

# Consultation Strategy

July 2011



# Croxley Rail Link

## Consultation Strategy

Draft Report

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# 1 Introduction

The Croxley Rail Scheme is a proposed extension of the London Underground Metropolitan Line to Watford Junction Station via Watford High Street Station. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), London Underground Limited (LUL) and Network Rail (NR) are developing in partnership the proposals. These include the construction of a viaduct to connect the existing Metropolitan Line to the currently disused Croxley Green Branch Line, and the provision of 2 new stations. The overall aim of the project is to reduce congestion within Watford and improve the transport connection to Central London and the West Coast Main Line. A Transport and Works Act (TWA) Order is being developed and promoted by HCC to gain the necessary powers to construct the scheme.

In addition to the best practice guidelines on consultation, HCC have a statutory duty to consult as part of the TWA legislation.

The purpose of this document is to set out the consultation and stakeholder engagement strategy for the scheme, detailing the manner in which the consultation should be conducted and to ensure a thorough, robust and auditable process is followed. The project is committed to working with the stakeholders and the public, involving them appropriately with the proposals to enable the project board to make more informed decisions.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 History

The need for the implementation of the Croxley Rail Link Project was first acknowledged in the 1990s by HCC who included it in the South West Hertfordshire Transport strategy. A Major Scheme Business case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in February 2008 and were asked by the DfT to provide further supporting evidence to support the case.. A revised Major Scheme Business Case has recently been submitted and it is now intended that a TWA Order Application will be submitted to the DfT in the autumn of 2010.

The project is identified in the Watford Local Plan. Additionally the Mayor's Transport Strategy October 2009 public consultation draft recognises the benefits of the scheme in the overall improvement of the London Underground Network

Watford has a retail centre of regional importance and has been designated within the East of England Plan as a Key Centre for Development and Change (KCDC) within the London Arc. A number of large developments are taking place within the area including, the Watford Health Campus, which will feature a new £320 million hospital with over 500 beds as well as a hotel, retail outlets, and residential developments creating a need for new transport links with higher capacities. The Croxley Rail Link intends to improve accessibility for the users of these developments. It will alleviate pressure on Watford's congested streets which threaten the future growth of the towns KCDC.

### 2.2 Scheme Promoter & Project Board

HCC is championing the Croxley Rail Link Project with the full support of Transport for London (TfL). LUL, a direct subsidiary of TfL, has made a commitment to operate passenger services on the Croxley Rail Link, and work in collaboration to ensure project delivery. In addition NR is a major stakeholder as they own the existing rail corridor which is to be utilised by the new Croxley Rail Link and because of the interface with their lines at Watford High Street. Representatives from all three organisations sit on the project and strategic boards, which are the decision making mechanisms for the scheme.

The project board is working closely with Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council to ensure the scheme objectives align to the communities they serve and the delivered scheme is the most appropriate for their needs.

### 2.3 What the scheme entails

The proposed Croxley Rail Link route begins at a new junction near Baldwins Lane, about a kilometer north-east of Croxley station. It will be carried via a new viaduct and bridge over the Watford Road dual carriageway and the Grand Union Canal on to the old track bed which belongs to Network Rail. This single line track bed was previously operated by British Rail between Watford and Croxley Green from 1912-

1996 and will be widened to double track up to Watford Junction. Two new stations will be opened and operated by LUL as part of the Croxley Rail link project. The existing, but closed, Croxley Green Station will be reopened as Ascot Road Station and a brand new station will open serving the new Watford Health Campus called Watford General Hospital.



## 3 Objectives

### 3.1 Ensure stakeholder and public involvement

The scheme is being developed to help reduce the congestion within Watford town centre and to improve the rail connections to central London and the West Coast Mainline. It is essential that the public are involved in the development of the proposals to ensure the project team understands the current situation and what the needs of the stakeholders and public are. The information gathered will help the project team to make more informed and better decisions on the proposals.

### 3.2 Facilitate successful TWA

The TWA legislation stipulates the need for consultation and a report summarising the consultations that have been undertaken should be included as part of the application. The purpose of pre application consultation is to ensure the relevant authorities, affected statutory utilities and all other persons likely to be affected by the proposals are well informed and have been given the opportunity to discuss the proposals with the promoter. The consultation process outlined in this document aims to inform the project team about the nature of potential objections to the Order and reduce the numbers that are spurious in nature. This will facilitate a smooth passage through public inquiry and a favourable decision from the secretary of state.

### 3.3 Build relationships that foster stakeholder support

As the Croxley rail Link project has been in the various development plans for many years there needs to be a concerted effort to convince the stakeholders the scheme is going to be developed. The project needs to create awareness of the commitment to push the proposals forward. There needs to be a comprehensive two-way flow of information to enable most fit for purpose designs are created.

## 4 Ethos and Strategic Intent

### 4.1 Best Practice

Whilst implementing our strategy, our approach to consultation will be based on the following principles. Our intent is based upon the Consultation Institutes' charter.

#### 4.1.1 *Open and Honest*

The consultation will have an honest intention. We will be willing to listen, and prepared to be influenced.

