

# **Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel**

**Date of meeting: 18 June 2013**

**Portfolio: Safer Greener and Transport**

**Subject: Crossrail 2 Consultation**

**Officer contact for further information:  
John Preston (01992 564111)**

**Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (01992 564607)**

---



## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- 1. That the Panel consider the issues set out in this report, determine what view to give to the consultation in respect of each issue and make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
  
- 2. That the views of EFDC are made known to other relevant stakeholders, including;**
  - **London Borough of Redbridge**
  - **London Borough of Waltham Forest**
  - **West Anglia Routes Group**
  - **North London Strategic Alliance**
  - **London Stansted Cambridge Consortium**
  - **Essex County Council**
  - **Borough of Broxbourne**
  - **LVRPA**
  - **SELEP**
  - **London First**
  - **Members of Parliament for the Epping, Harlow and Brentwood & Ongar constituencies.**

## **Report:**

This report will first be considered at the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel meeting on 18 June 2013. The Portfolio Holders for Planning and for Asset Management and Economic Development have assisted in consideration of the issues and concur with the recommendations in this report.

Crossrail 1 is well underway and is to provide improved links and capacity for east west travel across and within London.

Crossrail 2 (formerly known as the Chelsea – Hackney Line) was intended to do the same on a south west north east axis.

Since 1991 a route for Crossrail 2 has been safeguarded which has included the Central Line to Epping within our area. The formal area safeguarded has been the relevant underground sections of the Central Line and the District Line. Part of the logic of the Central line component of that route was that some of it was originally an “overground” or heavy rail line.

Ideas for some deep tunneled underground railway serving many locations on this axis have

been around for a long time; the first concept was promoted in the early 1900s as a private proposal and required an Act of Parliament; objections led to the demise of those ideas!

After World War Two the concept was resurrected and has been reviewed on several occasions before the 1991 formal safeguarding, and the idea has been reviewed on occasions since then. Until now the alignment ending in Epping has been a constant feature.

Transport for London (TFL) were asked to review Crossrail 2 by the Mayor of London about four years ago, and have done that. London First also reviewed this last year. EFDC were not asked to be involved in any of those reviews.

Those reviews essentially are beginning to regard the Epping route as a less preferable option to two other schemes/alignments which could have a north east terminus at Alexandra Palace (Metro Route) or Cheshunt (Regional Route)

The Epping branch of the Central Line has become well used over the years, to the extent that at peak hours it is very well used or congested; this is evident because of commuter parking pressures, the inability to gain a seat, and the journey lengths made by standing passengers. The peak hour has also "spread" to cover a greater period.

The Scrutiny Committee has asked for presentations from London Underground or Transport for London about Central Line issues within this District over a long period. A common feature of those discussions has been that the line is operating pretty much at capacity and that, whilst minor changes may be made, no major change was envisaged.

This position means that, when considering future options for development in the Local Plan for the next twenty years, the capacity constraints have led to the consideration of options for development away from Central Line stations within the District.

It might have been thought that Crossrail 2 would have eased those constraints, because an "overground" or heavy rail carriage would have greater passenger capacity than a tube carriage, and longer trains could have been envisaged. The service frequency might also be able to be increased.

There is now a non-statutory consultation from TFL and Network Rail from 14 May to 2 August 2013 concerning the Metro and the Regional Route options. Amendments to what is safeguarded will now be consulted upon next year. The web address for information and responding to the consultation is [www.crossrail2.co.uk](http://www.crossrail2.co.uk) A plan of the two options now being considered is attached at Appendix A.

Some of the reasons for the Metro and Regional options being preferred include (i) their relative cost benefits (ii) inter-connectivity and (iii) their ability to relieve pressures and provide new capacity on existing tube lines such as Bakerloo, Piccadilly and Victoria, and on congested South West train lines which are to the south west of and within London.

### **Likely Issues for EFDC**

- A terminus station on Crossrail is likely to have been a significant opportunity for economic development is EFDC happy to lose that?
- Are the overall benefits of a realigned Crossrail 2 better for the District; in particular because they are predicated on improvements to the West Anglia line, and because a function of the Central Line is to provide access to the West End of London for locals without having to change trains?
- Members have asked and been told by TFL that the Central Line has capacity limits which cannot presently be altered. Crossrail 2 would have changed that, but if Crossrail 2 does not take the alignment to Epping, what then happens to the Central

Line; is it left alone without investment because that is going elsewhere, and does this threaten the Hainault Loop?

