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CROXLEY RAIL LINK PUBLIC INQUIRY

Submission by County Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

My name is Stephen Giles-Medhurst and I am the Hertfordshire County Councillor for Central Watford and Oxhey Division having first been elected for this division in 2001 and subsequently re-elected.

My purpose today is to highlight to the Inquiry for the Inspector in ^{her} final report to require the Proposers and Developers of this scheme to ensure that adequate and substantial mitigation measures both for noise and where possible vibration is included in the final scheme.

I am not here today to promote the scheme on behalf of the county council but to represent the views of my residents, in this case, mainly in the Central Watford part of my division who will be directly adversely affected by the scheme should it go ahead.

That being said it is the case that all county councillors representing the three main political parties and the sole Green County Councillor have supported the principle of the scheme and the Transport and Works Act when this was debated at County Hall. We can see the overriding economic, strategic and transport benefits of this scheme for Watford and South West Herts.

However I, and indeed others, have raised the need to ensure adequate protection, not on along the disused section of the former railway line, but also the existing lines. It is required to ensure the disbenefits that will be suffered by some residents are minimised.

Evidence given by residents in written submissions and today by Mr David Temayane and Mrs Reid will highlighting in detail the personal disbenefits of the scheme. They will also point out flaws in some of the submissions put forward about the noise impact of the scheme in terms of the times and locations of their readings.

The reasons for mitigation

Four wards are identified as deprived in the study area.(Table 17.2) Of these Central, Has the highest level of deprivation catchment analysis for Croxley Rail Link.

TABLE 17.2 INDEX OF DEPRIVATION WARD ANALYSIS

Central

WARD level of deprivation 9.02 house holds 2,766 households within 800 meters 2,696 97%

Whilst these figures differ from the actual electoral role and number of houses where a figure of 3,900 is the case I would have to agree the level of deprivation is high.

Indeed this has been more recently recognised by the Government who tthrough the Neighbourhood Match Fund, has allocated monies to Watford Central Ward- the only

ward in the entire county to help reduce this by spending on targeted community projects before the end of March 2015.

Central has both a mixed and high stay home population and higher than average elderly population, many in residential homes – one of which is within meters (Dyson ct) of the line.

Para 1.30 of the CRL submission says , “ In response to the Eddington Study and the Stern Review in 2007, the DfT published “Towards a Sustainable Transport System” (TaSTS). TaSTS outlines five goals for transport:

- maximise the competitiveness and productivity of the economy;
- address climate change, by cutting emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases;
- **protect people’s safety, security and health;**
- **improve quality of life, including through a healthy natural environment; and**
- **promote greater equality of opportunity.**

And Identified scheme objectives

Improve quality of life and environment by providing alternatives to private car for trips made within and to/from the area,
reducing the adverse effect of road congestion such as noise, pollution and safety

This should thus be applied to the CRL and to ensure the benefits of the scheme are not negated by the disbenefits to residents that back onto the line. As such this scheme will have a direct affect of making worse the living conditions in no less than 566 homes : - over 1,500 residents!

Namely in Gladstone Road, Queens Place, Queens Road ,Woodford Road, Orphanage Road, Shaftesbury Road, Ottoman Terrace, Water Lane, , Dyson Ct, , Neal St, Eflrida Road, Cannon Road,

I have excluded the more recent Springs development and those homes although close enough to suffer noise nuisance are not next to the line in Central Watford.

Equally the CRL affects the enjoyment of the Watterfields Park- this is again at a low level. The Borough Council has recently invested several hundred thousands in improvements here including a new play area for both local children and Central Primary School that lacks any open space. The railway line overlooks this thus mitigation here would help ensure what can be a tranquil oasis in the Town centre can still be enjoyed.

Indeed the submission says:

Noise:

Some temporary noise impacts along the route during construction. The introduction of frequent rail services along a currently disused route will have a significant noise impact, although mitigation measures will reduce this. AFFECT : Slight adverse

This in my view and the view of residents seriously underestimates the impact the scheme will have not only on the disused route but the existing line with the upgraded and longer carriages and vastly increased services.

I would ask that the Inspector ^{looks} ~~talks~~ into account the following:

- 1. The extension of the carriages from 4 to 8 amounts to one extra train. 16 then becomes 32!!**
- 2. The possibility that the foundations of the houses are too shallow to take the extra weight and traffic increase.**
- 3. The Victorian system was meant for the transport of the time.**

This any upgrades now will have an affect but that affect could be reduced

Whilst it is accepted that some of the disbenefits will occur and indeed could occur with an increase in the current number of trains that is not a reason to penalize existing and future residents. I have discussed with council officers how mitigation could reduce the worse noise effects of the rolling stock and how a considerate contractor schemes could minimise the effect of the works. However at the planning stage their hands are likely to be tied if there is not a clear acceptance in your report that there will be thus disbenefits. No matter who builds this scheme or any other always wishes to do so least works required to mitigate their effect. To do so here would seriously harm and affect my residents. It could breach their human rights to enjoy their property.

Therefore I urge the Inspector to require that the Promoter must include along the entire length of the route of the CRL mitigation measures, some which maybe on private property and to subsequently agree those with the local authority at the planning stage.

We all expect if this scheme is approved that it will last as long as existing lines – 150 years or more so to require what are relatively low cost measures to mitigate that affect and allow residents of Central to enjoy their own human rights of their property and gardens is not unreasonable. Indeed because of the higher level of deprivation I would argue that is essential or we are more likely to increase deprivation with the said properties becoming less economically habitable.

Inspectors Site Visit.

I would wish to make the following points having seen the time table for this.

Whilst the train journey from High Street to the junction, will show some of the residential areas which are close to the line and a good perspective will be obtained from it, the visibility is often obscured by trees etc . Therefore I would urge that you arrange walk back to the High Street along the route of line, preferably through the park as this may show the contrast between the relatively quiet areas and noise from railway. I would point out that in particular Water Lane and Dyson Court, also cannot be viewed from rail as the rail is lower than them. Indeed there is small strip of land next to Dyson Ct that could be used to construct noise mitigation for that block of sheltered elderly housing. This cannot be viewed from the trains.