#### 4.1.2 *Inclusive*

The Croxley Rail Link team will identify, engage with, and be accessible to all stakeholder groups and will communicate using appropriate methods for the intended audience, embracing HCC's statutory duty to equality and accessibility.

#### 4.1.3 *Visible*

All those who have a right to participate will be made aware of the consultation through a broad strategy of communication.

#### 4.1.4 *Transparent*

Consultations will be publicised and all views will be disclosed within the boundaries of data protection legislation. The ability for Freedom of Information requests will be taken into consideration.

#### 4.1.5 *Focused*

The Croxley Rail Link route will be presented to consultees as a single qualified approach rather than as a series of options. Consultation will focus on options that are available.

#### 4.1.6 *Fair interpretation*

Information gathered throughout the process will be subject to an objective assessment and the weightings used in the decision making process will be made available.

#### 4.1.7 *Feedback*

The consultees will receive feedback on their contributions to the consultation.

## 5 Scope of the Consultation

This consultation will be about HCC's preferred route option for Croxley Rail Link and the development of the additional stations along the route. The route is already in the Watford Local Plan which has been consulted on and has been highlighted in the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy 2009 consultative draft.

We will therefore be seeking the views on the public and key stakeholders on the following:

- The closure of the existing line and from Croxley Green to Watford Metropolitan Station and the associate station closure
- The location of the additional stations and the access relating to them
- The facilities available at the stations
- The need for the scheme
- The frequency of the trains to central London and Watford junction

We will be seeking views on ways of ensuring that the local communities make the most of the social and economic benefits from the developments to the underground network

### 5.1 Key Messages & Branding

The key messages that will be embedded in all consultation and promotional material are

- Croxley Rail Link will reduce congestion within Watford town centre
- Croxley Rail link will improve the transport connections to Central London and the West Coast Mainline.
- The improved transport connections will attract more investment into the area supporting Watford's status as key centre for development and change which will benefit local people.
- Hertfordshire County Council, London Underground, Network Rail, Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council are committed to working together to deliver proposals that benefit the communities they serve.
- The Croxley Rail Link project is following robust design and consultation processes.

- The project will move forward, funding is secured and the scheme partners are committed to its development
- The preferred scheme is a cost effective, sustainable investment as it maximises the existing infrastructure

## 5.2 Branding

The Croxley Rail Link will have a strong project brand (see appendix 8) that will be used on all promotional material and correspondence with stakeholders. This will be supported by the three brands of the key promoters demonstrating the collaborative approach and commitment to the project. The brand will also make any communications regarding the project easily recognisable for the consultees involved.

## 5.3 Stakeholder Mapping & Management Plan

A stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken with the project board and the project team to identify all known stakeholders and plot them against the axis of interest and influence. By mapping stakeholders against the agreed criteria recognises that the stakeholders are not equal and will determine the best approach to engage them in the process. This exercise has focused on the stakeholders of the project not the individual organisations involved.

As the stakeholder map is a live document it will be reviewed and updated by the consultation manager on a monthly basis and any changes reported to the project board.

See appendix 9 for mapping document.

The identified stakeholders will be included in the stakeholder management plan which sets out how the project will consult in detail.

The management plan covers the following items

- The name of the stakeholder
- Why they have been identified and role they play within the project
- How they should be consulted
- When they should be consulted
- The main points from any discussions
- The action to be taken by the project team as a result of those discussions
- An evaluation of the method used to consult with the stakeholder

The management plan is a live document that is owned by the consultation manager but will be updated by the project regularly to capture all the consultation activity that occurs. The plan will be supported by all the individual records of consultations with stakeholders that will be stored on our data management system, webPERCS. The 2 documents will provide the robust audit trail required by the project to demonstrate meaningful consultation.

See appendix 10 for management document.

#### **5.4 Consultation Methods & Communication Channels**

A variety of methods will be used to communicate and will be tailored to each individual stakeholder. Methods will depend on their position on the Stakeholder Map, and any feedback received asking for communications in a particular way.

Consultation Methods include

- Affected Party Meetings
- Residents meetings
- Parish/ Town Council meetings
- County Council Member briefings
- Walking Tours of the Proposed Route
- Public Exhibition
- Consultation Events

Communication channels include

- Website
- Local media and advertising campaign
- 3D visualisation Fly Through's
- Summary documents about what we are consulting on
- Questionnaire/ comment form
- Freephone and freepost

