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Final Report, 28 08 2012

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Final report of the consideration by London TravelWatch of the proposed closure and discontinuance of services to and from Watford station

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To set out the background and process undertaken as part of the consideration of the proposed closure and discontinuance of services to and from Watford station.
- 1.2 To summarise London Underground Limited's (LUL's) case for the closure, the concerns of passengers and the conclusions of Panel members consideration of the issues.
- 1.3 To report to the Mayor of London any hardship that would result from the closure, should it proceed.
- 1.4 To report to the Mayor of London measures that would alleviate hardship resulting from the closure, should it proceed.
- 1.5 To report any other conclusions from London TravelWatch's consideration of the closure.

2 Background

- 2.1 Watford station is one of the northern terminal stations on the Metropolitan line. There is a long-standing aspiration to divert the Metropolitan line, via the former Croxley Green branch line, to terminate at Watford Junction station. This would entail a short section of new railway being built to connect the Metropolitan line to the former Croxley Green branch line. The Link would have two new accessible stations at Ascot Road and Vicarage Road and connect to Watford Junction station via Watford High Street station. The project is known as the Croxley Rail Link. See Appendices A & B below for schematics of the existing and proposed Metropolitan line. Appendix C is a copy of LUL's consultation poster that shows the geography of the area and the Croxley Rail Link [Note Watford Hospital station is also known as Vicarage Road station]
- 2.2 This Croxley Rail Link is jointly promoted by London Underground Limited, as the operator of the Metropolitan line, and Hertfordshire County Council (the Metropolitan line terminates in Hertfordshire). Powers to construct the Croxley Rail Link are presently being sought under a Transport and Works Act (TWA) 1992 order. The TWA process is akin to a planning application, but applies to the

construction of transport infrastructure. The TWA process is overseen by the Department for Transport and commenced on 6 January 2012 with the publication of notices in newspapers. There was a 42 day objection period which ended on 17 February 2012. It is understood that an inquiry considering the Croxley Rail Link project will commence in October and as such would be able to take account of London TravelWatch's conclusions.

3 Process issues

- 3.1 As part of the Croxley Rail Link project, LUL (the service operator) is proposing that Watford station and services to and from it are to close to passengers. This will only occur if and when the Croxley Rail Link becomes operational.
- 3.2 On 23 February 2012 LUL initiated the closure process with notices in two national and one local newspaper. The start of a 6 week objection period commenced with the publication of a second set of notices on 2 March 2012, again in two national and one local newspaper. Following its deliberations, London TravelWatch must report, by 2 September 2012, its findings to the Mayor of London.
- 3.3 The Secretariat met with LUL, prior to the start of the process, and agreed the format and wording of station posters advertising the closure. These were to be posted at all Metropolitan line stations clearly visible to passengers (one version for Watford and Croxley stations, a second for other Metropolitan line stations) from 23 February 2012. Copies of the notices and posters were included in Document D of the agenda pack for the Watford Panel meeting held in public on 14 June 2012. An example is shown below as appendix C.
- 3.4 The Secretariat visited both Watford and Croxley stations plus a selection of other Metropolitan line stations early in the consultation period and can confirm that notices were posted at stations at reasonable locations. Additionally LUL sent out emails to its registered, Watford station, Oyster ticket users.
- 3.5 On 27 March 2012 the London TravelWatch Board met and considered how the closure would be dealt with. A panel of three members, David Leibling (Chair), Gail Engert and David Barry were appointed with delegated authority to consider the closure proposal.
- 3.6 In the report appointing the Panel, its duties, as described in the Railways Act 2005, were noted. In summary these are to:

(a) consider the objections made during that period [the objection period];

(b) consider any representations made by the service operator; and

(c) report to the Mayor of London on the hardship the Committee considers will be caused by the proposed closure.

The report to the Mayor of London under the above paragraph (c) may contain proposals for alleviating any hardship to which it refers.

