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I am pleased to send you the Royal Borough's response to the consultation on Crossrail 2 – or the Chelsea-Hackney Line as it is still known in the Royal Borough.

The principle of the Chelsea-Hackney Line

The Council has always been supportive of plans for a cross-London underground line through Chelsea, and welcomes the renewed interest in a railway scheme that has been neglected for too long. We believe there is a very strong case for building a new line broadly on the south-west to north-east alignment currently proposed, and we are clear that this line must serve Chelsea. We further believe that there is a remarkable degree of consensus across the capital that when Crossrail 1 is complete, London will need a new line to help meet the serious capacity issues that it will face. We hope that the results of this consultation will provide the Mayor with a strong mandate to begin in earnest the detailed planning stages of this project, giving it a realistic prospect of delivery within the kind of timeframe currently envisaged by TfL and Network Rail.

Regional or Metro options

From the perspective of the Royal Borough and its residents, it is perhaps less straightforward to choose between the Metro and Regional options. We would support both schemes. For the Council, the scheme's

deliverability is crucial, and to the extent that the Metro option is both cheaper and less technically complicated, these factors stand in its favour.

Another reason that some may intuitively see as a reason for preferring the Metro option is that by virtue of the trains being shorter, and the tunnels narrower, it might be expected that the unavoidable environmental impacts of building the line would be smaller with a Metro option.

However, the advice we have had from TfL officers is that in practice, the surface footprint of stations would not vary greatly between the two types of train service. Further, although the Regional stations and tunnels would require more excavation and more spoil removal than Metro equivalents, we are advised that a Regional railway should not result in significantly more lorry movements through Chelsea than the Metro option – with the majority of the spoil removal being done, quite properly, by rail. We accept that it is far too early to expect detailed plans on how construction traffic would be managed, and we reserve the right to reflect on our position as between regional and metro services as new information comes to light.

In the same way, our support – we do not say it is a preference – for a Regional option comes with the proviso that this should not compromise the deliverability of the best Chelsea option, discussed below. We note that the minimum track curvature of the regional option is much larger than the metro's, which we understand to mean that the regional option offers rather less flexibility about the precise alignment of the tunnel.

There is one final concern about the regional option, which is that intuitively, there would seem to be a greater risk that trains running through from further out would be more likely to arrive full at King's Road. Again though, the advice that we have had from TfL officers is that the King's Road station would see more passengers alighting in the morning peak than boarding – suggesting that Chelsea residents would be able to board trains into central London in the morning rush hour. This is something that we would wish to be assured of as TfL's demand modelling is developed.

Why Chelsea needs the Chelsea-Hackney Line

The Council's support for the station is based on its long-standing concern that public transport provision in some parts of Chelsea is considerably less good than that enjoyed in most parts of the Borough. Sloane Square is the only station on the Underground network between Fulham Road and the river, leaving many Chelsea residents – and businesses – reliant on buses as their only public transport option. Whilst these buses are plentiful along the Fulham Road and King's Road corridors, they are not fast. The TfL Journey Planner suggests a journey time of 20 minutes to

travel from the Borough's western boundary to either South Kensington or Sloane Square. Traffic congestion and associated poor air quality are in part a function of this reliance on buses and the private car - and these are both issues that score highly when we ask our residents to list their main concerns about living in the Royal Borough.

Shortly after TfL began its consultation, the Council carried out a survey of Chelsea residents and businesses, to seek their views on the Chelsea-Hackney Line. The survey found very high levels of support for the line, with a station in Chelsea. Seventy per cent of respondents supported or strongly supported the scheme, compared with 25% who opposed or strongly opposed it. These findings are consistent with a survey carried out for the Council ten years ago, among a sample of residents.

Chelsea residents' reasons for supporting the Chelsea Hackney Line have also remained unchanged. The single biggest reason for supporting the line is simply that it would improve public transport. But more than half of those who supported the Line in this year's survey also said that it would reduce traffic congestion and benefit businesses in the area. The Council agrees that providing a new rail link to Chelsea would offer residents and visitors alike an attractive alternative to existing modes, which should help to reduce traffic on the King's Road and Fulham Road corridors.

