

News Release

For Immediate Release

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GOVERNMENT OPENS THE WAY TO CROSSRAIL TO EBBSFLEET EXTENSION

BEXLEY SAYS IT WILL WASTE NO TIME IN MOVING BUSINESS CASE FORWARDS

The Government has today indicated it is open to a planned extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet, committing £4.85m to help fund preparations for the widely supported scheme.

Bexley's Council Leader has welcomed the news that the government has agreed to fund exploratory work on transport links between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet – the route of the planned extension.

In a written ministerial statement, Housing Secretary James Brokenshire confirmed the funding as part of Government's response to the flagship Thames Estuary Commission. He confirmed support for -

- The vision of 1.3 million new jobs, £190 billion of economic growth potential and 1 million new homes.
- Making £1 million available to set up a governance body with an independent chair supported by a Minister at Cabinet level.
- Making £4.85 million available for a study into options for delivering transport enhancement from Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet.
- Exploring potential for two new Development Corporations.
- Supporting new Master Plans for the Estuary.
- Supporting further work on the idea of a Thames Park.

This support follows four years campaigning from the London Borough of Bexley and its partners in the C2E Campaign to undo the 2008 decision to shorten Crossrail's south-east branch.

The resource will enable detailed feasibility, funding and viability work to take place on the scheme – which would transform connectivity over 10 miles of under-used housing land on the London/Kent border along the safeguarded route from Abbey Wood, including planning new homes and employment sites. It will also be used to help attract major new investment into the area.

Speaking after the announcement -

Leader of the London Borough of Bexley, Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE said:

“Today’s announcement is a landmark moment for Bexley. It means that Central Government has endorsed Sir John Armit’s view of the Thames Estuary, and sees the potential of finishing the job of connecting Crossrail to HS1 – between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet. This is the critical infrastructure project for the Gateway. This funding means that we can get on with work to realise Crossrail’s true potential for our borough and the whole Thames Gateway. We will waste no time in moving forwards.”

“We have worked hard to explain the value of finishing the job on Crossrail, which will create thousands of new jobs and homes around three new Crossrail stations in the north of Bexley and into Kent.”

Chairman of the C2E Campaign alliance, Paul Moore, said:

“Extending Crossrail to Ebbsfleet is at the heart of the Thames Gateway’s future prosperity. Today moves us closer to unlocking 10 miles of unmatched growth potential on the edge of London, and the next stage in transforming connectivity for the area. Government has today firmly recognised the vast potential of Bexley and North West Kent as a Growth Corridor.”

“This is the result of almost four years hard work by partners from Kent and London authorities – which shows the strength of the C2E alliance.”

‘ENDS’

When delivered, C2E will represent one of the south-east’s biggest and most exciting new economic corridors – providing a huge boost in connectivity for some of the UK’s most economically challenged areas.

The extension of Crossrail will dramatically cut journey times and is projected to deliver more than 55,000 new homes and 50,000 jobs in the immediate corridor, and many more across Kent.

Since it launched the C2E campaign, Bexley has won the backing of a wide range of influential supporters for the project, including local MPs, Kent County Council, Canary Wharf and City Airport.

In June 2018, the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission backed C2E as a top infrastructure priority that it said should be delivered in the 2020s.

When completed, C2E will link Ebbsfleet to City Airport, Canary Wharf, the City, West End and Heathrow, as envisaged in the original 1980s plan for Crossrail.

In June 2018, The Thames Estuary Growth Commission prioritised C2E and called on Government to make funds available for a full business case, with a view to enabling operations by 2029.

In September 2018, the C2E Campaign delivered a strategic outline business case to Government – the first step on this journey.

Today's funding is short of the amount needed for a full business case, but it will position the extension for further funding in the spending review planned for Autumn this year.

The C2E Campaign brings together seven public authorities campaigning for the extension of Crossrail's south-east branch to Ebbsfleet Garden City, where it will also help supercharge the development of the UK's first new garden city and connect to High Speed 1 destinations.

More at www.c2ecampaign.com

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