- 3.7 Members were advised that they could go beyond what the Act specifically says it must do. Members were also advised that any proposals to alleviate hardship must be balanced against the cost to the public purse.
- 3.8 It is noted that although the TWA and this closure process are separate, London TravelWatch requested, and has received, from the DfT the TWA objections that relate to the closure of the station and passenger services. We continued to receive objections after the formal closure date. These were taken into account, particularly where new issues were raised.
- 3.9 During the objection period London TravelWatch received 16 objections / comments via the TWA process. We received 104 responses following the posting of the closure notices and as a result of TfL emailing its Watford station Oyster ticket users. We received 99 objections on return slips, issued as tear-off portions of leaflets delivered by local councillors to residents. Subsequent to the close of the objection period we have received 6 items of correspondence. One of the late objections contained a link to an online petition of 1148 names. Though some of these names are anonymous and some without addresses, we have been assured by the originator of the petition that full details are available.
- 3.10 As objections and comments were received, during the objection period, London TravelWatch informed the Mayor of London and LUL (the service operator) of the objections.
- 3.11 On 25 April 2012 the Secretariat wrote to LUL setting out a summary of objections and questions flowing from them and from its own considerations. On 19 May 2012 LUL responded to the letter together with its 'Supporting Statement'. There was one additional item of correspondence between the Secretariat and LUL prior to the public meeting. These letters, LUL's response and Supporting Statement were included as Document E and F of the agenda pack for the Watford Panel meeting.
- 3.12 On 15 May 2012 members visited Watford station at 07:30 to see for themselves the activity at the station. Members also walked to the sites of the proposed new stations and to Watford High Street station and travelled by train to Watford Junction station.
- 3.13 On 17 May 2012 we wrote to all consultees to invite them to the Panel meeting on 14 June 2012.
- 3.14 On 6 & 7 June we despatched papers to Panel members and those objectors that had indicated they were attending the meeting.
- 3.15 On 14 June 2012 the Panel met at the Colosseum, Watford to hear from LUL and objectors to the proposal. This meeting was attended by over 80 residents. 15 contributed to the debate including the local MP and three local councillors.
- 3.16 Subsequent to the public meeting the Secretariat asked several questions of LUL. We also asked Hertfordshire County Council to write to us to describe the street works that they propose as part of the Croxley Rail Link project.

4 Summary of representations and issues raised by consultees

- 4.1 Paragraph 3.9 above describes the numbers and types of objections / comments we received during the objection period. All of these representations have been considered by the Secretariat and are set out in the table below. Of course many objectors gave more than one reason for their objection.
- 4.2 It should be noted that not all of the responses to the consultation process were negative. 16 correspondents supported the closure.
- 4.3 There were 79 objectors that simply stated they were against the closure of Watford station, but not the Croxley Rail Link.
- 4.4 15 consultees opposed both the closure of Watford station and the Croxley Rail Link project.

Summary of material issues raised by consultees

Issue Number	Issues	Number of Responses
1	Simply state against proposal and the Croxley Rail Link	15
2	Against proposal (object only to the closure of Watford station, but not the Croxley Rail Link)	79
3	Simply state in favour of proposal (fully support)	16
4	Alternative Proposals	
	4 (a) Run peak only or less frequent service	21
	4 (b) Run a shuttle between Watford and Croxley stations	13
	4 (c) Invest into extension of service from Watford stations to Amersham/Chesham stations	5
5	Additional walk/cycle time (to/from proposed stations, school and park)	58
6	Increased volume of local traffic	
	6 (a) Children being dropped off and picked up from school instead of using the train	22
	6 (b) Visitors to Cassiobury Park choosing car over train due to distance from the station	6
	6 (c) Commuters choosing car over train due to distance from station	18
7	Increased level of pollution due to potential increase in use of car	9

Issue Number	Issues	Number of Responses
8	Car parking	
8 (a)	Car park provision (park and ride)	8
8 (b)	Car park cost	5
9	Increase in travel cost	
9 (a)	Increase in fare (zone extension)	8
9 (b)	Cost of additional car journey to new station(s)	2
10	Safety of routes (road safety and personal security)	
10 (a)	Require adequate and safe cycle routes	2
10 (b)	Pedestrian crossings, adequate lighting and cleanliness (children getting to school, nights, residents security)	19
11	Investment not worth the benefit	8
12	Loss of local bus route due to lack of use if Watford station ceases to operate	2
13	Re-run Bakerloo line to Watford Junction station	1
14	More passengers near Watford station compared to newly proposed stations or Watford station is a busy/well used station	10
15	Watford Junction station not able to handle the increased usage (train and passengers) from proposed Croxley Rail Link project	3
16	Improve bus service to give better access to stations	3
17	"I object to the proposed closure of passenger services as Watford Met station. I believe that there are viable options for retention of passenger services at Watford Met as being proposed by Watford Lib-Dems without impairing the proposed Croxley Rail Link service" (see 4(a), 4(b) and 4(c))	131

5.0 Consideration of the issues

5.1 Alternative proposals and overall justification of the proposal to close Watford station

Objectors have suggested alternative proposals to the closure of Watford station. The various alternatives are listed below.

Some Objectors believe that the money, time and effort invested in the Croxley Rail Link project are not worth the benefits of the new service as sufficiently more people will not use the Metropolitan line as a result of the project .

Objectors believe that enough passengers use Watford station to justify its existence. Objectors also believe that more passengers reside near Watford station than in the areas of the newly proposed stations and dispute the closure of Watford station.