- Is there a case for a further Crossrail 2 option which EFDC and other Councils which the Central Line runs through could support?
- If not, then what future investment and role do TFL see for the Central Line?
- The North London Strategic Alliance, and the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium are considering what view to present; does EFDC align with that view or take a different view?
- If the Regional option is chosen with a terminus at Cheshunt, there may well be a requirement for a marshalling yard in the vicinity of that station, and relatively close to the District boundary. What view of that possibility is taken by EFDC ?

### **Epping as a terminus.**

Epping has become a terminus rather than having originally been intended to have that role. This happened after the Epping-Ongar portion of the Central line was closed. A terminus is likely to have positive economic impacts because it may be seen to have a higher profile and to attract users to it more than an individual station on the route; this may lead to pressures for development near the terminus, both for commercial development taking advantage of the users expenditure, and for housing development nearby attracted by the accessibility provided by the transport route. A contrary view would be that it brings pressures which are not particularly welcomed such as those using this “railhead” rather than, say, Harlow (in part because of the relative expense of fares and relative parking costs on the tube makes it cheaper compared to the overland rail line.) Commuters parking outwith the Station car park can cause issues for local residents and businesses. Where such a terminus is away from other town centre development, it might also cause some damage to the economic viability and vitality of those centres.

Some rail station termini have seen extensive development above the station itself, or nearby, both for retailing and the provision of offices. Those working at the offices are arguably making good use of public transport, in particular if some of the journey flows make use of capacity of trains coming out of London in the morning which would otherwise be less occupied.

Local residents and businesses will have views about this. Some views may be clear from comments made on websites, whilst Members will also have experience of where they consider the relative advantages and disadvantages lie. If the overall balance of advantage is in favour of a terminus station on such an enhanced rail line, then it is likely to be seen as a loss if that goes to Alexandra Palace or Cheshunt or elsewhere.

### **Overall benefits of Crossrail 2 taking an alignment just to the west of the District using the West Anglia Routes.**

If an alignment using the Central line is not now to be developed, then an alignment which uses the West Anglia Main Line as a Regional option just to the west of the District would still give businesses and residents of the District the opportunity to gain access to it. In particular if the predicted journey times and connectivity with other tube and “overground” rail then gave more opportunities than taking over the Epping to Leytonstone part of the Central Line. The relative accessibility to the urban population of the District along the Central Line would be less, but would be preferable to the Metro Option, which is further to the west.

The Regional option also assumes, in effect, that four-tracking of this route has been achieved (which many would argue is long overdue.) So, for residents within easy reach of both what the four tracking would bring and a new Crossrail 2 service, that could be seen as very advantageous. In addition if that left the present direct connectivity of the Central Line to the West End of London, then the Regional route could still be a boost for the District.

## **What happens to the Central Line without Crossrail 2?**

It is considered that the Central Line is already at capacity, in particular during peak hours, and if nothing else changes that would get progressively worse over the next twenty years. The consultation is thin on practical information about how congested individual lines are at present. (The London Fist report includes some information about congestion levels in 2007 and 2021 and 2031 predictions on page 13; none suggest that the Central Line reaches high levels of crowding at its extremities.) The consultation recognises that funding of major public transport improvements i.e. Crossrail 1, High Speed 2, and Other tube line upgrades over the next twenty years has several very significant calls upon limited resources. The Central Line rolling stock is apparently about midway through its 40 year design life now.

One scenario is that, in order to make all these other investments, the Central Line is simply left devoid of much investment: This is a cause for concern for several of the Authorities whose area it runs through (Epping Forest District Council and the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest.) In particular, it is also of concern for this Council because the service on the Hainault Loop is already restricted compared to that on the Epping branch. The Hainault Loop does not offer a late evening service, and the station usage levels at Roding Valley are towards the lowest end of the spectrum. Might the same thought process which ultimately led to the closure of the Epping Ongar Line be applied to at least parts of the Hainault Loop? Perhaps mindful of such threats the consultation suggests that there are plans to upgrade the Central Line before the completion of Crossrail 2, but no more explanation than that is given. If the District is not to get Crossrail 2, then there needs to be much greater certainty about what would happen to the Central Line and its upgrades, which are a key piece of infrastructure.

