

As the Member of Parliament for Bromley and Chislehurst, I write to place on record my response to Transport for London's (TfL) open consultation on the Bakerloo Line Extension (BLE).

While I appreciate that the primary aim of this consultation is to seek views on the construction of the initial extension to Lewisham via Old Kent Road and New Cross Gate, I believe it is important to underline again the need and widespread popularity of the proposals, consulted on in 2014, to continue the BLE to Bromley town centre. In that regard, I welcome the consultation's confirmation that an onward extension beyond Lewisham is still actively being considered.

Indeed, the case for doing so is incredibly strong. As numerous TfL studies have made clear, including the South East London Rail Access Study and the Sub-Regional Transport Plans for south and east London, connectivity from Bromley to the City and Canary Wharf is extremely poor. Historic underfunding in infrastructure, and the resulting pressure this has put on an already overstretched rail network, has left passengers in south east London entirely dependent on the discredited local franchise – Southeastern. In effect, there is a monopoly supply, the impact of which on local rail users should not be underestimated.

The problems created by this under-provision would in no small part be alleviated through an extension of the Bakerloo Line to Bromley town centre. In short, London's south eastern suburbs need a reliable, metro style service that can cater for more passengers and provide greater flexibility in the destinations, and transport routes, on offer. It is worth quoting paragraph 4.12.4.3 of TfL's BLE options assessment report:

*'The transport network improvements generated by a new rail line through inner London and then the onward connection to Hayes and Bromley town centre could significantly improve capacity, access and connectivity in south east London. The option would provide direct rail connections between major town centres such as Lewisham, Catford and Bromley.'*

With Bromley town centre designated as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan, and given our capital's exponential population growth – which will rise to 10 million people by 2030 – it is vital that transport provision in south east London is able to accommodate what will be a considerable increase in demand. That will require a reduction in journey times between key destinations, greater capacity to address overcrowding and congestion on both road and track, and a more responsive, flexible network that can overcome delays and setbacks.

I welcome the importance the consultation attaches to the BLE acting as an enabler for further development along the proposed route. It would support housing, generate employment, and accelerate regeneration. It is vital that the scheme forms part of a wider, integrated package of improvements to transport infrastructure in London, including Crossrail, Crossrail 2, and HS2. Operating together, these would deliver significant journey time improvements and increase access to employment opportunities across the city for people living in the suburbs.

Continuing the BLE to Bromley town centre has overwhelming local support. It is a project that is vital to ensure south east London is well-equipped to meet the needs of the future, and I would urge officials, working with the Mayor of London, local authorities and Members of Parliament, to consider what immediate steps can be taken to reassess the viability of an extension to Bromley town centre and expedite further scoping work.