Consideration of alternatives

A series of alternatives have been suggested:

- a) Continue running the service to Watford station, with four trains an hour going to Watford Junction station and two trains an hour going to Watford station in the off peak with corresponding services during the peak. Alternatively run a peak only service to Watford station.
- b) Run a shuttle service from Watford station to Croxley station.
- c) Extend the service from Watford station to Amersham/Chesham stations via the "North Curve" (an existing section of railway) and Rickmansworth station. This would maintain a Watford station to Croxley station service and objectors believe that this would extend the service to the whole of the West Herts and South Bucks region and thus extend the benefits of the capital expenditure of the Croxley Rail Link to many more people than LUL's proposition.
- d) A variant on c) was also suggested. This alternative would retain the existing service pattern to and from Watford station and provide an alternative service from Amersham/Chesham to Watford Junction station via the Croxley Rail Link. This would also provide a link between the main centres of West Herts and South Bucks and provide significant local benefit as well as retaining the existing service to Watford station.
- e) An additional proposal was suggested of a service from Watford station utilising existing non-passenger train movements into and out of Watford station as passenger carrying services.

LUL have responded to these proposals.

A split service (3 trains per hour terminating at both Watford and Watford Junction stations) is rejected as having a poor economic case because two reduced frequency services, costing more, would be created and would be less attractive than a single, high frequency service only to Watford Junction station. The cost to benefit ratio of this split service proposal is 1.4 to 1 compared with 2.6 to 1 for the project as presented. LUL say that this would bring the financial viability of the project below the level at which the Government would provide funding. Although the figures have been scrutinised by Department for Transport, the Panel is concerned that a simple split service should reduce the return so much and asked LUL to provide more detail.

Subsequently members asked for an assessment of a split service providing four trains an hour to Watford Junction and two trains an hour to Watford station in addition to LUL's split service comparator of three trains per hour to each Watford station. The analysis LUL has subsequently provided suggests the cost to benefit ratio of this split service is 1.68 to 1. The primary reason for there being fewer benefits is the less attractive nature of a lower frequency service for a larger number of Watford Junction station passengers

The second (a shuttle to Croxley station) is rejected by LUL due to cost, operational complexities and because it would provide a less attractive service to some passengers. Passengers are said to dislike waiting and interchange.

The third (a service to Amersham or Chesham stations) is rejected by LUL because there would be low demand (500 passengers per weekday) at a disproportionate cost, even with only a two-trains-per-hour operation. An alternative route via Moor Park already exists.

The fourth (a through service from Watford Junction station to Amersham station) is rejected by LUL as it would not be good value for money (demand would be low and the costs relatively high). However, LUL also said that the Croxley Rail Link project would provide the possibility of such a link in the future.

The final suggestion (utilising the small number of existing non-passenger train movements) is rejected as these movements take place either very early or very late in the day and would not provide useful passenger services.

LUL's general response to all of the suggested alternatives is that they would all result in a less attractive business case, i.e. loss of benefits compared to their preferred option. This is primarily because resources (trains) would either be diverted to less beneficial use or offer lower frequency services that would be less attractive to passengers, and therefore deliver less benefit than a high frequency service.

The Panel asked LUL to tell them the effect on passenger flows of changing the off-peak frequency from 6tph to 4 tph in December 2011 as this could give some indication of the effect of reducing the frequency to Watford Junction station from 6 tph to 4 tph if the 4:2 split of services proposed above were adopted. TfL have looked at the drop in demand at Watford station before and after the timetable change by comparing gateline data in June 2011 to that in June 2012. TfL tell us there was only a slight fall in 2012. The reasons for this slight fall are unknown.

Passenger demand at Watford station

We asked LUL to tell us how many passengers presently use the station broken down by peak, off peak and weekend. We asked how many passengers access and use the station by car during these periods, how many Watford Boys Grammar School pupils use the station a day and how many passengers LUL estimate will use the new service and stations during peak, off peak and weekends.

Using 2010 data, LUL state the station is the 25th least used station of 268 underground stations with 2631 average week day entrances. It is expected usage would fall by at least 50% should the Croxley Rail Link open as passengers transfer to the new stations, which would make it the 6th least used station. It is suggested that this is due to the improvements seen in the London Overground services.

LUL say surveys and ticket data indicate that there were 2631 entries and 2466 exits on an average weekday in 2010 there is a peak between 7:00 and 10:00 on weekdays and between 15:00 and 16:00 in the afternoon. On Saturdays demand is lower with no discernable peak. The overwhelming number of passengers arrive by foot. Patronage increased slightly in 2011 to 2696 but is still 7% lower than 2007 in contrast to a rising level on the network as a whole.

