

28 Gade Avenue
Watford
WD187LG
24/06/12

- 2 JUN 2012

Dear Ms O'Neill,

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992: APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED
CROXLEY RAIL LINK ORDER

Your ref: TWA/12/APP/01/OBJ/53

Thank you for your letter of 1 June requesting my statement of case.

Please find enclosed a copy of my letter of objection to the proposed closure of Watford Met station: while this is not my exclusive objection to the proposed rail link never the less it forms a major part of it and as a local resident to the station and a frequent user of it I understand the hardship closure of the station would entail. Thus I would like this letter to be used as my statement of case.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Mary French

cc Messrs Winkworth Sherwood

28 Gade Avenue
Watford
WD187LG
6/4/12

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WATFORD METROPOLITAN STATION

I write to inform you that I do not agree with this proposal. I have lived and worked near the station for the last 35 years, frequently use the station and know the surrounding area intimately. I believe the closure of the station would have a detrimental effect both on the environment and on the local community.

The station is used by commuters to get to work, schoolchildren and many others for business and pleasure. Access to the proposed new station would be difficult for many current users.

Commuters

- Commuters from the Cassiobury estate would no longer have a station within walking distance. This would inevitably increase traffic on the Hempstead road as this provides the only road access out of the estate. This is already a busy road leading to the town centre which is frequently gridlocked at peak hours.

Schoolchildren

- Many schoolchildren use the station, particularly boys attending Watford Grammar School which is situated adjacent to the station. Closure of the station would necessitate these boys crossing a network of busy main roads in and out of Watford to reach the proposed new station. The roads the boys would need to cross get gridlocked at peak times. Large numbers of boys crossing all at the same time is likely to cause problems for boys and other road users.

Unpleasant/difficult access to the proposed new station for Cassiobury triangle residents

- The shortest route for the majority would be via the Rickmansworth road end of Gade Avenue. This road is poorly lit at night (dark by 4.00 pm during the winter months). On one side of the road there is no footpath and this is next to the river Gade and a wooded area. There is a high railway embankment. There are no houses nearby. Many people are uneasy about walking this way in the dark and would not feel safe. To add insult to injury the walk also involves walking under the current railway viaduct which houses large numbers of pigeons which often mess on cars waiting at the traffic lights or unfortunate pedestrians. Most people I know only walk this route if they really have to and then at top speed. The pavement here is always covered in pigeon droppings and is very smelly.
- As well as the above, people walking to the proposed new station at Ascot road would also have a difficult main road network to cross similar to the school children. While the majority of people on the estate can walk to the current station in about 5 minutes, allowing for time to cross the roads, the walk to the new station could well take 20 or 25 minutes.

Loss of station and bus route

If the existing station is closed the estate would also lose the W30 bus service which links the station to the Business Park, town centre and Watford junction station at week day peak hours. The only other bus which serves the estate is a 2 hourly service which serves local villages and goes to the town centre. This is Mon-Sat only and no public holidays. Therefore the station is extremely important for people who do not drive or own a car as it is the only easily accessible, regular, frequent, 7 days a week public transport service available. The station is also vital to residents of West Watford living near Rickmansworth Road. A partially disabled friend who lives there told me that it is her only means of transport as she does not drive and that if the station is closed she would have to have a taxi to and from the proposed new station.

Traffic increase

- The existing station is close to the popular Cassiobury Park. People will not want to walk to the park from the proposed new station especially if they have small children and pushchairs. They will drive instead adding to congestion on the already overcrowded narrow estate roads.
- Pressure on surrounding roads and car parks at Watford Junction and the proposed new station at Ascot Road from people no longer in walking distance of a station.
- Extra traffic pressure on the two bridges roundabouts close to the site of the proposed new station. These roads already serve the Watford and Croxley business parks which are busy at peak times. It is unlikely many of the car users would change to rail transport as they already have a bus service to and from Watford Business Park every 15 minutes throughout the day. If they wanted to make a rail journey instead of car they already have the choice. Further, this area already serves a chain hotel and restaurant a nursery school, doctor's surgery and busy local shop. New flats have been built on the old fire station site which will further increase the volume of traffic.

Since the closure of 2 petrol stations along Rickmansworth Road the only petrol station left in this area of Watford is along the Watford Road not far from the proposed new flyover and station. In order to buy petrol, traffic queues to turn both left and right into the garage. This causes problems for traffic flow at busy times.

In summary there is already too much traffic in the area surrounding the proposed Ascot Road station without adding a new station and Park and Ride. It is already at saturation point at peak hours without adding further pedestrians and cars.

Proposed new viaduct

The construction of a tall 450 meter long viaduct across the Watford road and the Grand Union canal would be noisy and disruptive for traffic while work was in progress and when completed would be a permanent eyesore along the approach road to Watford. No amount of cosmetic cladding could disguise that it was there. It would spoil the current pleasant views for those living nearby.

I am writing to make clear that I would wish the existing station to remain open with a fully operational service as now. Compromise

suggestions have now been put forward from the same politicians who voted for the Croxley Rail Link knowing that the existing station would close if the project was successful in gaining Government funding. While some service is better than nothing I do not believe it would meet the needs of residents who live near the existing station. Therefore I would prefer to keep the existing station open with at least the current level of service rather than have the Croxley rail link.

Finally I would like to praise the staff of the existing station who are always courteous and helpful. Whenever I visit the station when they are on duty they are always busy helping customers with a variety of queries. Cuts to ticket office staff are detrimental to customer service and feelings of safety. Unmanned stations are not what passengers want.

Yours sincerely

Mary French