



Getting approval to progress

Some of the terms explained

Parliamentary Bill – A Bill is a proposal for new law to be debated by Parliament. A Bill becomes an Act when it has been approved and receives Royal Assent. The Crossrail Bill may be introduced into either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. Public Bills deal with matters of public law. Most are introduced to Parliament by the Government.

Hybrid Bill – A hybrid Bill is one that is introduced by the Government and deals with changes to the public law which affect private interests.

Act of Parliament – A Bill that has been debated in Parliament and received Royal Assent.

Royal Assent – Royal Assent is the Monarch's agreement for a Bill to become law by making it into an Act of Parliament. The Monarch has the right to refuse Royal Assent, but it is usually a formality.

Petition – an objection made against a Bill.

Who decides whether Crossrail goes ahead?

Approval to build Crossrail would need to be given by Parliament. The Government would apply to Parliament to approve the principle of Crossrail and grant special powers for the railway to be built, operated and maintained.

How would Crossrail get approval to build the railway?

The Government would submit a special type of Bill called a hybrid Bill to Parliament. If the Bill is passed by Parliament, then it would need Royal Assent from the Queen. It becomes law as an Act of Parliament. Only when the Bill receives Royal Assent and becomes an Act is legal permission to build the railway granted.

How would the process work?

When it is being considered by Parliament, a Bill goes through a number of stages. The process is known as the passage of the Bill. The stages have been established over nearly 3 centuries.

Essentially, the stages provide opportunities for all Members of Parliament and the House of Lords to discuss or debate the Bill. A special Crossrail Select Committee would be established in the House of Commons made up of elected Members of Parliament (MP's) and a further Select Committee in the House of Lords consisting of Peers. Each Select Committee would consider the Bill in depth and hear petitions against the Bill.

The passage of the Bill through Parliament can be summarised as follows:

- The Crossrail team with the Department for Transport prepares the various documents that make up the Bill deposit.
- The Government officially present the Bill to Parliament for consideration and it has its First Reading.
- The principle of the Bill is debated in the House of Commons during what is called the Second Reading of the Bill. The debate would be led by Government, but any MP has the opportunity to participate.
- MP's appoint a Select Committee to consider the Bill and hear petitions against the Bill.
- The Select Committee is set up to examine the Bill in detail and hear any petitions on behalf of the House of Commons. The Committee would decide whether or not the proposals in the Bill should be changed.
- The Bill is also considered by a Standing Committee of MP's.

- Following consideration by the Select Committee and Standing Committee, the Bill moves forward to its Third Reading where changes made by the Committees are considered. This is a final opportunity to vote on the Bill. The Bill then moves to its First Reading in the House of Lords.

- The process is then repeated in the House of Lords.

- Once the Bill has completed its Third Reading in the House of Lords, the House of Commons considers any changes made in the Lords. It can then be sent to the Queen for Royal Assent. Once it has Royal Assent, the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament giving permission for the railway to be built, operated and maintained.

What would go in the Bill?

It contains a description of the work to be done and where it is to be carried out. It refers to plans that identify the land needed temporarily or permanently and shows the location of the works.

Who would be in the Parliamentary Committee?

The Select Committee would be made up of seven Members of Parliament. They would be nominated or selected and would represent different political parties, but could not be from constituencies directly affected by Crossrail.

Why involve Parliament?

Powers of compulsory purchase and other powers would be needed to build the railway. Obtaining permission to build Crossrail would require modifications to existing law, particularly in relation to railway industry legislation. Any change to, or modification of the law can only be made by Parliament.

Would Parliament consider every aspect of Crossrail in detail?

Crossrail is a major engineering and construction task. Parliament would not be expected to look at every last detail. The Bill may provide for local details - known as reserved matters - to be referred to others as appropriate. The Bill and subsequent Act may create a set of rules by which these local issues would be dealt with.

What does the Act allow you to do?

The Act of Parliament fixes certain matters in law including:

- The geography of the proposed route – where it would run.
- The ability of the Crossrail team to obtain and use certain areas of land.
- The right to carry out the construction work, operate and maintain the railway.

Precisely what, how and when it is done, is then left to the Crossrail team in accordance with the rules set out in the Act.

How long would the Bill take to go through Parliament?

We cannot predict precisely how long, but previous experience of similar Bills – the one to give permission for the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link for example – suggests that it is likely to take about two years.

Crossrail would bring considerable benefits to the people of London and the UK economy as a whole. However, it may also cause disruption and disturbance. Opportunity must be given for objections to be made and time given for the Parliamentary Committees to consider these views. Making new law is complex and an adequate amount of time must be allocated to the process.



What if there is a General Election?

It is quite common for general elections to occur before a Bill's passage is completed. In our estimate of two years before the Bill could become law, we have accounted for this possibility and still believe it would take up to two years even if a general election is called.

Should Members of the House of Commons Crossrail Select Committee lose their Parliamentary seat at the general election, they would need to be replaced by another Member of Parliament.

Is there an opportunity for me to have my say?

Yes. The public has an opportunity to state its objections through their Member of Parliament, their local authority or as individual petitioners.

The Crossrail team would hold Information Centres and Exchanges before the Bill enters Parliament explaining what would be contained in the Bill. We would continue to try and resolve outstanding issues.

Can I claim for professional fees?

No. In the same way as for a public local enquiry relating to a planning application, individuals or organisations are not entitled to claim for any fees they might incur employing professional advisers, such as surveyors or lawyers.

What happens next?

The Crossrail team is preparing all the material needed for Parliament. Actively consulting and discussing issues surrounding buildings or land is central to this process. Over the coming months, we aim to speak to those who could be affected – above and below ground – and assess their individual circumstances. Through discussion we hope to reach an acceptable agreement.

Further information

More information on the Parliamentary process can be found at the web site www.explore.parliament.uk or by calling the House of Commons Information Unit on 020 7219 4272.

If you think that you may be directly affected and have not yet been contacted by Crossrail, please contact the Helpdesk on 0845 602 3813 or email helpdesk@crossrail.co.uk or write to: Consultation Team, FREEPOST NAT 6945, London SW1 0BR.

Crossrail's Round 2 Public Consultation ends on 27 October, 2004