

WELCOME



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

spring 2011

Share your views online at:

www.croxleyrailink.com

Free phone: 0800 6125240

Info@croxleyrailink.com



**Croxley
Rail Link**
Connecting Watford





Introduction

The Croxley Rail Link is a proposed diversion of the Watford branch of the Metropolitan line to Watford Junction via the former Croxley Green branch line and Watford High Street. Two new stations are to be constructed – at Ascot Road and Watford General Hospital. The proposals are currently in the design phase and are being developed in time to have trains running along the new track by 2016. As a result of the scheme the Metropolitan line route to the current Watford terminus station will be closed.



Need for the scheme



South West Hertfordshire has been underperforming economically. The local economy is still £200 million per year lower than it was in 2001 and the area continues to experience significant job losses. The Regional Transport Economic Evidence Study showed Watford as having growth potential, but in an area where the cost of congestion and rail crowding is high.

South West Hertfordshire offers proximity to London, its airports and rail infrastructure, as well as the outer London balance of city-working, country-living. However, the close proximity to London has not been exploited due to lack of easy access to and within Watford.

The existing rail network fails to connect residents of Croxley, Moor Park and other settlements along the Metropolitan line to the business, leisure and employment opportunities located in Watford.

There are several strategic development projects including the planned Watford Health Campus, and Croxley & Watford business parks, that require access to an integrated public transport system allowing the surrounding local communities to benefit from the opportunities they present.

It has been recognised for a number of years that the Croxley Rail Link project would make travelling in the area quicker, easier and more convenient for people as well as unlocking economic potential for Watford and South West Hertfordshire.

The scheme is being promoted by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), with support from London Underground and Network Rail. Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council are key to the project providing local input and guidance.

HCC is progressing the project to proceed through the statutory planning application process known as a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO). This consultation forms a key part of that process providing the local communities and existing users of the line an opportunity to comment.

History of the project

The Croxley Rail Link Scheme has been an aspiration since the early 1990s and has been developed over the years by a number of different promoters. The outline scheme has been consulted upon during a number of studies. This development process included various iterations of engineering design however the overall scheme concept of diverting the Metropolitan line along the disused Croxley Green National Rail branch line to terminate at the Watford Junction Station remained unchanged.



Alternatives

A number of alternatives to the current proposals have been assessed including:

- Retention of existing Watford terminus and running a split service to Watford Junction
- Reopening the Croxley Green Branch Line and not connecting to the Metropolitan line
- Conversion of the Croxley Green Branch Line to a segregated bus way
- Improvements to the existing local bus network
- Connecting the rail link to the St Albans Abbey Line and Amersham branch of the Metropolitan line
- Construction of a Watford relief road
- Tunnelling under Cassiobury Park

The preferred scheme continues to offer the greatest benefits whilst remaining financially and operationally viable.



What the scheme is

- Providing a Metropolitan line link from Croxley Station to Watford Junction Station, via south west Watford
- Construction of a viaduct and embankment linking the current Metropolitan line approximately 1km north of Croxley Station to the disused Croxley Green Branch rail alignment at Ascot Road
- Reinstatement of double track on the disused Croxley Green branch line, including reinstatement of the connection with the 'Watford Junction to London Euston' over ground route just south of Watford High Street
- Work to bring the existing bridges, cuttings and embankments along the route up to current standards and into operational use
- New stations at Ascot Road and Watford General Hospital