LUL's 2010 survey estimated that around 200 students use the station but only 70 go to Watford Boys Grammar School. However, members' observations suggested that the majority of the students were Watford Boys Grammar School pupils. A review undertaken by LUL, after the public meeting, of the survey methodology has resulted in significant

changes to their estimate of the number of Watford Boys Grammar School pupils using Watford station from that originally presented as part of the closure case. However, LUL has assured us that the business case overall does not change.

LUL's business case

LUL's case for the Croxley Rail Link is firstly that there are average time savings for existing users (although there are winners and losers). In addition, there are new passenger journey opportunities created by the connection of Watford's town centre stations to the west Watford area and there are social and regeneration benefits to the wider Watford area. They told the Panel that the project had been scrutinised by Government and had been granted funding on the basis this very positive business case.

Members accept that Watford station is a lightly used station in comparison to many other Underground stations and the use is particularly skewed towards peak hour use. Nevertheless, members noted how important the station was to local passengers.

While the Panel accepts that the economic case for LUL's preferred option is better than for a split service, the Panel feels that there may still be an economic case for keeping Watford station open with services split between Watford and Watford Junction stations.

5.2 Additional walk/cycle time to new stations, road safety and personal security

Objectors believe that the closure of Watford station will result in an unacceptable additional walk/cycle time to the nearest proposed new station from their homes. They say additional travel times would also apply to many Watford Boys Grammar school pupils and to visitors to Cassiobury Park.

Objectors noted that for some passengers, such as the elderly and passengers with mobility impairments the journey would be more problematic and slower.

Objectors believe that the road safety and the personal security of passengers travelling to the proposed stations would be compromised.

An objector has requested that safe, sustainable cycle routes be implemented in the region of the newly proposed stations. One objector has also requested a new path and cycle route running along the line from Watford station to Croxley station and cycle racks at the Croxley station.

Objectors believe that the areas around the newly proposed stations are "unsafe" and are concerned about lighting and cleanliness. Objectors also told the Panel that school children using the station will have to cross two busy roads from the proposed Ascot Road station to travel to and from school. At present it is suggested that there are not sufficiently safe crossing points.

LUL have modelled the journey times of existing users (by all modes). They acknowledge that some existing passengers will have longer journeys to the new stations under their proposals, but also believe half of the existing users will have shorter journeys. Their model suggests that the net average impact on existing users starting their journey at Watford station will be a one minute reduction in journey time. It is suggested that only a very few existing passengers, generally living north of the station in the Cassiobury Park area, will see an increase in journey time of more than 15 minutes.

LUL's model suggests that existing passengers travelling to various locations in Watford (the town centre, hospital etc.) will benefit from an average journey time saving of three¹ minutes because the new stations served by the Metropolitan line are generally better located for popular destinations in Watford than Watford station presently is.

LUL's case is that the hardship caused by the closure of Watford station will be alleviated by the opening of the Croxley Rail Link with its two new accessible stations that are located only a short distance from Watford station.

The Croxley Rail Link project includes significant street works that will improve access – dropped kerbs, resurfaced roads and cycle parking for example. These works will be undertaken by the local highway authority as part of their transportation plan for the area associated with the project. This plan will be formulated taking into account the journeys of school pupils.

The cycle route suggested along the track formation between Watford station and Croxley station is not practicable as the railway will remain in operational use.

Members accept that the proposed new stations will be closer for some existing passengers and generally a reasonable alternative for others to access the Metropolitan line. However, the experiences during the site visit conducted by members support the objectors' comments about the poor pedestrian environment of several of the walking routes to, from and between the existing and proposed stations and the difficulties for the elderly and those with mobility impairments.

Members felt improvements to the pedestrian environment were essential to alleviate hardship and street works should be conducted as part of the Croxley Rail Link project by Hertfordshire County Council, as the local highway authority and joint promoter of the project. Similar issues arise with respect to cycle access to the new stations.

Members also recognised that there were road safety and personal safety issues associated with journeys that would include the crossing of busy roads and stations located in less hospitable surroundings than presently found at Watford station.

At its meeting in Watford, the Panel asked Hertfordshire County Council to write to it and describe what is proposed as part of its Transportation Plan for the area to address these concerns. This information has been received and taken account by the Panel in this report.

5.3 Additional car journeys and resulting additional air pollution

Objectors believe that the closure of Watford station will result in more passengers choosing to travel by car, instead of using public transport, resulting in increased local traffic. They suggest:

- a) the increased distance from the newly proposed stations to the Watford Boys Grammar School will result in parents/guardians choosing to drop off/pick up their children using their cars;

¹ This figure has been reduced by LUL from four minutes to three post the public meeting and a review of the 2010 survey methodology.

