

The Programme Officer,
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Dear Ms. Parker,

Thank you very much for your letter about the public inquiry into the Croxley Rail Link. I spoke to you over the phone and you asked me to submit any further comments by 12th September. I am therefore writing to add some further points which I would like to be considered.

The Croxley Rail Link have said that the link will provide an alternative to residents who do not have access to a car to travel to say, employment. To which employment are they referring to? In Harrow or Northwood? I suspect that it is unlikely that there will be many people travelling from Watford to Harrow or Northwood for employment and there are already transport links in place for people to travel to central London and those people who do work in London will not be living in the areas near the planned new stations. I do not imagine that the link will make central Watford more attractive to London commuters as it is not a very pleasant residential area. If households in these areas cannot afford a car as the Croxley Rail Link claim, they are unlikely to be able to afford to travel by tube. They claim that employment opportunities will increase because a better infrastructure will be in place but I still fail to understand exactly where this employment will be located. How many households will benefit? I am sure that if you counted up it would be very few, probably as many as will lose out due to the closure of the Metropolitan Line Station.

The Croxley Rail Link have stated that the number of car trips **will** be reduced by 3750. This is pure speculation, they cannot say with certainty that the number of car journeys will reduce even by one. They even admit that some roads will see an increase in traffic. Surely with an investment of this size, using public money, they should not be suggesting that any routes will see an increase in traffic and the validity of the scheme has to be questioned if it will result in more congestion in places.

They continue to play down the impact of the closure of the Metropolitan Line Station and will not consider a compromise, for example, keeping the station open and providing some services to the station. You must be aware that all the local Councillors and the local conservatives including the MP Richard Harrington have publicly said that they are campaigning to keep the station open. I do not think they would be doing this if there was not a great strength of feeling locally opposing the closure of the station. I do not believe that the boys school use this station as little as the Croxley Rail Link are claiming. In the inquiry into the closure of the station in June it was clear that London Underground were lying about the number of boys using the station. They claimed that sixty boys use the station to get to school but the Chair of the meeting said they had counted two hundred on a morning in May. I would like to bring to your attention that two years groups are on study leave at this time of year as well so the number of boys using the station could be as many as three hundred.

The route is safe and must reassure the parents of boys living in Moor Park, Northwood and Harrow. A longer walk along a busy road might mean that some parents seek an alternative school. It also provides them with access to central London and all the educational benefits on offer. Croxley Rail Link have stated that people living North of the park will benefit because it is not pleasant walking across the park in the winter. However, no walk is pleasant in the winter and people are quite happy to do this rather than walk an extra fifteen minutes to Ascot Road. Surely you do not want these commuters, and others for whom the current station is convenient, to resort to using their cars?

This government seems to think that the way out of this recession is to invest money in infrastructure projects and this will boost the economy although this is not the place to discuss the merits or faults of their economic policy. This is a scheme that has been seriously considered in the past and has not been carried out because the case was not strong enough and the people of Watford do not believe that it will be an advantage to them. London Underground have dressed this scheme up and presented it to a naïve government, probably claiming that it was a scheme that was always thwarted in the past by environmentalists or local activists intent on getting in the way of progress. The local people know the town and know that spending this amount of money on this scheme is questionable and surely if it was worth doing it would have been done previously. London Underground want a link to Watford Junction having lost the link via the Bakerloo line. The link will not benefit local people and their information about the number of people in Watford who will benefit is either exaggerated or false. I believe that bringing people into London from Watford Junction will benefit the Underground and London but will be of no value to local people, in fact many local people will face longer commutes into central London especially those who have moved into the Cassiobury area over the last twenty years because it is a very pleasant area with good access into town. Those people will move out of Watford and the town will be the poorer in the wake of their exit. The money for the scheme is coming from Hertfordshire County Council and the Treasury, not London Underground who will be running the trains and making extra money if there is any extra to be made. It is vitally important that the investment benefits the people who are paying the initial bill.

Thank you for your consideration of these further points.

Helen Rice