## **Is there a case for a further Crossrail 2 option which EFDC and other Councils which the Central Line runs through could support?**

Whilst it is recognised that any route will have capacity limits, the options now suggested have several routes/termini shown to the south west end of the Regional Option (Twickenham, Surbiton and Epsom) but only two at the north east end (Alexandra Palace and Cheshunt) There are also some arrows shown on figure 5 (copied in appendix A to this report) suggesting further destinations from Surbiton and Motspur Park to the south west, but only a single arrow from Cheshunt to the north. If part of the rationale, and a positive feature of a cost benefit analysis, is for realignment to achieve the greatest connectivity with extensively used routes, then it is odd that an alignment reaching Stratford has not been found. Figures presented to the West Anglia Routes Group meetings over the last two years (based on survey and not on ticket sales) have shown that Stratford has seen very significant increases in the use of the station, (taking it to something like the sixth busiest station in the entire UK rail network) and not only because of the Olympics or the addition of some other improved routes. It is of course going to be a Crossrail 1 station. Crossrail 1 and 2 are presently intended to have only a single meeting point at Tottenham Court Road; is it a sufficiently robust assessment of the costs and benefits to not press for there to be two points at which these lines should meet? This could either be in the form of a further Crossrail 2 option, or the basis on which the continued importance of the Central Line is recognised by a much clearer indication of how its capacity is to be increased. It is understood that this adds costs, but it also adds very considerable benefits.

## **What future investment in and role does TFL see for the Central Line?**

For reasons explained already, it is not considered that the future intentions for the Central Line without it becoming part of the original Crossrail 2 are adequately spelt out. There are seen to be significant risks if investment is put into other projects over an extended period, and this has an important influence on plan making for this District at least.

**The North London Strategic Alliance (NLSA), and the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC) are considering what view to present; does EFDC align with that view or take a different view?**

Officers attended a discussion recently where, in advance of the consultation commencing, TFL explained their present thinking. As a generality many of the Councils attending that meeting, and a representative of London First, saw many advantages to the options, in particular the Regional route. Authorities along the Central Line acknowledged some of those advantages, but also understood issues which are raised in this report. The options for this Council range from taking a position of absolute objection to the loss of the original ideas, through to giving unqualified support for the new ideas. It is understood that the consultation is receiving a very high response rate already, and that it is generally positively inclined to one or both the options. However, this report seeks to show that EFDC probably ought to take a more measured view, which does not lose sight of the issues for the Central Line. That is a view which is likely to be shared by at least other Authorities along this north eastern portion of the Central Line (both the Epping branch and the Hainault loop.) The NLSA and the LSCC may also be persuaded to recognise the issues for the Central Line.

In addition, irrespective of quite what the future brings for Stansted Airport, the present development with planning permission relies on a single rail line to serve the airport. This has had adverse consequences for local commuters on the West Anglia Line. The development of other airports have seen consequential improvements to their public transport accessibility, and their resilience, by having improved rail connections. With all due respect to Cheshunt that would appear to be a lesser destination than taking the opportunity to use Stansted. Of course, further development of the West Anglia Line has consequences for level crossings in or near the District.

**If the Regional option is chosen with a terminus at Cheshunt, there may well be a requirement for a marshalling yard in the vicinity of that station, and relatively close to the District boundary. What view does EFDC have of that possibility?**

Crossrail 2 would be likely to require a marshalling yard relatively near each terminus. Some investigation has taken place, and one site that is being considered is near Broxbourne Station (some of the site that was originally being considered for the Olympic White Water Centre. (the site is in the Green Belt, the Regional Park and is contaminated.) It would be quite close to the boundary of this District.

It is also understood that some requirements of Crossrail 1 have involved taking land for temporary periods to give construction access, but which then causes issues for those with homes or businesses nearby.

**Reason for decision:**

At first glance it might appear that this District would have limited interest in a rail line in south west London or that has a possible terminus at Alexandra Palace. However, on more thorough analysis this consultations options would have significant impacts upon the future of the Central Line within the District, and is thus of wide interest within much of this District.

**Options considered and rejected:**

- Not to respond to the consultation at all.
- To respond positively to the consultation.
- To respond negatively to the consultation.
- To respond without trying to find common cause with others whom have similar interests and issues.

**Consultation undertaken:**

EFDC is a consultee in this case. EFDC has had discussions with other Councils, in particular those who also have sections of the Central Line within their areas.

**Resource implications:**

Budget provision: From within existing resources

Personnel: From within existing resources

Land: Unless these issues develop to an extent where they make EFDC landholdings more or less attractive, the Council's land is not involved

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Relevant statutory powers:

Background papers:

Safeguarding Directions 7 February 1991

Safeguarding Directions 12 November 1991

Safeguarding Directions 30 June 2008

Report to London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee 13 December 2007

Aecom London: on the move with Crossrail 2 July 2012

London First Crossrail 2 Supporting London's Growth Final report February 2013

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Key Decision reference: (if required)