

**Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames**  
**Response on National Infrastructure Commission Call for Evidence**  
**London's Transport Infrastructure**

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames welcomes the creation of the National Infrastructure Commission and its objective of providing independent advice to government on long term investment choices. We are pleased to provide comment on the following questions relating to London's transport infrastructure.

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

The predictions for population growth and associated requirement for jobs represents one of the major challenges facing London. Working with partners, this Council is striving to deliver against London Plan targets with ambitions for sustainable growth within the borough, and notably in and around a number of well connected key locations in the Borough. The Council is proactively engaging to shape growth to encourage high quality, innovative development of exemplar design and sensitively integrated within its surroundings.

However, there is an overriding need to balance housing provision with the location of new jobs to create balanced and sustainable communities. Population growth in our area needs to be matched by significant local growth in employment, otherwise most new job opportunities will be concentrated in central London and create even greater pressure on our already constrained radial transport routes. Appropriate mixed use development is key to achieving successful redevelopment and intensification, particularly in central locations. Metropolitan centres such as Kingston need to become a focal point for new jobs and transport oriented development, helping reduce the need for radial trips to central London. Investment in high capacity orbital links are therefore needed to kick-start both housing and employment growth more evenly across the region. This is particularly important accounting for the fact that the South London Sub Region has the lowest connectivity of any sub-region which is a principal constraining factor on our economic growth.

**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?**

Kingston strongly supports the Crossrail 2 initiative which is desperately needed to address severe capacity constraints in the public transport network and also support the growth in housing and jobs which is predicted across the area in the coming years. Crossrail 2 will help address some of the key imbalances that exist in Kingston, in particular its poor connectivity by rail and lack of tube/tram connections and over reliance on the bus, which are all evident despite its status as a Metropolitan Centre. Importantly, it would facilitate the creation of new investment markets (for employment and residential use) above and beyond the scale of which could be delivered without Crossrail 2, for example at Tolworth.

Crossrail 2 would transform travel to and from the area providing direct train services to destinations across the region with increased capacity for many more people travelling in peak periods, helping relieve crowding and congestion. Enhanced journey times to central London (particularly from the south of the borough) and the provision of step-free access at all stations on the proposed Crossrail 2 route are seen as major steps forward and improvements that many local people have been requesting for some time.

Crossrail 2 will make London's financial and business districts more accessible to Kingston residents, with improved and more frequent services. It will also make Kingston's unique cultural and shopping offering more accessible to the rest of London. Through Crossrail 2, the Council wishes to take the opportunity explore the potential of remodelled and reconstructed stations in Kingston, Tolworth and New Malden centres to secure better connectivity into the towns.

South London Boroughs would benefit from improved orbital rail links between key centres such as Kingston, Croydon and Wimbledon. This is a matter that boroughs in South West London have been pursuing for many years through various transport forums. There is potential for improvements to orbital travel for all modes, in particular linking key metropolitan centres to areas of housing growth.

Bus operations are of particular importance to Kingston due to the current lack of alternative public transport options. A package of significant bus measures would be of particular benefit in the area to provide more frequent and reliable services and new routes.

In terms of cycling infrastructure, the current mini-Holland initiative, which is being trialled in 3 London boroughs including Kingston, is a major opportunity. The success of these measures will be tested and no doubt the potential for rolling out similar initiatives on a London wide basis will be assessed.

There is also the need to consider interdependencies between investment in numerous areas of infrastructure in terms of delivering optimum levels of development. For example, at Tolworth, while Crossrail 2 is an essential piece of public transport infrastructure which will help facilitate growth in this area of opportunity, there is an associated requirement to improve the A3/A240 road intersection and identify supporting new road arrangements in the area which will help free up space for the required redevelopment. In particular this involves reducing the severance effect that the A3 Trunk Road has on this area.

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

RBK strongly supports the increased benefits of the Regional scheme over the Metro scheme. The Regional scheme would bring significant benefits to a many outer London boroughs which would otherwise see little benefit from the alternative Regional scheme. It includes a number of south west branches that would make a real difference enabling sustained growth in our boroughs. We believe that the benefits, both transport and non-transport, will probably be maximised with the current scheme and that any further route extensions or new stations would simply add increasing complexity for marginal benefits. Crossrail 2 will promote new and sustain existing community infrastructure and business growth in outer London to support and create balanced sustainable communities.

The Regional scheme would see significant funding through future growth while the use of existing railway tracks in outer London will certainly contribute significantly to reduced overall scheme costs. Any cost cutting resulting in the loss of branches or stations, capacity or frequencies would undermine the viability of the project and specifically the benefits to our residents and businesses.

The Council is currently working with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Transport for London (TfL) to produce an Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) for Kingston with Kingston Town likely to be designated an Opportunity Area in the updated London Plan. Crossrail 2 is a major piece of supporting infrastructure in the facilitation of such growth. Key sites in and around the town centre are being identified for redevelopment including

intensification and potential land use changes. There is also the possibility of a similar approach being adopted for the Tolworth and New Malden areas of the borough with associated supporting studies. In particular, there are potentially a number of significant development sites in Tolworth that could optimise their development potential and an associated change in land use patterns through the provision of a Crossrail 2 station.

Recent economic studies report Kingston's relatively poor levels of rail connectivity being a major contributory factor in the town having failed to attract significant new office development in recent times. Crossrail 2 provides a significant opportunity to attract investment to secure the employment potential offered by Kingston town centre as well creating new strategic markets for employment use in Tolworth, New Malden etc.

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

Crossrail 1 is being funded through a combination of fares revenue, the Business Rate Supplement and Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The London wide benefits mean that there is a need to press the Mayor, TfL and government to reflect the Crossrail 1 approach to securing funding from all London Boroughs for Crossrail 2 (and Councils that will see benefits from additional rail capacity, connectivity and economic development). To propose funding is drawn only from the boroughs or developments that directly benefit from the south west to north east routes would be seen as inequitable and as such unacceptable to our communities and businesses.

#### **5. 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?**

We recognise the value of learning from the experience of cities around the world in terms of funding and delivering transport infrastructure in many innovative and effective processes.