

## **Extending the DLR to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead – London TravelWatch's response**

London TravelWatch is London's independent transport watchdog, using evidence to campaign to improve journeys, and advocate for all people travelling in London.

Thank you for consulting with us and inviting our views as TfL continue to develop proposals for the DLR extension to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead. This follows our supportive responses to TfL's previous two consultations on the proposed extension.

As a transport organisation, our response to these proposals will focus on the aspects related to travel and the impact on passengers. Other considerations, while still important, are outside of our remit and so we offer no comment on them.

We offer the following comments about TfL's proposals:

### **The benefits of an extended DLR**

London TravelWatch supports the extension of the DLR to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead. Amongst other benefits, an extended DLR would give those areas fast and reliable public transport services, cut DLR journey times, improve cross-river links and support modal shift from private car to a more sustainable transport mode.

### **The new stations**

#### *Both stations*

In our previous response we expressed our belief that the new stations – and the environment around them – should be as user friendly and accessible as possible.

We are therefore pleased with the proposed features for both stations:

- Full accessibility, with lifts and step-free access between street and train
- Ticketing facilities designed to be accessible to all passengers
- Station lighting, CCTV and help points, which will help reassure passengers about their safety and security
- Customer information displays and clear, easy-to-understand signage to provide live travel information – though we ask that this information should be both audio and visual
- Seating throughout the stations
- A platform canopy for protection against the weather
- Secure cycle parking

We note that the provision of accessible toilets (including Changing Places toilets) will be considered in future to determine whether to have them within the new

stations or the new adjacent developments. We would support the provision of these toilets in either location, provided they are well signposted and easily accessible.

We also highlight the important design features we have raised previously, namely:

- At least one ticket vending machine in each station always able to accept cash payments
- Local maps, DLR service posters and onward journey information in the station entrance area
- Clear signage outside the station directing people to other public transport options and local amenities
- Clear integration between DLR stations and local bus routes e.g. bus stops/shelters directly outside the stations containing onward journey maps, timetables and real time bus Countdown boards
- Safe and level pavements outside the stations and, where required, pedestrian crossings with tactile paving to bus stops, shelters and other local amenities.

Crucially, we urge TfL to continue its stakeholder engagement including with individuals and representative groups with lived experience and groups who may be harder to reach. Undertaking this engagement and applying this learning should result in outcomes which maximise positive impacts and minimise negative impacts.

### *Beckton Riverside*

We welcome that there will be a new on-street interchange for local bus services, improved walking and cycling facilities to make it easier and safer to reach the station and, in due course, that the station footbridge will provide a walking and cycling link between new neighbourhoods on either side of the station.

The location of the station close to Gallions Reach Shopping Park will also improve access to these facilities beyond the current bus services.

### *Thamesmead*

We welcome that there will be a new interchange with local bus services from the main entrance, with walking and cycling improvements added where needed to provide safe routes to the station. Given that Thamesmead has been identified as a potential New Town, it is sensible that the station is being designed with this in mind, including a western entrance to link to future walking and cycling routes and the existing town centre.

## **Minimising and mitigating disruption**

We believe that TfL's approach to the construction works should be done with a view to reducing any negative impact on passengers while it's taking place.

We note that temporary access routes, short-term road changes and construction traffic would be needed to build the new stations and associated infrastructure. We urge TfL to mitigate the impact on people travelling in and around the worksites (particularly those walking, wheeling and using the bus), as well as DLR passengers.

## **Impacts on the existing DLR**

This consultation explains that upon opening of the extension alternate trains will run every 8–10 minutes to Thamesmead (via Beckton Riverside) or Beckton. We noted previously that this would be a frequency reduction for passengers using Beckton from the current train every 5 minutes (off-peak) and expressed our disappointment that TfL had not assessed the impacts of this in time for inclusion in that consultation. TfL did, though, commit, to update the EqIA 'with further information in future iterations.'

However, now, one year later, it appears that this assessment has still not been published. In similar words to the EqIA in the previous consultation, TfL now say they 'are working to assess the potential impacts of the proposed service pattern for users of Beckton Station in terms of access to employment, education, and leisure opportunities.' We ask - why is it taking so long? Once this assessment has been completed, we ask TfL to publish it as soon as reasonably possible.

## **Gallions Reach station**

We note the decision that additional station capacity at Gallions Reach is not required as part of the extension scheme but support TfL's commitment to keep the station under review and to explore opportunities for improvements as demand increases.

## **Advertising and engaging with the consultation**

We were pleased to see TfL offer multiple channels to respond to this consultation, including via email, telephone and Freepost. Similarly, we welcome the variety of accessible formats provided including Easy Read materials, a British Sign Language video and consultation conversation service, audio versions and the option to translate the webpage into a variety of languages. Holding drop-in events about the consultation in both Beckton and Thamesmead is also a positive and inclusive way of engaging with those who live, work or visit in those areas.

These options help to make the consultation process more accessible. We strongly encourage TfL to keep offering these options to alert passengers to all consultations so that everyone who wants to respond to them can do so.