

Merton Liberal Democrats

Response to Crossrail 2 Consultation – January 8, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Crossrail 2 (CR2) proposals. This response is on behalf of the Merton Liberal Democrats.

Crossrail 2 is important to our residents in order to resolve many local and regional transport issues as well as to support the wider London transport network. These issues include: crowding on the Southwest Mainline into Waterloo; more direct transport services to Canary Wharf, the West End and the City including via services on Crossrail 1; new and improved local stations and facilities; better access to Euston, Kings Cross and High Speed 2; as well as wider cross city connections.

As proposed, CR2 is clearly not the only means of delivering these needs, but we accept that the proposals can deliver a step change in local transport as well as the wider needs across Greater London and beyond. We don't propose to offer redesigns of the scheme for the proponents, but request that evaluated alternative station designs and routes considered are immediately and regularly published with the reasons for and against being outlined. This transparency will allow for a more informed public debate.

This is a major, long lasting and enormously expensive scheme and thus, should only be delivered in a way that responds to reasonable community needs and concerns without only trying to minimise costs. We need to ensure that comprehensive efforts are put in place to address the considered comments of local residents and businesses for "improvements" to the scheme.

Specifically our comments are:

1. It is our understanding that this isn't a 'legal' consultation. Thus, we ask that you promptly publish a clear schedule for a summary of the use of the results of this

consultation, the timing of the statutory consultation, the expected parliamentary process to obtain powers for the expected 'hybrid' bill, the required local planning process and Mayoral approvals. This should be made available online and updated as the situation evolves over time;

2. Specific advice and contact details for local home owners and businesses who may be concerned about 'planning blight' as a result of the CR2 scheme should immediately be published in a prominent position online on the CR2 website;
3. The works currently proposed in central Wimbledon are so significant and long lasting, 8 to 10 years, to be barely contemplated. Thus specifically:
 - a. Wimbledon town centre is the current social heart and a major shopping and leisure location for our community. It is not interchangeable with Clapham Junction, Kingston, Putney or Wimbledon Village. Many have chosen to live or work here due to the nature and community in and around the town centre. The proposed works cannot only be considered in technical or engineering terms, but must also fully consider the social and economic impacts;
 - b. CR2 provide written evidence of how an alternative deep tunnel under Wimbledon that would avoid the widespread demolition of the town centre could be delivered and its costs. This is our preferred alternative to the shallow tunnel, all else being equal, and we need to understand what issues are currently preventing it from being proposed and how these could otherwise be dealt with;
 - c. The length of time for even this complex undertaking to disrupt Wimbledon town centre seems excessive. We would like to see a written explanation of the costs and other issues that would allow the works to be completed over a much shorter period of time. This would allow Wimbledon to recover much more quickly from the construction phase of the work even if the full CR2 scheme is not yet operational;
 - d. CR2 prepare a detailed remediation plan of how Wimbledon town centre would realistically function during construction before formal consultation begins on the scheme. This plan should involve local traders and residents. This should be published and agreed by TfL, Network Rail, the Mayor and LB Merton prior to the formal consultation;
 - e. LB Merton has been shockingly absent from the early public discussions on this scheme even though they hold planning powers to enable the resulting redesign of Wimbledon town centre to proceed. Thus, the Mayor of London should lead with TfL and LB Merton an alternatives analysis for the future of the town centre involving local residents and businesses. This should build on

the existing 'Future Wimbledon' process, but take into account the CR2 impacts, building heights, retail space, expected densification, new traffic flows/ routes, residential intensity, affordable housing, green space, reuse of existing under used sites, sustainability, amounts of public and private space and relationships to neighbouring residential areas;