- b) the additional distance from the newly proposed stations to Cassiobury Park will result in visitors to the park choosing to travel by car rather than train;
- c) the additional distance and journey time from the newly proposed stations for local residents will result in commuters travelling by car rather than train.

Objectors also believe that the additional use of cars will result in an increased level of pollution.

LUL state that the traffic assessment, undertaken as part of the Croxley Rail Link project, suggests that there will be 3,750 fewer car trips a day. Some roads will see a small increase of no more than 5%. LUL believe that levels of pollution are generally linked to car use and as car trips would reduce so would pollution levels, though marginally.

Members accepted LUL's assessment of these issues.

5.4 Car parking

Objectors are concerned about car parking provision and its cost:

- a) Objectors appear satisfied with the provision of car parking facilities at Watford station and are concerned about the availability of parking facilities at the newly proposed stations and Watford Junction station.
- b) Objectors were also concerned about the costs of parking at the new stations and the higher charges at car parks serving Watford Junction and Watford High Street stations. Objectors stated that the Watford Junction station car park costs £7 a day, more than double the Watford station car parking fee.

LUL told us that the present Watford station has 70 car parking spaces and that the new station at Ascot Road will have about 200 spaces and designated car drop-off points. Although this increase could lead to more car journeys LUL do not believe this will be the case as in addition to the 70 spaces at Watford station drivers presently park at locations other than the LUL car park. LUL say the fee scale for the Ascot Road station car park is yet to be determined, but it is likely to be the same as the fees at Watford station.

Members accept that access to the Metropolitan line by car would be possible in a similar manner and at a similar cost to that pertaining at present.

5.5 Additional travel costs

Objectors believe that the closure of Watford station will result in increased travel costs:

- a) Watford Junction and Watford High Street stations are presently in higher London fare zones than Watford station. Watford Junction has special fares that differ, depending on the route taken.
- b) Objectors believe that the closure of Watford station will result in them having to take another form of transport to get to their nearest station, resulting in an increase in the total cost of their journey. If they have to use their car to access more distant stations objectors believe it may be cheaper to drive to their final

destination rather than pay the petrol and parking costs at the station and travel by train. We asked LUL what assessment they had made of this.

LUL have supplied the table below which sets out the fares from Watford station and the proposed new Watford Metropolitan line stations and the fares from both Watford High Street and Watford Junction stations. LUL believes the two new London fare zone 7 stations can be used by all displaced Watford station passengers.

Fares from Stations in Watford to Central London

Station	Fare Zone	Day anytime Travelcard to central London	Monthly anytime Travelcard to central London
Watford Met	7	£19.60	£222.80
Ascot Road	7	£19.60	£222.80
Watford Hospital	7	£19.60	£222.80
Watford High Street	8	£19.60	£262.70
Watford Junction	Special	£20.20	£291.90

Panel members were pleased to see that it is proposed that the new Croxley Rail Link stations will be located in the same London fare zone as Watford station, zone 7. However, for a small group of existing passengers, for which Watford High Street and Watford Junction stations would be their closest alternative station to access the Metropolitan line, there would be a choice of either paying more for their journey or walking further to a cheaper, London fare zone 7 station.

Members felt that this would be a hardship to a small number of existing passengers and that there were precedents, in similar circumstances, for a discretionary lower fare to be offered for a time limited period for passengers identified in this group. LUL did not think this was viable.

LUL have told us that fares from the new stations via Watford Junction station to Euston would be the same as for anyone using existing Overground and London Midland services direct from Watford Junction station.

No assessment has been undertaken by LUL looking at how many passengers will switch modes to private car travel as LUL believes few passengers would abandon the Metropolitan line for their trips as there are financial disincentives (parking charges and Congestion Charge) that will dissuade them.

Members accepted that modal switch away from the Metropolitan line as a result of the closure of Watford station would be minimal.

5.6 Loss of local bus services and request for new bus services

Objectors believe that the closure of Watford station will result in the loss of the local bus service (W30) as it will become less used. Objectors are concerned that this will cut the link between the local area with the business park and town centre.

Objectors believe that the bus service could be improved to allow better access to and from the newly proposed and existing Watford stations to minimise the disruption caused

by the closure of Watford station. The Secretariat asked if improvements to bus services were proposed.

LUL informed the Panel that it understood that, larger vehicles are being introduced by the operator on the W30 route. The present contracted service runs to the end of 2012/13. It is accepted that, like other contracted services, its future will be reviewed both by the bus company and the highway authority.

Hertfordshire County Council told the Panel that it works with the bus operators in a Quality Network Partnership and that it seeks to provide the bus services people need. However, members noted that in a commercial bus market there were no guarantees that services that ran today would continue to run. In contrast, members also noted that the proposed Croxley Rail Link would provide a permanent east to west public transport link to and from Watford town centre.

