

# Wandsworth Society

Philip Whyte  
49 Wandsworth Common West Side  
London SW18 2EE

Tel: 07860 317 509

Ms Emma Hindley  
London Transport Policy  
5/26 Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

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Dear Ms Hindley,

## **Crossrail 2: Safeguarding Route Consultation**

Both John Dawson and I attended a meeting held by the Crossrail 2 team at Holy Trinity Church, Tooting Bec, on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015. Subsequent meetings held in Wandsworth, Balham and Clapham Junction were attended by other representatives of our Society.

Since the meetings we have had feedback from several interested parties and groups about Crossrail 2's revised proposals for rerouting the line from Wimbledon to a station stop at Balham rather than Tooting Broadway on its route to Clapham Junction, the next new station stop.

To put the revisions in context, since the original publicity for Crossrail 2's route and our subsequent negotiations with your team for the successful relocation of two ventilation and emergency service shafts to avoid building on Wandsworth Common, we had relaxed in the knowledge that, for once, public consultation on a major strategic issue appeared to have seen a successful outcome to deliberations to all participants involved. As you are aware, the second round of publicity, informing again thousands of local residents and businesses of major revisions to the original route came as a surprise – or rather a rude awakening! We would summarise our observations on the revised proposals as follows:

- i. The original proposal for locating a new station at Tooting Broadway was widely welcomed. It was sensible to connect here with the Northern tube line. Tooting Broadway, we were informed was a very busy station and Crossrail 2 would significantly reduce the strain on the tube. It was seen too as an opportunity to springboard the regeneration of Tooting commercially and was warmly received by the Council and local communities alike. A station at this location would vastly improve access to St Georges Hospital which is at present principally served by bus routes.
- ii. The revised route, by-passing Tooting Broadway and rerouting to an alternative station at Balham seems to be an unfortunate move. Balham already links by rail to Clapham Junction and Victoria Stations, both of which are proposed to be the next and third stop respectively from Balham on Crossrail 2. The Northern line would be relieved of pressure as before. Balham, by dint of good, integrated, existing rail, tube

and bus services, has seen successful regeneration in recent years and we are of the view that Tooting would fully justify future regeneration through investment in Crossrail 2 rather than Balham.

- iii. Whilst the revised Crossrail 2 route would be able to locate a discreet service shaft on the Springfield Hospital grounds as agreed previously, regrettably a second shaft on the revised route between Balham and Clapham Junction is planned to be sited on Wandsworth Common close to Bolingbroke Grove. The Common is designated Metropolitan Open Land and is heavily safeguarded under Borough and London policies from development. Our Society has vigorously defended past attempts over a period of 45 years against development encroaching upon the Common by road proposals or built development. Currently, that remains the Society's position.
- iv. We submit that at present we cannot suggest an alternative sizeable site on which to build a shaft to serve the proposed Balham/ Clapham Junction route. Consequently, The Society, like others locally who have responded to your plans, wish to re-open the debate about the feasibility, suitability and reported costs of reverting to the original proposal to build a station at Tooting Broadway. For us to be convinced of the need to revise the route (via Balham), and bearing in mind the lengthy construction timescale and the future lifespan of the completed project (the Northern Line is nearly one hundred year old!), achieving the best outcome in strategic infrastructure terms is essential. To arrive at the best solution strategically we would expect to see produced a detailed exercise in measuring build costs against real gain over time in regeneration value and benefits. The *correct solution strategically* should be the goal of South London communities, Wandsworth Council, TfL, the GLA and Crossrail 2 alike.
- v. Perhaps, further investigation of the wider sub-strata in the area around Tooting Broadway should be undertaken, to fully ascertain the construction requirements to build a new station there. Detailed cost studies should be judged objectively against the future benefit to Tooting. We would like to see such exercises before the original route is seriously considered for cancellation.

We fully support the strategic aims of Crossrail 2. However, we consider that much more effort is spent in collaboration with all parties concerned in an attempt to secure the preferred original route via Tooting Broadway, with the likelihood of the substantial benefits to the area accruing, than the revised proposal via Balham with the objection to building on Wandsworth Common and the unnecessary duplication of transport services as serious issues arising.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Whyte  
Vice-Chairman  
Wandsworth Society