

Boris Johnson: cutting London transport spending would be insanity

London mayor says Crossrail shows importance of transport infrastructure spending, but coalition considered scrapping it

Gwyn Topham, transport correspondent
guardian.co.uk, Friday 31 May 2013 14.16 BST



Boris Johnson and Crossrail workers pose in front of the tunnelling machine named Elizabeth at the future Canary Wharf station. Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Boris Johnson has warned the government it would be "insanity" to curb transport investment in **London** at a ceremony to mark a major milestone in the construction of **Crossrail**, which he said the coalition had considered scrapping.

The mayor was speaking 30 metres below ground in the cavernous concrete box that will be the future Canary Wharf station, beside a tunnelling machine that broke through the walls this week after six months boring west across the capital. Tunnelling on the £14.8bn Crossrail project will be completed next year, in preparation for the 2018 launch of rail services from Maidenhead and Heathrow through central London to the City and further east.

Johnson said: "People said it couldn't happen. Four years ago, one senior member of the incoming government said the best thing to do with Crossrail is to stop talking about it."

Instead, he said, Crossrail had given a "vital lesson in the importance of maintaining investment in transport infrastructure. Now you can see the utter insanity it would have been to halt this project in 2010."

Last week the chancellor, George Osborne, told the BBC it would have been easy to scrap Crossrail but he had decided not to. Transport is one of the departments that face 10% cuts in the upcoming spending review in late June. The transport secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, indicated that it would be possible to protect investment, but Johnson and Transport for London fear the capital's budget will take cuts that will jeopardise planned upgrades of the tube and river crossings.

The mayor said: "In such a big economic hole, the best thing we could do is keep digging."

Crossrail will provide around 10% more capacity on the capital's rail services. The 1,000-metre-long tunnelling machine which made its ceremonial breakthrough on Thursday, named Elizabeth, will undergo maintenance before continuing to dig from Canning Town to Farringdon.

More from the Guardian [What's this?](#)

[Oscar Pistorius attends church, but rarely goes out, says aunt](#) 02 Jun 2013

[Saudi prince launches libel action against Forbes magazine over Rich List](#) 06 Jun 2013

[Natural birth: 'I felt brilliant. I was in utter ecstasy'](#) 01 Jun 2013

[Cameron moves to curb union funding of Labour's election campaigns](#) 03 Jun 2013

[Nursery ratios: Clegg blocks Tory attempt to relax childcare standards](#) 06 Jun 2013

More from around the web [What's this?](#)

[If You Want To Be Awesome At Emails, Add Yesware To Your Gmail Today](#) (Forbes.com)

[The death of the pension: how equity release can fund your retirement](#) (Independent)

[10 costly pension mistakes millions of Britons make](#) (Hargreaves Lansdown)

[JD Wetherspoon to Open Motorway Pub](#) (Yahoo!)

[What could add 15% to Japan's GDP?](#) (Goldman Sachs)