It is expected that you will be able to board a train along the rail link

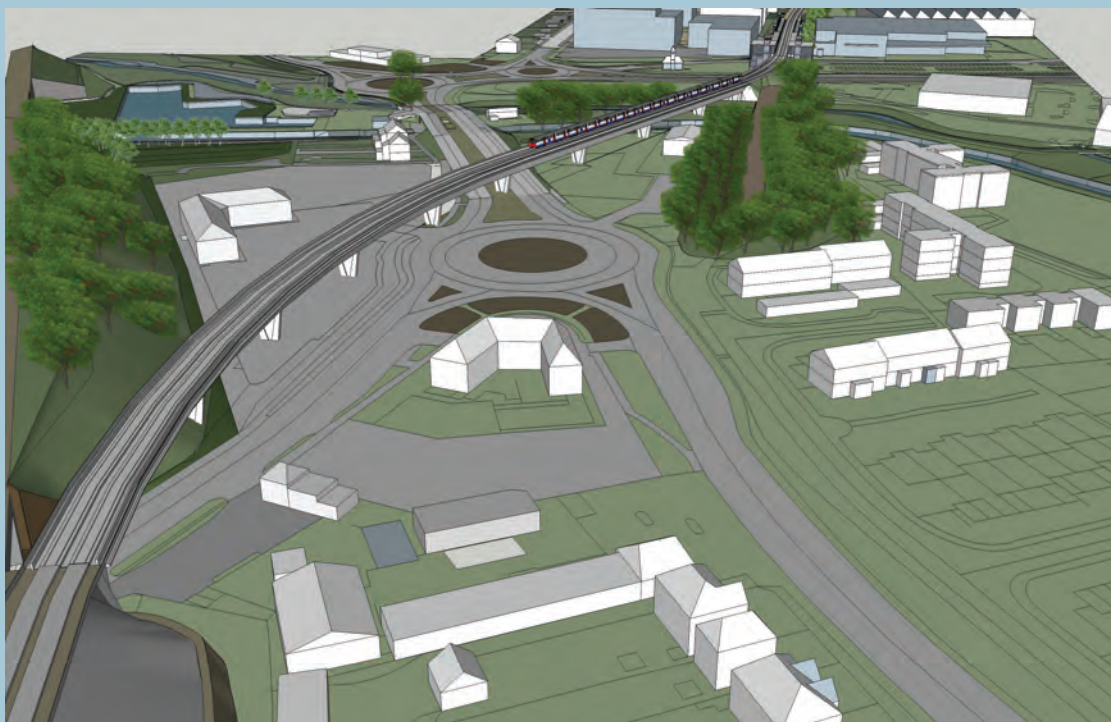
- Every 10 minutes during peak hours
- Every 15 minutes at all other times

Benefits of the scheme

- Increased travel choices for local communities making travelling in the area quicker, easier and more convenient
- Improved access to the Watford Junction and National Rail network
- 2700 households will be within walking distance of a station on the extended Metropolitan line
- Greater access to health, education, employment and leisure services
- An enhanced underground link to the Central London network
- Alternative to private car use, reducing the adverse affects of road congestion such as noise, pollution and safety
- Enhancing local economic prosperity and potential, promoting job creation
- Frequent underground service to Wembley Stadium from Watford Junction
- Croxley Green to Watford Junction in 12 minutes
- Rail Access from St Albans and North Watford to Watford hospital and business parks

