

## Is Crossrail 2 a bridge too far for regions?



**By Tim Donovan**  
Political Editor, BBC London

**The chancellor George Osborne has said he is not yet prepared to support a second Crossrail for London, apparently dashing Boris Johnson's hopes of getting the project off the ground during his mayoralty.**

It comes as Tory MPs outside London are voicing concerns about further investment in major transport infrastructure in the capital at the expense of other parts of the country.

### 'Patch and mend job'

Mr Osborne believes work on the existing £16bn Crossrail should be completed first - in 2018 - before he considers further major transport schemes for London.

It indicates there will be no support for Crossrail 2 when the government publishes its spending review next month - outlining departmental budget limits for the next three years - and will add to speculation that the capital's transport budget may face significant cuts.

The former Transport Secretary Lord Andrew Adonis, who is heading the campaign for Crossrail 2, described the approach as "short-termist".

Last week, Mr Osborne visited the Crossrail construction site near the Olympic park in east London.

One of the project's engineers told him he hoped to go on and work on a second Crossrail after the first was completed.

Mr Osborne told him, "They want me to build Crossrail 2. Let's finish Crossrail 1 first and then we will look at other projects."

Supporters of Crossrail 2 - which would run north-south through London from Hertfordshire to Surrey - say preparatory work needs to start soon if it is to be completed by 2030.

Lord Adonis told the BBC it was necessary to convince the chancellor that it made sense to ensure a seamless transition from Crossrail 1 to Crossrail 2 to capitalise on the ready workforce and the available tunnelling and engineering expertise.

He argues there is a particular need for investment in north-south routes, and by 2030 the Victoria, Northern and Piccadilly Lines - already overcrowded at times - would be under massive pressure from growing passenger numbers.

"Doing nothing is not an option," he said.

"The alternative is a patch-and-mend job. But even if you do that now, you will only have to build Crossrail 2 eventually anyway," he said.

Mayor Boris Johnson said Crossrail 2 was being "seriously considered" by the Treasury and that it was the timing of it at issue.

But he said despite being a "passionate optimist" he thought Crossrail 2 would most likely be a separate project starting "as early as 2019".

## Growing resentment

A report, commissioned by business organisation London First, says Crossrail 2 is essential to reduce journey times, tackle overcrowding, relieve pressure on the tube and south-west overground rail routes and promote economic growth - especially in the Lea Valley in north-east London.

But there are signs of growing resentment among Tory backbenchers at Westminster at what they perceive to have been favourable treatment of the capital over recent years.

Last week in Parliament, David Mowat, Conservative MP for Warrington South, attacked the London mayor's pursuit of a second Crossrail project, saying London gets too much taxpayers' money for public transport.

Prompted by claims by Boris Johnson that "momentum" was growing for Crossrail 2, he demanded a parliamentary debate before any money was approved even for preparatory work on a new rail line.

Earlier Mr Mowat said: "I think there is a view, which may or may not be fair, that the Department for Transport finds it easier to allocate money to London.

"London is our capital city and we're all proud of London and want it to continue to prosper. But there other parts of the country that need transport spending as well including my constituency.

"I'm keen to make sure CR2 comes under scrutiny like HS2 and also keen to put it on policy maker's agendas that there are other parts of the country that need infrastructure and parts that are not as strong as London.

"It is true to say London has higher capital spend per head than other parts of the country and it also has higher current spending per head than other parts of the country."

## 'London has done well'

Eric Ollerenshaw, former leader of the Conservatives on the London Assembly and now MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood, said one of the government's priorities was to rebalance the economy between the north and south, and funding for Crossrail 2 could leave their regions short of investment.

Northampton South MP Brian Binley, who was a member of the Crossrail parliamentary committee, said, "Enough money's been spent on London already.

"I support Crossrail and want it to get moving as quickly as possible but I don't think there needs to be any money spent on Crossrail 2."

Lord Adonis accepted that investment in London transport was becoming increasingly "politically contentious" ahead of the Chancellor's spending review next month which will outline departmental budgets for the next three years.

He said it was important for a strong case to be put together, backed by a partnership between the mayor, local authorities and London businesses.

"There is a strong view in the DfT that London has done very well recently," he said.

---

## Things To Do

RUN BY THE BBC AND PARTNERS

FRI 31 MAY

[It's Wing Time -  
Half-term](#)

WWT London  
Wetland Centre

FRI 31 MAY

[Illustrating the  
Immortal Bird](#)

Keats House

[See London Activities >](#)

Find activities near you

Town, city, postcode

