

# Crossrail as Catalyst

A **Future of London** report on how London communities can grasp the regeneration potential of Crossrail stations – and of future infrastructure projects

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By 2050, London's population could reach 13.4m people – nearly twice its 1991 population, and larger than today's São Paulo or Beijing.

The Capital must plan for growth, and the stakeholders developing London's Infrastructure Investment Plan recognise transport's crucial enabling role. Crossrail, set to open in 2018 – 45 years after the name was coined and more than a hundred after an east-west London rail link was mooted – is a ground-breaking step in that direction.

While Crossrail's core mandate is to deliver much-needed rail capacity, it is the first UK infrastructure scheme to integrate regeneration and wider economic benefit so fully into its business case and its activities. As shown by station-area development to date and plans on the table for more, there is real potential to generate or enhance economic opportunity along the route.

Halfway through the construction process, some communities are already seeing tangible benefits from incoming stations, while others have yet to. This report is aimed at local authorities and their development and transport partners, and is designed to share experiences and best practice from a variety of stations, along with tools that can kick-start regeneration activity.

To do that, *Crossrail as Catalyst* reviews other rail and regeneration experiences and examines activity around six Crossrail stations to understand what has been instrumental – or missing – in delivering change. Those findings, supported by two research seminars and interviews with more than 25 public- and private-sector practitioners, form the basis of our recommendations.

# The report

As with all Future of London work, Crossrail as Catalyst is focused on delivery: sharing best practice; identifying ongoing opportunities for Crossrail 1 stations; and offering local and strategic lessons for structuring and delivering future schemes.

The report does that by:

- Revisiting **rail-regeneration cases** from overseas and from London's own history, for opportunities seized and missed;
- Using **six stations** to highlight the variety of planning contexts, property value impacts and local factors at play across the network;
- Identifying transferable **key experiences** at those stations; and
- Using all of the above to offer a **strategic view** of how future infrastructure projects could deliver even more.

The report explores the impact of Crossrail through case studies of six stations along the route. The six stations are:

- **Tottenham Court Road** (LB Camden/City of Westminster)
- **Whitechapel** (LB Tower Hamlets)
- **Southall** (LB Ealing)
- **Ilford** (LB Redbridge)
- **Abbey Wood** (LB Bexley/RB Greenwich)
- **Woolwich** (RB Greenwich)

Each case includes planning context, property-value impact, and details on particular opportunities, strategies and challenges at each site. Though each community receiving Crossrail is unique, they offer lessons that can be applied across Crossrail 1 – and on future infrastructure projects.

Together, these stations' experiences and the overview of rail-led regeneration and form the basis for two sets of recommendations. Mirroring the diversity of the actors involved in delivering regeneration and development, the recommendations call for action from a range of stakeholders, with particular focus on, and support for, the public sector.

There is still scope to realise regeneration and development around Crossrail 1, but this is the time to act – as both outside cases and Crossrail's own successes to date highlight, the earlier stakeholders get involved, the better the experience and the result. This is also a good time to assess the Crossrail's successes and lessons for the Capital's next rail projects. This report should be part of a toolkit for capturing opportunities presented now and in the future.

## Rail and regeneration

The report reviews studies of the effects of rail infrastructure around the world on local land and property markets and the extent of integration with local transport networks. It then turns to rail schemes in London and what lessons have emerged to provide the context in which Crossrail is being delivered. This section highlights the Docklands Light Railway, the Jubilee Line Extension, the East London Line and High Speed 1 as recent examples of rail's impact on regeneration. Exemplary international rail regeneration projects are also highlighted, looking at Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, and France.