MIND THE GAP

VIADUCT



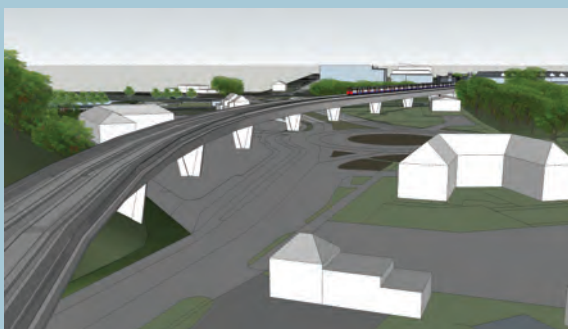
The Viaduct

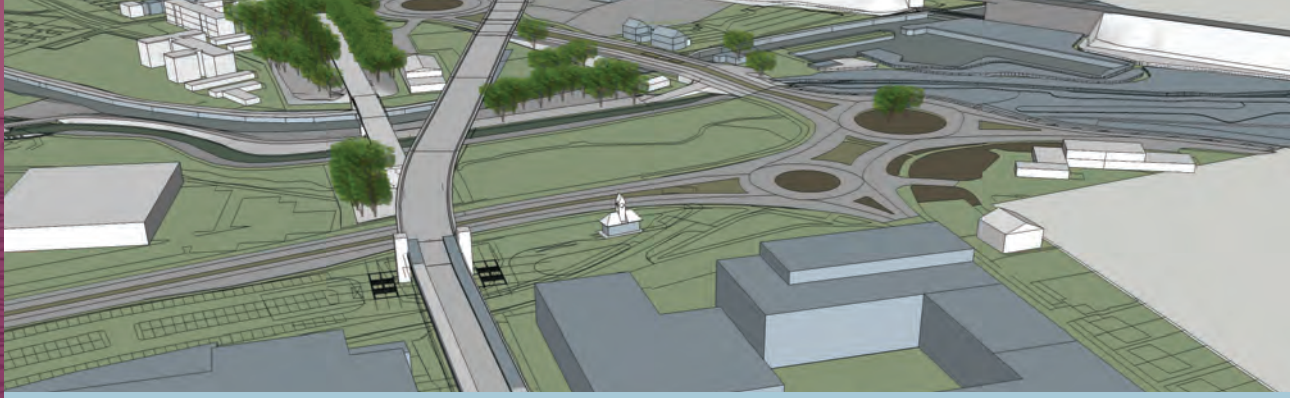


A viaduct is required to connect the existing Metropolitan line with the disused Croxley Green Branch line, carrying trains over the Watford Road dual carriageway and the Grand Union Canal. The structure has been designed

to incorporate construction materials that will help to minimise the impact. An Environmental Impact Assessment is being undertaken to assess the effect of the viaduct of the on the local surroundings.

The design of the viaduct has changed slightly since earlier iterations of the project. The previously published alignment no longer conforms to the current standards required to allow smooth running of the trains.



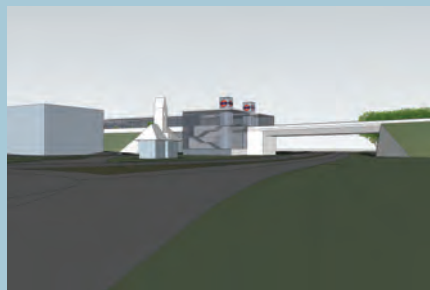


Stations

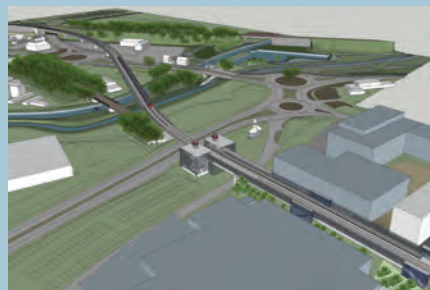
The scheme proposes the construction of two new modern designed stations along the route with inclusive and accessible facilities.

The first is located at Ascot Road to serve the communities of Croxley Green and west Watford and users of the Watford and Croxley Business Parks. Car parking facilities are proposed for users of the line who may travel from further afield to use the service.

Watford Hospital Station is the second new station located adjacent to Vicarage Road to serve the local community of south west Watford, users and visitors to the existing Watford Hospital and fans travelling to Vicarage Road Stadium. The station is also positioned to be easily accessible for the opportunities offered in the planned health campus.



The new stations have been designed to London Underground standards and it is anticipated they will incorporate the following features:



The proposed Ascot Road Station

- Ticket machines incorporating Oyster top up facilities
- On site London Underground Personnel
- Help points and security cameras
- Step free access from the pavement to the train
- Cycle parking



Croxley Rail Link will connect with the existing stations at Watford High Street and Watford Junction allowing passengers to easily access the town centre and the other destinations connected by services from these stations. Minor operational changes are required at these stations to facilitate the underground service, including Oyster ticketing facilities, possible platform extensions, and installation of signalling equipment.



In accordance with the service on the rest of the Metropolitan line it is anticipated that operating hours will be between:



The proposed Watford Hospital Station

- 05:10 - 01:15 Monday to Saturday
- 06:45 - 01:00 on Sunday.

These timings are indicative and subject to London Underground timetabling

The project is undertaking an assessment of the wider local area to allow you to access the Croxley Rail Link in the safest, easiest and most accessible way.

The following areas form part of our assessment:

- Access to the stations
- Safety and security at the stations
- The spaces at the stations
- Your onward journey



Closure of "Watford Met" Station

The closure of the existing Watford Metropolitan line terminus station (known locally as 'Watford Met') has always been part of the Croxley Rail Link proposals.

Has there been work done on the future of the station?



As part of the Croxley Rail Link's ongoing development an 'options appraisal' was carried out to see if there was any scope for running a 'split service' to both the Watford Met and to Watford Junction. The appraisal found that a split service would result in there being more losers than winners amongst those who currently use the Metropolitan line and those who are likely to do so in future. This was because the frequency of the trains to both stations would suffer and all users would end up with a poorer service overall.

It was concluded that continuing to serve both stations would present poor value for money owing to the high cost and reduced revenue of keeping Watford Met open - the latter resulting from many people choosing to use the new station at Ascot Road because it is more convenient. Furthermore, it would result in the majority of Metropolitan line customers on the more heavily used Watford Junction line having to wait longer for trains.