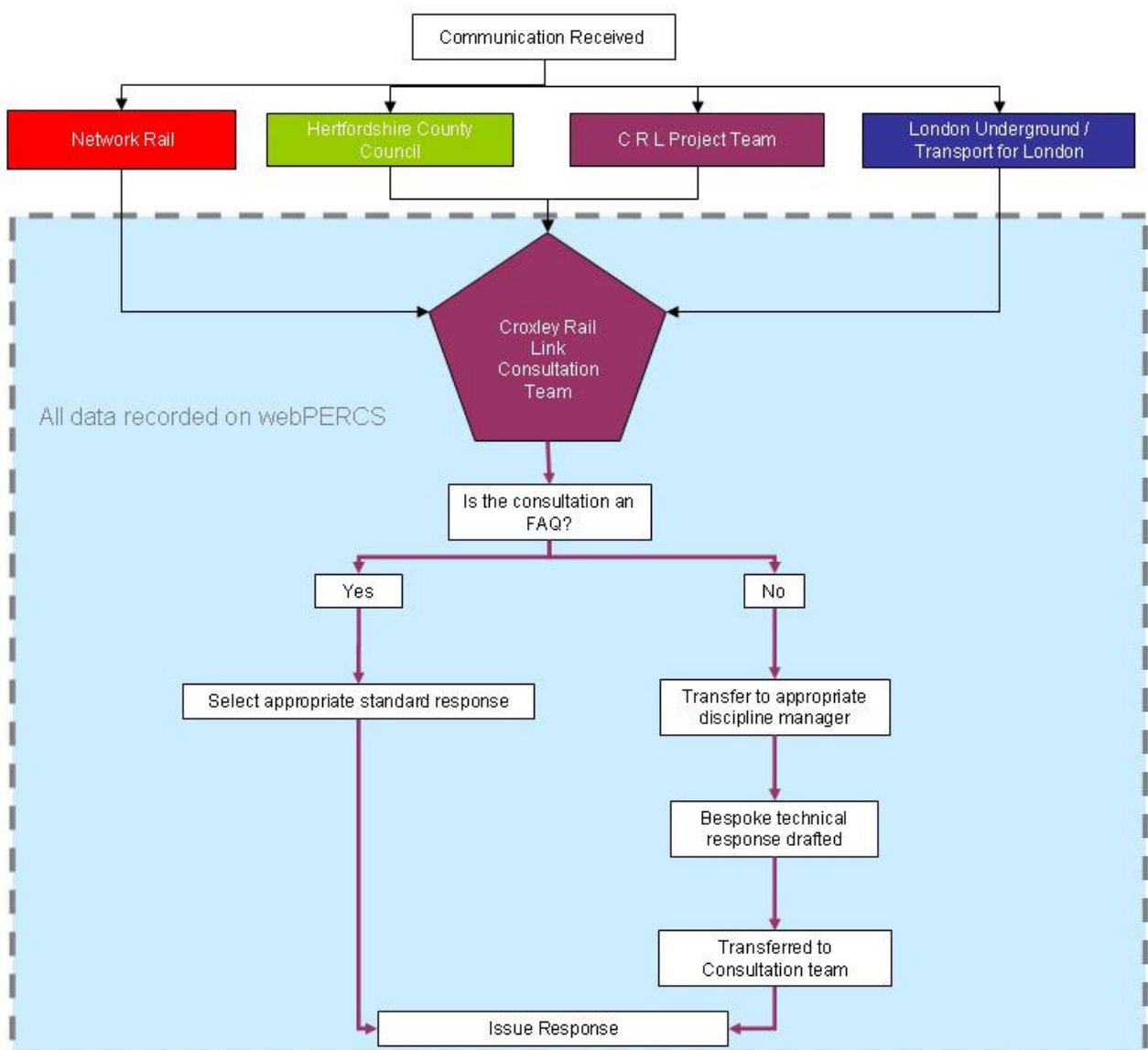
HCC as a public body has a duty to equality and accessibility. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken for all aspects of the project and will assess the need for information to be published in additional formats to written English.

### 5.5 Media Protocol

Consistent communication with the media by all partners is necessary. Any press releases will be signed off by xxxx and issued to HCC, LUL and NR press liaison officers for distribution.

### 5.6 Dealing with queries

The protocol for dealing with inquiries regarding the proposals is detailed below.



## 6 Measurement of the Strategy

In assessing the success of this strategy we must endeavour to be objective and meaningful. The following areas will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy

- The deadlines for the production and distribution of programmed consultation documents are met.
- The stakeholder management plan is reviewed and updated according to the milestones of the project.
- Regular feedback on stakeholder issues and concerns informs the development process of the project. Meeting minutes are circulated to appropriate members of the project team and updates in key issues provided at team meetings.
- At the anticipate TWA Order Inquiry be able to demonstrate, with a comprehensive record of consultation activity, that all reasonable endeavours have been made to consult everyone who has a legitimate interest in the project.

## 7 Programme

Programme will follow project milestone to make it a meaningful, iterative process.

### 7.1 Key consultation activities

Stakeholder Mapping and Management Planning	November 2009
Launch of Website	January 2010
Press Releases and Local Advertising	January 2010
Key Stakeholder Presentations	December 2010
Invitation of other identified Stakeholders to take part in Consultation	February 2010
Public Exhibition and Information Days	March 2010
Affected Land Owner Meetings	April 2010
Land Owner Mitigation Meetings	May 2010
Consultation with Watford Borough Council	May 2010
Objection Mitigation - up to Order Submission	March – October 2010
Objection Management – Post Order Submission	November 2010- March 2011
Public Enquiry	March - April 2011
Post Public Enquiry Liaison	December 2011 and for the remainder of project as required



## 8 Appendix 1 – Croxley Rail Link Brand

## 9 Appendix 2 – Croxley Rail Link Stakeholder Map

## 10 Appendix 3 – Croxley Rail Link Stakeholder Management Plan