

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

22nd September 2025

Dear Chancellor,

Re: Unlocking economic growth with the West London Orbital Railway

We are writing to you to ask for the Government's support as we enter the next stage of making the West London Orbital (WLO) a reality. The West London Orbital is a shovel-ready, transformative rail scheme that will improve connectivity, drive economic growth, and contribute to the Government's central missions, alongside your agenda for national renewal.

The West London Orbital is a proposed London Overground route spanning approximately 18 km from Hounslow to Hendon, running through stations such as Brentford, Old Oak Common Lane, Harlesden, West Hampstead, and Brent Cross West. The scheme will repurpose existing under-used freight lines to create an orbital link across West London, and will involve four new step-free stations, upgrades to existing interchanges, and seamless connections into HS2 and the Elizabeth Line at Old Oak Common. The West London Orbital is a cost-effective and technically feasible project with no clear engineering barriers.

The economic case for the West London Orbital is compelling. The West London Orbital can directly support the delivery of 15,800 new homes and 23,000 new jobs, unlocking growth in the key 'opportunity areas' of Brent Cross, Wembley, Old Oak and Park Royal, the Great West Corridor and Heathrow. In our borough of Brent alone, the West London Orbital can be expected to generate 1,255 new homes, 455 new jobs, £22.8 million in residential and commercial land value uplift, alongside increased annual Council Tax and business rates revenues. It is likely that now with a clear path forward for HS2, the economic multiplier of the WLO is even higher. When last estimated, the WLO showed medium to high value for money, with a benefit–cost ratio of 1.4–1.8 for 8tph and 1.7–2.0 for 4tph.

The West London Orbital represents an opportune moment for growth that is felt far and wide. The WLO rail scheme will enable over 500,000 more people to reach Old Oak Common within an hour – a 30% increase in access to jobs and opportunities, whilst significantly cutting travel times, for example between Brentford and Neasden where journey times will be 57% less than currently. This is all whilst making important contributions towards our Net Zero agenda through encouraging a modal shift from car to rail. The West London Orbital is forecast to prevent 650,000 car journeys annually by 2041 preventing nearly one-thousand tonnes of carbon emissions. Crucially, the West London Orbital will inject vital investment into serve some of London's communities most in need, where wards like Harlesden and Neasden, rank poorly in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Investment in West London benefits the whole of the United Kingdom. West London's economy is estimated to be worth £70 billion, and currently serves 2.2 million people, more than Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool combined. Yet productivity here remains worryingly low, at 16.4% less than pre-Covid levels, lagging behind the wider London and UK economic recovery. Closing this gap and fully unlocking the vast potential of West London's high-value life science, manufacturing, clean energy, and logistics sectors has the potential to unleash up to £7.3 billion of additional GVA per-year into

the UK economy. The West London Orbital could act as a vital strategic enabler, through boosting transport accessibility, attracting investment and talent, and unlocking development in key growth areas. This would not only be an investment into West London, but one that contributes to Britain's long-term economic success, with clear spillover benefits in jobs, housing and supply chain growth well beyond our capital.

The West London Orbital is a shovel-ready scheme, and we are ready to proceed with the right backing. Transport for London's comprehensive GRIP feasibility studies have already confirmed project deliverability with no "showstoppers". At Brent, we have already committed £465,516, as well as contingency, towards the GRIP 3 option selection stage, with Transport for London covering a further 50%. The WLO also recently cleared the TfL gate review process, enabling it to progress to the next stage of technical and design works. Whilst TfL and West London boroughs have also commissioned a new growth study to provide greater detail on the economic opportunities that could arise from the scheme. Subject to successful outcomes from these, a public consultation is planned for 2026.

It would be hugely valuable to have Government's support at this stage, giving us the confidence to take forward the next steps. We are ready to work with Government, TfL, and all our West London partners to explore an innovative funding model and to progress towards securing a Transport and Works Act Order at the right time. With timely Government engagement, construction could begin around 2030, opening the way for services as soon as possible.

The West London Orbital is aligned with the Government's central missions and has cross-organisational support.