The project was always aware that the proposal to close Watford Met would impact on the current users of the station and people's view of the Croxley Rail Link scheme overall. This is why an assessment of the impact on local users of closing Watford Met, including a survey of those people who do currently use the service, has been undertaken.

Findings from the users of Watford Met survey

- 83% access the station by walking, 14% by car, 2% by cycle and 1% by bus
- 53% of the trips made at the station were for work or commuting, 20% for Leisure and entertainment, 18% for shopping and personal business, 9% educational
- 20% of those travelling on a weekday are under the age of 16

Analysis of the impact of closing Watford Met

- Half of current Watford Met users will have a quicker journey using the new and existing stations on the Croxley Rail Link
- Some users journeys will increase. The walk between Watford Met and the proposed station at Ascot Road is 1.2km. On average this would take about 15 minutes to walk. However, if there was a split service on offer, the typical waiting time between trains at Watford Met would double. Currently, work is being done to see if there are any improvements that could be made to the walking route

Closure process for Watford Met

There will need to be a separate legal process in order for London Underground to close Watford Met and the current line for passenger services. This will provide a further opportunity for local people to comment



Environmental Impact Assessment Process

The proposed scheme is subject to a process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The purpose of the EIA is to ensure that potentially significant effects of the rail link on the environment are identified and assessed, and that mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or remedy those impacts are identified and evaluated. The results of the EIA will be published in an Environmental Statement (ES) and submitted as part of the Transport and Works Order application.



The assessment and proposed mitigation measures published in the ES serve two principal purposes:

- they form an essential part of the information taken into account by the Secretary of State when deciding if the proposed scheme should be approved for implementation
- they provide an explanation of the anticipated environmental implications of the proposed scheme in order to inform statutory consultees and members of the public who may wish to comment on the application

What to expect within the ES:

- a description of the proposed development, comprising information on the site, design and size of the project
- An assessment of the likely significant effects which the proposed development is to have on the environment
- a description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse impacts
- A consideration of alternatives
- A non-technical summary of the main findings



The different topic areas covered by the EIA are as follows:



- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources and Heritage
- Ecology and Nature Conservation
- Geology, Soils and Contaminated Land
- Landscape Character and Visual Context
- Noise and Vibration
- Surface Water, Flood Risk and Drainage
- Traffic and Transport
- Community and Socio-economic Cumulative
- Effects

The project is currently undergoing baseline modelling to assess what mitigation is required. A further public information event planned for Autumn 2011 will provide more details on the contents of the Environmental Statement.