Members agreed to ask that a review of bus services is undertaken as part of the Croxley Link Rail project. Members particularly felt an off-peak W30 service serving the Cassiobury Park area would be beneficial for those unable to walk, or have difficulty walking, between the area and the proposed new stations.

5.7 Re-run Bakerloo line to Watford Junction

An objector believes that it will be beneficial to run the Bakerloo line to Watford Junction station, as in the past.

The Panel asked what consideration had been given to re-running the Bakerloo line to Watford Junction station in order to reinstate Underground services to central London. It also asked why this suggestion was not a better alternative to achieve a link between Watford Junction station and central London.

LUL say that the re-extension of the Bakerloo line back up to Watford Junction station has been considered, but rejected for a number of reasons, not least because the London Overground now provides a good service with connections to the Bakerloo line. The proposal would also not provide the connections to Watford town centre from deprived areas of Watford that need regenerating. LUL tell us there is neither a business case, nor an engineering case to do this.

Members accepted LUL's assessment.

5.8 Watford Junction station is busy now and will be over capacity if the Croxley Rail Link project goes ahead

Objectors believe that Watford Junction station will not be able to cope with the additional passengers and the additional numbers of trains that will result from the implementation of the Croxley Rail Link. Objectors are concerned that the Croxley Rail Link project will not include any investment into the development of Watford Junction station to deal with the additional train and passenger traffic. We asked if this had been considered and what the impact of additional passengers would be.

LUL said they that there will only be a 6% rise in passengers at Watford Junction station and so have not included any capacity enhancements at Watford Junction station in the project.

Members accept that there would be enough platform capacity at Watford Junction station for the new service and that the additional services would result in only a comparatively small increase in overall passenger numbers.

5.9 Non-material objections

Several objectors wrote with objections that London TravelWatch cannot take into account as part of this process as they are not directly passenger issues.

Summary of non-material issues raised by objectors

Issue Number	Issues	Number of Responses
1	Impact on property value	13
2	Heritage (character of building etc)	1
3	Noise from construction and operations	5
4	Visual impact of viaduct	5
5	Impact on survival of business	1

