

Keep Watford Met Open

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London Transport Users Committee
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Keep Watford Met Open

Also sent by email.

We object to the proposed closure of passenger services at Watford Met.

LUL have given no reasoned justification to close the Watford Met station to passenger services.

There is an overwhelming case to keep the station fully operational based on local needs, reduced environmental damage and reduced CO₂ footprints.

Personal Inconvenience

We will be personally inconvenienced by the closure of the Met Station. Currently a 3-minute walk will become 20 minutes. Any inclement weather will cause us to use our own car with consequential parking costs or a taxi that will have to come from far afield. This is not a CO₂ friendly answer. Our case is not unique and will be replicated by many commuters in the local area.

Background Issues

Stabling of trains

There is insufficient stabling space at Watford Junction under the proposed Croxley Rail Link and therefore Watford Met will remain open for stabling purposes. Most of the cost of an operational station will be incurred but for no passenger benefit. Not an environmentally friendly solution.

Effect of keeping the station open

In summary all the principal capital and running costs will be incurred by using the Met Station to stable trains.

Keeping the Met station open requires no capital expenditure. The infrastructure exists and will be maintained and upgraded due to the need to keep the station's stabling functional. There is insufficient stabling capacity to stable all the trains required at Watford Junction. Any resignalling of the line would automatically require the spur to Watford to be upgraded. To provide the level of security required for Watford Met it will need 24x7 staff attendance as the spur is an electrified operational railway. Leaving it unattended would encourage vandalism. There are many easy access points adjacent to the Met Station. As the spur is operational railway it would require normal

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maintenance routines - right down to snow clearance - to keep it safe and operational.

The fundamental case then becomes one of revenue expenditure.

There will be an incremental cost of manning the station and booking office, which is above that of providing the security previously, identified. Other costs will include cleaning, lighting and maintenance of ticket machines. Now the critical point, these costs will be offset by the passenger revenue generated by keeping the station operational.

There will be counter arguments about the service pattern and the proposed 6-min service from Watford Junction will be lost. There is nothing magic about service pattern that a timetable cannot advertise! A 6-min service departing Croxley Green may be the answer with one train in 3 going to Watford Met. The number of trains to be bought for the Croxley Rail Link service is insufficient for a 6-minute service. We calculate 3 trains at £10m each will be needed for the project. This constitutes 25% of the project's costs. However, one train has been provisioned. The trip time Croxley to Watford Junction and back is about 16/18 minutes. For the 6-minute proposed service 3 trains will be needed. On the other hand keeping the Met Station open and providing a passenger service could reduce the number of trains to be purchased and still achieve a 6-minute service south of Croxley to London. It is inconceivable that trains departing Watford Junction will be fully loaded to justify the 6-minute service.

Scheme Related Consequences of Closing Watford Met.

Local area Parking

Parking on the Cassiobury Estate by commuters using the Met station is already a major problem for residents and epitomises the issues that will transfer to Ascot Road area if the Met station is closed. Indeed the problem could be exacerbated by additional traffic emanating not only from the current car users but added to by the Cassiobury residents using their cars to get to the new Ascot Road station. This will add to the congestion on the Rickmansworth road.

Journeys to Ascot Road Station

Car journey times to the station from the Cassiobury area will be greatly extended and add to the road congestion. Currently a 1-kilometre walk will convert to 3 kilometres. An equivalent round trip car journey will be 4 to 5 miles due to the road layout. Car usage always increases if it is raining. Again more road congestion and increased journey times.

Kiss and ride, park and ride commuters will still rat run through Cassiobury Park Avenue as they seek to find the quickest journey time to get to Ascot Road Station. Indeed it could even add to the rat run problem as Cassiobury Residents also seek to avail themselves of the rat run facility in their car journeys to and from the station rather than the long walk.

Non beneficial noise

Because the rail infrastructure remains those properties adjacent to the railway will have all the disadvantages of a railway at the bottom of the garden but none of its benefits.

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Cassiobury Park

The Park will have no station. The Council expects to spend some £5m on developing improving the Park's facilities. How sad that visitors will be denied rail access! Watford Met is 100m from the Park!

Watford Boys Grammar School

This will lose the significant benefit of having a station "on its doorstep".

Mayor of Watford Support

Keeping the Met station open has the support of the Mayor of Watford. Whilst the Mayor of London makes the final decision, Schedule 8 of the Railways Act 2005, clause 5 para (2) places a legal obligation on the Mayor of London to consult the local authority.

The LUL case is that closure of the Met Station is a requirement. No substantiation of any requirement has been given. This is the issue that must be tested by the London Transport Users Committee. Keeping the Met station fully functional and meeting the incremental revenue costs from the fares generated is our recommended option.

ME and VR Fish