

Three Rivers Environmental Forum – Scheme Update June 2011

Purpose of Paper

The following briefing note has been prepared to set out the current status of the Croxley Rail Link project. The paper provides an overview of the scheme proposal, scheme benefits and proposed timetable, including an overview of the funding arrangement, consultation and environmental assessment work.

Further information regarding the project is available on the scheme website www.croxleyrailink.com

The Scheme

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. The proposals include:

- 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
- Closure of the current Watford terminus station.

The 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

Current Status of the Scheme

The proposals are currently in the design phase and are being developed in time to have trains running along the new track by 2016.

Submission of funding bid	September 2011
Information update	Autumn 2011
Submission of Transport and Works Act Order	Autumn 2011
Announcement on funding	December 2011
TWA Public Inquiry	2012
Detailed Design	2013
Construction	2014
Croxley Rail Link Operational	2016

Best and Final Funding Bid

Following the comprehensive spending review in October 2010, the DfT announced the proposed programme for funding various transport schemes. As part of this announcement, 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 and after rigorous assessment, the DfT announced that the Croxley Rail Link scheme had successfully entered into the 'Development Pool' group of projects.

The focus for the project is now on compiling the 'Best and Final Funding Bid' to be submitted to the DfT in September 2011 as part of the next stage in the funding process. The outcome of this process is likely to be known in December 2011.

Consultation

As part of the ongoing development of the scheme, Croxley Rail Link recently launched its consultation period. A significant information campaign was launched including

- The delivery of leaflets to c60,000 properties within Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council and Hertsmere Borough Council boundaries.
- Erection of posters in public places in Watford and Croxley Green and at stations along the Metropolitan and London Overground lines.
- News paper adverts
- Radio adverts and interviews on Heart Radio and BBC Three Counties
- Public Exhibitions within Watford and Croxley

All of the information from the exhibitions has been placed on the consultation page on the website www.croxleyraillink.com , including the 3D fly through.

The consultation will close on 18th August 2011.

Environmental

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 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

A further information update is planned for Autumn 2011 to provide details on the outcome of the Environmental Impact Assessment and proposed mitigation.

How to contact the project team:

Freephone: 0800 6125240

Email: info@croxleyraillink.com

Website: www.croxleyraillink.com