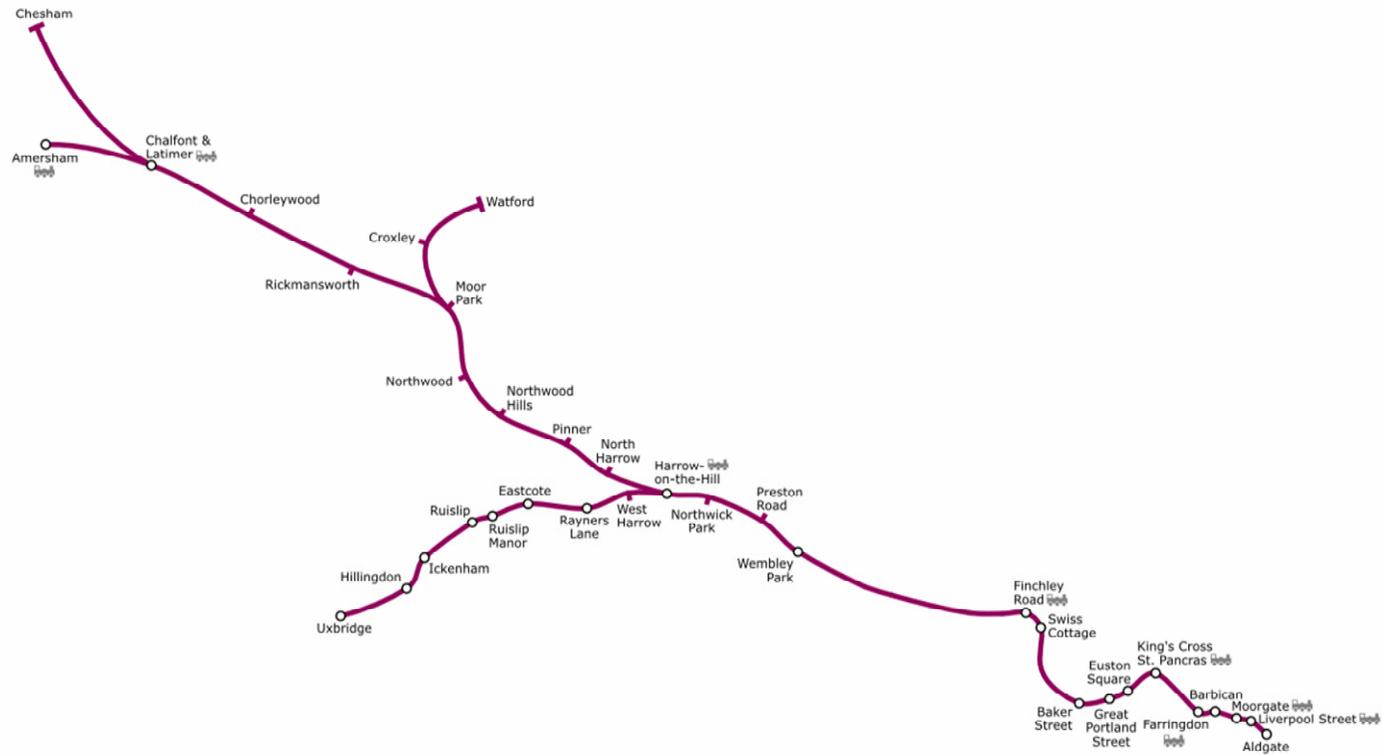
6 Conclusion and recommendations

- 6.1 The closure of Watford station will result in hardship to some existing passengers. But this hardship will be largely alleviated by the implementation of the Croxley Rail Link project that will provide two new accessible stations facilitating access to the Metropolitan line. This is predicated on LUL's stated intention that Watford station will not close until the proposed Croxley Rail Link project is operational.
- 6.2 For about half of existing passengers there will be a longer walking journey to the proposed new stations, but this additional walk will be short for most. Only a few existing passengers will have longer than a 15 minute additional journey. For others there will be a shorter walk.
- 6.3 This hardship could be alleviated if there were to be an improvement in the sub-standard walking environment on the routes passengers use to, from and between the existing and new stations. It is therefore recommended that there should be a condition of Transport and Works approval that Hertfordshire County Council should undertake to substantially improve the walking environment. They should include improvements to the pavement condition, pavement widths, the removal of steps by the introduction of dropped kerbs or entry treatments and single stage, direct pedestrian crossing facilities on pedestrian desire lines. Improvements to the street lighting may also be necessary.
- 6.4 This hardship could be alleviated by improvements to cycling conditions, the remodelling of junctions to improve cycle safety and an investigation of possible new off-road routes.
- 6.5 Although it is recognised that the proposed new stations will be of great benefit to those with mobility impairments, in terms of access, the additional walk to the new stations for this group of passengers will be an additional hardship. This hardship could be alleviated by the continued operation of a bus service between the affected area and the new stations. However, bus services outside of London are

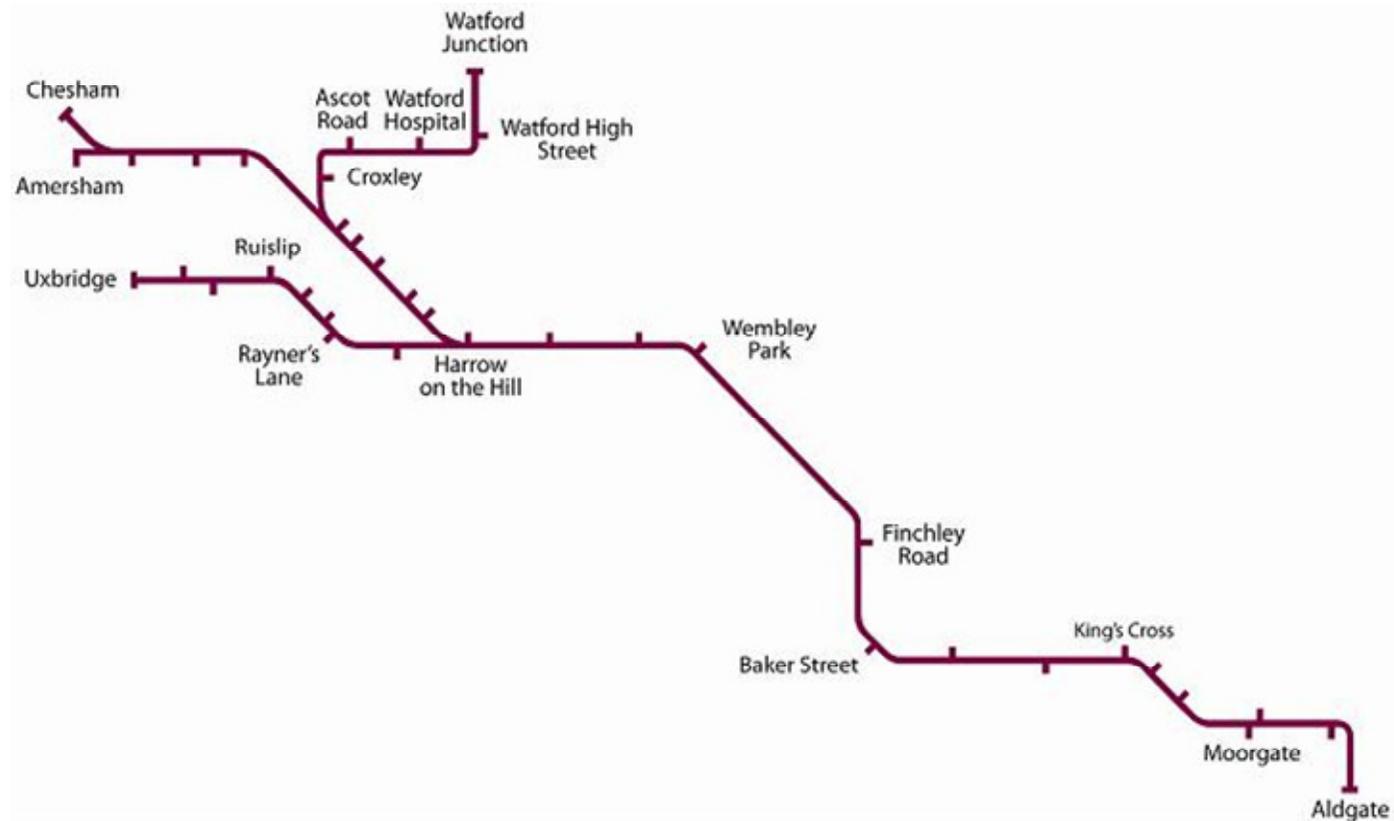
not regulated and so are subject to commercial viability and the willingness, or otherwise, of Hertfordshire County Council to subsidise a service. It is therefore recommended that there should be a condition of Transport and Works approval that a bus service (possibly a demand responsive one) operates between the Cassiobury Park area and the new stations for a period of three years to at least allow passengers with mobility impairments to adjust their journey.

