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
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Crossrail Ltd (CRL) was established in 2001 to promote and develop vital links to meet the needs of people and businesses throughout the South East and to ensure London continues as Europe’s leading financial and business centre. A fully owned subsidiary of TfL since 2008, Crossrail represents a real commitment to the development of new services to tackle the lack of capacity and congestion on the existing network.

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Future of London project team: Programme and Research Lead Jennifer Johnson (lead author and project coordinator), Director Lisa Taylor, Membership and Programme Officer Alexei Schwab.

Planning perspective sections of Chapter 4 were contributed by Arup: Katie Kerr, Rosalind Blewitt and Max Loverack.

Development and investment influence sections of Chapter 4 were contributed by GVA: Martyn Saunders and Laura Gardner.

Project Steering Group: Katie Kerr (Arup), Ian Lindsay and Sam Richards (Crossrail), Stewart Murray (Greater London Authority), Martyn Saunders (GVA), Mark Lucas (LB Redbridge), Chris Madel and Jenna Goldberg (London Communications Agency), Dan Hill (Peabody), Robin Hickman (University College London), and Esther Kurland (Urban Design London). Thanks also to Communications leads Kevin Marriott and Ed Dewar of GVA.

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70 Cowcross Street
London
EC1M 6EJ

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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.
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 starting with awareness campaigns, high-quality design and infrastructure, and by using policy levers to prioritise transit modes.

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.

B. Principles for future schemes

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.

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.

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.

- Brooden the remit: Delivery agencies should be endowed with a broader scope of powers by Parliament, so they can better utilise 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 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 broader support from the Capital’s public and private sector.

- Assess impact: Crossrail 1 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.
Chapter One

Introduction
Introduction

“As from east to west, Crossrail offers us clear proof that investing in our transport infrastructure pays dividends on many other fronts. The creation of new homes, retail and office space is of paramount importance in galvanising and safeguarding London’s economy and Crossrail is helping to do just that.”

Mayor of London Boris Johnson, March 2014

The Mayor’s recognition of Crossrail’s role in London’s development comes as construction is just over halfway complete – and four years before its trains carry their first passengers. At an expected construction cost of £14.8bn, Europe’s biggest infrastructure project is an ambitious undertaking with immense promise: the biggest increase in London’s rail capacity since World War II, and an anticipated GDP impact of £42bn. That impact is already being felt.

As Crossrail makes visible progress across the Capital, many infrastructure conversations are already turning to the next transport schemes. More than two decades after its route was safeguarded from major building, the Chelsea–Hackney line is nearing reality, after its route was safeguarded from major building.

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Proponents in London are thinking even further ahead. The London Finance Commission (LFC) may be best known for promoting fiscal devolution, but infrastructure for the Capital was core to its work. The commission’s call for a thorough assessment of London’s future infrastructure needs and a strategic plan to address them was endorsed by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. Led by the Greater London Authority (GLA), key stakeholders are now developing a Long Term Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) that looks to 2050, and transportation is at its heart: “transport enables the unlocking of new growth areas and potential for large-scale house building, by linking them to the rest of London.”

Crossrail is key to those growth areas. Construction is moving swiftly on, but with five years before system-wide operation, opportunities remain to unlock regeneration and development across the network.

Though increasing transport capacity has always been Crossrail’s prime driver, part of its promise – and business case – was always to generate or enhance economic opportunity. The route runs through the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and links four major commercial centres at Heathrow, the West End, the City and Canary Wharf. Connectivity itself has ‘unlocking’ power – here and across the route’s 40 stations – but it also offers new regeneration and development potential across London and into the South East.

Delivering on that potential isn’t always straightforward. As with previous rail projects in and around the Capital, some communities are seeing direct and rapid benefits from incoming stations, while others have yet to realise Crossrail’s local regeneration potential. This spectrum of experience – and which interventions can tip the balance in favour of a local community – are the foundation of this report.

What are the key ingredients for station-based regeneration? How much does a proactive approach or an appetite for change – or local authority resource – matter? What kinds of partnerships are effective? Perhaps most importantly, what successful strategies can be replicated across Greater London? These are some of the questions we will address.

As with all Future of London work, the focus of this report and the larger programme is on delivery: sharing best practice; identifying ongoing opportunities for Crossrail 1 stations; and offering local and strategic lessons for structuring and delivering future schemes. This report does that by:

- revisiting rail-led 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 market 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.

Crossrail as Catalyst draws on input from two research seminars and over 25 in-depth interviews with transport, planning, regeneration and property practitioners. It begins with a review of international and previous UK rail and regeneration examples. Rail projects in London are a particular focus, from Metro-Land through the Docklands Light Railway and the Jubilee Line Extension to the East London Line and the Shoreditch High Street experience. There is a clear evolution here, especially where regeneration is concerned, and these experiences provide a useful starting point as we follow thematic threads through the report.

Next, Chapter 4 moves on to the case studies. 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 market 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 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 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.

* Hereinafter, Crossrail refers to Crossrail 1 unless otherwise specified.
Chapter Two

Rail and Regeneration
The regeneration and development impact of rail

Since the first roads, canals and railways connected cities and their surrounds, public infrastructure has shaped urban and peri-urban development. Studies throughout and following the 20th century traced the impact of road and rail networks on the communities they created and served — including studying their impact on value, urban realm integration and market behaviour.1 These studies provide a useful starting point to look at Crossrail’s regeneration potential.

Land and property value

Unsurprisingly, most research concludes that new transport options and access improvements deliver increased value in a number of ways.2 Just how large a value uplift depends on a wide range of factors.

To begin, there is a well-documented appetite to develop around stations — both from the private and public sectors. US public transit agencies “claim property development around rail stations as the most significant economic benefit of rail transit investments.”3 Likewise, in a study of impacts on 12 European city centres, researchers found transport could have a catalytic effect on regeneration and development, though it takes many other factors combined to lead to successful regeneration.4

One impact is that new rail access in an area can be used to justify higher-density planning policies. Many cities allow or encourage more intense development near transit stations, increasing total development value and the potential for developer-funded community amenity.5 As seen with the East London Line’s Shoreditch High Street station and in GWA’s 2014 report on Crossrail’s property potential, local authorities and developers also cite the station and in GVA’s 2014 report on Crossrail’s property impacts on 12 European city centres, researchers found transit stations, in London and abroad.7

Retail property value is also subject to variables such as consumer base local to new stations — a consideration when it comes to attracting businesses to newly built, underdeveloped or high-deprivation areas. These can be appropriate targets for public investment, as seen with Strasbourg’s Etible district or Hamburg’s HalfenCity.6 For commercial and retail property, value ascribed to new stations increases with proximity to the station, but local authorities and development partners must focus on attractive station environments to guard against a residential-property ‘doughnut’ effect.8 This term describes the scenario where values are static or depressed close to stations and lines, but higher than average further out (and stretching for a greater distance than for commercial property).9 Overall, accessibility to transit is as much a draw for householders as it is for investors, and carries greater weight than the ‘nuisance’ factor of proximity to a rail line.10

Another variable is timing: there is significant evidence that value uplift often appears well before new systems open, increasing at different stages and rates depending on property sector and proximity to the station: “completing environmental review adds additional value, as does breaking ground for construction, as does the opening of the system… there can be increments of value accrual as a project is seen through its various planning stages.”11

The most common finding here may be that given the phasing and scale of most value uplift, all stakeholders involved in new rail should get involved early. “Cities [must] do their property purchases or assemblies as early in the planning process as possible… The earlier they get into the market, the more valuation increases they can capture for their public investments for land, transportation, affordable housing, or other developments.”12

External factors also need to be considered. In some communities with existing transport, new stations were shown to deliver only minimal increases in land value, or redistribution over the metropolitan region, rather than an aggregate increase.13 One key early work by Spengler also argued that new transport cannot correct for other factors acting to depress land values, but a recent study noted that properties closest to transit hubs held their value best during the US housing slump, so stations — when supported by quality urban realm — may be developing a stabilising influence.14

Another external is politics — and in the context of value capture, its focus on fairness — who should benefit from value uplift: the taxpayers funding the project, or the developer and the local community benefiting from development contribution?15 Decisions about how to capture value for financing — and about who should benefit — are often political, and affected by (social) equity and the need for construction and operational revenue.16

As a final factor in value, there are the benefits of partnering. Joint projects have been shown to enhance value in several reports; in one study of a public-private joint development of transit stations and nearby office space over a 10-year period, it was found that “joint development projects added more than three dollars per gross square foot to annual office rents. Office vacancy rates were lower, average building densities higher, and shares of regional growth larger in station areas with joint development projects.”17

Across the literature, it is clear that new stations can deliver value uplift. What is also clear is that there are no guarantees: many factors impact the speed, scale and manner in which value increases, and who sees this benefit.

Integration

The interface between a station and the community it serves is also critical, and one useful frame of reference for London’s variety of stations is the spectrum from Transport-Oriented Development (TOD) to Transport-Adjacent Development (TAD). Both models focus on a half-mile [0.8 km] or 10 minute walk radius from a new station, but they deliver quite different experiences and built environments.

Developed in European cities, TOD has also been promoted in the US as an option for expanding metros to create a hybrid ‘village’ experience in the suburbs. Though not without critics, its focus on integration with surface transit, clustered higher density, mixed use, and a cycle- and pedestrian-friendly urban realm are generally desirable, and a sustainable step along from the more traditionally suburban Transport-Adjacent Development.18

‘While a TOD describes a station-area precinct that is compact, mixed-use, and facilitates transit connectivity through urban design, a TAD is ‘physically near transit [but] fails to capitalise upon this proximity... It lacks any functional connectivity to transit – whether in terms of land-use composition, means of station access, or site design.”19

Construction underway at Bond Street Station Eastern Ticket Hall
(Credit: Jennifer Johnson)
Integration with other modes and with the surrounding community has also proved critical, but accessibility has to work at all levels, "micro (e.g. vehicle access), meso (e.g. network connectivity and severance), and strategic (e.g. sub-regional access to employment)." A single gap, from physical barrier to perceived danger to cost of commute, can cut people off, particularly in disadvantaged communities, and neutralise the advantages of a new station.

This 360˚ attention to detail is well suited to stations, with the involvement of transport planners, local authorities, developers and the public.

The above points are from just a few of the many studies showing that new transport needs to be integrated – into local fabric, planning priorities, surface connections, related policies and other major investments where possible – in order to really achieve its regeneration potential.

So how do these findings apply in the London experience? Of course rail hubs can transition from TAD to TOD, but this typically takes a major push from local government in partnership with private-sector partners – and retrofit is almost always more expensive and complex than starting with a plan. In London, functional hubs such as East Croydon are moving towards TOD, with increased connectivity and amenities for rail users and residents. Many elements of TOD have been applauded, including its European elements of travel demand management, hard targets for mode-share and a focus on the quality of transport delivery itself. But some say the model doesn’t go far enough, decrying the lack of focus on station design and amenity, or of retail strategy beyond ‘street-level activation.’ The importance of a high-quality station environs has also been well-researched, including its impact on value and area perception by residents, local businesses and visitors. As noted in the UK cases below, these benefits are seldom shared uniformly across a network – except in cases where equity across the transport network is a public-sector priority, as in Bogotá, Medellín or Strasbourg.

The most successful commuter rail projects have been integrated into not just the local area, but into broader investment and policy landscapes too, including concurrent major programmes – Expo ‘67 in Montreal, Bilbao’s Guggenheim Museum, Hamburg’s HafenCity, the London 2012 Olympics and many more urban projects and programmes have used concrete deadlines and fresh investment to build or upgrade transport facilities.

Tying rail projects into related policies can also be mutually beneficial, “significantly increasing” the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of a number of other important areas of economic and social policy, including employment, health, education and economic development. For instance, several TOD studies found that increased station-area densities led to a shift from the car to alternative transport modes. Supporting the high-street agenda, stations within an interesting retail area have correlated with higher levels of commuters using public transport, walking, and bicycling.

Lessons from recent rail schemes in the Capital

As outlined, the wider experience of new transit stations has lessons for maximising value and funding opportunities, placemaking, user experience and mode shift. How have relevant London schemes furthered that understanding, and brought us to Crossrail?

A long tradition

Precedent for the rail-and-property model in London exists as far back as the Metro-Land movement in the early 1900s. With its surplus of north-west London rail land and a dedicated marketing campaign, the Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Limited developed areas such as Harrow, Wembley, Rayners Lane and Neasden for suburban housing – the independent company and its expansion campaign lasted through the early ‘30s, and had a significant impact on the shape of London. Between 1921 and 1931, the Census showed Metro-Land population growth of more than 50%, compared to 11% across Greater London as a whole, and the company estimated in 1929 that up to 12,000 houses had been built within a kilometre of its stations over the preceding 10 years, with a further 17,000 planned.

Fast forwarding to today, another example of rail-enabled development can be found amongst the cranes on South Bank. After decades of trying to bring the site forward, the development of the Northern Line Extension was directly tied to the regeneration of Battersea Power Station and the surrounding Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea Opportunity Area. Clearly, London understands that rail can open areas for development; perhaps the most obvious examples are in East London and at High Speed 1 stations.

King’s Cross St Pancras is undergoing a major transformation (Credit: Jennifer Johnson)
Regeneration as the driver for rail in east London

London’s eastward shift in focus was initiated with the state-backed regeneration of London Docklands. Urgency was added by growth predictions as far back as 2006, with their ensuing need for new homes and jobs. East London’s relatively cheap and abundant brownfield land was ready, but there wasn’t sufficient transport to serve it. As one study noted, “major transport investment is critical to underpin the future development [of east London] and can act as a real catalyst to renewal.” 33 Three recent east London rail projects – the Docklands Light Railway, the Jubilee Line Extension (including the Southwark station experience), and the London Overground’s Shoreditch High Street station on the East London Line – help to illustrate the complexities of rail-enabled regeneration.

The Docklands Light Railway and the Jubilee Line Extension

Labelled a ‘stoppages’ service,34 the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) was opened as a temporary measure in 1987 to serve the financial services boom following deregulation, and the establishment of Canary Wharf as a new business district. An automatic system running mainly on disused docklands right-of-way, the DLR began as an office hours service. The line’s central London access was extended from Tower Hill to Bank station in 1991, but the service couldn’t keep up with the growth in commuter numbers. Within 15 years of its opening, the DLR’s capacity crunch was seen as a barrier to regeneration.35 There were also issues related to the scheme’s compressed planning-to-operation timeframe: station design was not a top priority, and connectivity to the areas the line traverses is minimal.

The capacity solution for east London was the Jubilee Line Extension (JLE) from Green Park to Canary Wharf and on to Stratford, written into the government agreement with developers Olympia & York (O&Y) and jointly financed. Seven years of complication and expense after O&Y went into administration, the line was completed in late 1999. Before the economic downturn, the line was already seeing a two-hour service and the Jubilee Line. As one commentator put it, “the Jubilee Line was now considered a Major Town Centre in the London Plan.”36 As one researcher notes, “the original project was approved with a (benefit–cost ratio (BCR)) of 0.92 and an expectation that there would be substantial (though unquantified) benefits from the regeneration of the South Bank and the creation of new jobs in Canary Wharf. Using current Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines, the JLE BCR is 1.72, even after allowing for cost overruns.”37

In terms of accessibility, the Extension not only increased access at individual locations which didn’t have Underground stations, such as Southwark and Bermondsey – it also shifted the “centre of gravity of the network” southwards.38 With regard to property market impact, two key stations had very different experiences in terms of sector and scale: between 1999 and 2002, Canary Wharf saw a £2.1bn increase, mainly through new commercial completions, while Southwark gained £280m, mainly in the residential sector (within 500m of each station for commercial uses and 750m for residential uses).39

Southwark station was designed for over-site development, so as the new rail and bus interchange is proving a spur to regeneration and making travel by public transport in this part of the Capital a lot easier.”47

Southwark station was designed for over-site development, with planning permission granted for an office building in 1996 and a mixed-use block in 2000, but neither were implemented.48 The lack of development above the station is conspicuous, and the unfinished look of the station exterior is at odds with the acclaimed interior architecture. One interviewee contended that the JLE wasn’t designed for regeneration of this stretch of the route, but to move bankers from Surrey to Canary Wharf as quickly as possible – they weren’t going to stop and get out. Now that Blackfriars Road is being developed within the Bankside and London Bridge Opportunity Area and TfL has asset optimisation as a business priority, the time would seem right to reactivate the station’s over-site potential.

A final note about JLE stations is the exemplar multi-modal offer at Canning Town, an interchange between DLR, bus service and the Jubilee Line. As one commentator put it, “the new station at Canning Town was one of the most difficult to get right. The end result, however, was worth waiting for as the new rail and bus interchange is proving a spur to regeneration and making travel by public transport in this part of the Capital a lot easier.”49

Canning Town and the Royal Docks have long been seen as the next logical step eastward – completing the London Legacy Development Corporation’s work and linking to longstanding Thames Gateway regeneration efforts (underway since 1991). Two development scenarios to 2026 were produced as part of the Canning Town and Royal Docks Transport Strategic Options Appraisal Study, including one featuring 360% population growth.49

The Jubilee Line Extension and Southwark Station

Although the Jubilee Line Extension was conceived to address capacity issues, TfL’s top stated objective for the line was supporting development and enhancing regeneration along the route, including accessible new employment at Canary Wharf, connecting Docklands and North Greenwich into the Tube network, and improving east London connectivity with other London Underground (LUL) and commuter lines.41

The JLE as a whole delivered well above expectations, including double the anticipated construction jobs, and an additional 40,000 Canary Wharf-area jobs attributable to JLE; Canary Wharf is now considered a Major Town Centre in the London Plan. As one researcher notes, “the original project was approved with a (benefit–cost ratio (BCR)) of 0.92 and an expectation that there would be substantial (though unquantified) benefits from the regeneration of the South Bank and the creation of new jobs in Canary Wharf. Using current Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines, the JLE BCR is 1.72, even after allowing for cost overruns.”42

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A 2004 Jones Lang LaSalle report for TfL estimated that land values in a 750m radius of the station had increased in value by approximately £800m over the 10 years to 2002.45

As to the station itself, the architects were to focus on functionality, ease of movement, safety and linkages with Waterloo East station. A third of the station’s volume is above street level, and the station itself has attractive design features, with clean lines and skylighting. Extensive consultation took place with the London Borough of Southwark and other stakeholders, and design influences included stations designed by Charles Holden, the work of John Soane, and the 1816 set design for ‘The Magic Flute’.