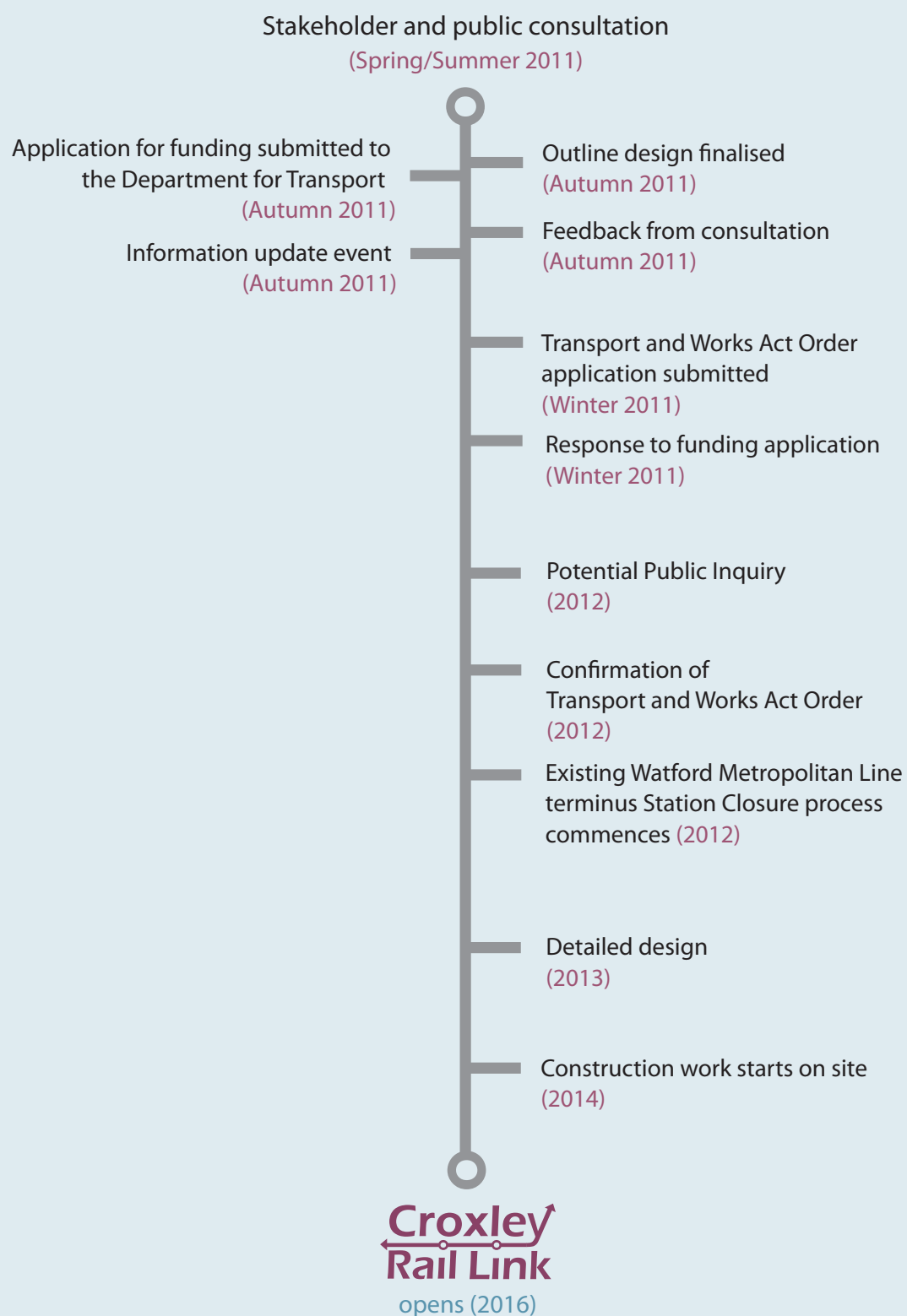
Funding Arrangement

The cost of the project is estimated at c£120 million, which includes adjustment for inflation and risk. Contributions from local organisations make up approximately 30% of the total figure, whilst the remainder is being sought from central government.

Funding process

- A major scheme business case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in November 2009 applying for funding necessary to develop the scheme, by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)
- Following the outcome of the 2010 general election all investment decisions for local major transport schemes were put on hold pending the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review
- The DfT announced the proposed programme for funding for the various transport schemes in October 2010 and the Croxley Rail Link was included within the 'pre-qualification group' of projects where a further preliminary assessment was required by the DfT
- HCC submitted an 'Expression of Interest' to the DfT on 4th January 2011
- The DfT announced on the 4th February 2011 that after rigorous assessment, as part of the Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, the Croxley Rail Link scheme entered into the 'Development Pool' group of projects. This means that the DfT acknowledges that the scheme represents good value for money, and enabled Croxley Rail Link to compete with other selected projects in the development pool for funding
- The focus for the project is now on compiling the 'Best and Final Funding Bid' to be submitted in September 2011 as part of the next stage in the funding process. This bid will concentrate on the high value for money the scheme offers and providing sustainable infrastructure for the future. The outcome of this process is likely to be known in December 2011
- One of the assessment criteria the DfT will be reviewing as part of the funding process is the deliverability of the scheme. For that reason the progress with the Transport and Works Act Order application process is continuing in parallel

Below is the indicative programme for the development of the scheme.



CONTACT US



“ Thank you for taking part in the Croxley Rail Link consultation. ”

The project is committed to maintaining communication with stakeholders developing the proposals for the scheme to meet the needs of the local community. A further information event is planned for the autumn to provide more details about the scheme and let you know about the progress we have made with the designs.

Please complete the feedback forms available allowing the project to capture your comments. The consultation will close on 18th August 2011.

Should you have any further questions or if you would like to make additional comments, please contact the Croxley Rail Link Consultation Team.

- Freephone: 0800 6125240
- Email: info@croxleyraillink.com
- Writing: Hertfordshire County Council,
CHN205 County Hall, Pegs Lane,
Hertford, SG13 8DN
- Website: www.croxleyraillink.com

Information available in other formats on request.