

Transport for London (TfL)

Thank you for consulting Transport for London (TfL). We have a number of interests in the area including cross boundary bus services, strategic projects such as a potential future eastward extension of the Elizabeth Line from Abbey Wood and the Lower Thames Crossing. We also have an interest in the impact of major development or infrastructure close to the London border on management of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), our public transport operations and infrastructure and more generally delivery of London Plan policy, especially that promoting sustainable travel.

Dartford town centre

TfL is keen to ensure that any changes to the street layout and traffic circulation in Dartford town centre takes account of the need to accommodate bus stops and stands which are conveniently located for passengers. You will be aware that any extra bus mileage results in increased operational costs which can be significant even if only one service is affected. Consequently alternative routes for buses through the town centre and a review of priorities at junctions may need to be considered as part of redevelopment plans, to reduce delays and improve connectivity. It is important that bus stop provision is accessible to disabled people and others needing step free travel. There are several examples where this is currently not the case, for example on Dartford Road and Shepherds Lane, wheelchair access is not possible and bus stops are not supported by the appropriate cage markings to protect the bus stop from parking. Passenger waiting areas including shelters also need to be suitable and sufficient. Again this is not always the case e.g. at Home Gardens. Redevelopment plans should contribute to improved bus infrastructure in the town centre.

Transport projects

TfL welcomes the Council's commitment to joint work and studies relating to a potential eastward extension of the Elizabeth line (Crossrail) and the widened scope of the current study to include a range of transport options. We also welcome the continued protection of the route in paragraph 2.36 along with the references to safeguarding in policy M16. TfL would want to ensure that any extension or enhancement of rail services would not adversely impact the capacity and performance of the existing route and performance of the Elizabeth line.

Since the last consultation, more work has been done on the growth, housing and regeneration case for the Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet scheme which has reached strategic outline business case stage. We note approval of the scheme would trigger a review. However, the Local Plan provides an opportunity to strengthen the case for the scheme in policy. It would be helpful if some additional text could be added in the strategic context about the important role of a potential extension in supporting future regeneration.

TfL notes support for the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) in paragraph 2.32. We wish to emphasise the need for the LTC to be managed carefully to ensure that it does not have any adverse consequences for the local highway network in London including on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). We would be happy to work with you to ensure that any negative impacts from additional trips generated on the local road network as a result of the LTC scheme are mitigated.

There may be potential in the future for TfL bus services to use Fastrack infrastructure which we would like to explore further with relevant authorities.

Swanscombe Peninsula and London Resort proposals

TfL notes from paragraph 4.17 that the Council has highlighted matters that need addressing as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process for the London Resort proposals. TfL also has concerns about the transport impacts of this development, including impacts on road capacity and rail services between Ebbsfleet International and St Pancras, and from Swanscombe station. We would be happy to discuss these issues with you further. TfL considers it appropriate that there is a mechanism for the Local Plan to be reviewed if the London Resort development goes ahead, as set out in Table 11, given the substantial scale of development proposed and the changes that would result in the local area.

General

Within London the Mayor's Transport Strategy was published in 2018 and the 2021 London Plan was published on 2 March. We would be grateful, if you would consider extending some of the Mayor's strategic transport policy objectives to the borough which would link in well with policy M17 including the promotion of Healthy Streets, rebalancing the transport system towards walking, cycling and public transport, improving air quality and reducing road danger.

I hope that these comments are helpful and look forward to commenting on the further development of the Local Plan

Best wishes
Richard Carr

Richard Carr | Principal Planner (Spatial Planning)
TfL Planning, Transport for London