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Over-site development yet to arrive at Jubilee Line Southwark Station

(Credit: Alexei Schwab)
In difficult sites such as the former docks, development rests on integrated public sector intervention and developers comfortable taking on complex schemes. Plans for Canning Town and the Royal Docks – on hold through most of the recession – were helped by the fact that much of the land was in London Development Agency (LDA) hands, making coordinated planning of transport and development much simpler. Now, the unforeseen circumstance of overseas investment in the Royal Docks – as in Battersea and other locations around the Capital – is helping to move those plans ahead, though what these areas and station access will actually feel like remains to be seen.

The East London Line and Shoreditch High Street station

The interplay of station, transit access and development opportunity is made very clear in the opening paragraph of the Bishopsgate Goods Yard Planning Guidance, issued by LB Hackney, LB Tower Hamlets and the GLA:

“Bishopsgate Goods Yard is a large, important and strategic site in Shoreditch, which has been vacant for many years. The East London Line extension is now under construction and Shoreditch High Street Station will open in 2010. The improved access will create an exciting opportunity to redevelop the site in a way that reconnects the surrounding areas and contributes to ongoing regeneration. ”

Shoreditch High Street Station has made good on that promise, and may be a bit of an anomaly, or it may be a sign of things to come. The station platforms and much of the station itself are in a quarter-mile-long raised concrete box, meant as future-proofing for development on the surrounding site. This could have been incredibly sterile, but the station’s conscious engagement with its surroundings makes the difference: clean, textured materials, unique signage, the Boxpark pop-up mall and entertainment venue adjacent, football pitches and book stalls under the tracks, clear signage, occasional video projections on the station box, street art and events within view, plus the broad passage beneath the station from the Brick Lane area to Shoreditch and on to Hoxton.

The fact that a concrete box fits into such a lively area is proof that attention to integration can deliver high-quality urban realm. Much of that impetus came from the planning guidance above, which “brought together existing planning policies, urban design guidance and place making principles to provide a framework for the future comprehensive development of the site. Key design principles include[d] new links through the site, new public open spaces, guidance on building heights and sustainable development.” Further, the guidance had the full support of the boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets and the GLA, forming part of the boroughs’ Local Development Frameworks and “[helping] to provide certainty about the future of this important and historic site for the local authorities, developers and the local community.”

High Speed 1

The different experiences of two stations along the High Speed 1 (HS1) line provide further perspective on the relationship between transport infrastructure and regeneration and development. Also known as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, HS1 connects London’s St Pancras through Ashford International, and on to Paris and Brussels. The line has been fully operational since 2007.

At its St Pancras terminus, one of Europe’s largest redevelopment projects is underway. The development is being delivered by the King’s Cross Central Partnership – a long-term partnership between developer Argent and landowners London & Continental Railways and DHL. When complete in 2020, the mixed-use King’s Cross scheme will provide housing for 45,000 people, a range of office buildings, and 26 acres of open space. The long delivery timeframe has seen the scheme through economic cycles, but patience appears to have paid off, having secured major institutions including Google’s European headquarters and arts university Central Saint Martins.

Down the line in Kent is Ebbsfleet, site of another HS1 station. Nearby is Ebbsfleet Valley, which has planning permission for large-scale residential development – but this has stalled with under 200 homes built, due in part to the offer, according to one interviewee, and in part to unfortunate timing as the economic downturn hit. The Government hopes to change this through designating Ebbsfleet a “new Garden City” in their Budget 2014, announcing a Development Corporation to kick-start the stalled development and funding for supporting infrastructure. Whether this will be a catalyst for development remains uncertain: while some herald the move as a solution to England’s housing crisis, others have voiced scepticism that the interventions will be enough.

Learning from abroad

Throughout this research, interviewees routinely pointed to international best practice in delivering development and regeneration around rail schemes. While it is useful to look to other countries and cities, station development choices must fit their context, and not all will be appropriate. Stockholm’s model of density at stations is attractive, but difficult to integrate into historic areas; the continued US focus on transport-oriented development offers new options for greenfield development, not an option for much of Greater London. Still, there are important lessons in other countries’ models. What can be learned from abroad?

Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway Co (HK MTR)

HK MTR is undertaking an ambitious and successful programme for expanding its 218km network, with five underground and elevated rail extensions set for completion in the next decade. The investment is delivered through a largely self-financing ‘rail plus property’ value-capture scheme, similar to the Crossrail model – but in this case featuring some 60 development projects across the network.

In Hong Kong, public land is sold at low cost to the transit company for development and revenues from development or sale cover the cost of expansion; Hong Kong also owns significant station-adjacent land. There is criticism, namely about local sensitivity and integration of some OSDs – and the network is running out of the easily developable sites that are its signature. As a response, HK MTR is expanding, and already operates in neighbouring Shenzhen and fast-growing Tianjin.

Singapore Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)

Singapore Mass Rapid Transit also has a focus on development, marketing and leasing commercial, residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network. Station designs have included an 87,000sqm over-site residential and advertising space within the network.

Japan

Japanese cities have used station-area revitalisation as a successful way to retain and attract residents and businesses, who were leaving urban areas for the suburbs. Since rail privatisation in 1987, they’ve focused on densified commercial activity at or adjacent to stations, such as shopping and cultural centres, restaurants, food stores, and active links to nearby attractions, which has also drawn visitor traffic.

French tramways

Tram lines – and corresponding stations – have been particularly praised throughout this research for supporting regeneration efforts, and improving public perception by businesses, residents and visitors. Here, France is leading the way, with over a dozen recent systems in cities like Paris, Orleans, and Lyon all focused on regeneration in tandem with rail transit. The rapid development and adoption of light transit is enabled by a system wherein French cities own or direct all transport, and so can balance modes; can finance through transport tax on business rates; and have greater local control, allowing for more integration between land use and transport planning.

In Strasbourg, the tram system focuses on central transport than suburban extensions; however, there are some urban realm similarities to London. Both have densely built station areas, willing users, a mix of commercial and residential hubs and a range of incomes along the lines. Strasbourg’s tram also has one key difference – up to half the initial spend for the line went to urban realm. This included tree planting, street, square and bridge refurbishments; pedestrianisation along some stretches and improved cycle and walking streetscape everywhere. This attention has contributed to place-making across the network:

“Boulevards that feature tramways, even in the poorer neighbourhoods, are great places to be because of the clear effort that has been put into improving them along with the introduction of the train lines.”

The expansion of the tram line has also unlocked new development sites, allowing for the creation of a new shopping and residential district, Riv'etoile, on disused industrial port land, served by four new stations.
Lessons for London

This chapter has brought together relevant research on rail, regeneration and development, highlighting the link between stations and value uplift, the importance of multi-level integration of a station into a community, and rail-user decision-making. It has also presented recent London rail projects, focusing on the mixed experiences of areas along east London lines and HS1. The common thread is that while transport infrastructure alone can’t guarantee successful regeneration, it can serve as a valuable catalyst for development.

Looking ahead, a further challenge would seem to be taking the best of London success stories and international examples and parlaying them into quality stations and surrounds across the line. As one study points out:

“There are good examples of new [public transit orientated development (PTOD)] in urban areas around the major rail interchanges; but very little good practice in the suburbs around smaller rail (or Underground) stations. It is in these places that the art of integrated urban planning and transport planning has been forgotten. There are, for example, few new developments in east London that replicate the quality of PTOD and suburban vitality around public transport stations in west London (e.g. Richmond, Hammersmith and Ealing). It is here that much ground can be made in future years.”

East London is just one of the areas where rail-based development and regeneration are particularly complicated in terms of station, line and land ownership and control – from Thames Gateway development overall through TfL and Network Rail to specific stations such as Custom House and Canning Town, where GLA and borough powers, strategies and frameworks can conflict or overlap. Situations like these exist across the Capital, and require coordination and shared priorities to overcome.

There are also questions about who should lead rail interventions, and how strong their remit should be; international examples provide useful context (see Box 1). Here in London, complex governance arrangements and political sensitivities may mean decision-makers act less boldly. For example, could or should the GLA and TfL use their compulsory purchase powers beyond direct infrastructure need to deliver regeneration and development? We’ll return to these structural questions in Chapter 5: Recommendations.
Crossrail Context

History of the project

Plans for an east–west railway across London can be traced back to the 1880s, to a proposal for a railway following the Regent’s Canal. Construction was never started, but the idea persisted. The 1944 Abercrombie Plan raised the idea again, and in 1974, British Rail’s London Rail Study proposed a scheme called ‘Crossrail’, which built on Abercrombie’s vision.63

The 1989 Central London Rail Study revived the idea for an east–west Crossrail link.64 It was intended to relieve congestion on the London rail network and link the mainline services to the east and west. The study also made proposals for both Thameslink and what has since become Crossrail 2. The study again proposed a Crossrail route linking Paddington to Liverpool Street, with stations at Farringdon, Tottenham Court Road and Bond Street. The scheme was valued at an estimated £885m.65

The Conservative government started the process of getting a bill through Parliament, but it was defeated in a 1994 Commons vote. Further attempts were abandoned in 1996. In 2000, the Labour government commissioned another study to look at relieving rail congestion, and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) produced the London East–West Study, recommending both the previous east–west and north–south routes.66 On the back of the London East–West Study, a joint venture company was formed by the SRA and Transport for London (TfL). In 2003, a business case was submitted to government, which announced its support for the plan and recommended creating a Hybrid Bill to assemble the powers necessary to construct Crossrail. The Bill was introduced to Parliament in 2005 and received Royal Assent in 2008.

Significant issues raised among MPs scrutinising the Bill were whether the route should continue to Reading and Ebbsfleet; the tunnelling strategy through Tower Hamlets; options for depot sites; and the addition of a station at Woolwich.67 The 2008 Act budgeted for £15.9bn to deliver Crossrail. The 2010 Coalition Spending Review reduced this to £14.8bn, with the difference accounted for by a longer timescale for delivery, which held less risk for backers.70

Crossrail is joint funded in roughly equal parts by the Department of Transport (through a grant), Transport for London (through a contribution of future fare receipts) and the GLA (through a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy, a business rate supplement introduced in 2010).71

After over 100 years in the making, construction on Crossrail began in 2009, with tunnelling commencing in 2012. Engineering works are scheduled to be complete by 2017, with the remaining time before the line becomes operational spent on fitting out stations and key testing, commissioning and trial operations.

Crossrail in London

Stretching as far west as Reading and as far east as Shenfield, and with two shorter branches reaching Heathrow and Abbey Wood, Crossrail will link 40 stations across more than 100km of track. London is a focal point of the line, receiving 30 stations across 13 boroughs: City of London, City of Westminster, LB Barking and Dagenham, LB Bexley, LB Camden, LB Ealing, LB Havering, LB Hillingdon, LB Islington, LB Newham, LB Redbridge, LB Tower Hamlets, and RB Greenwich.

Delivering the route is a major undertaking, making Crossrail Europe’s largest construction project. It includes surface-level stretches connected through by new underground sections – the first underground line in more than 30 years.72 Tunnelling is moving swiftly along, reaching 75% completion in April 2014.73

Tunnelled sections will service 10 stations, while the remaining 30 stations (including 20 in London) will be on the surface line. For the surface stations, Crossrail offers better connectivity with fewer transfers compared to existing rail services; in speaking about these surface stations, one interviewee offered that “Crossrail is not a new piece of infrastructure; it’s a new way of connecting existing dots.”

In addition to preparing tracks and tunnels, a range of station improvements are also being delivered to support the new service. At some stations, this means minor upgrades, such as extending platforms to accommodate Crossrail’s longer trains, with some existing stations receiving larger improvements. 10 London stations will be brand new, nine of which are found along the central, tunnelled section: Paddington, Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon, Liverpool Street, Whitechapel, Canary Wharf, Custom House and Woolwich; the tenth, Abbey Wood, is slated to be the only surface-level new-build station.
The regeneration case

Although the primary function of Crossrail is increasing transportation capacity, economic aims have also been integral to the project. As outlined in Sir Rod Eddington’s 2006 advice for Government – The Eddington Transport Study – rail improvement can bring economic benefit in two ways. First, it can offer direct economic benefit to rail users, for example by reducing journey times and therefore increasing productivity. This has been how the rail improvement–economic impact link has conventionally been quantified.

Increasingly, transport economists are looking to wider economic benefits (WEB) in understanding an intervention’s impact and informing its business case. WEB analysis takes a broader approach to the influence rail improvement might have in supporting local, regional or national economies; supporting clusters or agglomerations, improving labour catchment areas or facilitating business-to-business interaction could be amongst WEB’s considerations. Crossrail is an early example of a scheme where WEB analysis was considered, the results of which were critical in supporting its business case.

Central London is at the heart of this economic focus. The project is expected to bring an additional 1.5m people within 45 minutes of central London and its key business districts, resulting in agglomerative and employee time-saving benefits. This has been how the rail improvement–economic impact link has conventionally been quantified.

How this regeneration is manifested will naturally vary between stations. In Crossrail Regeneration Benefits: Strategic Prospectus, consultancy Regeneris further suggests that markers for regeneration may also vary as the Crossrail programme progresses, from an early engagement of businesses in local supply chains during construction to realising agglomeration benefits years after the scheme becomes operational.

Early estimations of the distribution of economic benefits attributed to Crossrail showed that boroughs across the Capital could expect substantial uplift; however, more recent work by GVA highlights that the impact on an area’s property market varies significantly amongst stations – with the implication that Crossrail’s regenerative impact will also vary between communities receiving stations (see next page for an overview of key studies).

So whose job is it to realise these aims? Ultimately, Crossrail Ltd’s (CRL) role in delivery of the project is guided by legislation. The Crossrail Act 2008 secured the powers necessary to build the scheme. Notably, these included:

- A focused remit on delivering the rail programme. Beyond the station, CRL’s statutory obligation in delivering wider improvements stops at reinstating what was there before works began.
- Compulsory Purchase Order powers for the minimal amount of property deemed necessary to deliver the scheme.
- Its own planning framework (Schedule 7). Amongst other implications, it places limits on what the relevant planning authority can use as grounds to deny permission.

Constructing a legacy

Crossrail is proud of its legacy – not just in what it’s delivering, but how.

- Sustainable procurement has put UK businesses at the centre of Crossrail. British businesses have been awarded 97% of supply chain contracts. These suppliers are located across the UK – 62% of them outside of London – extending economic benefit from the project across the country.
- Over the Crossrail project, the equivalent of 55,000 full-time jobs will be created. Importantly, small- and medium-sized businesses benefit: 58% of supply-chain firms are SMEs.

Crossrail’s openness to working beyond its obligations in this way is rare for a UK rail scheme – though a British comparator illuminates the narrowness of Crossrail’s remit. London & Continental Railways (LCR) Ltd is a government-owned (Department for Transport) company that manages and develops property assets in a railway company. First tasked with delivering HS1 and now a joint-venture partner in both King’s Cross and Stratford City’s The International Quarter, LCR takes a long-term view and is a full investor in its schemes. It recognises that regeneration will last longer than the organisation building a railway, and sees benefit – and need – in having stable organisations in place. The two companies’ structures are very different, but their rail-and-property perspective is similar, as is their drive to look beyond infrastructure provision at the communities it can deliver.

“Crossrail can also enable the regeneration of areas around other stations along its route through improving accessibility with shorter journey times, and giving employers located along the route better access to a larger, more highly skilled labour market with more choice of skilled employees. This is likely to attract new private sector development, and increased employment densities, near Crossrail stations.”

Though its purpose is clearly restricted, Crossrail has been open to working with stakeholders to help realise the full benefits of the scheme. Crossrail Land and Property Director Ian Lindsay captures this spirit:

“Fundamentally, Crossrail at its heart is a railway project. We’re about delivering new transport capacity on time and within our funding. But we also recognise we are publicly funded and we will do our very best to do more than that and try to act as a catalyst for regeneration… However we can only go so far. We absolutely rely on boroughs and the GLA to make wider development and regeneration possible.”
Previous research

Research and analysis on Crossrail's impact has increased as the project has gained momentum, reflecting a wide acceptance of the scheme's potential to deliver growth. Four key studies are notable in discussing economic and regeneration impacts:


This early report adopted a new appraisal method for measuring the impact of Crossrail on London, taking into account wider economic benefits as well as standard analysis of journey time savings. This new method introduced theoretical models which considered economic effects not accounted for under previous appraisal methods, allowing for the valuation of the effect Crossrail would have in reducing congestion across London’s transport network.

