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## Kensal Crossrail station plan finally ruled out

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Hopes for a new Crossrail station at Kensal in north Kensington have been dashed with a decision by the Department for Transport and Transport for London not to support the project.

The proposal, to add a station to the Crossrail route between Paddington and Acton Main Line, was the brainchild of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea which saw a station as key to regenerating a 67 acre site and pledged to underwrite the estimated £33m capital cost.

Council leader Sir Merrick Cockell has been attempting to rally support for the scheme since at least September 2009 (TB 6241) but last week he admitted that there is no high level backing for a Kensal station.

In an email to supporters of the scheme he wrote: "I met with the transport minister Stephen Hammond MP, along with Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP, last week to discuss our proposals. Unfortunately I have to tell you that at that meeting Stephen indicated our plans did not have the support of either the Department for Transport or the Mayor of London. The reasons for that lack of support remain frustratingly unclear."

The DfT confirmed this position: "The proposed Kensal Crossrail station is not compatible with wider transport priorities for London," said a spokesman. "However, Transport for London has offered to work with the borough council to explore options for improved transport links for this area."

In his email Merrick Cockell said Stephen Hammond had told him that the DfT would be glad to work with the council on alternatives that might include some form of Heathrow-style monorail. It is understood that this refers to the Ultra personal transit pods introduced at the airport in 2011.

The decision by the DfT and TfL to rule out the scheme comes despite the Mayor of London previously offering support for the project, subject to it not heaping costs on Crossrail, delaying delivery of existing plans or degrading performance of Crossrail or other train services. Amid continuing uncertainty regarding the proposal, the London Assembly Transport Committee was told on 7 March 2013 by Crossrail Ltd chief executive Andrew Wolstenholme that Crossrail's sponsors (DfT and TfL) would need to decide by mid 2013 whether or not to build a station at Kensal to avoid affecting the Crossrail programme schedule.

Asked why a Kensal station is now not compatible with transport priorities for London, the DfT spokesman said the proposed station would have had an impact on the overall capacity of Crossrail services. He added: "With the decision by the government to proceed with High Speed 2, and given the close proximity of the proposed Kensal station to the planned HS2 interchange at Old Oak Common, DfT/TfL have agreed that no further work should be carried out on the proposal."

*Kensal: borough of Kensington and Chelsea has campaigned for additional Crossrail station*



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Merrick Cockell has vowed to fight on for a station at Kensal. Responding to the suggestion that a "Heathrow-style monorail" could provide an alternative he said: "Clearly that is an intriguing idea but in the absence of any detail about what precise form the alternative would take, what capacity it would have, and crucially, when it would be built and where it would stop, it is impossible for us to make any sort of judgement about whether such a service would be a genuine alternative to a Crossrail station."

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