Although classified as two separate centres in the London Plan, (King's Road West and King's Road East), for the public the King's Road is one shopping street. However, it is a relatively long shopping street and there is a short break in continuous shop frontages just west of Dovehouse Green which can discourage shoppers from venturing further. The Council wishes to encourage more visitors to shop the full length of King's Road, from Sloane Square to World's End. This is also a priority for the King's Road Retail Forum.

Currently most visitors to the King's Road arrive at Sloane Square underground and walk westward along King's Road. The highest footfall is in King's Road East and it falls off quite dramatically further west. A Chelsea-Hackney Line station for King's Road, would provide the opportunity to arrive at one station, shop along the whole length of the street and leave at another station.

The location of the King's Road station

Not all of Chelsea is poorly served by rail. Indeed, among those respondents who were opposed to the Chelsea Hackney Line, the most frequently cited reason was that there is already sufficient public transport in the area.

Sloane Square to the east, and South Kensington to the north-east, put most of the eastern half of Chelsea within a ten-minute walk of the

Underground network. It is west of Chelsea Old Town Hall that public transport accessibility begins to fall. Social deprivation in Chelsea is most pronounced between World's End and the West London Line: there are areas that fall within the 20 per cent most deprived parts of the country. It is not surprising that our survey found the highest levels of support for a station – at over 80 per cent – in the westernmost quarter of Chelsea.

The Council wishes to ensure that the Chelsea-Hackney Line, and in particular the King's Road station, should deliver the optimal connectivity, economic and regeneration benefits for Chelsea. Accepting that there are important engineering, commercial and operational factors driving the location of stations, we ask TfL to consider what can be done to provide connectivity benefits to the areas of Chelsea that need them most. The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation figures show that the super-output area in the west of Cremorne ward is currently in the five per cent most deprived communities in the country. Furthermore, unemployment amongst the economically active in Cremorne is above both the London and Borough average. Improving transport links to these communities will help address inequality in this part of the borough.

Decisions about individual station locations are not within the scope of the current consultation. However, it is important that we do not miss opportunities to adjust the alignment of the tunnels, if this should be necessary in order to achieve the Council's objective of improving public transport options for its residents.

The existing safeguarding scheme envisages a station on the site of what is currently Chelsea Fire Station, adjacent to Dovehouse Green. Our initial analysis suggests that a station here would bring most of the south of the Borough within one kilometre of an Underground station. There would be a high degree of overlap with the existing Underground stations at South Kensington, and Sloane Square. Approximately 75 per cent of Royal Borough residents living within one kilometre of the Fire Station are also within the same distance of an existing Underground station.

The Fire Station site would also serve the core retail premises by providing a station at each end of the busiest stretch of King's Road (between Sloane Square and Dovehouse Green). Brompton Hospital would be approximately 250m from this station - providing good links to this pan-London facility.

Furthermore, the Sutton Estate would be a 500m walk to the station. Affinity Sutton are currently in negotiations with the Council to deliver a site-wide regeneration of their estate. However, this site already benefits from strong links to both South Kensington and Sloane Square stations.

Our initial analysis suggests that transport connectivity benefits could be increased if the King's Road Chelsea station were located a little further to the west. The whole of the south of the Borough would then be within a kilometre of at least one Underground station, including the Lots Road Triangle area, currently among the least well-served parts of the whole Borough.

A station sited just west of Beaufort Street would raise the PTAL for the World's End estate from 3 to 4. It would also improve access to the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, which is currently dependent on buses, raising the PTAL score from 4 to 5. We estimate that a station here would bring over 9,000 people (including residents of neighbouring boroughs) within a ten minute walk of the Underground for the first time. Improving accessibility in this location would have the biggest potential to help address inequality around World's End.

A station near Beaufort Street would, like the Fire Station site, be likely to have a mixture of boarders and alighters. In addition to the shops on the King's Road, we would expect that the Chelsea and Westminster hospital would be a major attractor.

The Beaufort Street site could serve to increase footfall along the western part of King's Road. There are also retail benefits of locating a station here. Sloane Stanley, who own property in this part of the King's Road West centre are keen to revitalise the west of the shopping centre. By adding a station in this location, the retail offer of the entire King's Road would be supported and revitalised.

The Council's survey asked whether the Fire Station site was the best site for a Chelsea-Hackney Line station, or whether there might be better alternatives elsewhere. The results showed a marginal preference for the Fire Station site over a site further to the west.