The analysis of wider economic benefits resulted in a prediction of substantial financial return on investment for government through investing in Crossrail. This was predicated on greater agglomeration, increased access to jobs, greater productivity and impacts on imperfect competition. Of these, increased agglomeration and productivity were seen to deliver the greatest benefits. The report concluded that the wider economic benefits could in fact be worth more than the transport user benefits, even using conservative estimates. The alternative appraisal method set out was approved by DfT and became a key element of Crossrail's business case.


Regeneris's Strategic Prospectus outlined the regeneration potential of Crossrail on a station-by-station basis, looking at the impact new stations could have on their surrounding areas. It assessed the impacts of increased local footfall, changing perceptions and land use changes, as well as increasing property values and agglomeration effects. The report also made recommendations for the London Development Agency (now Greater London Authority) to help local authorities seize the regeneration opportunities at each station location, including investment in skills and training programmes, supporting businesses, encouraging sustainable growth and promoting London's global image.

Regeneris ranked stations on a scale of opportunity, with Custom House, Southall, Whitechapel, Hayes and Harlington, Ilford and Woolwich having the potential for highest regenerative impact relative to investment. The report stressed the need for local and regional authorities to implement complementary programmes across a range of policy areas in order to realise the regenerative potential of Crossrail.

**GVA (2012) Crossrail Property Impact Study**

This early assessment of Crossrail's property market impacts across London looked at where effects could already be discerned, and what to expect over a nine-year period to 2021. The report gives projections for land value increases in the areas immediately around stations and assesses the broader effects on local property markets.

The report looks at trends in office space, retail and residential property markets around each station on the line, forecasting an increase of £5.2bn in property value between 2012–2021. Crossrail is expected to support the delivery of 57,000 homes and 3.25m square metres of office space. Stations were ranked in a matrix according to the degree of change that could be expected to follow Crossrail, with potential for significant change at 10 sites, reinforced trends at 13, and no significant impact except on values at 14.

The report drew attention to the value added by public realm improvements around stations to the local property market through creating a sense of place and improving perceptions. The report's authors encourage local authorities to take a proactive role in encouraging development around new stations and identifying future opportunities.

**GVA (2014) Crossrail Development Pipeline Study**

GVA’s second report on Crossrail’s effect on the London property market surveyed current developments in areas around Crossrail stations, and found that 41% identified the new route as a key factor in supporting development. This percentage had increased from 15% in 2009 to 48% in 2013. The effect of Crossrail was even greater within a 500m radius of Crossrail stations, with more than half of planning applications referring to Crossrail in their justifications.

While Crossrail is supporting existing strong property markets in central London, the report highlights the potential regenerative impacts in weaker markets, through bringing forward developments, improving public realm, and changing perception through design of new stations. The report noted that at Liverpool St and Stratford, greater changes were occurring than were predicted in the 2012 report. Conversely, at Abbey Wood, Whitechapel and Ealing Broadway, evidence of change is not yet being seen.

Chapter Four

Station Stories
Every community receiving Crossrail has a different market offer, a distinct set of opportunities and challenges, a unique set of resources at its disposal. When combined with a borough’s practitioners and politics, the ‘right’ policy levers and delivery mechanisms for realising regeneration and development around each station may be best captured in one word: bespoke.

But for all that is different, there is much in common. Design, interchange, urban realm, community engagement, vision, and partnerships graze the surface of shared experience.

Station Stories

What has been delivered so far? What strategies have been successful? What opportunity can still be seized? This chapter examines six distinctive stations receiving Crossrail to understand their experience:

- **Tottenham Court Road**: Taking its place in Central London
- **Whitechapel**: Accelerating change on the City fringe
- **Southall**: Transforming a former industrial zone
- **Ilford**: A tale of a town centre
- **Abbey Wood**: Accessing new opportunities in Outer London
- **Woolwich**: A latecomer to the line

These stations are intentionally diverse, but make no claim to being exhaustive: amongst the 40 communities along the Crossrail route, no two are the same. Instead, their experience serves as a platform for understanding and sharing best practice when it comes to realising regeneration and development.
Taking its place in Central London

Tottenham Court Road

Introduction

Four London districts – Soho, Covent Garden, Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury – are knitted together at Tottenham Court Road. Each has a different offer, attracts different social groups, and swells with activity at different times of day. The area has a rich history in all directions. Bloomsbury hosts world-class institutions University College London and the British Library to the north-east, while legendary British writers frequented Fitzrovia to the north-west. South of the station, Covent Garden’s market has been an institution since 1654, while nearby Soho has developed an identity as a unique entertainment district.

Tottenham Court Road (TCR) station is itself a hub, connecting the Central and Northern lines and nearly three dozen bus routes. This status as a transit hub is set to grow with current proposals for Crossrail 2 routes, which will see the two Crossrails interchange between TCR and Dean Street.

For all this connectivity – between places, between modes – the Tottenham Court Road locality has underperformed for decades. The highly successful retail frontage that characterises western Oxford Street never made it all the way to the junction, and values have remained lower than might be expected. A handful of developments, including the listed Centre Point tower and the colourful Central Saint Giles scheme, have had success, but none have really acted as a catalyst for comprehensive change.

Investors see big potential in the West End, pointing to Crossrail as the biggest catalyst for regeneration in the area in a generation. At TCR they see particular opportunity, expecting the highest gross value uplift of anywhere across the line, bringing it in line with the wider West End performance. New development and improved public space should help Tottenham Court Road continue to serve as a hub while becoming more of a destination in its own right.

Station Context

Tottenham Court Road station is in the central, tunnelled section of the Crossrail route, between Bond Street and Farringdon stations. It is located on the edge of two boroughs: LB Camden and City of Westminster. It is within the Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area.

Area metrics

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<tbody>
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Development pipeline96

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<td>Retail floorspace (sqm)</td>
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Journey time improvements97

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<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Liverpool Street</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Canary Wharf</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
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</table>
Planning perspective

Tottenham Court Road forms a key part of London’s world-famous West End, known for its unique architecture and cultural heritage, and attracting visitors and businesses from across London, the UK and the globe. These high visitor numbers, however, have put the West End’s infrastructure and public realm under significant pressure – and numbers are expected to increase in coming years. A study published by Arup in January 2014 and supported by Crossrail, Transport for London (TfL), the London Borough of Camden and the City of Westminster looked at the likely impacts for areas of central London as a result of future visitor demand from Crossrail. 45

The study showed increasing visitor numbers in the West End, including an estimated 300,000 visitors per day at Tottenham Court Road Station in 2026, more than three times the current number. Both local and regional planning policy emphasise the importance of maintaining and enhancing the Tottenham Court Road area to cope with, and effectively exploit, the new demands placed on it. Designated as an Opportunity Area in Camden’s Core Strategy, Westminster’s City Plan and the London Plan, policies dictate that development at Tottenham Court Road should continue to support the area’s strategic future as a retail and leisure destination, focusing particularly on improving accessibility and the public realm and maximising the benefits a new Crossrail station will bring.

The opportunity for utilising Crossrail as a catalyst for transforming West End public realm and connectivity has been recognised by key stakeholders in and around the area, including the New West End Company (NWEC), a Business Improvement District for Bond Street, Oxford Street, Regent Street and 12 neighbouring streets, and the West End Partnership, created to provide better coordination and a more influential voice for the area.

Focused on local growth and continual enhancement of the urban fabric, the two groups have provided a forum to respond to the opportunities and challenges of Crossrail. Working with the Greater London Authority (GLA), TfL, Crossrail, LB Camden, the City of Westminster, residents’ associations, landowners and many other interested parties, they have partnered to initiate various schemes to improve the public realm in the West End, and in particular, around the Tottenham Court Road area.

A supportive surface network

At Tottenham Court Road, large passenger numbers alongside new development will put increased pressure on surface transport. Crossrail is providing an impetus to reconsider how the road network and pavement around the station is used.

Transport planners from both councils have been collaborating with Crossrail at TCR throughout the design process, keen to coordinate efforts to get the best environment for pedestrians. An early win for their involvement came in the station’s south Oxford Street entrance, where initial design narrowed the pavement. Already a busy pedestrian area, the problem created by less pavement combined with the extra passengers expected with Crossrail was flagged by borough practitioners, and led to a redesign that widened instead of narrowed the pavement.

Councils can also use Crossrail as an opportunity to take on wider transport planning. For LB Camden, a one-way system has dominant traffic flow in Bloomsbury, with vehicles travelling north up Tottenham Court Road and south down Gower Street. The borough is looking to dismantle this car-oriented gyratory system in favour of two-way traffic that, among other advantages, can be particularly helpful for cycling. A dangerous junction at Tottenham Court Road and New Oxford Street has also received attention by both authorities, who saw a chance to reconfigure an intersection which has a high accident rate because of a blind turn.

There’s still work to be done at TCR on transport interchange, including how road space for buses and taxis will be prioritised – and there’s still time for aspiration. As mode share shifts around TCR, interviewees suggested a range of future interventions from shared space on New Oxford Street to the pedestrianisation of Charing Cross Road. Monitoring and shifting supporting transport infrastructure will be an important story even after Crossrail opens – particularly if Crossrail 2 comes to Dean Street.

Development and investment influence

Tottenham Court Road lies within one of the most successful property markets in the world. Even so, the introduction of Crossrail is already having a dramatic impact on the scale, nature and quality of development here.

Critically, Crossrail unlocks the latent capacity in the area by alleviating current transport capacity constraints at Tottenham Court Road Underground station. At a basic level, this enables greater levels of development as more people are able to access and pass through the area.

However, the impact of Crossrail on the property market extends far beyond the creation of new capacity. The delivery of the new station has required the re-organisation of land uses in and around the station, which in turn has enabled creation of a new square at the foot of Centre Point, seen as vital for providing a high-quality arrival point for Almacantar’s redevelopment of this iconic building.

The impact on the public realm is also critical. Crossrail and London Underground’s public realm improvements and Crossrail’s own developments are driving other landowners to reconsider their own assets. This is helping to address previously lower-quality frontages which have depressed the retail offer in the area and, in turn, suppressed development values and the desire to overcompensate ownerships. The opportunity provided by major value increase forecasts and the potential footfall of over 200,000 passengers utilising the Crossrail station every day is dramatically changing perceptions of this area.

Given the already strong market, the property benefits of Crossrail are already being delivered. Central Saint Giles has been established as a new hub and is already seeing major retail tenant interest linked to Crossrail. Indeed, as prime West End retail rents continue to rise and the quality of place at Tottenham Court Road continues to improve, Crossrail is contributing to an increase in demand for prime retail space, particularly driven by international luxury brands such as Armani.

While Tottenham Court Road has the highest level of permitted retail floorspace of any Crossrail location, the impacts spread much further. For example, developments at Rathbone Place and Fitzroy Place will both deliver new residential and office spaces, recognising that Crossrail and the associated improvements to the built fabric of the area help create a place where a much broader range of uses can be accommodated.
Over-site development opportunities

While over-site development (OSD) is the norm in some parts of the world, London has less experience with it. What has been delivered in the Capital has been mixed: the success of Barratt’s Dalston Junction residential-led scheme over the London Overground station contrasts with an OSD opportunity over the Jubilee Line’s Southwark Station that has remained undeveloped for 14 years.

From the outset, OSD has been a significant component of the Crossrail project, with the company aiming to generate more than £500m for funding the scheme by maximizing property development opportunities over 12 key development sites. Provisions in the Crossrail Act mean planning applications for these OSDs must be submitted within two years of station construction starting on site, to best align urban design elements between the two developments.

At TCR, Derwent London will deliver part of this development. The developer owned the Charing Cross site until 2009, when it was compulsorily purchased by Crossrail. Though it changed hands, Crossrail Ltd and Derwent London signed a collaboration agreement in 2008 so that Derwent continued to be involved in the scheme, which received planning permission in April 2012 for 25,500sqm of retail and commercial space at 1 Oxford Street and the Goslett Yard theatre site. Part of the agreement was an option to reacquire the site with planning, which Derwent intends to exercise following the expected completion of station upgrade works in 2017. Prime access to Crossrail adds clear value, but is insufficient alone to spur development. Clarity in a borough’s plan for urban realm, which Derwent intends to exercise following the expected completion of station upgrade works in 2017.

Improving urban realm

One interviewee captured the importance of urban realm with an illustration of a passenger travelling from Heathrow, stepping out of a station and forming a first impression of London. The Crossrail experience can’t stop at the top of an escalator, he argued, it should blend into a high-quality urban fabric. While some element of consistency does contribute to a Crossrail brand, high-quality public space should look different at each station.

The importance of urban realm around Crossrail stations has never been disputed, but its delivery is more complicated. Crossrail’s statutory obligation stops at reinstating what was there before construction, but they recognize its importance and have been working with key stakeholders to deliver bespoke solutions. A small team of six at Crossrail guides this work, led by Sam Richards, Head of Urban Integration.

In 2010, Crossrail, local authorities receiving stations and other key parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Urban Realm and Transport Interchange at Crossrail Stations. This document provided a level playing field for all local authorities in what they could expect. Collaboration was a key feature of the agreement, which called on a number of public bodies to be involved in planning and implementing design and functionality outside of stations. TfL, Crossrail and local authorities also split the cost of external architects and highway consultants.

Funding was also a key focal point of the Memorandum. Crossrail does not have funds available for the full extent of urban realm improvements. Local authorities, Transport for London and developer contributions all form part of the pool. Improvements across the scheme are estimated to cost £130m, £113m of which are accounted for at London stations. Crossrail aims to identify £90m for improvements by the time the operation begins in 2018; so far, Crossrail and TfL have each committed £30m to the scheme, and a further £1.5m has been identified from third parties, leaving £1.5m to source (Fig 1: Urban realm funding split). Drawing on a breadth of resource and depth of expertise from across public organisations offers opportunity for more intensive and longer-term projects than Crossrail could deliver on its own.

At TCR, circulation space already feels near capacity. Partly to blame for this are complicated pedestrian links, epitomised at the busy and convoluted Prince’s Circus. To pedestrians unfamiliar with the area, way-finding is particularly difficult and many take the Tube for short trips that would in reality be faster on foot, for example, between TCR and Covent Garden, or between TCR and Leicester Square. For LB Camden, there’s an opportunity to connect three significant visitor attractions that draw considerable footfall – the British Museum, Covent Garden and Tottenham Court Road – in a Y shape pattern, alleviating pressure on stations, bringing footfall to local businesses and vibrancy to the streets.

Closer to the station, more movement channels will be available to pedestrians once hoarding comes down and the station and surrounding public realm opens up. A big question across all Crossrail stations rests on how many passengers will actually exit stations, compared to how many will come through or interchange. The station is being upgraded to meet the estimated demand of more than 200,000 journeys per day once Crossrail is operational, but research by Arup has suggested it may see 300,000 daily passengers by 2026. Even a small proportion of this 50% growth exiting the station will place considerable footfall on stations, bringing footfall to local businesses and vibrancy to the streets.

Besides over-site development opportunities, the immediate area around TCR is built to a relatively moderate density. Renzo Piano’s nearby mixed-use development is one example: if Central Saint Giles was rebuilt today in the context of Crossrail demand, it would likely be much higher density to accommodate more units (and to balance higher land value). One interviewee went so far as to suggest that this existing urban fabric – including the impending office-to-residential conversion of Centre Point – may be a blessing in disguise, at least from a congestion view.

Credit is due to Crossrail for taking the initiative in public realm where obvious work is needed, despite not being obliged to do so. In this light, the Memorandum of Understanding has proven useful in considering delivery mechanisms. LB Camden and the City of Westminster are involved with Crossrail and other stakeholders in a joint working group focused on Tottenham Court Road station. They have lots of work to do in delivering public realm interventions, and should continue to monitor usage after Crossrail opens to address any impacts of the predicted growth in demand.

Fig 1: Urban realm funding split

Data supplied by Crossrail Ltd.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TfL funds</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third parties</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding to be secured for £90m target</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route total</td>
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Pop-up landscapes

Disruption on Charing Cross Road during Crossrail work at TCR has altered traffic flows in the area – including a reclaiming of the street by pedestrians. Inspired by the possibility that this road closure could become permanent, Simon Green – Landscape Architect at Arup – offers one idea on how this experience could be translated more widely:

“...in an age of constrained public budgets and an increasing appetite for better-designed public spaces - is the answer experimental pop-up landscapes? Many public spaces are underutilised, from over-engineered vehicular carriageways to neglected incidental spaces for refuse or recycling collection. These sorts of spaces could be transformed into pop-up landscapes hosting a variety of uses and social functions. Projects could be simple affairs or larger transformations. Imagine transforming a small, neglected urban space with a new coloured-surface material, seating and shade trees in planters, with local businesses and organisations encouraged to host events there throughout the year. Imagine too the possibilities for more ambitious schemes, such as transforming a closed road over a summer into a stage, cinema, restaurant, garden or orchard.

It would be fascinating to see what emerges: how people use the space, how it makes them feel and the effect on the locality. Suddenly everyone could have the opportunity to experiment with transforming public spaces and shaping and taking ownership of their bit of the city. It would galvanise local pride, bring people together and make a robust case for a longer-term investment in public realm schemes. An online 'pop-up landscape toolkit' could even be developed to allow local people and businesses to start creating their own local projects... leading to a revolution in how our public spaces are perceived and used invigorating the locality and improving the overall city.”

Artistic expression

There’s always been an element of art on the Underground, beginning with a series of iconic Transport for London posters. While some installations have been temporary, others have permanence. At Tottenham Court Road, large mosaic designs by Scottish artist Sir Eduardo Paolozzi have adorned the station’s walls since 1984. As TCR is refurbished by London Underground prior to Crossrail opening, most of Paolozzi’s work will be preserved, with small sections permanently removed for display elsewhere.

