



THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

Val Shawcross CBE,
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26th July 2016

Dear Ms. Shawcross,

PROPOSED CROSSRAIL 2 STATION IN THE KINGS ROAD

The Chelsea Society was founded in 1927 to protect the interests of all those who live and work in Chelsea and to preserve the unique character of this part of London. We support Crossrail 2, but are strongly opposed to diverting the line from Clapham Junction to Victoria via Chelsea, with a station on the Kings Road. We have published the reasons on our website at <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/response-to-tfl-consultation-crossrail2/> in response to the TfL consultation.

In local terms we fear that such a station would drive out the small shops and enterprises, would increase congestion and air pollution and would lead to unacceptable development pressures and increased land prices. It would risk damage to the essential character of Chelsea and to our large stock of listed buildings. The disruption during a long construction phase would be a nightmare for local people.

In addition, many millions of pounds would be required for repairing buildings affected by settlement and compensating for noise, vibration, odours, and fumes. In addition, another unquantified sum – likely to be many millions of pounds - would be lost to local people and businesses due to the inevitable disruption caused by construction works.

There is no potential for urban regeneration around that station as there would be at other points on the Crossrail 2 route, and there are no significant areas in the vicinity of the station which have degenerated or suffered from industrial dereliction. Any available money would be better spent elsewhere on the route.

There is little or no unemployment in Chelsea and there is no need for another railway station to increase employment or housing here. The problem in Chelsea is not demand for housing, but land on which to build it, and we do not see where the 1,000 dwellings envisaged by Mr. Mike Brown could be built. Even if they could, he says that this figure must be considered in the context of the



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200,000 dwellings that Crossrail 2 could “unlock” and in this context 1,000 is not enough to justify spending an extra £1.2 billion. Most of them would be built anyway if land could be found, but there are very few places where additional housing could be provided anywhere near a Kings Road station. Moreover, the price of land in Chelsea is one of the highest in the world, and a station in the Kings Road would drive up that price still further. Such dwellings as might be built would mostly be sold to the super-rich and would not enable local people to find a home.

Proposals for development by people in the private sector who hope to be able to contribute to the cost of Crossrail out of their expected profits will add further pressure to the demand for development which is already hard to resist, and we have no confidence that RBKC would be able to resist it. This is unacceptable to local people, and could seriously damage the character of Chelsea.

As you may know, the pavements on the Kings Road are often overcrowded and it is sometimes necessary to step into the road. Large numbers of extra pedestrians going to or from a station would make matters much worse. Also, an almost constant stream of pedestrians crossing the entrances to side-streets would back up the traffic in those streets and cause serious obstruction to traffic in the Kings Road as vehicles waited to turn into the side-streets. This would make the buses and all other traffic run more slowly and would make air pollution worse, not better.

But we have wider concerns as well. The station would not serve Crossrail 2's overall strategic objectives. It would provide no access to London's international employment centres and it would offer no scope for regeneration or economic development. It would cost an additional £1.2 billion and there would be no interchange at Chelsea with any other rail services. We do not see how, at a time of pressure on public resources, expenditure of this sort could be justified.

According to a comparison prepared by TfL for the Mayor in October 2015 the overall public transport benefits of the direct route from Clapham Junction to Victoria would be greater than having a station in Chelsea. This is because journey-time savings from Clapham Junction to Victoria for the majority would outweigh longer journey-times for those travelling to/from Chelsea.

TfL also think that the direct route would make Crossrail 2 more effective at meeting the objective of relieving the Northern and Victoria lines. The direct route would also relieve Victoria's mainline and tube stations, because many passengers on overground trains from the south would change to Crossrail 2 at Clapham Junction instead of continuing into Victoria main-line station. Likewise on their return journey.

Local public opinion is massively against a Kings Road station, and this was shown by the results of the TfL consultation. Nearly half of the more than 19,000 respondents focussed on this single issue and over 90% of them expressed their opposition to the proposal (the figure for respondents in Chelsea itself was over 95%). We are puzzled that, having organised the consultation, TfL seem disposed to ignore its outcome.

But this is not the only evidence of the strength of public feeling against the station. A petition opposing it received over 10,000 signatures, over 80 of them from small local businesses. Of the Residents' Associations affiliated to the Kings Road Association of Chelsea Residents, 27 are against the station and only one in favour.

We do not need more consultation, as local people have already expressed their views very clearly, so we hope that you will ensure that a Kings Road station is dropped from Crossrail 2's planning.



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This would save no less than a quarter of the £4bn cost saving that the Government is asking TfL to make

Would it be possible for you to receive a small delegation from the Society in the near future?

Yours sincerely,

Chairman of the Planning Committee

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