Response to Transport for London consultation on the proposed West London Orbital Rail Service



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This is my response as a London Assembly Member to the consultation run by Transport for London (TfL) on the proposed new West London Orbital (WLO) rail service, which closes on 18 November 2026.

The consultation is hosted by TfL at: https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/west-london-orbital, where you can complete their survey. Alternatively, you can:

- email your views via westlondonorbital@tfl.gov.uk,
- write to: FREEPOST TFL HAVE YOUR SAY, no postage stamp required, or
- call 020 3054 6037 to leave your name, and contact number, quoting 'West London Orbital', and TfL will call you back.

My response

Why a West London Orbital

I fully support the proposal to connect existing tracks to create new public transport rail connections for people living in west and north-west London. Londoners have already benefited from this strategy through the upgrading of the overground North London Line and West London Line to the Mildmay and Windrush lines, linking them with mainline rail and underground lines to create a popular and well-used circular connection around the whole of outer London.

Route

This new West London Orbital route will provide useful rail connectivity in west and north-west London removing the need for many local journeys to be made by travelling in and out of central London.

While I understand the decision to terminate this new service at Hounslow, I would like to see a commitment from TfL that decisions about the route and delivery of this scheme do not prevent a possible future extension to Twickenham. This would provide for interchanges between the WLO and services towards Shepperton, Kingston and Wimbledon.

In the long term it would be helpful to see this orbital approach extended, given time and feasibility, to south-west London.

I gather that the WLO route will make use of existing rail lines that are currently underused, some currently only used by freight services. However, I want to ensure that this passenger service will not prevent future growth in rail freight, particularly if it were to push such services onto London's already congested roads.

Stations

The proposed new stations – Neasden, Harlesden, Old Oak Common Lane and Lionel Road – are very welcome, as are the new platforms, entrances and other upgrades to existing stations.

The connectivity benefits of the new WLO must be fully accessible and inclusive for all Londoners. This means level boarding on to trains at all new and existing stations, ideally without the use of mini-ramps, along with lifts and/or ramps to access platforms.

Free public toilets should be included from the outset in the designs for all new stations and retrofitted, if possible, into existing stations.

The WLO works should be an opportunity for TfL to work with local boroughs to ensure that residents can access the stations and travel between the interchange stations safely and conveniently by walking, cycling and local bus services. This work should follow the Healthy Streets approach, providing benches to pause and rest, cycle parking at stations, safe pedestrian crossings, step free pavement access and new cycle routes.

The Mayor's Transport Strategy has targets for the percentage (80%) of trips made by walking, cycling and public transport, Vision Zero for no one to be killed or seriously injured on the road by 2041, and to reduce traffic. Taking a Healthy Streets approach should ensure the WLO plays it part in meeting these targets.

<u>North Acton, Old Oak Common and Old Oak Common Lane stations</u>

- The proposed Old Oak Common Lane station is shown as '10 minute walk[s] via street' to North Acton and Old Oak Common stations, so these are not strictly speaking 'interchanges'. People travelling with small children, luggage, or who are older or disabled, may struggle to walk between these stations, so effective engagement and opportunities for co-design with communities around both these stations should be carried out.
- North Acton station is well-used and often overcrowded. Creating an interchange with the new Old Oak Common Lane station could increase pressure on North Acton station. Have you assessed this risk and what mitigations are you suggesting?
- 'Old Oak Common' and 'Old Oak Common Lane' have very similar names which could easily lead to passenger confusion? Existing west London examples of such mix-ups are Chiswick rail station and Chiswick Park underground station, along with

the many Acton stations, ie North Action, South Acton, East Acton, West Acton, Acton Central, Acton Main Line and Acton Town.

Acton Central station

To ensure maximum usability, pedestrian access to Acton Central station should be provided from High Street/The Vale.

Lionel Road station connection with Kew Bridge station

As with the new proposed Old Oak Common Lane station 'interchanges', this connection is shown as a '10 minute walk via street', so it will require a step-free, accessible adaptation. Effective engagement along with opportunities for co-design with communities around both these stations should be carried out.

How it may impact you

I met with councillors from the boroughs – Barnet, Brent, Ealing and Hounslow – through which the proposed WLO will run. They raised the following points from their residents, which I support.

Construction concerns

Ealing residents, who have already been living with the local impacts of the construction of HS2 in their borough for years, have requested that during construction for WLO there should be a direct line to log complaints, a simple small claims procedure for damage to their properties, and/or other compensation from noise, dust, lighting, out-of-hours works etc. These need to be clearly communicated as written commitments, so residents have a line of communication with construction teams to raise issues as they emerge.

Inevitably there will be temporary road closures leading to redirection of traffic during construction. Residents request that advance notice is provided and well communicated, and that alternative routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and driving are identified and well signed.

Loss of level crossings

The removal of level crossings risks severing existing walking, wheeling and cycling routes. Any bridge or subway alternatives for crossing the rail tracks must provide step-free accessibility.

Bollo Lane (Mildmay line) in South Acton

Residents say they are worried that removing this crossing will reduce connectivity between Chiswick on one side, and from Acton Town station on the other side.

Churchfield Road next to Acton Central station

Residents are concerned that the community will be cut off from the main shopping street on one side and the park on the other. Currently the residents and businesses in the area say they do not feel heard and that a simple online survey is inadequate engagement.

As this project moves forward, effective engagement and opportunities for co-design with communities around these two level crossings should be carried out, particularly given the need to ensure step-free access to the station is maintained.

Borough benefits/concerns

In Hounslow, residents have raised points over the need to:

- protect accessible Wood Lane journeys,
- protect the H28 bus route, and
- improve the Hounslow Loop access.

Finally, residents in all boroughs want to ensure that TfL provides measurable increases in local jobs, skills and apprenticeships as part of the construction and provision of these welcome new rail services.