TCR’s art offer will be further boosted by an installation from French artist Daniel Buren. Commissioned by TfL’s Art on the Underground programme, he will create large, colourful circle and diamond shapes to cover the internal glass walls of the station’s new entrance hall.101

The station will further benefit from Crossrail’s art programme, The Culture Line. In partnership with the Mayor of London, DfT and City of London Corporation, the programme pairs stations with art galleries, who will commission an internationally recognised artist to deliver an art intervention related to a station’s unique design and architecture. In addition to Tottenham Court Road, seven other stations will benefit from the programme: Paddington, Bond Street, Farrington, Liverpool Street, Whitechapel, Canary Wharf and Custom House. Five have already been matched with galleries, included TCR’s pairing with the Gagosian Gallery.

This programme will bring creative spirit to urban realm around central London stations, but the rest of the line doesn’t have the opportunity to participate in the scheme, and some boroughs left out voiced disappointment:

“The targeting of Crossrail’s Arts Programme in Central London is not without irony, given that this zone is already a national repository of artistic and cultural endeavour – whilst outer London by contrast, enjoys nowhere near the same levels of arts subsidy and access.”

Mark Lucas, Head of Inward Investment and Enterprise, LB Redbridge

Public art may still come to these stations through other means – for example, through the Art on the Underground programme, which typically runs projects throughout the entire network, or through developer contributions; but if there becomes capacity to expand The Culture Line further along the route, boroughs are certainly interested.

Key experience

Industry experts are quick to point to Tottenham Court Road station as an area where massive property impact is expected – and it’s easy to see why. High values in nearby neighbourhoods, paired with transport interchange across key lines, will likely lead to the rapid rise of what has been the less-loved end of Oxford Street. Receiving Crossrail isn’t seamless, though. Key experience presented here includes:

- Layers of partnership, across organisations and across sectors, have supported collaborative working in delivering the station;
- Surface-level transport interchange is complex, but high pedestrian numbers and outdated systems mean that improvement to the road and pavement network is needed;
- In the over-heated Central London market, providing additional development capacity as part of the scheme may sufficiently facilitate the market interest in creating a new offer;
- Crossrail is being bold with over-site development, which has been a positive (if slow) process so far;
- Delivering high-quality public realm matters a lot for realising inward investment, and there’s a balance to be struck between design and functionality;
- The Crossrail art programme will elevate the quality and attractiveness of station environments – for those lucky enough to be part of the project.
Introduction
The geography of Central London is shifting, as values continue to climb in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ). London’s growing population will continue to put strain on employment space as job numbers rise, meaning companies must look further afield for premises, particularly when affordability factors in. At the same time, residential development in the CAZ may be an increasingly attractive asset for investors at home and abroad.

As pressure mounts on Central London, Crossrail presents a solution. The line connects four principal commercial centres in London: the City, the West End, Canary Wharf and Heathrow. The connections to and between these core economic hubs will doubtless have knock-on benefits, including regeneration potential, at stations along the route. Whitechapel is one of these.

With the City less than a kilometre away, it’s logical that regeneration would find its way along Whitechapel Road to this ‘City Fringe’ neighbourhood. However, the impending arrival of Crossrail services has hastened this process, catalysing development and speculation.

From the Docklands to Thames Gateway and through the Olympics, London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) has often been the subject of large-scale external intervention. LBTH is looking to build on this past experience to maximise the benefits to Whitechapel for its existing and future communities. This up-and-coming neighbourhood is one to watch.

Station Context
Whitechapel is located in the central tunnelled section of the Crossrail route, one station east of Liverpool Street and just west of where the eastern stretch splits north first to Stratford, and south first to Isle of Dogs (also known as Canary Wharf). It is one of two Crossrail stations found in London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the other being Isle of Dogs whose delivery is being led by Canary Wharf Group. It is located within the City Fringe/Tech City Opportunity Area.

Area metrics
- Population: 53,056
- Mean house price (£): 335,523
- Housing Tenure (%): Own (outright & with mortgage) 21.8, Private rent 35.1, Social rent 39.6
- Number in employment (workspace): 34,259

Development pipeline
- Number of major planning applications: 11
- Residential units: 2,061
- Office floorspace (sqm): 11,653
- Retail floorspace (sqm): 2,098

Journey time improvements
- To Heathrow (T1,2,3): 6 mins
- To Tottenham Court Road: 12 mins
- To Liverpool Street: 3 mins
- To Canary Wharf: 10 mins
Planning perspective

London Borough of Tower Hamlets has taken a multi-pronged approach to regeneration in the area around Whitechapel station, but with an overarching focus on the need to preserve the neighbourhood’s character and heritage, and the close involvement of key stakeholders and partners in the community. Soft urban renewal projects such as High Street 2012 have been coupled with more broad-brush plan-making to develop an overall vision for the future of the area.

The High Street 2012 scheme, coordinated by a consortium of public sector bodies including TfL, LB Tower Hamlets, Design for London, the GLA and English Heritage, and delivered by private-sector architectural firms, aimed to deliver area-based public realm improvements along the route from Aldgate to the Olympic Park and create a coherent flow between the different high streets in Whitechapel, Mile End and Bow. The ultimate goal was to encourage inward investment by: restoring historic buildings and spaces to highlight areas of cultural richness; creating greater ease of movement both along and across the route; and providing better walking and cycling opportunities to stimulate a healthier urban environment.

In Whitechapel, improvements have taken particular account of the imminent arrival of Crossrail, focusing on restoring and improving historic shop fronts along Whitechapel Road where Crossrail passengers will emerge from 2018, and creating a high quality public realm in the market area, designed to accommodate more pedestrians. Unique community engagement methods were used, including an ice cream van (The Nice Dream Van) and a market stall in Whitechapel Market, in order to collect the views of local residents. These opinions helped to shape the overarching principles of the project.

Building on these principles, LB Tower Hamlets developed the Whitechapel Vision, formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in December 2013. Echoing the collaborative process used to develop the High Street 2012 proposals, the masterplan aimed to manage expected growth in a way that would secure benefits for the community. The arrival of Crossrail is specifically cited in the document as an opportunity, with the appropriate level of public sector investment, to “inspire a new and exciting place”.

In developing the vision, the local authority worked closely with a broad cross-section of different stakeholders, including residents, businesses and market traders, faith organisations, landowners, developers, architectural practices and consultancies through a comprehensive series of forums, workshops and drop-in sessions throughout 2013. The question was posed: ‘What is Whitechapel?’

What has emerged is an ambitious vision that acknowledges the existing strengths of Whitechapel, such as its rich architectural heritage, reputation for creative industry, and healthy local market. The overarching principle behind the vision is collaboration between the public and private sectors, with local authority-led interventions providing focal points for the leveraging of further private investment. Short- to medium-term, these investments include ‘soft’ interventions which build upon the public realm improvements commenced through the High Street 2012 initiatives to unlock key development sites around the Whitechapel Road area, through to the refurbishment and reuse of the former Royal London Hospital buildings to develop a new community hub.

A visionary launch

The value of comprehensive masterplans has been consistently highlighted during this research. Though Crossrail undertakes masterplanning around each station, it is limited in scope to transport and public realm. Where this worked best was in boroughs which had taken on their own masterplanning exercise with a broader remit, offering a clear idea of where Crossrail fits into their vision for the area. LBTH’s work was applauded as a good example of this process.

After it was formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in December 2013, Tower Hamlets launched its Whitechapel Vision: Regeneration Prospectus to an audience of key stakeholders on March 27, 2014. The 15-year masterplan was produced by consultants BDP in partnership with the borough, and supports the development of 3,500 new homes and 5,000 new jobs in the community. At its heart is a spatial concept diagram mapping future land use and spatial planning framework for the area, centred on six Key Place Transformations:

1. Revitalising Whitechapel Road by enhancing the public realm, with particular attention to pedestrian movement and the street market
2. Relocating LBTH’s town hall to the former Royal London Hospital building, creating a new civic hub
3. Creating a new urban quarter – Durward Street Gardens – at the west end of the station
4. Build on the existing health sector to deliver a Med City Campus
5. Developing a new, residential-led neighbourhood at Raven Row
6. Transforming Cambridge Heath Gateway through redeveloping the Sainsbury’s site and future-proofing for a secondary Crossrail entrance

Those represented at the launch were broadly supportive of the vision, from event hosts Queen Mary University to the British Bangladeshi Chamber of Commerce. Of course, the real test is in delivering on the masterplan’s priorities. LBTH is in discussions to create a delivery body to take this vision forward.

Former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone will be advising LBTH on putting its masterplan into practice. Speaking at the launch, he highlighted that the single most important impact to Whitechapel will come in Crossrail: “It’s absolutely transformative[sic]… the potential to attract inward investment on a massive scale… to make money for themselves [investors] and for the community.”

Former Royal London Hospital to be transformed into new Tower Hamlets town hall (Credit: Jennifer Johnson)
Development and investment influence

Despite its proximity, Whitechapel has always been on the fringe of the City. The lack of direct connections has slowed the evolution of the area, particularly from a commercial occupier perspective. However, the introduction of Crossrail and the interchange opportunity with London Overground offers a new impetus.

Whitechapel is well positioned to be the next location for the expansion of the City, but its character, built stock and existing occupier mix are enabling a much more varied vision and development proposition to come forward. Crossrail provides the central driver for a new ‘vision’ for the Whitechapel area that will transform both the economic and residential offer, building on existing knowledge economy assets (such as the Royal London Hospital) and their links to London’s creative hubs at Hackney and the City Fringe.

The economic diversification of the area is already happening, with Dept W, a new technology incubator opening next to the existing station, bringing new ‘Fintech’ entrepreneurs to the area in a space managed by Central Working. Alongside the GMB Innovation Centre there is a growing base of economic activity that is driving demand for space in the area and changing the nature of the supporting retail and amenity offer.

Affording growth

With scope for rapid change comes concern about gentrification. Housing costs are rising everywhere in the Capital, including Whitechapel. The area’s median house prices are high for the borough but relatively low given proximity to the CAZ. As Central London grows and Crossrail arrives, values are likely to increase. LBTH recognises the threat to affordable housing and intends to negotiate with developers for high provision levels.

The prioritisation of employment space in the area is also a hot topic. In recent years, Whitechapel has benefited from SMEs moving in as Tech City grows and the cluster’s traditional area of Old Street becomes more expensive. The rise of this creative cluster forms part of the area’s economic development strategy, alongside the headlining health, bio-tech and life sciences sectors at the heart of the Med City scheme. The Whitechapel Vision puts forward ambitious targets for commercial and retail space, some of which – like the over-site development and Durward Street Gardens – may not be viable until values rise substantially.

The real development story in Whitechapel lies in this balance of homes and commercial space. Investment advisors and agents interviewed for this research felt that the area had a much stronger residential offer, and expected development to continue in that vein. Constraints on residential development within the City of London make the area even more attractive for market housing. Time will tell which sector moves fastest, but in the meantime, LBTH will press on with delivering its ambitious targets in both sectors, helped by an exemption from office-to-residential conversion in the area, secured by the Mayor of London.

The case for community engagement

Forty Crossrail stations come with at least 40 unique communities which need to be on-side during construction and development. Their collective local knowledge can also feed into the design and construction process, integrating the station into the community’s fabric. Community engagement does – and should – look different from place to place, and from intervention to intervention. Best practice, such as Planning Aid’s Principles of Engagement in consulting with communities,10 help frame some of the community engagement experience at Whitechapel, as follows.

Early research and analysis pointed to substantial opportunity at Whitechapel – and significant community challenges. Responding to local concerns about Crossrail, and recognising that community fragmentation might hinder involvement, Crossrail Ltd appointed Planning Aid London (PAL) in 2007 to facilitate a Whitechapel Community Liaison Panel. PAL spent its first year focused on relationship building, knowledge and skills, holding individual meetings with local groups and stakeholders to understand their concerns and give direction to the Panel.

Crossrail has a strong visible presence in the Whitechapel area, starting with its branded hoarding. It also opened a Visitor Information Centre at Whitechapel, where the local community can get information (for example, on timing), and ask questions of Crossrail staff. These communication tools complement the work of the Panel and of LBTH. Crossrail visibility at Whitechapel and other stations in Central London is the envy of some surface stations, where public relations efforts might not be as well-resourced and raising community awareness of the scheme and its impact is still ongoing.

The timing of community engagement matters, and there is advantage to beginning early. Communication efforts at Whitechapel started with PAL’s work even before the Crossrail Act was passed. This complemented the efforts of LBTH, which has long been working with stakeholders on Crossrail’s impacts and, later, fed into the Whitechapel Vision.

Improvements to Stepney City Farm (foreground), funded by Crossrail, as construction happens on-site (background) [Credit: Jennifer Johnson]
Another group, the Whitechapel Liaison Panel, makes headway in an inclusive process, including sub-groups which focus on impacts in particular areas. In this ethnically diverse area, engagement has been particularly sensitive to language, involving translators at meetings and offering some materials in Bengali, Turkish and Somali.

There is also a challenge over reluctance to engage: for example, with private-rent or social tenants who may feel weaker ties to the area, or with a small proportion of traders who may be wary of engaging with the borough due to its role as a regulator.

Delivering Crossrail at Whitechapel poses perhaps the trickiest construction challenge of any site on the route, given that the line is being installed behind existing buildings. Mitigating the works’ impacts has become an important focus. Noise, traffic and hoardings all disrupt the quality of life for local residents during construction, while local businesses, including the market traders, are concerned about corresponding decreased footfall.

Continuing to engage the community throughout the works gave the engagement efforts clear focus. As one participant put it, “Fundamentally, it’s people who do the work—most lack expertise in some way. As one research seminar interviewees felt that the value in this internal organisation didn’t rest on what model it took, as many different strategies had worked well so far. The real value was in self-organising early, and adding longevity to involvement.

Successful delivery isn’t just about how the team is organised; it’s also about having the in-house skillset and knowledge to deliver transport-led regeneration. While local authorities do have specialists in some relevant fields—station design, urban design, and transport planning—most lack expertise in some way. As one research seminar participant put it, “Fundamentally, it’s who people do the work... Big railways don’t come along all the time. Some local authorities are quite naturally going to struggle with this.”

In discussing the role of collaboration in realising opportunities around Crossrail stations, a research seminar participant spotted a vacancy. “Is there... an urban chorographer for these places around Crossrail stations?... Someone who can take a 200m, 500m view around stations and say, ‘I understand everything that’s happening in that area, and I can add value by making connections?”

In some ways, Tower Hamlets has an urban chorographer. From the outset, the borough knew it wanted someone dedicated to working on Crossrail. It welcomed the scheme’s arrival, but not at any cost and was particularly concerned about impact during construction. Bob Bennett joined LBTH as Crossrail Project Director to make sure that the borough benefited from the process, taking on a liaison or ‘fixer’ role between Crossrail and the borough—not just at stations but also around other impact sites. Now that he’s a decade into the post, key parties within and outside of the council know to go through Bob for all things Crossrail.

Next to clarity in ambition for receiving Crossrail, good organisation within boroughs was commonly cited as a key ingredient for success. Partly, this has to do with embedding structure into process and decision-making around Crossrail. In some boroughs, this is led by planning documents; LBTH’s point-person approach is an alternate strategy. Pan-London structure into process and decision-making around Crossrail. As Crossrail Project Director to make sure that the borough benefited from the process, taking on a liaison or ‘fixer’ role between Crossrail and the borough—not just at stations but also around other impact sites. Now that he’s a decade into the post, key parties within and outside of the council know to go through Bob for all things Crossrail.

Key experience

Fundamental change is coming to Whitechapel, perhaps inevitably due to its City Fringe location, but certainly hastened with the arrival of Crossrail. London Borough of Tower Hamlets has been proactive in directing this change, setting out its Whitechapel vision and putting in place structures and people to seize this opportunity early. The market is watching what comes next. Key experience here includes:

- Proof that there is value in borough-led masterplanning for areas around stations, even after Crossrail works have already begun;
- Prioritised intervention points can guide private sector investment, and encourage partnership working with the public sector;
- The shifting geography of Central London suggests a market offer for City growth in fringe locations, whose appeal is upped by Crossrail;
- The market and the public sector might have different ideas of an area’s property market offer, which boroughs should keep in mind as they apply policy levers;
- Community engagement is critical, but takes time and resource, particularly when engaging fragmented communities;
- There’s a single model for successful internal organisation of boroughs, but attention to teams and skills matter to delivering quality.
Introduction

In 1971, more than a million people were employed in the Capital’s manufacturing sector. In the decades since, structural change has seen London’s economic nexus shift to the service sector, with manufacturing employing just 131,000 people in 2010, or 3% of employment. Some of the Capital’s industrial areas have become home to other sectors, accommodating roughly 11% of London’s total employment. Maintaining key industrial land factors in the London Plan, including the designation of strategic industrial locations as reservoirs of industrial and related capacity.

Despite this activity, substantial swathes of former industrial land have gone underdeveloped. As the Capital’s pressing need for housing, commercial space and other development takes hold, regenerating brownfield land for these purposes is a Mayoral priority. The Supplementary Planning Guidance on Land for Industry and Transport provides guidance to plan, monitor and manage the release of surplus industrial land in contributing to these objectives.

One exemplar site is Southall, in the London Borough of Ealing, which – in some ways – might find more in common with northern English towns than with other parts of London. The area’s industrial heritage is clear: situated on the Grand Union Canal and along the Great Western Railway, industry ranging from margarine production to grain storage found its home at Southall over the years. As manufacturing shifted elsewhere, sites were left underutilised.

