

Transport and Works Act 1992:
Application for the Proposed Croxley Rail Link Order.
Ref: DNW/31541/1/PFI

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Transport and Works Act Orders Unit
General Counsel's Office
Zone 1/31
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
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Dear Secretary of State for Transport,

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This statement of case submission seeks clarity about the costs and logistics of the scheme. I attended a consultation meeting. Not all my questions were answered.

The scheme is set to cost £116m.

1. Number of trains to be bought. One train has been provisioned. I calculate 3 trains at £10m each will be needed. This constitutes 25% of the projects costs. The trip time Croxley to Watford Junction and back is 18 minutes to include a station stop at Croxley in each direction. The LMS service on the Croxley Branch had a round trip time of 16 minutes without station stops at Croxley, as this was the terminus station. So 18 minutes is the right sort of order for the new service. With a proposed 6-minute service interval 3 trains will be needed. A train costs about £10m and thus 3 trains is £30m, which is 25% of the projects costs. Has the cost estimate at £116m sufficient contingency to fully cover the cost of extra trains? Ironically the retention of Watford Met as a passenger station could help alleviate the number of new trains required for a given service frequency south of Croxley Met.
2. As ratepayers we should know who is warranting the estimates and who will meet any cost overrun. The controlling mind for the project has to be LUL as under The Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (ROGS), they hold the operator's license. Who owns the cost estimates? Are they robust? The above calculation throws some doubt on that.

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3. The route follows the old LMS line. The LMS stock that operated that route was much narrower than the S Stock that will operate the service under the scheme. Is the route footprint wide enough for the new trains and does it provide for the passing clearances required by modern standards? Have the properties affected been alerted to any compulsory purchase orders?
4. The route is grossly over grown with vegetation, some trees must be 30ft high. The route will require complete clearance and re-instatement. I calculate that each metre of track will necessitate 2 lorry movements. The track bed will to be some 10m wide for two-train operation. It will require cutting the existing track bed out to a depth of 1m. Therefore each metre of track requires 10cubic metres of material to be removed – which is one lorry load. Equally there will be one lorry load of new material. For each 1km of track there will be two thousands lorry movements. If a lorry costs £100 per movement then each kilometre has a notional cost of £0.2m for transportation. There will also other logistic costs including earth-moving machines, cranes and materials and possibly land fill costs. As far as could make out no costs had been allocated for this work and the replacement ballast. I would expect the existing ballast to be limestone and therefore is not suitable for the new railway system. The modern standard is granite ballast with concrete track sleepers. Much of the work will require single point entry to the working site due to the proximity of the surrounding inhabited properties and where the route is running in a cutting. The up and down movements will cause much noise, dust and be time-consuming. Working hours and the noise footprint could be a problem.
5. The Road Bridge over the railway at Tolpits Lane, by LMS West Watford Station, the restricting arch may be cracked. The consultation advised that no bridges would need renewal. Is this bridge suitable for the 44T lorries that now operate when the restricting arch is removed to allow trains to operate?
6. The existing bridge over the railway at Sun Printers, Ascot Road Bridge No 5, is under 6m wide and therefore not wide enough for dual track operation of the new S stock. Furthermore one of the supports is cracked.
7. Photos demonstrating the serious vegetation issues at Watford West and the crack in the bridge support at Ascot Road are on the attached disc. The first 13 pictures are at West Watford Station showing the trees growing through the track both to the West and East as well as the cutting the track bed lies in. The old single 3rd rail track can be seen. The brick support to the Road Bridge is also shown. It restricts the track width. Was it constructed to support the Road Bridge? It will need removing to allow dual track operation. For Ascot road there are 4 photos that show the Rail Bridge No 5. It is under 6m wide and therefore not wide enough for dual track operation of the new S stock. Furthermore one of the supports is cracked and this is clearly shown in the last photo.

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Because the old 3rd rail track is still in position it might be possible to use the main running rails after crude vegetation clearance, as an engineer's construction track to facilitate the installation of the new dual track and thus reduce some of the disturbance of the new works.

8. Whilst I do not expect these issues are new to the scheme's sponsors they do require cogent answers.
9. The implementation logistics have not been rigorously explained and one wonders whether the cost estimates are robust?

Yours sincerely,

Michael Fish Dip EE, CEng, FIET, FIMechE, FIRSE, FPWI.

Copy of Submission and Photo disc to:
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