30 DEC 2013

Thank you for your letter of 11 December highlighting concerns surrounding any future Crossrail 2 project and the Francis Crick Institute.

Firstly, please let me reassure you that I am very much aware of the Francis Crick Institute’s concerns and I recognise the importance that the Government has attached to this project. Officials have been working closely with Transport for London (TfL), who understand the situation and have committed to work with the Institute to understand the risks and agree a solution.

TfL are currently undertaking detailed work to identify a route for the proposed Crossrail 2 line for safeguarding, a process that ensures future developments will not affect the project. And it was during the early stages of this work that TfL identified that their activities may have an impact upon the Institute. Since then they have met frequently with the Institute and specialist engineers have been engaged to understand and assess the possible impacts.

TfL are currently looking at options around the Euston area. Their preferred route may impact upon the Francis Crick Institute and they are in frequent dialogue to understand the issues and to design a proposal that is acceptable. However, there are alternative route options in the area and my departmental officials have encouraged TfL to give careful consideration to these.

It is intended that the formal Safeguarding Direction will be issued, by the Secretary of State for Transport, at the end of 2014; however there will be a period of consultation next summer where those affected by the route can raise their concerns. However, the Secretary for State has been very clear with the Mayor that he will not safeguard a route that will adversely impact upon the important work at the Francis Crick Institute, which this Government is rightly supporting.
Since 2013 there has been frequent dialogue between TfL and the Institute to understand potential impacts and agree solutions. This dialogue has principally been at a technical level, with TfL working with the Institute's Director for Construction. Furthermore, officials from the Department for Transport, the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, the Medical Research Council, TfL and Mott MacDonald, engineers engaged in route planning, met in November to discuss potential impacts and progress on seeking mitigating actions; another such meeting will be arranged for the New Year. Finally, TfL has offered a high-level meeting with the Chief Executive of the Institute early in the New Year, to continue to discuss how their concerns can be addressed.

This continuing dialogue has led to an assessment of potential impacts, which has enabled the Crossrail 2 project team to look at how mitigations can be identified during both the construction and operation phases of Crossrail 2. While this dialogue is ongoing, significant progress has been made in understanding the technical tolerances of the Institute in relation to noise, vibration, and electro-magnetic interference.

I hope this response offers the reassurance you are seeking.

Yours ever,

STEPHEN HAMMOND