From the 1960s, the area took on a new role as a destination for South Asian immigration, which in turn created a niche retail offer in ethnic speciality shops. As Ealing looks to the next era for Southall, redeveloping its industrial sites and growing its town centre will begin with building on its Asian identity while moving towards a wider offer. With the arrival of Crossrail comes new possibilities for unlocking this potential.

Area metrics

- Population: 24,261
- Mean house price (£): 224,955
- Housing Tenure (%): Own (outright & with mortgage) 51.2, Private rent 26.7, Social rent 18.7
- Number in employment (workspace): 8,135

Development pipeline

- Number of major planning applications: 6
- Residential units: 4,045
- Office floorspace (sqm): 857
- Retail floorspace (sqm): 730

Current transit service

- Travelzone: Zone 4
- Rail: First Great Western (Reading/Oxford/Newbury to Paddington), Heathrow Connect (Heathrow to Paddington)
- Tube: –
- Cycle hire: No

Journey time improvements

- To Heathrow (T1,2,3): 8 mins
- To Tottenham Court Road: 17 mins
- To Liverpool Street: 21 mins
- To Canary Wharf: 20 mins
Planning perspective

Southall, like many areas along the Crossrail route, is identified in the London Plan as an Opportunity Area, and the London Borough of Ealing, working with the community, has led the development of a broad strategy for the area up to 2018. The strategy encompasses planning considerations, but also social initiatives that aim to improve safety and reduce crime, elevate civic pride and promote healthy living. The Southall Big Plan is founded on synergy between local residents, the local authority and other agents, with an overarching vision to “work together to renew pride in Southall, building on the ambition of its culturally diverse community.” Although LB Ealing is very much the lead actor, there is a clear sense that residents and community groups play an active role in the process. In a series of commitments between different stakeholders, the local authority and local public agencies promise to “back local residents and businesses” in their efforts to generate local employment, a bold pledge to the local community.

The Southall Big Plan combines a series of small-scale, community-led projects with more ambitious, physical regeneration plans that aim to enhance the “Southall experience”. The Southall Opportunity Area Planning Framework, whose development was led by LB Ealing with consideration for the wider social goals of the Big Plan, has been spurred on by the arrival of Crossrail and focuses on partnership working with landowners and developers to ensure the deliverability of strategic development sites in the area.

The local authority has worked closely with both private and third sector partners to ensure that development is equitable and caters for both existing and potential new residents, with a focus on developing diverse communities. For example, the Havelock estate to the south of the new station plays a significant role in unlocking many of the Plan’s 38 designated areas. Southall is just one case. In all, 18 Crossrail stations are located in or near 14 Opportunity Areas, which have the combined capacity to support the delivery of 120,000 homes and 320,000 jobs.

Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) put in place by London boroughs must support the objectives of the London Plan, including aligning with Opportunity Areas. In some cases, thoughtful borough-level planning may be sufficient to realise these aims. For example, at Tottenham Court Road, the LDFs of LB Camden and the City of Westminster are seen as sufficient to realise the London Plan’s vision for the Opportunity Area there.

The GLA recognises that some Opportunity Areas might need particular support to unlock their full development potential, especially in cases where cross-boundary issues exist, and so may help develop bespoke planning guidance related to this designation – called Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks (OAPFs). OAPFs guide development within an Opportunity Area, and are created through partnership between the GLA, the local authority (or authorities) and other key stakeholders active in the area. Once successfully through consultation, they are adopted by the Mayor as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the London Plan.

Beyond OAPFs, the Mayor is exploring other levers to unlock development in Opportunity Areas. One such tool put forward in Homes for London: The Draft London Housing Strategy 2013 is the establishment of Housing Zones. These could function similarly to Enterprise Zones, employing policy measures including tax incentives, lighter touch planning and land assembly. The Mayor has asked the government to explore options in conjunction with the GLA for delivering such a strategy, while the GLA sets to work with boroughs in identifying potential areas.

Southall has benefited from Mayoral intervention in at least four ways: first, through the Mayor’s ‘calling in’ of planning permission for the gas works site; second, through local recognition that an OAPF may be useful tools for creating vision and building community support for development – LB Ealing realised its importance and was proactive in kick-starting the development of a framework for Southall; third, by helping to resolve cross-boundary issues; and finally, LB Ealing has proved receptive to joint working with the Mayor, which can be carried forward. One factor to watch for is whether the LB Ealing will make a case for a Housing Zone in Southall.

Opportunity Area offers

To support London’s growth, major development sites are needed to bring forward sufficient land for housing and employment. The London Plan approaches this by identifying Opportunity Areas: major swathes of brownfield land with a typical capacity to accommodate at least 5,000 jobs, 2,500 homes or a combination of the two, underpinned by infrastructure that can support this local growth. Crossrail plays a significant role in unlocking many of the Plan’s 38 designated areas. Southall is just one case. In all, 18 Crossrail stations are located in or near 14 Opportunity Areas, which have the combined capacity to support the delivery of 120,000 homes and 320,000 jobs.

Development and investment influence

Crossrail is the major catalyst for change within Southall. It offers strategic access improvements, unlocking a major brownfield opportunity that has lain dormant for years, and may help shift perceptions of the area, generating new demand for residential and commercial space.

The Gas Works site represents the major regeneration and development opportunity here. Crossrail is providing the impetus for neighbouring authorities to work together to deliver a new community including 3,750 new homes and over 50,000sqm of commercial, community and open space. This will provide a major boost to the area, enabling the diversification of the residential offer in particular and delivering larger house types to satisfy existing unmet demand. The outline application for the Gas Works site notes the role Crossrail plays in enabling development by providing accessibility and attracting increased investment to the wider area.

Realising this potential is a long-term opportunity. In the shorter term, opportunities are more modest, representing infill and redevelopment potential within the existing urban fabric. At present, there are only plans for delivery of approximately 500 units in larger schemes. It is likely that as Crossrail is delivered and positive value trends are established, further opportunities will be identified and the pace of delivery will increase.

The opportunity arising from Crossrail is not solely tied to the delivery of new development. Southall town centre is a well-established retail destination with a focus on meeting the needs of the ethnically diverse community in West London. Improved accessibility will enhance market opportunities locally and help to diversify the offer further, potentially introducing a range of high street brands to sit alongside the current offer as the local resident catchment grows.
CROSSRAIL AS CATALYST

Looking west towards future site of St James development (Credit: Jennifer Johnson)

Already have links with Southall. Attractive, particularly those from South Asia who may live in Southall, noted that "the current generation are resistant to public transit, cycling and walking... cars are a cultural expression of one's worth." Getting people out of cars, then, is partly aspirational. Ensuring that stations, urban realm and modal interchange are modern and work efficiently raises the attractiveness of travelling on Crossrail. This supports the case for high-quality design.

There's work to be done in overcoming car culture. In efforts to avoid congestion and satisfy local demand for parking, road and urban realm design which prioritises other modes can be watered down. Delivering schemes in conjunction with Crossrail's opening sets an imperative to move quickly, but boroughs should balance this need to sign off projects with more strategic transport objectives – even if it lengthens the design process.

A green light for the gas works

Southall's gas works offers the area's largest opportunity for development – but not without challenges. Like many brownfield sites, substantial remediation is required to make the land suitable for development, posing a major cost. Accordingly, buyers were cautious. Leaseholder National Grid Property had the site on the market for 15 years, securing a hybrid outline and full planning permission for a mixed-use scheme from the Mayor of London in 2010. While they waited for a buyer, airport parking became the primary use of the 85-acre site.

Enter Berkeley Group's St James in 2012. The developer had been searching for a large regeneration site to balance its portfolio. With experience in delivering major schemes on brownfield sites in the Capital, St James saw long-term potential and was prepared for substantial upfront costs. The gasworks offered scale, amenity (including the Grand Union Canal and the adjacent Hillingdon Country Park) and quick access to Heathrow, and the impending arrival of Crossrail made it an attractive investment. The purchase was secured in July 2013, and is expected to complete in April 2014.

With full Crossrail service expected from Q3 2019, construction will focus initially on opening up the eastern edge closest to the station. The scheme is expected to take three decades to complete, delivering up to 3,750 homes, of which 30% will be affordable, made up of a 50-50 mix of social and intermediate rents. Up to 70,000sqm of retail and commercial space will also be provided, particularly focused on extending the existing town centre offer of the Broadway up South Road and into the site.

The ethnic identity of the area is likely to be reflected in the buyer demographic, as young people and families who have grown up in Southall want to maintain their community links while benefiting from the transport links of Crossrail, which will put them only minutes from central London. Investors may also find the Gas Works scheme attractive, particularly those from South Asia who may already have links with Southall.

Bringing the scheme forward involves significant coordination ahead of construction. St James decided to take on the remediation in order to have more control of cost and timing. The installation of new junctions into the site also needs to be secured. But perhaps the most arduous task is in land assembly. There are 36 other landowners in the area covered by the scheme, including the Canal & River Trust, Network Rail, and both LB Ealing and LB Hillingdon as well as private landlords. Purchase is currently being pursued by private treaty, but the GLA will step in if agreement can't be reached. Under the Localism Act, the Mayor gained Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers; if employed at Southall, it will be the first time the GLA uses CPO in this way.

At the borough level, LB Ealing's 'open for business' attitude has been applauded. For the private sector, confidence in the borough – and in its recognition of the potential Crossrail can bring – is critical given the importance of infrastructure and urban realm that need to be delivered. For the borough, St James's willingness to take a long-term view in realising return on investment means that the site can be taken forward and deliver development targets.

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Planning has sticks and carrots at its disposal to encourage public transit uptake. Planning levers can directly discourage car use through tools like prioritising road space for other modes and minimising parking. Southall's OAPF encourages car free development, and seeks to minimise car parking within a 400m radius of the Crossrail station by limiting provision to 0.3 spaces per residential unit.

It's not just about hard measures. The cultural significance and status that comes with car ownership may be a particular challenge in shifting to public transit use. One interviewee, describing the dominance of private vehicles in Southall, noted that “the current generation are resistant to public transit, cycling and walking... cars are a cultural expression of one’s worth.” Getting people out of cars, then, is partly aspirational. Ensuring that stations, urban realm and modal interchange are modern and work efficiently raises the attractiveness of travelling on Crossrail. This supports the case for high-quality design.

Confronting car culture

Private vehicles are a particular transport challenge in Outer London, where more than a quarter of residents cite them as their primary method of travel to work, compared to just under 10% in Inner London. Like much of Outer London, Southall and its residents are car-oriented. The arrival of Crossrail will mean new public transport services make many parts of London and South East more accessible. What can be done to shift car users onto Crossrail?

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There's work to be done in overcoming car culture. In efforts to avoid congestion and satisfy local demand for parking, road and urban realm design which prioritises other modes can be watered down. Delivering schemes in conjunction with Crossrail's opening sets an imperative to move quickly, but boroughs should balance this need to sign off projects with more strategic transport objectives – even if it lengthens the design process.
Bridging the infrastructure gap

Overcoming severance is a key challenge for transport infrastructure. In Southall, community spans both sides of the railway, connected by only a three-lane vehicular bridge. In addition to serving through traffic, it is also home to the current station entrance and related bus interchange. A disused pedestrian bridge sits to the east.

Demand on this bridge will grow as a result of increased footfall and interchange related to the Crossrail service, as well as other traffic linked to nearby residential and commercial development sites being brought forward. The need for better north–south connectivity has been recognised, with plans to widen the existing railway bridge. In addition to serving through traffic, it is also needed to maximise the potential of Crossrail but also support wider development and growth in the area.

The issue is not if a bridge will be built, but when. The current agreement means the widening of the railway bridge will happen when 2,500 residential units are complete, a benchmark which is likely several years away. Ealing Assistant Director of Strategic Transport Nick O’Donnell sees urgency in delivering this infrastructure sooner than that:

“Ealing Council is keen to see a package of urban realm and local highway improvements delivered prior to Crossrail, to help not only the package of measures needed to maximise the potential of Crossrail but also support wider development and growth in the area.”

A Golden opportunity?

In stretching across (and beyond) the Capital, Crossrail stations will ignite change in many local authorities. It’s easy to grasp the importance of the scheme in those locations receiving the new service, but it also has potential to help deliver regeneration and development in London boroughs without a Crossrail 1 station.

In that vein, London Borough of Hounslow has identified an opportunity to link-up with the arrival of Crossrail at Southall. Its Golden Mile area of Brentford along the Great West Road has been an epicentre of regeneration activities over the last decade, starting with the headquarters building of GlaxoSmithKline and, more recently, the Sky Media campus. Serviced by the A4, the Golden Mile is near capacity and users are feeling the impact.

South West Trains and the Piccadilly Line run nearby, but there are accessibility barriers and many employees use shuttle buses to the tube station. Crossrail will serve the area further north, and at present would only be connected by one bus route.

To support continued growth on the Golden Mile, LB Hounslow is proposing a new rail link, by adding a passenger service to a freight line that connects to Southall, along with a new station. Speaking on the proposal, Brendan Walsh, Director for Regeneration, Economic Development and Environment at LB Hounslow said:

“This is a golden opportunity to realise the latent potential of the Golden Mile by connecting it directly with Crossrail, the biggest single investment in transport ever seen in the capital. It will deliver a step change in public transport accessibility for the existing 20,000 employees with the potential to attract investment to double that number of jobs in the future, as well as provide new homes, amenity space and enhanced public realm. The employment-led growth on the Golden Mile (a newly designated Strategic Outer London Development Centrel and the residential led development set out in the Southall OAPF have the potential to perfectly complement each other, leading to a regenerative dividend for west London bigger than the sum of its parts.”

Technical feasibility is not an issue, but the business case is more complex, as it’s founded on the principle of delivering large scale employment growth on the Golden Mile. As the borough continues to engage with stakeholders to bring its scheme forward, it is particularly keen to see the link in Southall’s OAPF and has responded to the consultation. LB Hounslow is neutral on the scheme, as its impact on Southall would likely be small.

Businesses across London are contributing to Crossrail through business rates, so all local authorities are right to look at capitalising on related opportunity. Formal channels for exploring these wider options are not in place, so boroughs should be proactive in promoting schemes, as LB Hounslow has been. What comes of the plan remains to be seen.

Key experience

Across this research, Southall was frequently highlighted as a community where there is substantial scope for change linked to Crossrail’s arrival. LB Ealing’s proactive approach to realising these benefits was often cited by interviewees as an exemplar for other boroughs. Key experience demonstrated here includes:

- The value of a vision document like The Southall Big Plan, developed with extensive consultation that translates into local buy-in;
- Borough openness to Mayoral involvement, including initiating the development of an Opportunity Area Planning Framework;
- A role for the Mayor of London and appropriate application of his policy levers, including the calling in of planning applications and CPOs;
- Good borough-developer relations: an ‘open for business’ borough attitude in attracting investment and working with the private sector, and developers willing to front substantial upfront costs and take a long-term view on ROI;
- The need for hard and soft measures to encourage the local community to substitute private vehicle use for travel on Crossrail;
- Delivering supporting infrastructure for station access in a timely and cost-efficient manner;
- Exploring new possibilities for interchange from other public transit lines to Crossrail, including the possibility of new projects or services.

Congestion – and tight interchange – along the bridge that houses Southall Station (Credit: Jennifer Johnson)
Introduction

Of all the London boroughs receiving stations, LB Redbridge has been the most vocal. Beginning with Crossrail’s value-engineering of station design, the borough has been flying the flag for high-quality intervention close to home for its four stations, and across the line in making the case for Outer London. Speaking in December 2013, Redbridge Head of Inward Investment Mark Lucas captured this urgency:

“There is still time, but the door is closing. We’re in the last chance saloon. The last time stations on this branch of the tracks were created was in 1839, when the Victorians built them. When you’re talking about something which should be lasting a century and a half, we really should be applying the greatest possible design scrutiny.”

The busiest of the borough’s stations is Ilford. In many ways typical of Outer London town centres, it has a historic identity grounded in a commercial and retail offer that has been challenged as transport links improve and the retail landscape changes. For Ilford, the 2011 opening of Westfield Stratford City in neighbouring LB Newham especially compounded this shift. Crossrail presents Ilford with an opportunity consider how the town centre moves forward, and Redbridge is keen to seize it.

Station Context

Ilford is along the north-east surface section of the Crossrail route, between Manor Park and Seven Kings stations. It is one of four stations receiving Crossrail service in LB Redbridge, alongside Seven Kings, Goodmayes and Chadwell Heath. It is located within the Ilford Opportunity Area.

Area metrics

Population: 31,494
Mean house price (£): 209,405
Housing Tenure (%):
- Own (outright & with mortgage): 38.4
- Private rent: 40.6
- Social rent: 17.8
Number in employment (workspace): 16,128

Journey time improvements

To Heathrow: 14 mins
To Tottenham Court Road: 11 mins
To Liverpool Street: 1 mins
To Canary Wharf: 7 mins

Development pipeline

Number of major planning applications: 8
Residential units: 1,140
Office floorspace (sqm): 3,648
Retail floorspace (sqm): 5,531

Current transit service

Travelcard: Zone 4
Rail: Greater Anglia (Shenfield/Southend and Southminster to Liverpool Street)
Tube: —
Cycle hire: No
Planning perspective

Recognising the potential for Crossrail to act as a catalyst for encouraging growth and regeneration in the area, the Council set out a planning framework for change ahead of its arrival in 2019. Adopted in September 2011, the Crossrail Corridor Area Action Plan aims to rejuvenate the character and quality of the Roman Road east of Ilford through the provision of new schools, healthcare, leisure and community facilities, public realm and connectivity improvements and the delivery of 2,000 new homes.\(^{135}\) In the town centre, this is complemented by the Ilford Area Action Plan, where capacity for 5,000 new homes has been identified. The High Road currently suffers from a number of underused, vacant sites, a poor quality townscape, heavy traffic congestion, a lack of high quality development and opportunities for training and economic development, all of which acted as incentives for the council to prepare a plan to combat these issues.

