

A REPORT BY SAWTAG OPPOSING THE CLOSURE OF WATFORD METROPOLITAN STATION AND ITS ASSOCIATED ROUTE. ALL OF THESE ARE TO BE SAFEGUARDED UNDER EXTRACTED GOVERNMENT POLICY.

This report opposes the closure of Watford (Metropolitan Line) Station on three major grounds.

- 1 Retaining peak, football and special traffic, and positively building up traffic. Both the Metropolitan Line and WCML/Watford Suburban Lines serve nearby Wembley Stadium extremely well already. Also, train portion working must be advanced to best practice elsewhere.
- 2 Facilitating the forming of an extended London Overground network, through the extracted Government Policy of better protection, critical in developing rail infrastructure and interchange.
- 3 Essential safeguards are to be put in place to protect the truncated alignment through Watford (Metropolitan Line) Station.

Firstly, it is essential the latter station is retained at least for continued peak hours services, in view of the steadily increasing peak and general use of both the London Metropolitan Underground and Network Rail West Coast Main Line centered system.

Safeguarding is also essential in order to serve during the interim for Watford Football Club traffic attending the Vicarage Road Stadium. Pending the establishment of a new station; immediately **South of the Stadium** on the new Croxley Link Line; Watford (Met) Station is to be kept open for both peak and Football traffic with requisite direct connecting buses.

These connecting buses will run from a retained Watford Metropolitan Station direct to the Stadium.

There was a railway triangle immediately **South of the Stadium**, and Croxley Moor alternatives (reference no. 8) to the **Croxley Link** Project; investigated both linking the Rickmansworth LNWR branch corridor west to the Rickmansworth (Met) Main Line towards Aylesbury, and generally reinstating the pre-Beeching railway triangle inter alia.

It is advocated that a new station to serve Watford FC immediately **South of the Stadium** should be facilitated. This is optimally located at the merging point west of the railway triangle. Until this is in place and open Watford (Met) Station must be kept open to serve this traffic as advocated.

Similar integration, generally to many parts of West Watford, was co-ordinated on the opening of the Station in November 1925, but was disrupted by the General Strike in May 1926.

The LNER initially good steam fast service from Marylebone to Watford (Met) lasted only a few months, and since then there has been a virtual Metropolitan Line monopoly there. There was also a service to Rickmansworth via the (triangle) North Curve, which lasted until 1933.

Secondly, and in the context of increased peak rail use, the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, intends to extend the successful London Overground system. This is currently a key item in the campaign to be re-elected as London's Mayor.

It is understood that Watford Council may have approached City Hall in these regards. Historically the Watford Railway system (including Croxley Green) has been closely allied to the North London Railway focus of the expanding London Overground lines.

Now originally the branch to Watford's non-central station **in point**, was authorised by the **Metropolitan Railway Act of 7 August 1912**. Eastwards a surface railway was 'not on' through amenity grounds, by Cassiobury Park. For further details readers are directed to: London's Metropolitan Railway, Alan A Jackson pages 217*, 254, 255*, 256 and 348. There is also by Alan A Jackson – 'The Metropolitan Railway at Watford,' The Railway Magazine, December 1961.

The point on surface railways being 'not on,' will be understood today, through the recent consultations on HS-2 from London to Birmingham. The nearby Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are similarly 'not on' for surface railways.

There is a wider point regarding HS-2. It is essential that HS-2 and the WCML are carefully planned as a Network **together**, especially with the future of Heathrow and Birmingham railway links/airports under consideration as well.

By virtue of retaining capacity for optimum peak use, the regeneration and future of the key sub-regional centre of Watford will be furthered.

'The New Deal for Transport' – CM 3950 of 1998 specifically has paragraph 4.165 on page 127; which applies on the Watford Metropolitan Line point in view. Government Policy is "Better Protection to those Sites [Watford Metropolitan Station] and routes (both existing and potential) [from Croxley new bridge to the latter, and the potential extension mooted in Alan A Jackson – London's Metropolitan Railway page 255], which could be critical in developing [London Overground extensions as highlighted] to widen [Watford, as set out herewith] transport choices; such as [ibid] interchange facilities allowing road to rail transfer or for water transport." Please note that *water* transport here includes the conveyance of water by canal, pipeline, river or otherwise; and this is particularly important in a time of drought and high oil costs. Please note further that the words in square brackets [] apply the Watford situation.