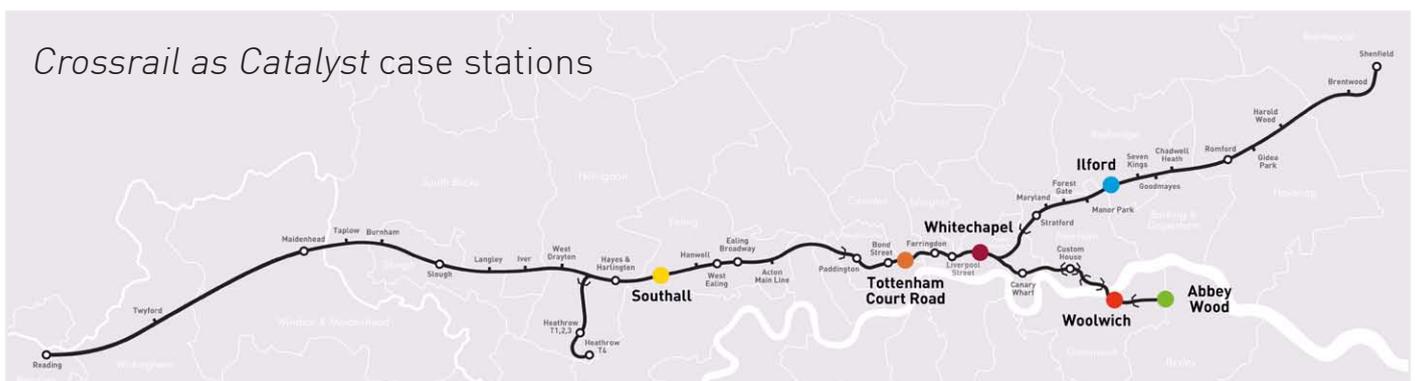
## Crossrail context

A brief history of the Crossrail project is presented, along with the key issues informing the business case presented to government. Key research on Crossrail so far is summarised here.

## Station stories

In this section, the report looks at six stations on the Crossrail route and examines the experience of receiving Crossrail at each. This serves as a platform for understanding and sharing best practice when it comes to realising regeneration and development. Each case study is accompanied by an area profile, looking at planning and property perspectives and how Crossrail affects existing local context. Key experiences are summarised for each section, providing the basis for the report's recommendations.

*Crossrail as Catalyst case stations*



# Recommendations

Given that Crossrail still has four years to completion and that the next major rail schemes are already on the horizon, recommendations are in two groups: best-practice specifics on how stakeholders can act now to realise regeneration through Crossrail 1; and broader principles to inform future projects:

## A. Specifics

### Transportation & interchanges

- **Surface-level transport interchanges must be fully integrated:** cycling and pedestrian access and the approach to the station have major impacts on use and perception; where interchanges or congestion are an issue, boroughs should work closely with TfL to integrate multi-modal flow. For streetscape improvements, boroughs can take advantage of tools like Smarter Streets, and partner with TfL, the GLA and other entities for funding and support.
- **Deliver supporting infrastructure in a timely and cost-efficient manner:** in particular, road junctions connecting with stations should be phased with other developer- and borough-led initiatives, so works can be combined; explore financing alternatives if developer contributions aren't phased in tandem with station works.
- **Boroughs should take an active role in encouraging residents to change travel modes** from private vehicle to Crossrail and other public transport alternatives, through awareness campaigns, high-quality design and infrastructure, and by using policy levers to prioritise transit modes.

### Partnerships

- **Invest in project leadership and coordination within and across local authorities,** to manage the process and to instil confidence in development and community partners. This should include practitioner and elected project champions, and ideally a design champion, as well as at least some borough in-house skills, for continuity and consistency.
- **Identify key partners** across planning, transport and development sectors, and engage as soon as possible.
- Boroughs needing support should **consider taking advantage of GLA resources,** including initiating the development of an Opportunity Area Planning Framework. Boroughs wanting investment should **adopt an 'open for business' attitude** to attracting investment and working with the private sector – this doesn't have to mean sacrificing community priorities, but it does mean willingness to partner must percolate through the organisation.
- **Developers should recognise the potential of taking the long view,** absorbing upfront costs and being willing to work in partnership with boroughs, the GLA and TfL on high-quality plans that will deliver social as well as financial returns.

### Development & property

- **Aim for over-site development wherever appropriate,** for value-capture, sustainability, access, and streetscape quality.
- **Seek clarity** on how public sector, developers and community see the area developing, and use negotiation and borough planning tools to establish common ground.
- **Capitalise on the demand for housing** in conjunction with new cross-London access, to consider residential uses in town centres and to explore new housing models.
- In evaluating station-area markets, **developers should consider London's growth trajectory** and the potential for new commercial and retail opportunities.