There are also many opportunities to build on Ilford’s strengths, such as its good retail and leisure offer, areas of green, open space and strong educational reputation (as noted in the London Plan 2011). Although many of the key projects and developments identified in the Plan will take place irrespective of Crossrail, the arrival of the new high frequency railway has been described as “very much the icing on the cake” and an important mechanism for enacting change and growth in the area.\(^{136}\)

A number of these key projects have included the creation of new educational and training opportunities for the local community. One of these has been the redevelopment of the Cricklefields Opportunity Site, located in the Area Action Plan’s ‘East of Ilford Character Area’. The Isaac Newton Academy, a new six form entry secondary school opened on the site in September 2012. Specialist facilities such as the sports hall and IT suite are available for community use outside of school hours and a new primary academy on the site will start taking pupils from September 2014. The new Academy has helped to meet the increasing demand for school places in the Borough, and forms part of the Council’s plans for the expansion and redevelopment of other vacant sites and existing schools along the Crossrail Corridor.

The Area Action Plan not only provides a framework to stimulate the local economy and guide development but it also seeks to promote Ilford as a desirable and inclusive place to live through the delivery of tangible community benefits such as new educational facilities. The joined-up approach through the recognition within the planning policy framework of a ‘Crossrail Corridor’ has enabled LB Redbridge, as landowners, to appreciate the wider opportunities and challenges from Crossrail rather than just simply focusing on those in the immediate area by the stations.

Benefiting smaller stations

The conversation about realising opportunity around Crossrail sometimes stops after the ‘obvious’ areas of impact: new-build stations, town centres, brownfield sites. While these interventions form a significant part of the route, they aren’t the whole story. What about the line’s lesser-known stations?

Along the surface section, Crossrail is not a new piece of infrastructure; it’s a new service between existing stations. In some locations where the surrounding urban fabric is quite established, development opportunities do not abound. In its 2012 Property Impact Study for Crossrail, GVA classified these types of areas as “limited impact – where little change to the current development context can be expected” largely because there was little identified capacity, or stations were in tightly restricted areas such as Green Belt or conservation areas.\(^{137}\) Ten of these identified stations sit in London:

- On the western surface stretch: LB Hillingdon’s West Drayton station and LB Ealing’s Hanwell, West Ealing and Action Main Line stations.
- On the eastern surface stretch: LB Newham’s Maryland, Forest Gate and Manor Park stations, LB Redbridge’s Chadwell Heath station, and LB Havering’s Gidea Park and Harold Wood stations.\(^{138}\)

GVA followed this work up in 2014 with an analysis of the development pipeline around Crossrail stations. Drawing data from submitted planning applications for major schemes, the research identified substantial activity even at this early point. Only four of Crossrail’s London sites hadn’t yet seen a major planning application with 1km of the station: Heathrow, Maryland, Forest Gate and Manor Park.\(^{139}\)

Is a limited scope for development or regeneration a bad thing? Not necessarily, some borough interviewees argued. Crossrail may not need to be a catalyst everywhere to be a success, especially when considering that its primary purpose is to increase capacity on the transit network, if a local community can enjoy a better-quality rail service, and perhaps benefit from uplift in property values, this may meet the needs of some locations.

The Crossrail Corridor Action Plan does well in considering smaller stations in strategic planning. In stitching together all of the borough’s stations in one planning document, it both provides a wide aspiration for receiving the line and design principles tailored to each area’s character and opportunities. For boroughs receiving multiple interventions from a single scheme, it’s a strategy to strongly consider.
Development and investment influence

Ilford town centre experienced major development and change during the late 1990s and early 2000s, delivering a range of high quality (and high rise) developments around the station. Momentum has slowed since 2008, however Crossrail is beginning to provide a catalyst for further development and change.

The most clearly defined impact of Crossrail to date has been the changing focus of town centre development. Ilford has seen a major impact from Westfield Stratford initially, drawing shoppers away from the town centre and, in turn, causing some retailers to leave the town. It can be deduced that by enhancing connections to Stratford and providing direct connections to the West End retail core, Crossrail will further exacerbate this trend. Similarly, the growth of the commercial office pipeline in central London has reduced demand for space in ‘satellite’ locations such as Ilford, reducing the strength of the town centre’s economic base further.

As such Ilford is at a crossroads in terms of its future. Work by LB Redbridge is seeking to enhance the perceptions of Ilford to investors, an approach which links improvements to the urban realm with the new Crossrail service to attract the growing local market. In the longer term this will help to refocus the office offer and strengthen the local market by retaining stock that best meets the demand profile of the area. In the longer term this will help strengthen values and encourage further space to come forward where demand exists.

Importantly, the increased residential demand is beginning to address a number of stock issues within the town centre. In particular development proposals are seeking to redevelop existing low quality office buildings to provide residential units, which will have additional benefits in market terms.

Removing the weakest office stock will improve the perception and quality of the town centre environment, encouraging further interest from developers. It will also help to refocus the office offer and strengthen the local market by retaining stock that best meets the demand profile of the area. In the longer term this will help strengthen values and encourage further space to come forward where demand exists.

Enhancing station design

For Crossrail passengers, stations are the gateway into a community. A well-designed station can contribute to the public realm and broader regeneration of an area, enticing passengers to use the line and creating an attractive environment for potential investors.

Careful attention has been paid to design in Crossrail’s new stations, involving renowned architects and experts from other disciplines. All new stations in the tunneled section and Abbey Wood have been subject to design review by a panel set up by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). The new Pudding Mill Lane DLR station, built as part of Crossrail, has also been design-reviewed.

For the surface stations, preliminary design in advance of the Crossrail Bill’s 2005 introduction to Parliament gave high-level indications for what each station could expect. After Royal Assent, Crossrail Ltd got to work allocating available funding, allowing for safety, cost and delivery schedule impacts. One result of this value engineering was the requirement to re-evaluate station improvements at some locations.

All London surface stations will receive improvements including rebranding, new signage, lighting and passenger information facilities. Major interventions such as larger ticket halls, new lifts, longer platforms or new footbridges were proposed for some surface stations, but some were reassessed; for example, existing ticket halls or station decks were to be refurbished in place of new construction. Ilford was amongst these.142

As time passed, two boroughs – Ealing and Hillingdon – appointed architects to realise their vision for the stations in their borough.141 “The local authorities are very serious in their ambitions for these stations – there is a frustration that has been brewing for a while,”143 said Hiro Aso, director at architecture firm John McAslan + Partners, reflecting on his firm’s appointment at Southall and Hayes and Harlington stations.
Building local skills

Employment and training are top concerns for all public organisations, including in Ilford. With Crossrail come new opportunities and accessibility for work and education.

Crossrail itself has been investing in skills training through sponsoring the UK’s first national Tunnelling and Underground Construction Academy. Built in 2011 by Crossrail and located to the west of Ilford Station, it offers essential tunnelling and underground construction skills and qualifications for people working on the Crossrail project. The Academy aims to address the shortage of people with these key skills and create employment opportunities within the construction sector, and is Europe’s only purpose-built facility for skills training on soft-ground tunnelling techniques. Once the construction of Crossrail is complete, it is envisaged that the Academy will provide a lasting legacy by continuing to offer training for people working on other major London, national and European tunnelling projects such as the Thames Tunnel and Dublin Metro.

Up-skilling the workforce so that they can take advantage of opportunities along the Crossrail line has been suggested before. In their Crossrail Regeneration Strategic Prospectus for the London Development Agency (LDA), consultancy Regeneris advocated for interventions in skills, training, employment and inclusion. Specifically, they suggested “investment in programmes that tackle barriers to employment and help to improve and strengthen the skills of the workforce, including:

- Schemes and programmes that support Londoners in becoming ‘work ready’;
- Supporting local organisations to deliver solutions to address local issues;
- Influence the private sector to stimulate job opportunities for London.”

Perhaps due to the folding of the LDA into the GLA at around the time of Regeneris’ report, these recommendations have not been fully implemented on a pan-London scale. With four years until service begins, there’s still time to deliver employment and skills-focused programmes. Public-sector stakeholders can start by considering the interventions above.

A role for business partnerships

Local business has a lot riding on Crossrail. There are benefits in the market exposure that stems from better transport links but there’s also risk, as customers and clients can leave as easily as they come. Just as skills training and employment programmes can support local residents in realising new economic opportunities, the business community also need engagement.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) may provide one entry point for business engagement. BIDs are geographical areas in which the local businesses have voted to invest collectively to improve their environment. The number in London is rapidly rising, with 37 currently representing diverse business communities across the Capital.

A recent GLA study demonstrates the willingness of BIDs to deliver a range of interventions. All 30 BIDs included in the survey stated they were involved in area marketing and promotion; 21 said they were involved in business support and services; and 16 indicated they were involved in delivering basic area improvements. Just under half of London BIDs surveyed said they were involved in, or planning, larger public realm and regeneration projects.

Ilford BID works on behalf of almost 500 of the town centre’s businesses. Having just begun its second term, the BID will feature Crossrail in its ongoing programme. Ilford BID Manager Ben Collins reflects on what the organisation can do to prepare businesses for the scheme’s arrival:

“In my opinion, Crossrail has had little effect on Ilford town centre businesses and I believe it needs to be more on their radar. The BID can and will help bridge what I feel is a knowledge gap with information through a range of communications measures... The BID was renewed in November last year and one of the major goals is to deliver a vision for the future of Ilford town centre. This should and will be tied with the arrival of Crossrail.”

As least four other stations are in, or adjacent to, existing BIDs: Ealing Broadway, Paddington, Bond Street and Tottenham Court Road. Business Improvement Districts’ five-year terms mean that many might not be considering Crossrail yet; as 2018 nears, they should be proactive in preparing their businesses – and the public sector should look to use BIDs as tools for realising local economic development around Crossrail.
Local employment offer

Is a shift away from retail, commercial and industrial space towards residential use the big development story for Crossrail in Outer London? As a designated Metropolitan Town Centre, Ilford hopes not. The community and borough aspire to keep commercial, cultural and leisure activity as a vibrant part of its offer, and the arrival of Crossrail might provide some support.

A niche market offer (such as a sector cluster, e.g. technology, medicine) is one approach to attracting businesses to an area; affordable space is another. In response to London’s priory market, some companies have delegated administrative functions to other cities in recent years where commercial space is cheaper. As Crossrail improves access to underdeveloped office markets in Outer London and the South East, there could be a case for relocating back-office departments along the route instead of further afield in England. It’s important to remember, however, that space accounts for a smaller portion of office costs than in the past (around 15%); once balanced with London’s higher cost of labour, this business case might weaken.

Some communities have expressed concern that better transport connectivity might actually detract from their commercial offer, further increasing the accessibility of the CAZ and decreasing the viability of local employment. A small strand of TfL’s research around the 2050 Infrastructure Investment Plan may provide evidence to the contrary, suggesting that areas that have attractive residential offers to high earners may benefit from this employee mobility. Ian Birch, Transport Economist at TfL, outlines the findings on the link between Central London and local jobs:

“We have found that there is a strong relationship between the average earnings of residents and local employment levels in London. The high incomes of Central London employees in particular generate high levels of demand for local services in the areas they live in.

There are also parts of London in which few Central London workers live and accordingly they tend to have lower levels of local employment. These are often the areas that used to have strong local employers (e.g. Ford in Dagenham) and they haven’t been as successful as other parts of the city at finding a new role following earlier structural decline. An implication is that if we can make these areas more attractive to a wider range of people including a sprinkling of high-income people, we can help regenerate them.

Another implication is that high-income Central London workers generate more growth pressure in the locations in which they live than average, which may be a challenge in areas of southeast England beyond London.”

So, it follows that better Central London connections may support more local jobs, perhaps focused on retail, leisure and local service orientated businesses. It’s too early to say with certainty what influence transport access will have on employment patterns; even once Crossrail opens, it will be difficult to distinguish the line’s impact from all other market forces. In the interim, a seminar attendee urged boroughs to take a hard look at their offer: “What is their town centre, and what will it become? How can they help it develop a new identity, and do new things?”

Key experience

LB Redbridge has long recognised potential for Crossrail to enable a new wave of development and regeneration. Throughout this project, key stakeholders have pointed to the borough’s strategic work and advocacy as exemplary best practice for other local authorities to take note of. Ilford station is at the heart of that work. Key experience presented here includes:

- **Comprehensive planning frameworks** like the Crossrail Corridor Area Action Plan encourage creative partnership within the council, and can help attract inward investment;
- For boroughs receiving multiple interventions, there’s value to small stations in creating a borough-wide strategy;
- As town centres change, a shift towards residential use may help support a high-quality mixed-use offer;
- **High-quality station design** is critical for realising wider benefit, but has proven difficult to secure;
- To best benefit from new economic opportunities along the line, local people need access to skills training and employment advice;
- Business communities also need support, and **Business Improvement Districts** may be an ideal mechanism for engagement;
- Given uncertainty on the impact of Crossrail on town centre employment, boroughs should be both thoughtful and ambitious in setting out a vision for employment and skills.

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"65"
Accessing new opportunities in Outer London

Abbey Wood

Introduction

Sitting at the end of the line on the boundary of Royal Borough of Greenwich and London Borough of Bexley, Abbey Wood feels miles from Central London due to poor transport connections. In a time of change across much of the Capital, it has largely stood still over recent decades. Post-war infrastructure dominates and fragments the area. The station itself sits in the middle of a community that is predominantly residential, accessible from a thoroughfare that runs along the borough boundary. Put bluntly, not much is happening around the station.

Crossrail is a chance to reimagine Abbey Wood. One interviewee captured this hope in pointing to a spectrum of ways the line’s presence could elevate the area: directly, for example by raising the area’s profile, enabling opportunities around the station, and increasing land values; and indirectly, for example through giving confidence to the market, and in spurring the two boroughs to strategically plan for growth and regeneration. There’s a lot of potential at Abbey Wood – but also lots to do.

Station Context

Abbey Wood station is the terminus of the southeast surface section of the Crossrail route, and follows Woolwich. It sits on the border of two boroughs: Royal Borough of Greenwich to its west, and London Borough of Bexley to its east. It is located within the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area.

Area metrics

- Population: 20,725
- Mean house price (£): 177,702
- Housing Tenure (%): Own (outright & with mortgage) 46.1, Private rent 14.9, Social rent 37.4
- Number in employment (workspace): 1,334

Development pipeline

- Number of major planning applications: 2
- Residential units: 244
- Office floorspace (sqm): 426
- Retail floorspace (sqm): 8,942

Journey time improvements

- To Heathrow (T1,2,3): 24 mins
- To Tottenham Court Road: 25 mins
- To Liverpool Street: 27 mins
- To Canary Wharf: 20 mins

Current transit service

- Travelzone: Zone 4
- Rail: Southeastern (Dartford and Gravesend Metro lines)
- Tube: –
- Cycle hire: No
Planning perspective

Regeneration in the area around Abbey Wood has, thus far, largely been private and third sector led. A Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Supplementary Planning Document was produced jointly by Greenwich and Bexley councils and adopted in 2009. This sets the broad, overarching policy context for the wider area around the station and beyond. However, no detailed masterplan has come forward for the area, despite acknowledgement in the SPD that a “comprehensive masterplanning exercise” is required to avoid “piecemeal development.”

In the absence of a detailed strategy, a partnership encompassing Development Securities, Berkshire Investment Capital and Gallions Housing Association (now part of the Peabody group) has been formed to take forward a comprehensive redevelopment on a largely derelict 10 acre brownfield site to the north of the station. The development, known as Cross Quarter, will “develop a heart” for the area by providing a major new Sainsbury’s supermarket, addressing the lack of major convenience retail in Abbey Wood. Cross Quarter will also include 220 new homes, community facilities (including an Early Years centre), a hotel and units which will be aimed specifically at start-up businesses.

The partnership leveraged £38m from the insurance group Canada Life to fund the first phase of the development and aims to generate further private sector investment and create 450 jobs, primarily for local residents. Peabody, one of the development partners, is simultaneously developing an economic masterplan for the Thamesmead estate, an area in which they have significant land holdings, with the aim of maximising the economic and regenerative benefits which Crossrail will draw. The area has significant scope for further development, including the intensification of existing land (highlighted in the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood SPD). Going forward though, there is a genuine need for closer partnership working between public and private sectors and the development of a more defined spatial vision for the area to allow Abbey Wood to maximise its potential.

Design review success

In 2008, Crossrail announced it would be working with Design Council’s CABE. A special design review panel was set up to provide expert feedback, initially with the intention of assessing seven new stations in Central London and the Docklands. Reviews looked at parts of the development requiring consent from the relevant planning authority, and considered all facets of design including exteriors and over-site development. Speaking on the partnership, panel chair Les Sparks said:

“Design review by CABE has been tried and tested. Over the last nine years it has had a significant impact on the quality of new buildings and spaces. This initiative with Crossrail shows a commitment to ensure that this huge investment in transport infrastructure results in exceptional buildings that Londoners can be proud of. Design quality is critical for the new stations to operate effectively. But we also want to see them adding considerably to the quality of the environment around them.”

