



## **Crossrail and the Tube – let's get on with both**

A version of this letter appeared in the Evening Standard, 1 May 2009

Dear Sir,

Crossrail was canned in the early nineties recession, to London's cost, as anyone who has experienced a face-in-earmpit Tube journey will affirm (Simon Jenkins, 28 April). This recession will not last for ever. Growth will resume, as it did in the nineties.

Improving the Tube is also vitally important, but even without political PPP shenanigans, the Tube alone will not provide the necessary capacity from Heathrow to Canary Wharf, West End to the Thames Gateway. The Central Line and Jubilee Line upgrades have increased East-West capacity substantially, yet they are already full to bursting again.

Crossrail is a rare project – with support from Labour Government, Tory Mayor, Canary Wharf, City, outer London, business and trade unions as evidenced by several hundreds of endorsements collected by the Campaign for Crossrail. The vast majority of London First's members (collectively generating over a quarter of London's GDP) are supporters. While rivalry may exist between the Square Mile and Isle of Dogs, on the need for Crossrail they are united. Woolwich were so persuaded by the regeneration potential of the project that they raised money and campaigned to include a station for their area.

To avoid overload, TfL leadership can leave most decisions on the project to Crossrail's highly regarded management, who have a successful track record building complex infrastructure in the UK and overseas. There is a credible, costed project plan. The route is protected and it's ready to go, the perfect countercyclical project, driving construction activity through the slump and providing extra transport capacity needed for growth on the other side.

Despite Simon Jenkins' cynicism, borrowing against future fares is not unusual for transport infrastructure. It helped to finance both the Dartford Bridge and the second Severn Crossing. Businesses will contribute around £5bn through the infrastructure levy and Section 106 agreements on new development, through a supplement on business rates and through direct contributions from Canary Wharf, Heathrow and the City of London.

Beijing, a contender for London's world city status, managed to build three extra rail lines in the two years before the 2008 Olympics. Is it beyond London to manage Tube improvement and Crossrail, both absolutely necessary for our future success? Let's get on with both.

**Baroness Jo Valentine**  
**Chief Executive**  
**London First**

**For more information, please contact Graham Capper on 020 7665 1505 / 07852 030 303**