- f. It is clear that the current Tramlink station at Wimbledon will be relocated. Proposals for this should be made public and explicit impacts and options for where to terminate, or locally extend Tramlink, should be made. A local Tramlink service has the ability to support a redeveloped town centre;
4. Specific assurances need to be provided regarding when residents in West Barnes will be consulted locally about the impact of the proposed increased train services on the two local level crossings – i. the crossing in Motspur Park by the shopping parade and Library, ii. the crossing at the junction of West Barnes Lane and Burlington Rd. Easy access across the railway is required for this community and closing these crossings will significantly impact local residents. A process should be put in place to develop locally acceptable and accessible grade separation solutions to avoid significant community severance as a result of the extended time periods when the railway gates will be lowered once CR2 is complete;
 5. A 5th track is apparently proposed between New Malden and Clapham Junction. This, it would seem, will require the demolition of the existing Raynes Park station platforms and widening the railway viaduct from Raynes Park to Wimbledon. We accept that this is yet to be designed, but that railway right of way exists adjacent to the current tracks. This is not only an engineering challenge, but we request that the built environment, noise, vibration, and social aspects of this work be considered and the resulting project improves the environment for neighbouring properties and the local community. This includes addressing issues such as the condition of the north side pedestrian/ cycle path, the incoherent planting and fencing along the viaduct and the existing limited and poorly accessed pedestrian crossings over/under the railway;
 6. That you provide assurances of how local improvements to stations will be managed in the interim period prior to approval of the scheme and we avoid 'planning blight'. Specific concerns include installing a lift at Raynes Park and Motspur Park stations as well as congestion management at Wimbledon station;
 7. That construction material for the eventual works should be moved as much as possible via the existing rail networks and not via local roads. Furthermore, construction workers should use public transport or other sustainable means to travel to the site and should not be provided with local parking;

8. The tunnel portals at Wimbledon should be located in order to minimise local residential noise and impact and designed using the ‘best in class’ techniques to this effect, rather than solely as an engineering solution;
9. CR2 and TfL need to be more explicit about how the scheme will be integrated with the other modes serving Wimbledon and Raynes Park from surrounding communities. This includes Tramlink extensions such as the proposed extension to Sutton that was consulted on in early 2015, improved and safe cycle routes and cycle parking and an improved Wimbledon bus station;
10. The future plans for Wimbledon need to look to recreate and maintain through the construction period, a real, vibrant, community focussed public realm. Current worrying trends in town centres look to create sterile and private spaces, such as are seen at Westfield Stratford, which preclude independent small retailers and focus on premium retail offers. Our Wimbledon town centre is a real community heart and we want explicit plans from TfL, the Mayor and LB Merton about how these trends will be dealt with and a vibrant, public 24hr town centre maintained;
11. The resulting Wimbledon station should be subject to an architectural competition and designed in order to provide a comprehensive ‘best in class’ solution as can be seen at the new Crossrail 1 station at Canary Wharf;
12. Can you immediately publish online the expected public transport travel times from Wimbledon/ Raynes Park to the West End, Canary Wharf and the City:
 - today;
 - post CR2 via Waterloo;
 - post CR2 via CR1 services.
13. Can you confirm the expected rail operating model post CR2? That is, like CR1 will TfL and the Department for Transport jointly operate the CR2 services and to existing TfL standards leaving remaining non-CR2 services to be franchised by DfT processes? This is relevant re the expected level of station and train facilities that are likely to be offered;
14. Raynes Park station will become a major interchange and pick up/ drop off hub. The current station is in a poor state and, in particular, passenger pick up conditions are extremely poor for such a busy location. A planning application has already been made and approved by LB Merton to replace the Rainbow Industrial Estate, within the railway triangle, with a mixed use residential and industrial development. This is against the expressed views of residents, residents associations and local councillors. The only access to this new community will be via a single lane tunnel under Raynes

Park station. This access point would be within the construction site of the new station. Furthermore, the proposed improvements to passenger pick up and drop off as part of this development do not seem plausible re their impact on traffic on Approach Rd and Grand Drive. As part of a proposed rebuild of Raynes Park station a thorough rebuild of the station access, drop off, access from the north and south side of the station as well as cycle access and parking should be developed, consulted upon and published. The station, and in particular the south side, should be enabled to be become the proud heart of the community.



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