

What should happen?

As the mayor of London himself wrote, last year, “affordability remains the project’s most pressing issue, so it is important to identify ways to deliver the scheme for less and get value for taxpayers’ money.”¹⁰ This must be the overriding aim of the project management and it is encouraging that a review of the costs has been set up with a view to finding savings.

Much of the detail of the proposal is not public and would be beyond the scope of this exercise to review anyway. But a thorough review of these details by transport, construction and project management experts, particularly in view of the lessons already to be learned from Crossrail 1, is likely to form a basis for finding savings and enhancing value for money.

Nonetheless, some high-level alterations to the scope of the project can be assessed from publicly available information and this exercise presents five suggested changes. It also offers three suggestions for transferring funding of the project from taxpayers to passengers and finally offers six suggestions for alternative uses of money saved from the reductions suggested. Many of these six offer overlapping benefits so should not be considered as an alternative programme but instead a selection of possible projects which may, after much more considered appraisal than this exercise can offer, present better value for money with respect to some of the objectives of Crossrail 2.

TfL should consider the £11 billion of savings presented here, together with the transfers of funding from taxpayers to passengers worth approximately 13 per cent of the project’s cost (or 19 per cent after adjusting for the suggested cost reductions). The transport and other benefits foregone as a result of the savings should be judged independently to see if Crossrail 2 or other projects, such as one or more of the six identified by this report, might offer better overall value for money (not just measured against the narrow criteria of Crossrail 2’s objectives).

For example, figure 2 (opposite) shows expected crowding on tube lines in 2031, with purple denoting the worst crowding, five or more people standing per square metre. The most crowding is forecast at Mile End to Bank, Tufnell Park to Clapham South via Bank, Oxford Circus to Highbury & Islington and Fulham Broadway to Earl’s Court. A simpler, cheaper Crossrail 2 might be able to address Victoria line and National Rail crowding almost as well while freeing up funds for other projects to better tackle other identified crowding problems as well as improving journey times and connectivity more substantially. In addition, smaller schemes such as extensions of existing lines or new self-contained lines are less complicated, more easily managed and could be delivered more quickly.

Figure 2 (opposite): forecast weekday M peak crowding on London Underground in 2031¹¹

Legend: █ 3 to 4 standing per m² █ 4 to 5 standing per m² █ >5 standing per m²

¹⁰ Khan, S., *Response to Darft Consultation Budget- January 2019*, Greater London Authority, 8 January 2018, MGL 141217-7677, www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pre_budget_report_-_response_from_mayor.pdf, (accessed 7 April 2019).

¹¹ TfL, *Crossrail 2 NIC Supplementary Submission*, 12 February 2016, crossrail2.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Cross-rail-2-NIC-evidence-submission.pdf, (accessed 8 April 2019), p. 85.