- 6.6 There will be a small group of passengers whose closest station, to access the Metropolitan line, will be either Watford High Street or Watford Junction stations. However, the fare from these stations will be higher. These passengers will have the choice of a longer walk to one of the new fare zone 7 stations or pay the additional fare from Watford High Street and Watford Junction stations. The financial hardship could be alleviated by a discretionary fare being agreed, for a limited time period, allowing this small group of passengers to use the Metropolitan line from Watford High Street and Watford Junction stations at London fare zone 7 levels. There are precedents for such schemes. For example a scheme was implemented for passengers who suffered dis-benefit following the closure of the Thameslink service between Farringdon and Moorgate stations.
- 6.7 Although LUL maintained that it would be complicated to set up a scheme London TravelWatch believe that this is an important principle and recommends that for this small group of passengers a compensation scheme should be implemented for a period of three years.
- 6.8 Additionally London TravelWatch believes that there is a business case for a Croxley Rail Link that retains Watford station as part of a split service, albeit with fewer overall benefits than LUL's preferred option. The Panel recommend to the Transport and Works Act Inspector that he or she consider a trial split service, serving both Watford and Watford Junction stations to determine the real passenger numbers and issues involved with the running of a split service serving both Watford and Watford Junction stations prior to a final decision on the closure of Watford station. The trial could last for two years from the opening of the Croxley Rail Link to 2018 when the new signalling is due to be completed on the Metropolitan line when there will, presumably, be a major re-timetabling programme.

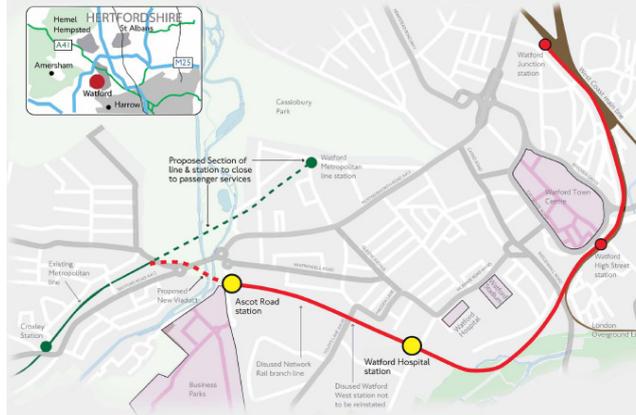
The existing Metropolitan Line



The proposed Metropolitan Line



Proposed closure of Watford station



The Croyley Rail Link is a proposed extension of the Metropolitan line that:

- links Croyley with the interchange station at Watford Junction via Watford High Street station
- provides two new stations at Ascot Road and Watford Hospital
- requires the closure of the existing Watford terminus station following the opening of the new stations, which is expected by 2016

For more information visit tfl.gov.uk/croyleyrailink

Have your say on the proposed closure of Watford station no later than 13 April 2012.

Write to: London TravelWatch, 6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7JA
Email: closures@londontravelwatch.org.uk