However, 30 per cent of respondents felt there was a better location to the west of the Fire Station (whereas only four per cent felt there was a better location to the east).

The Council is aware of, and sympathetic to, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham's desire to see a Chelsea-Hackney Line station at Imperial Wharf, where it would provide an interchange opportunity with the West London Line that would most likely be faster and more convenient than the interchange at Clapham Junction. The Council recognises that transport improvements at Imperial Wharf would have benefits for the residents of Lots Road, as well as helping to mitigate the road traffic impacts in Chelsea of the large numbers of additional homes that will be built around Lots Road Power Station and the South Fulham Riverside area. We understand however that TfL believes that Imperial

Wharf lies too far west to be accommodated without adding unacceptably to the length of the railway, and therefore journey times between Clapham Junction and Victoria. We also note that it would leave a considerable section of Chelsea more than 1km from an Underground station.

The Council notes that there is no longer a proposal for a Chelsea-Hackney Line station to serve Sloane Square. While we remain of the view that a station here could have provided a useful interchange with the District Line, as well as bringing passengers directly into an important shopping area, we accept that public transport provision here is already very good. This would include access to the Chelsea-Hackney Line at Victoria, via the Circle and District Lines. The priority must be to improve connectivity to the areas of the borough where accessibility is poorest.

Environmental impacts of the Chelsea-Hackney Line

The Council recognises that some residents will be concerned about the noise and disruption that must inevitably arise when an underground station is built in the middle of a heavily built-up urban area. They may also be worried about the risk of ground settlement, and about large numbers of lorry movements in the area. These concerns are entirely understandable, particularly after many of our residents have had experience of subterranean development under private homes over the past few years. However, the Council has to weigh up these concerns against the benefits that a new transport link would provide to the area. On balance, we believe that the long-term benefits to residents and businesses will justify a degree of upheaval.

However, if the Mayor decides to proceed with the scheme, we will expect the scheme promoters to use all reasonable steps to keep the disruption and environmental impacts to an absolute minimum. We would hope that lessons would be learned from the experience of constructing the first Crossrail line, and indeed we are encouraged to hear that, for example, problems with settlement associated with Crossrail's construction have to date been far less than anticipated.

Conclusions

The Council believes that the forecast growth in London's population, and the pressures that this will add to demand on the transport network, form the basis for a compelling argument that a second Crossrail Line will be needed in the next twenty years. We welcome the recognition that transport access in Chelsea needs to be improved through the creation of a new station on King's Road.

We recognise the need to start planning for this line now, so that construction can begin soon after the completion of the first Crossrail line.

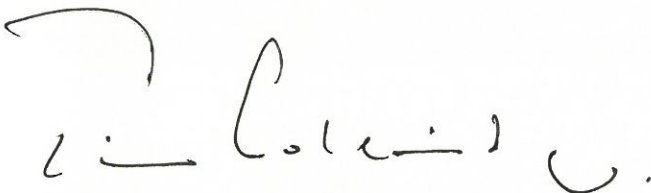
Although we would support a Metro option, we understand that the Regional option would provide greater benefits, which would be felt more widely across London and the South-East. Provided that this larger and more challenging scheme can be delivered in time to meet London's growing transport demands, and that it would not create unacceptably greater environmental disbenefits for Chelsea residents, we also support the Regional option.

We want to ensure that the scheme delivers the maximum possible benefits to our residents, business and visitors, and that having identified a brand new alignment for the route, TfL should be prepared to consider all possible options for the location of the King's Road station. We look forward to working with TfL to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Fire Station site and one or more alternative locations further west. The advantages of a station towards the western end of Kings Road should be investigated further because of the potential for improving public transport accessibility in this poorly served corner of Chelsea and for improving access to opportunities for some of the Borough's most deprived communities.

This work should include the socio-economic and business impacts on Chelsea as well as the engineering feasibility, operational and business case considerations. We would be happy to assist with this work in whatever way we can to best meet the needs of residents and businesses in Chelsea.

Looking slightly further ahead, as attention moves from matters of broad principle to locally specific detail, we hope that TfL will work with us to ensure that local residents are kept fully informed about they will be affected by the revised safeguarding, by the construction of the line, and finally, by the opening of a brand new railway beneath Chelsea.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Coleridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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