### Urban realm & design quality

- **Insist on high-quality station and public realm design** to attract investment, improve perception and community amenity, and gain or retain retail spend.
- **Consider formal design review** for meaningful improvement in station design.

### Planning & local delivery

- **Actively engage with existing plans** – comprehensive planning frameworks, vision documents and borough-led masterplanning, as appropriate.
- **Embrace and maximise the value of small stations** in contributing to place and to an area- or borough-wide strategy.
- **Prioritise public investment on key interventions,** to guide and leverage private-sector activity.

### Community & employment

- **Engage meaningfully with all facets of the local community** to mitigate construction impact and integrate the scheme thoughtfully into the area. Allocate sufficient budget for events, translators, promotion and related efforts.
- **Engage with town centre partnerships** and local businesses, to support them through construction, to seek their input and contacts, and to help them to take advantage after the line opens. Where town centres are ailing, consider options for reinvention.
- **Build or increase skills and employment services,** especially in areas where Crossrail is opening new opportunities and/or there is concern about losing employees to other areas.

## B. Principles for future schemes

Crossrail's experience has shown that London could achieve even more in terms of station-area regeneration – and its ripple effect on local economies and communities – if greater consideration was given to the 'non-rail' aspects of future infrastructure programmes right from the outset.

- **Broaden the remit:** Delivery agencies should be endowed with a broader scope of powers by Parliament, so they can better realise regeneration opportunities. This could include options such as land-purchase or assembly to enable better integration and functioning of stations, or even match-funding tools, to support local authorities in preparing effectively.
- **Engage early:** Use the experience of Crossrail 1 in tandem with the London Infrastructure Investment Plan and forecasts for growth, travel patterns, property markets and investment sources to strengthen the political and public case for regeneration investment – and engage with local politicians and practitioners, on and beyond the "What's in it for us?" question.
- **Optimise routing:** Consider the long-term needs of the metropolitan area and the wider network for optimum routing. Connectivity, commuter capacity, opening areas for housing or other strategic needs, integrating growing neighbourhoods into the wider city – all of these weigh on the next route decisions to be taken.
- **Build teams and experience for the long term:** Ultimately, it's people who deliver rail projects. Experienced, respected leadership and delivery teams are critical. At both project and local scales, retaining core people from one project to the next makes sense.

- **Be realistic:** An obvious but sometimes overlooked point, with a few elements: acknowledge that the character of some places will change – from town centre to residential, industrial to commercial, quiet to busy or any number of shifts. Accept that some areas will take longer to benefit. And communicate enough with local partners so that plans on the table can actually be delivered.
- **Pump-prime:** Public-sector resource must be invested alongside infrastructure spend, especially where the market is not yet attractive enough to investors – it's no coincidence that the areas benefiting fastest are those which have received further investment through private or public sources, including staffing to prepare plans.
- **Seek control of long-term infrastructure funding:** The surest way to secure transport and regeneration investment that prioritises London's needs is access to locally-controlled funding. The London Finance Commission has proposed financial devolution which could do precisely that, and has broad support from the Capital's public and private sector.
- **Assess impact:** Crossrail 1 has had notable success in helping to spark regeneration efforts across its network of stations – and it's still four years from opening. Tracking and measuring the economic, social and environmental impact Crossrail and its public- and private-sector partners are delivering can only serve to strengthen the case for greater, and usefully targeted, investment in future projects.

None of these activities or recommendations are startling on their own. But with scant time or resource at the local level – for risk analysis, information-sharing or advance planning – and pressing political considerations at national level, decision-makers aren't always able to put the pieces together. We hope Crossrail as Catalyst may help with that.

Supported by Crossrail, Arup, GVA, and London Communications Agency, the multi-platform *Crossrail as Catalyst* programme is guided by a senior steering group including sponsors as well as the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, University College London, London Borough of Redbridge, Peabody Group and Urban Design London.

**Future of London** is an independent, not-for-profit urban policy network. We focus on housing, regeneration, infrastructure and economic development, and deliver capacity-building for practitioners at all levels, through research, events and bespoke career development. Our active steering group is drawn from our members - the GLA, TfL, local authorities and housing associations – and from core supporters.

## Sources

Cover image and map, pg 2, based on Crossrail Ltd's Regional Route Connections Map, March 2014

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