Plans for installing a new-build station at Abbey Wood were driven by a much different need than at the central stretch stations: in order to expand the railway below to four tracks, the existing station had to be demolished. This unglamorous motivation meant that putting the station to design review was not an initial priority.

Interviewees expressed their view that the Abbey Wood scheme was always going to be “okay”, but Greenwich and Bexley rightly saw an opportunity to drive the area’s regeneration with a landmark station. Sitting together on a joint working group focused on station design, the boroughs pushed back on initial design proposals.

As station design was revisited, Abbey Wood was subject to a design review from CABE – twice. At the first review, the Network Rail-led scheme had several improvements suggested by the panel. Taking this feedback away, the design was thoroughly re-evaluated and, at its second review, CABE was impressed with the changes: “the project now has the potential to be an exemplar of suburban regeneration.” This positive experience at Abbey Wood has some practitioners pointing to the scheme as a demonstration of the benefit accrued from design review.

Development and investment influence

The arrival of Crossrail at Abbey Wood will transform the relationship between the area and the rest of London. For the first time it will be directly connected to London’s major economic hubs such as Canary Wharf and the West End. However, whilst the long-term benefits are likely to be significant, Abbey Wood is starting from a relatively low base and it will take time and effort to realise this full potential. As such, the full impacts for the property market are unlikely to occur until after services begin in 2018 and the perception of the area begins to change. This will require a wider set of interventions in ‘place-making’, improvements to the current stock offer and enhancements in the mix of activities and amenities locally.

The weak market starting point is reflected through the current low levels of market activity within Abbey Wood in terms of permitted development, which are amongst the lowest along the whole route. Development Securities (in partnership with Gallions Housing) are bringing forward an £85m development at Cross Quarter, which will introduce new residential, retail and hotel space as a ‘gateway’ to the wider area.

More widely, the regeneration of Thamesmead will draw heavily on the connectivity provided by Crossrail, using new accessibility to broaden the residential mix, attract new skilled residents to the area and, over time, deliver improved local economic opportunities. However, potential property value uplifts will be constrained in the short term by the quality of the existing built stock. It will take time for developers to have confidence in the market and therefore initial development phases are likely to be led in partnership with the public sector or housing associations.

Estate renewal is underway within Thamesmead and is improving the stock offer. However, demand in the first instance will be driven from indigenous demand and ‘urban pioneers’ who will be drawn to the area by these wider improvements alongside the transport upgrade. It is therefore expected that the early property impacts will be modest.
At present, Abbey Wood lacks a significant scale commercial property market offer, with modest retail offer within the Thamesmead district centre and an employment offer focussed on manufacturing and distribution. An increased population with higher skills and incomes alongside greater business opportunities for firms located here will be facilitated by Crossrail. Over time, the increased demand will offer the opportunity to grow the commercial market, diversifying the retail and employment offer; however, this will need to be led by residential development to create a critical mass.

More immediately (and perhaps most importantly) there are major economic opportunities for the residents of Abbey Wood and Thamesmead. Working with the existing population and business base to ensure they can access new opportunities provided by Crossrail connections will be key in the longer term physical regeneration of the area.

Considering new offers

Developers and investors looking at Abbey Wood would see lots of potential for growth, with two challenges. The first is simply a lack of developable sites. In the absence of a masterplan, opportunities are not obvious – they are there, they’re just fragmented.

A more structural challenge comes in the lack of a clear offer. As the property impact analysis states, a lack of developer confidence in the market means that early schemes might need to be taken forward in partnership with the public sector or with a housing association.

Though cumbersome in some ways, the possibility of bringing forward a scheme in partnership may provide the public sector with an interesting opportunity to explore new housing offers or models. For example, growing appetite for the private rented sector’s build-to-let market in the Capital, including amongst investors, could be an attractive option to consider for Abbey Wood.

Given the area’s growing population of older people, Patrick Devlin, Director of Third Age Housing at architectural firm Pollard Thomas Edwards, put forward an alternative suggestion:

“A number of inputs are likely to be needed in order to generate sufficient activity for local centres or neighbourhood hubs to become self-sustaining. Amongst these factors, footfall, spend, diversity of activity and social networks all benefit from the presence and involvement of older people. They hold much of the social capital in networks, they are often there when others are at work or school. In addition, the over-55s as a demographic group have relatively high levels of disposable income, and often support local businesses as a preference because it makes the neighbourhood more liveable, and sociable.”

In addition to these inputs, the popularity of a neighbourhood among the over-55s can be seen as a mark of approval for its character and facilities, including a feeling of security and friendliness. The over-55s are really a crucial part of the mix in building or regenerating a neighbourhood, and as people get older they will often prioritise good transport links such as are provided by Crossrail, both to cut down or eliminate the need to drive, and to ensure that they are accessible to their social networks. If Crossrail planning recognises this, there could be significant gains for councils, developers and residents.”

Whether the private rented sector or Third Age Housing is an appropriate offer for Abbey Wood in practice is beyond the scope of this report but the principle of openness to new development models should be carried forward as both boroughs involved look to bring investment into the area.

Cycling connections

Cycling in London has a clear Inner–Outer London split. The proportion of the population who travel to work by bicycle ranges from a London high of 14.6% of Hackney residents to a low of 0.8% of commuters living in LB Harrow. Bexley and Greenwich also come in with small proportions for cycling commutes, at 1.2% and 2.3% respectively.

The Mayor of London is working to encourage cycling uptake across the Capital. In 2013, he launched a funding competition specifically targeted at Outer London boroughs. The Mini-Holland programme aims to transform “areas once terra incognita for the bicycle [that] will, over time, become every bit as cycle-friendly as their Dutch equivalents – places that suburbs and towns all over Britain will want to copy.”

Three of the eight boroughs who bid for Mini-Holland funding linked their proposals to Crossrail: Ealing, Newham and Bexley. Bexley’s proposed scheme, which featured creating radical new junction solutions for cyclists in key locations and rolling out an extensive segregated and semi-segregated cycling network, linked to Crossrail at Abbey Wood. Though none of these three were ultimately selected as winners, it is expected that these boroughs will be able to access some funding to make improvements put forward in their bids.

London’s push for cycling came after work began on Crossrail, it comes as no surprise then that while the scheme does link with cycling, there’s space to do more. As cycling mode share increases, there is a need to better integrate routes into stations. Good parking provision also matters and, if policy dictates that bikes cannot go on trains, then it becomes even more important.

Cycling provision matters especially for Abbey Wood, as the station is a terminus of the route and so passengers will travel by other modes to begin their journeys on the line. Though unsuccessful in the Mini-Holland competition, the proposal put in place by Bexley will prove a useful tool in attracting complementary funding from other avenues.
Getting on the map

Across all the stations examined in this report, the wider perception of an area was consistently identified as a step-change in realising actual impact. And no single benefit in receiving Crossrail was brought up as much as its simplest one: making it on to the Tube map. Abbey Wood is not on today’s conventional Tube map, and the same is true for a majority of London stations receiving Crossrail. 17 other stations do not make the current version of the Tube map: Acton Main Line, Chadwell Heath, Forest Gate, Greenford, Goodmayes, Harrow, Harold Wood, Hayes and Harlington, Ilford, Manor Park, Maryland, Romford, Seven Kings, Southall, West Drayton, West Ealing and Woolwich.

In part, being on the Tube map is about creating brand recognition, as the first step to attracting inward investment is getting an area on investors’ radars. It’s also an exercise in place-making for the existing community, creating a sense of connection with other parts of London.

There might be a further impact related to the map itself. One study suggests that London Underground passengers’ travel decisions are heavily shaped by the schematic transit map, even more than they are influenced by their own previous experience on the network. Passengers trust the distorted map distance more than their own memory of actual travel time. How transfers between lines were presented on the map also had an influence on path choice.157 Whatever the psychological importance, there’s certainty that this simple intervention will come once Crossrail begins service. Stakeholders need not wait until 2018 to start considering perception though; a range of communication mediums and public relations strategies may help boroughs take advantage of an attitudinal shift sooner than later.

Cross-borough working

In many ways, Abbey Wood straddles two very different organisations in Greenwich and Bexley: a Labour borough and a Conservative one; a borough well-versed in receiving major infrastructure from the Jubilee Line Extension to the Olympics and one who has less recent experience; a borough receiving another major Crossrail station in Woolwich, and one whose only direct connection with the scheme lies at Abbey Wood.

Despite these differences, the boroughs have found some success in working together, demonstrating the value in collaboration through their station-design effort. In its second design review, CABLE applauded this partnership working:

“We recognise the benefits of cross-borough working, so it is positive that both local authorities (Greenwich and Bexley) are willing to seize this current development opportunity as a catalyst for broader regeneration within this neighbourhood.”158

Another joint working success has come in the urban realm design by Urban Movement, jointly commissioned by the two boroughs, TFL and Crossrail, which is perhaps the most transformational urban realm design on the whole route. The design – a result of more than two years of work – has the support of all parties and reforms the Harrow Manor Way fly-over into a pedestrian and cycle friendly road with a new station forecourt and bus interchange.

Abbey Wood is not the only station to necessitate cross-borough working; three other London stations involve multiple boroughs in their station building or immediate area: Tottenham Court Road involves LB Camden and the City Westminster, Chadwell Heath sits just inside LB Redbridge with station environs stretching into LB Barking and Dagenham; and Farringdon is at the junction of LB Islington, LB Camden, and the City of London. If a station at Old Oak Common proceeds, it can also be added to this list.

Some research participants expressed the view that while borough collaboration can work when projects have clear scope, jointly delivering wider vision or strategy is a much more difficult exercise. What could resolve this stalemate?
Introduction

Woolwich was a latecomer to Crossrail. It was not included in the line’s original scope, but made it onto the map during the passage of the Crossrail Bill when an agreement with Berkeley Homes to fund the station box was reached. Elements of the area’s military and industrial heritage are apparent in Woolwich but, as this identity fades, the town looks to new development as part of its transformation. Crossrail has a clear role in helping to regenerate the area, and so it’s of little surprise that the area pushed for a station.

Woolwich is not the only example of a late addition to the route. Old Oak Common and Kensal Rise have both been proposed in the time since the Crossrail Act, offering different cases for extending the service – and different outcomes. Similarly, Reading was part of the original, longer Crossrail route, was not included in the Act, and has since been reinstated as the line’s western terminus.

Area metrics

| Population | 23,885 |
| Mean house price (£) | 226,661 |
| Housing Tenure (%) |  |
| Own (outright & with mortgage) | 19.8 |
| Private rent | 28.5 |
| Social rent | 44.7 |
| Number in employment (workspace) | 11,685 |

Current transit service

- Travelzone: Zone 4
- Rail: Southeastern (Dartford and Gravesend Metro Lines)
- Tube: Docklands Light Railway
- Cycle hire: No

Development pipeline

- Number of major planning applications: 13
- Residential units: 4,286
- Office floorspace (sqm): 6,547
- Retail floorspace (sqm): 10,635

Journey time improvements

- To Heathrow (T1, 2, 3): 15 mins
- To Tottenham Court Road: 18 mins
- To Liverpool Street: 17 mins
- To Canary Wharf: 9 mins
Planning perspective

Woolwich has been identified by the Royal Borough of Greenwich as entering into a period of exciting change and opportunity. This area of London has a long military and industrial history, being home to the Woolwich Dockyard and the Royal Artillery, with the town still retaining an army base at the Royal Artillery Barracks. In recent years, the area has been the host of a number of new transport improvements such as the extension of the Docklands Light Railway from North Woolwich to Woolwich Arsenal, London River Services, and now Crossrail. Both the London Plan and the Royal Borough of Greenwich’s Core Strategy (currently at examination stage) realise the unique opportunity for Woolwich to build on open and proposed transport infrastructure to increase the borough’s residential capacity, the performance of the town centre and the area’s overall reputation as a desirable place to live, work and play.

Royal Arsenal Riverside in Woolwich is one of the capital’s largest regeneration sites and its redevelopment by Berkeley Homes sits directly adjacent to the planned Woolwich Crossrail station. A 30 hectare derelict site, formerly home to a munitions factory, it is widely regarded as the area’s flagship development and has helped the area to enjoy a renaissance.

The local authority has encouraged the opening up of this site and the development of an additional 2,700 homes, aiming to reconnect the riverside with the town centre and maximise the benefits of the new Crossrail station. The masterplan submitted by Berkeley Homes proposes a new commercial and leisure quarter for Woolwich with residential, retail, office and community uses. Phase 1 of the development has already been completed and includes the provision of 300 affordable homes out of 453 homes in apartments above the station.

The council has also secured major private sector investment in Woolwich town centre to create new retail floor space, open spaces, homes and over 1,000 new jobs in the next five years through the implementation of the Woolwich Town Centre Masterplan. Supplementary Planning Document adopted in April 2012. Several high street shops have opened branches in Woolwich and a number of the existing shops have been refurbished.

The masterplan recognises the benefits of the major new transport links arriving in Woolwich, including the Docklands Light Railway and Crossrail, and notes that Woolwich is an area “poised for change” that will increase in importance as a new transport hub. The Masterplan further supports the intensification of the areas and uses around the proposed Crossrail station, as proposed by the Berkeley Homes Royal Arsenal Riverside development.

The implementation of proposals for Woolwich Town Centre and the Royal Arsenal Riverside site have already begun to raise the profile of the area and encourage its wider regeneration. With the promise of further development in the area and the improvement of links between the town centre and the new Crossrail station, key players like Berkeley Homes and the Royal Borough of Greenwich continue to effectively harness the opportunities in Woolwich ahead of the arrival of Crossrail in 2018.

Development and investment influence

Woolwich is forecast to be a major beneficiary from Crossrail. The property value impacts are already being recognised, with recent reports suggesting residential values have increased significantly in the past 12 months. These impacts will begin to shift developer perceptions, attracting greater commercial interest to complement the growing residential offer.

In development terms the benefits of Crossrail to Woolwich have been mixed to date. There has been major high-quality residential space delivered at the Royal Arsenal with the delivery of recent and new phases by Berkeley Homes directly linked to the opening of Crossrail. However, this impact has not been experienced more widely, with limited new development coming forward within the town centre itself.

There are signs this is beginning to change. Berkeley’s over-station development at the Woolwich Crossrail station was recently granted permission and will provide new residential space above ground-floor business and retail units. Importantly, public realm improvements surrounding it will also act as a key gateway between the existing town centre and the Royal Arsenal development via the station itself.

Major investment within the town centre has created a new central hub which has begun to attract new retail activity alongside improved civic, residential and parking provision. Further phases of development are now in the pipeline, including Crossrail’s station development at the eastern end of the station box with plans also being developed for major brownfield sites at Spray Street and Thomas Street. The key focus of these will be to further raise the quality of the town centre built stock and fabric, encouraging greater demand for a range of uses and providing greater integration with the Royal Arsenal and Crossrail station.

The impacts of Crossrail within Woolwich are likely to be unevenly spread in the short term, with the established offer of the Royal Arsenal continuing to deliver high-quality residential space in advance of services commencing, whilst the wider enhancement of the town centre is delivered once the station is open and opportunities are considered to be more ‘tangible’. To assist the wider regeneration programme and encourage greater property investment in the town centre, these linkages need to be improved to enable the economic potential of new residential communities to be harnessed locally.

Delivering density with permeability

As London looks to accommodate the enormous population growth it expects over the next two decades, making the most of development opportunities around transit nodes will be a key focus. Transit accessibility is quantified through the public transit accessibility levels (PTALs), which are a “detailed and accurate measure of the accessibility of a point to the public transport network, taking into account walk access time and service availability. PTALs reflect:

- walking time from the point-of-interest to the public transport access points;
- the reliability of the service modes available;
- the number of services available within the catchment; and
- the level of service at the public transport access points – i.e. average waiting time.”

Planners in London are familiar with the London Plan’s density matrix, whose formulaic approach sets PTALs against setting (‘central’, ‘urban’, ‘suburban’) to determine density ranges for development in a given area. PTALs will climb with Crossrail’s arrival, driving higher density at many locations.

One interviewee highlighted that long-distance strategic transport (like Crossrail) may come with the price of disrupting local accessibility networks. When density is assessed on a site-by-site basis, the aggregate impact on the whole area is not optimised and a highly built-up area is not permeable. Local areas need to be sustained with well-designed public space and supporting infrastructure. In focusing on demand, the sustainable capacity of an area risks being forgotten. TfL and Crossrail recognise this need; as part of these efforts, TfL has set aside £30m in a Crossrail Complementary Measures fund to pay for urban realm and transport improvements by allocating funds to boroughs in 2015–2019.

In Woolwich, there’s some concern that these local links are not being optimised. The Crossrail station sits back from the high street amidst Berkeley’s Royal Arsenal development whose contributions made the station viable in the first place. To work for the whole community, further improvements to the roadway and pavement are needed to improve the link between the station and the town centre and wider bus network.
Finding station funding

The Crossrail station at Woolwich was not included in the Crossrail Bill, and so no funding was allocated to it in the parliamentary process. After subsequent lobbying from RB Greenwich and developer Berkeley, MPs on the Crossrail Bill Select Committee recommended in October 2006 that Woolwich be included, as it offered ‘exceptional value for money’. However, no additional funding was provided by central government, which did not want the overall agreed cost of the project to be exceeded.