Thus the gist of applicable Government Policy is "Better Protection to [Watford Metropolitan corridor] sites and routes both existing and potential which could be critical in developing [London Overground extensions] to widen [Watford, as set out herewith] transport choices; such as [ibid] interchange facilities allowing road to rail transfer or for water transport."

Readers are asked to carefully note that when the Jubilee Line Extension opened in 1999 to Stratford Station, now the site for the impending London Olympics 2012, Charing Cross (Jubilee Line Station), not on the new route, was *kept operational*, for diversions, peaks, engineering, and special events.

Thirdly, the St Alban's branch railway connects Watford Junction Station, to the former historic Roman City and once Capital City of Britannia. This railway passes close to the Building Research Centre. This report fails to understand the seeming relegation of this corridor to light rail status. The Building Research Centre should live up to its name and *improve* things as railways are buildings and structures, and consider these alternative views.

It is intended to modify the rail services between Watford Junction and St Alban's Abbey. If present plans fructify, Readers should note that the new destination for most Metropolitan line trains will be Watford Junction, instead of the present Watford Metropolitan Station.

Essential safeguards regarding Watford Metropolitan Station are highlighted herewith. The outstanding one derives directly from the previous Major Ground 2.

It is essential to safeguard through implementing the Government Policy of the 'New Deal for Transport' paragraph 4.165 page 127. This safeguarding is to extend from Croxley new bridge diversion, through Watford Metropolitan Station, underground to the vicinity of Watford High Street North (see Alan A Jackson London's Metropolitan Railway, pages 255 and 217); and the conclusion of 'going the extra direct mile' – at Watford Junction, via most likely under Clarendon Road.

At the conclusion, the new transverse station at Watford Junction is envisaged as a double-ended underground station. The north end will be located at Watford Junction main line station, and the south end will serve both Clarendon Road and the centre of Watford at a requisite distance.

Both a link southwards to the West Coast Main Line, utilising an ascending ramp; and a similar ascending ramp northwards to link directly with the St Alban's line, would be necessary in this route for **potential** safeguarding under the clear Government Policy highlighted herewith.

The St Alban's branch line would offer extra capacity if redoubled in part, in the wider corridor of the severely congested West Coast Main Line (WCML). The potential route eastwards re-establishes a link to the Midland Main Line south of St Alban's City Station; then proceeds by similar for the most part re-establishment in corridors of old rail routes and links, via Luton and Dunstable; to return to the WCML near Leighton Buzzard. Luton, with a quarter of a million population, and larger than Northampton, which already has such a WCML loop; is outstandingly suitable for such a loop as is advocated.

The 'New Deal' paragraph 4.165, page 127 is invoked in these general regards. Cumulatively, rolling up paragraphs 3.30 and 3.31, pages 43 and 44; with Annex F page 162 Letter; and especially 'ENHANCED

NETWORKS' by virtue of the cumulative effect of paragraph 1.33 on page 16, with paragraph 2.45 on page 29; taken together extracts a strong Government POTENTIAL Route Policy.

The advocated safeguarded route across central Watford sets in train similar POTENTIAL ROUTES, for WCML extra capacity loops westwards.

The initial one serves central Watford, after commencing from the London direction, at Watford Junction and descending a ramp. It proceeds via Rickmansworth North Curve at the Watford Line Junction, through Amersham to Aylesbury. A 'similar to Watford' short underground link at Aylesbury in co-ordination actions a 'New Deal' paragraph 4.165 page 127:-

'Better Protection and safeguarding, of both existing and **potential** widened routes as herewith advocated.'

Thence, east of Aylesbury this westwards of WCML loop continues to Cheddington, junction with the main lines of the, to be similarly safeguarded 1844 to 1954 Aylesbury Branch. A short spur line north and eastwards of Cheddington Junction, would connect with the Luton via Dunstable eastwards of WCML loop already advocated.

The catalysis of significant increases of rail traffic, through the above co-ordination with the 'sparks-effect' of the impending electrification planned of the Midland Main Line beyond Bedford, is extremely likely.