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## First Crossrail bill for Commons

**London's Crossrail transport plan went before the government on Tuesday, with Whitehall saying it was still committed to the £10bn scheme.**

The government introduced the bill authorising its construction, despite the lack of a final funding plan.

Businesses, property owners and public authorities could be asked to partly fund the cross-London rail link.



The Crossrail scheme will link east and west London

From Tuesday, people will be able to study 17,000 pages of documents about almost every aspect of the project.

The Crossrail scheme will link Maidenhead, Berkshire, with Shenfield in Essex to the east, and Abbey Wood in the south east.

### 'Step forward'

"Crossrail will significantly improve travel into and across the centre of the capital. It will bring huge benefits to the British economy as a whole and be a catalyst for regeneration in the east of London," transport secretary Alistair Darling said.

One funding plan, due to be discussed after the election, could mean a business rate rise of 3% for larger businesses, on top of a £4bn contribution from the government.

"There will need to be a substantial contribution to the cost of the project from those who benefit from it," the Department for Transport said in a statement.

Mr Darling said introducing a bill after nearly 20 years of consultation over the project was "a major step forward".

He said: "We've always said we need to have detailed discussion between ourselves, between transport for London and with the business community as to what proportion each should contribute."

He said legislation would take about 18 months to go through the House of Lords.

Transport for London (TfL) commissioner Bob Kiley welcomed the bill.

### 2013 deadline

"Crossrail, coupled with TfL's £10bn five-year investment programme, shows that London's transport is finally receiving the attention it deserves," he said.

"Crossrail will be the biggest transport project in the capital for a generation and TfL is ready to help drive it forward."

The scheme is due to be completed in 2013 - one year after the Olympic Games which London is bidding for.

Some residents in areas where major building works will take place - such as near Liverpool Street station - have complained about the effects of Crossrail construction.

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