In 2011, an agreement was reached with Berkeley Homes to build the station box to a specification given by Crossrail. The box would then be handed over to Crossrail for fit-out from 2013, to meet the line’s opening schedule in 2018. In return for building the station box, Berkeley Homes were given over-site development rights and permitted densities in the surrounding development were increased.

The station box was completed in February 2013, with no agreement on a final funding package yet reached. Discussions over funding for the fit-out continued until July 2013, when the government announced that a funding package of £54m had been put together to contribute to the station’s fit-out costs, estimated at £75m. This funding was made up of contributions from RB Greenwich, Berkeley Homes, the GLA, and TfL. Crossrail will also contribute any savings made by having the station ready to open in 2018.

Of the £54m committed to complete Woolwich station in time for the route opening, TfL’s contribution will be taken from increased fare revenues provided by the additional station, while the GLA has made a £5m grant from the Mayor’s Regeneration Fund. RB Greenwich will contribute money from developer agreements, while Berkeley Homes will contribute an additional amount (both unspecified).

Given the ‘exceptional’ case for a station at Woolwich, the addition has received widespread backing from local and central government as well as the private sector. Along with the fixed deadlines for the completion of the station box and the route opening, this has created the will in both sectors to find a way to overcome obstacles and find funding to take the project forward. While this has been possible in Woolwich, it may not have worked in other cases where benefits were less obvious. Delivery of the Woolwich station would have been more straightforward had it been included in the Crossrail Act and had funding allocated accordingly. However, cross-sector funding has been established as a viable model where this is not possible.

Other proposed stations

Old Oak Common

Old Oak Common was not envisaged as a station on the Crossrail route, but a station there now appears likely thanks to plans for a stop on the HS2 route. The possibility for an interchange between Crossrail and HS2 is appealing, and would create a driver for development in the surrounding area, which is part of the Park Royal Opportunity Area. There is also potential for an interchange with London Overground, a link to the HS1 Channel Tunnel route, and an extension of Crossrail services to Wembley.

The Mayor’s vision for Old Oak Common outlines a 30 year, multiple-phase project which could deliver up to 90,000 jobs and 19,000 homes. A Crossrail station would be constructed in 2026, to link with the HS2 service which is projected to commence in 2026/7. It is likely that the Crossrail depot and sidings currently planned for Old Oak Common will need to be moved to another site to open up development opportunities close to the new station.

As part of the Park Royal Opportunity Area, Old Oak Common is already covered by the OAPF drawn up in 2011 by GLA. However, in order to make the most of the opportunity for significant redevelopment offered by a Crossrail/HS2 interchange, it now appears likely that a Mayoral Development Corporation will be established to ensure delivery, alongside a separate OAPF for Old Oak Common. While the boundaries of the MDC are yet to be fixed, the body would assume planning powers from three London boroughs: Hammersmith and Fulham, Brent and Ealing.

The scope and powers of the Old Oak Common MDC are to be consulted on, but the Mayor has expressed a desire to see the MDC in operation by summer 2015. Old Oak Common shares many characteristics in common with London’s first MDC at the Olympic Park, including being situated across multiple boroughs, fragmented land ownership, and being tied to a flagship project with strict delivery deadlines.

Kensal Rise

An unsuccessful case in appealing for a Crossrail station found in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, who along with developer Ballymore pursued the potential of adding a station at Kensal. Kensal Canalside is designated as an Opportunity Area and adjoins the larger Park Royal and Old Oak Common OAs to the west.

Economic development consultancy Regeneris produced a report on economic and regeneration impacts of a station at Kensal, finding that a Crossrail station could add £609m to the local economy and support lasting regeneration. The economic effects would reach through north Kensington, south Brent and western Westminster – all areas with persistent deprivation.

A station at Kensal was seen to be crucial to bringing forward development of brownfield sites within the Opportunity Area, which contains a gas works, a supermarket, and a former rail depot. RBKC envisaged significantly higher residential densities on the site with a new station.

In 2009, Mayor Boris Johnson met the council and suggested that a station at Kensal might be possible as long as this did not delay construction on the rest of the line, compromise rail performance, or add to the cost of the project. In 2011, the borough produced a report for Network Rail on performance impacts, and agreed to fully fund the cost of the new station, at an estimated cost of £33m.

In April 2013, TfL and the DfT confirmed that they did not support plans for a station at Kensal Rise, likely in part due to the undertaking to build the Old Oak Common interchange. The door appears to be closed for now, and the 2014 Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan has removed mention of the potential Crossrail station in describing the Opportunity Area at Kensal Canalside. Instead, the London Plan suggests better transport links to the Crossrail/HS2 interchange at Old Oak Common.

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Extending the route

In March 2014, it was announced that Crossrail would be extended from its previous western terminus in Maidenhead to continue to Reading, including a stop at Twyford. Two trains per hour will run from Reading when the full route is operational in 2019, with the option of adding more in the future. Crossrail will operate in addition to existing rail services between Reading and Paddington, and will relieve congestion at Paddington, where the current service from Reading terminates and passengers must change.179

The extension will allow for a reduction in the cost of providing rail infrastructure at Maidenhead and Slough, while Twyford and Reading will not receive significant station upgrades. Network Rail has been upgrading Reading station and the surrounding rail infrastructure since 2010 as part of the £895m Reading Improvement Scheme.180 These works will be completed by 2015, and had been designed to take into account a possible Crossrail extension even before this was announced. Crossrail trains will now be able to use the upgraded rail depots at Reading, instead of building new ones at Maidenhead. The cost of extending Crossrail to Reading is therefore marginal, since the upgrades required have already been funded and delivered separately.

Plans have also been mooted for Crossrail to continue east past Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet and/or Gravesend.181 A station at Ebbsfleet would offer the opportunity for Crossrail to interchange with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The Mayor has expressed support for this idea, subject to a detailed cost-benefit study. These plans will no doubt be strengthened by Chancellor George Osborne’s Budget 2014 announcement that he would seek to reactivate plans for significant growth at Ebbsfleet, with a target of 15,000 new homes.182 With the route already safeguarded by the Crossrail Act, a decision either way will give greater certainty as to what development can take place.

Key experience

Opportunity comes with Crossrail, so it’s no surprise that many communities aspire to be part of the scheme. Woolwich, Old Oak Common, Kensal Rise and Reading are among them. The experience of the four areas presented here has proven that Crossrail is open to adding further stations to the route – but a viable business case is crucial. Key experience drawn from these schemes includes:

- Securing a Crossrail station may be catalytic in attracting developers to deliver ambitious sites;
- Boroughs have a role in integrating new residential developments and their infrastructure into the existing community;
- As sites become viable, new development should balance density with permeability for the benefit of the wider community;
- Public-private partnership in funding station construction is now a proven model;
- Realising new interchange possibilities between major transport schemes may also improve the case for a station;
- Local economic development and regeneration may be insufficient grounds for a business case when wider factors, like other stations’ offers, are in play;
- Future-proofing line extensions can help spread the benefits of Crossrail to new areas when it is financially viable to do so, although benefits can be neutralised or outweighed by the constraints on safeguarded land.

Chapter Five

Moving Forward
Moving forward

By 2050, London’s population could reach 13.4m people - nearly twice its population in 1991, and larger than today’s São Paulo or Beijing. Clearly, the Capital must plan for growth, and the stakeholders currently developing London’s Infrastructure Investment Plan recognise transports crucial role in enabling this.

Growth isn’t just about demographic change. As London endeavours to keep its place as a major global city, transport is critical in supporting economic competitiveness. But agility is key, and here London might have a lot to learn. Mayor Boris Johnson reflected on this in his Vision 2020:

“...The French were decades ahead of Crossrail with their cross-town RER, and now they are going ahead with a series of RER extensions that will bring millions of people closer to centres of employment and opportunity – one of the most effective ways of tackling social exclusion and, to put it bluntly, avoiding riots. London has plenty of competitive advantages over Paris, but we cannot fall behind in creating the transport links that will allow the economy to grow.”

As this quote suggests, Crossrail means more to London than an increase in rail capacity; with the rail project comes an expectation of generating or enhancing economic opportunity. Today, more than halfway through the line’s construction, some communities are realising tangible benefit from the incoming line while others have not yet realised this potential. Understanding these divergent experiences, and exploring tools that can kick-start activity, has been the motivation for this report.

Crossrail as Catalyst has built on a review of previous activity at six of London’s stations to understand what has been instrumental – or missing – in realising regeneration alongside Crossrail 1; the second set identifies broader principles to inform future schemes.

Recommendations

Two levels of intervention emerged over the course of this research. The first centres on actions taken in communities receiving Crossrail 1 stations, and returns time and again to the value of being proactive. Although many practitioners lamented that efforts undertaken at this stage would be reactive, all agreed that there was still time to help deliver positive change.

The second level focuses on the structure of the Crossrail programme itself. Long in the making, Crossrail is combining rail and regeneration efforts beyond what’s required, and going further than any scheme in recent memory. Throughout this research, however, practitioners routinely pointed to fundamental elements of structuring and delivering Crossrail which limit its ability to catalyse wider benefit. While few can be changed in time for Crossrail 1, there are lessons for future schemes.

Sharing best practice for what’s still possible for Crossrail 1 is important, but so too is understanding how the next programme could be delivered more effectively. Accordingly, this report’s recommendations are set out in two groups: the first offers specifics on how stakeholders can act now to realise regeneration alongside Crossrail 1; the second set identifies broader principles to inform future schemes.

Acting now on Crossrail 1

An important finding of this report is that while there are still many regeneration and development opportunities around Crossrail 1 stations, the clock is ticking. To deliver high-quality, mutually agreed improvements ahead of the line’s opening, interested stakeholders should get involved as far ahead of opening day as possible.

As a starting point, the best-practice recommendations below are drawn from the experiences presented in this report. They are organised around six key themes: transportation and interchanges, partnerships, delivery and property, urban realm and design quality, planning and local delivery, and community engagement and employment.

Note that wherever an actor is not specified, the recommendation applies to local project partners or working group. Relevant sections of the case studies are sign-posted under each theme, for background and delivery detail.

Transportation & interchanges

- Tottenham Court Road
  A supportive surface network
- Southall
  Confronting car culture
- Southall
  Bridging the infrastructure gap
- Southall
  A Golden opportunity?
- Abbey Wood
  Cycling connections

Surface-level transport interchanges must be fully integrated: cycling provision, pedestrian access and the approach to the station can have major impacts on use and perception; where bus interchanges or taxi and private-vehicle 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, 104 and partner with TfL and other delivery and funding agencies for resources.

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

- Whitechapel
  Borough preparedness
- Southall
  Opportunity area offers
- Abbey Wood
  Cross-borough working
- Woolwich
  Finding station funding

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.
CROSSRAIL AS CATALYST

Development & property
- All stations
- Planning perspective
- Tottenham Court Road
  - Oversight site development
- Whitechapel
  - Affording growth
- Southall
  - A green light for the gasworks
- Abbey Wood
  - Considering new offers

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
- Tottenham Court Road
  - Improving urban realm
- Artistic expression
- Abbey Wood
  - Enhancing station design
  - Design review success
- Getting on the map permeability

Insist on high-quality station design and public realm across the route to attract investment, improve local and visitor perception, and keep residents using local amenities; architecture, public art and open space are a few of the considerations here. As mentioned above, engage relevant user groups for effective impact.

Consider formal design review for meaningful improvement in station design.

Planning & local delivery
- All stations
  - Planning perspective
- Whitechapel
  - A visionary launch
- Ilford
  - Benefiting smaller stations
  - Work to create — or actively engage with — comprehensive planning frameworks, vision documents and borough-led masterplanning, as appropriate, even after Crossrail works have already begun. These need active consultation with stakeholders, for a vision that can actually be delivered.

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
- Whitechapel
  - The case for community engagement
- Ilford
  - Building local skills
  - A role for business partnerships
- Local employment offer

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 in 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 locations on the route.

Principles for future schemes

“Historically when we build Tube stations, we build them up to the top step and then we stop. When we build Crossrail now, it’s good to see that they have a broader remit but the result is... still transport infrastructure, [not] transport infrastructure and regeneration.”

– Research seminar attendee

Clearly the recommendations above apply to future schemes, but Crossrail’s experience has also shown that London could achieve much 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 station development right from the outset.

1. Broaden the remit

Future delivery agencies should be endowed with a broader scope of powers by Parliament, so that they are better able to realise regeneration opportunities – this could include a number of 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. Whilst this would increase up-front costs, the business case – including realistic assessment of past schemes — could demonstrate the greater long-term value it creates.

“The Crossrail Act powers almost force you to look inwards, rather than allow you to look outwards.”

– Research seminar attendee

2. Engage early

... and with a more strategic view. Use the experience of Crossrail 1 in tandem with the London Infrastructure Investment Plan and forecasts for growth, movement, property markets and investment sources to strengthen the political and public case for regeneration investment — and to engage with local politicians and practitioners.

“Certainly, you did not have every planning authority or local authority along the line at the same stage, or the same level of consciousness or consensus about what Crossrail could do for their borough and how they could ensnire that in planning policy.”

– Research seminar attendee

3. Optimise routing

Future projects must consider the long-term needs of the metropolitan area and the wider network for optimum routing. The technologically optimal route may not always be the most socially or economically beneficial one, and there are further considerations: pure 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.

4. 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.

“All the opportunities need to be thought through, and you can’t really do that centrally, you have to do it locally – [the stations are in] very different places ... Much more thought needs to be put in at the start, and I don’t think local authorities need new powers, they just need more opportunities or people to do the thinking.”

– Research seminar attendee
5. 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 – as one commentator put it, not every place can be a pilot – and investment may need to be ‘patient’ especially for major transformation, as with Royal Docks. And communicate enough with local partners so that plans on the table can actually be delivered.

“How do you engage with the private sector who are notoriously risk-averse? One thing you have to get right is tying the planning framework, or vision for an area, back to some reality of what people will want to take forward... What we’re trying to sell to the private sector as an opportunity is actually something that they will be able to deliver, and something there will be demand for.”

- Research seminar attendee

6. 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.

7. Seek control of long-term infrastructure funding

Several interviewees and commentators have highlighted that the surest way to secure transport and regeneration investment that prioritises London’s needs is to have access to locally-controlled funding. As noted in the conclusion, the London Finance Commission has proposed financial devolution which could do precisely that.

8. 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.

“How do you engage with the private sector who are notoriously risk-averse? One thing you have to get right is tying the planning framework, or vision for an area, back to some reality of what people will want to take forward... What we’re trying to sell to the private sector as an opportunity is actually something that they will be able to deliver, and something there will be demand for.”

- Research seminar attendee

Conclusion

Ultimately, the viability of rail projects comes down to their business case. Crossrail isn’t unique in aspiring to create economic opportunity; HS2 is the latest rail scheme to position itself as a catalyst for change. Speaking at the launch of his report, HS2 Plus, David Higgins reflected on the role of transport infrastructure in London’s success:

“The last 14 years of transport funding and planning in London have... shown how transport investment has changed from being a cost centre to a strategic investment that drives growth. The city has already benefited from, or is planned to benefit from, around £80bn worth of investment in London-centric rail investment, including the successful investment that enabled the delivery of the Olympics and expansion of the city east of Canary Wharf.”

In recent years, London and the South East’s transit systems have benefited from high levels of public investment: in 2010/11, 45% of expenditure on transport across England was allocated in and around the Capital. But as other public spending tightens, and as Government turns its attention to infrastructure investment elsewhere, London may need to be increasingly creative in finding funding for transport.

The London Finance Commission pointed to structural problems in financing infrastructure, using Crossrail as an illustration, given that it took complex negotiations over two decades before the scheme could be assured. The reliance on central government grant means that infrastructure is tackled project-by-project; the LFC put forward that decreasing borrowing constraints and devolving some taxes could help the GLA and London boroughs take a longer-term view and invest comprehensively.

Crossrail 2 – next in London’s pipeline of transport infrastructure – is an opportunity to explore new financing methods. Already, development and regeneration around stations have entered into the equation: one approach has suggested that developer contributions and value capture through intensification of development along the route could contribute £3.4bn to the scheme, equivalent to 18% of the construction cost.

Realising the regeneration and development potential of rail schemes matters for London. It matters for future schemes in making their case, and it matters for communities awaiting Crossrail 1. Crossrail as Catalyst is meant as a call to action for all involved, and as a set of best-practice guidelines to help stakeholders realise these opportunities – while there’s still time.
Notes


21. Ibid.


30. Ibid.


34. Ibid.


38. Ibid.


41. Ibid.


44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.


48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.


57. LB Hackney, LB Tower Hamlets, and GLA, 2010.


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65. Ibid.


67. Ibid.


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75. Crossrail Ltd, Crossrail in Numbers.


84. Area metrics based on best fit lower Super Output Areas located within a 1km radius of the station. Data source: GLA Intelligence Unit, n.d. LSOA data [accessed March 2014], http://bit.ly/1ilm4F.


86. Ibid.


89. GVA, 2014.


91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.


94. Area metrics based on best fit lower Super Output Areas located within a 1km radius of the station. Data source: GLA Intelligence Unit, n.d. LSOA data [accessed March 2014], http://bit.ly/1ilm4F.


96. Ibid.


Area metrics based on best fit Lower Super Output Areas located within a 1km radius of the station. Data source: GLA Intelligence Unit, n.d. LSOA data [accessed March 2014], http://bit.ly/1G5AxAT.


119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Area metrics based on best fit Lower Super Output Areas located within a 1km radius of the station. Data source: GLA Intelligence Unit, n.d. LSOA data [accessed March 2014], http://bit.ly/1G5AxAT.

123. Ibid.


126. GVA, 2014.


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