or potential infrastructure improvements. In addition to this, Brent would be interested in opportunities for data to be shared, and upgrade works to be coordinated between utility providers so as to minimise disruption to residents and businesses.

I trust this response has been of some assistance, however if you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Transport Planner, Chris McCanna, on [Phone number redacted].

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Kennedy  
Head of Transportation