- The WLO helps to **kickstart economic growth** by unlocking thousands of jobs, boosting productivity, and will deliver investment-ready sites
- The WLO helps to **make Britain a clean energy superpower** through directly contributing towards Net Zero by cutting car dependency and emissions
- The WLO helps to **break down barriers to opportunity** through improving access to jobs education, and culture for some of London's most disadvantaged areas
- The WLO helps to build an NHS fit for the future through improved access to health services within west London's life sciences corridor, while generating cleaner air through modal shift

The West London Orbital has already been backed by the Mayor of London, Transport for London, the West London Alliance representing west London Boroughs, and business leaders alike. And polling shows the WLO is popular locally – for example in Brent East, where the existing freight railway already runs, nearly 70% of residents expressed their support for the scheme.

We urge you to recognise the transformational potential of the West London Orbital, and to support west-London with the capital investment needed to put this scheme on the right track. This is a high-impact scheme, in strategic alignment with local, regional, and national priorities, and presents a once in a generation opportunity to re-cast existing infrastructure into a new form which will provide long-lasting socio-economic benefits for our region and the UK, for many years to come.

We would be delighted to showcase the opportunity to yourself or officials and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



CLLR MUHAMMED BUTT

Leader of Brent Council



CLLR TEO BENEÀ

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Property

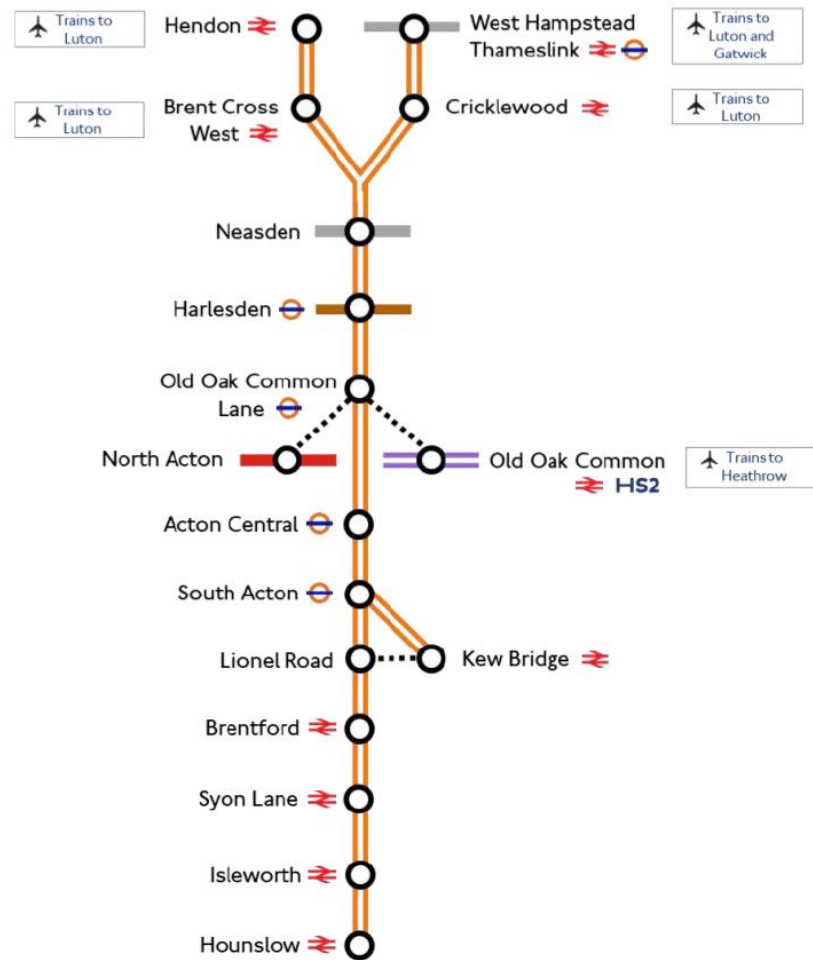


Figure 1: Proposed WLO route and connections (Transport for London: West London Orbital Strategic Narrative, 2021)