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**Secretariat memorandum**

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Agenda item: 9

LTW401

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The proposed closure of Watford station

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To set out the background to London TravelWatch's consideration of the closure process regarding Watford station and to recommend the establishment of a Watford station closure panel. To brief members as to their duties.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1. That members appoint a chair plus two members to form a Watford station closure panel.
- 2.2. Members note the report, the appended timeline and their duties.

**3 Background**

- 3.1. Watford station is the northernmost terminal station on the Metropolitan Line. There has been a longstanding aspiration to divert the Metropolitan line via the former Croxley Green branch line to terminate at Watford Junction station. This would entail a short section of new railway being built to connect the Metropolitan Line to the former Croxley Green branch line. The project is known as the Croxley Rail Link.
- 3.2. This development is being jointly promoted by Hertfordshire County Council (the Metropolitan Line terminates in Hertfordshire) and London Underground Limited as the operator of the Metropolitan Line. Powers to construct a railway are presently being sought under a Transport and Works Act (TWA) 1992 procedure. This process is akin to a planning application but applies to the construction of transport infrastructure. The process is overseen by the Department for Transport and commenced on 6 January 2012 with the publication of notices in newspapers. There is a 42 day objection period which ended on 17 February 2012.
- 3.3. As part of this project the promoters are proposing that Watford station and services to and from it are to close to passengers. On 23 February 2012 London Underground initiated the closure process with notices in two national

and one local newspaper. The start of a 6 week objection period commenced with the publication of a second set of notices on 2 March 2012, again in two national and one local newspaper. A timetable for the Board's consideration of this closure proposal is appended. Briefly, following its deliberations London TravelWatch must report its findings to the Mayor by 2 September 2012.

- 3.4. LUL have met with the Secretariat and we have agreed the format and wording of station posters advertising the closure. These were to be posted at all Metropolitan Line stations where it is practicable from 1 March 2012. These are appended. The Secretariat can confirm notices have been posted at stations at reasonable locations, although we noted there was an omission at Finchley Road which we have asked to be rectified.
- 3.5. Members should note that although the TWA and our closure process are separate, we request and receive from the DfT the TWA objections that may relate to the closure of the station and passenger services. We will also continue to receive objections after the formal closure date that we will nevertheless consider.

#### **4 The Board's duty**

- 4.1. London TravelWatch is required, under section 25 and the associated Schedule 8 of the Railways Act 2005 **As soon as possible after the end of the period for the making of objections to:**
  - a) consider the objections made during that period;
  - b) consider any representations made by the service operator; and
  - c) report to the Mayor of London on the hardship the Committee considers will be caused by the proposed closure.
- 4.2. If the London Transport Users' Committee decides—
  - a) to hear an objector orally, or
  - b) to hear oral representations from the service operator,the hearing must be in public.
- 4.3. The report to the Mayor of London under this paragraph may contain proposals for alleviating any hardship to which it refers.
- 4.4. After receiving that report the Mayor of London may require further reports from the London Transport Users' Committee relating to the proposed closure.
- 4.5. The London Transport Users' Committee must send to the service operator a copy of every report or further report it makes under this paragraph.

- 4.6. The Board could go further than the 2005 Railways Act suggests. Pre-1993 the legislation expected the Board to consider any hardship **and also what might be done to alleviate any hardship**. Although the legislation covering these issues was amended in 2005 the advice contained in the Railways Act 1993 (below) is worth noting if the Board chose to go further than the legislation.
- 4.7. *For the purposes of above, the Board is required not to conclude that any particular means of alleviating hardship is reasonable unless, balancing the cost to the Hertfordshire County Council and London Underground Limited (or any other public authority) of employing those means against the benefit of any alleviation thereby secured, the Board is of the opinion, on the basis of the information supplied to it, that the expenditure involved represents good value for money.*

## **5 The Board's consideration**

- 5.1. To fulfil the duties described above it is recommended that the Board appoints a panel of members to consider the closure proposals, the objections to the proposals and any other relevant matters. In the past this has comprised a Chair and two members.
- 5.2. To facilitate the Board's consideration the Secretariat will produce a report for members summarising the issues and objectors comment and any responses to those issues and objections by the promoters. If necessary, members could choose to hold a site meeting. Members could also hold a public hearing, probably in the Watford area, in early June, at which those affected would be invited to address members with their concerns.
- 5.3. A final report will be produced for the Mayor prior to 1 September 2012.

## **6 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 6.1. These issues will be explored as part of member's consideration of the closure proposals.

## **7 Legal powers**

- 7.1. London TravelWatch will be conducting this process under the Railways Act 2005, Section 25 and the associated Schedule 8.

## **8 Financial implications**

- 8.1. The resources for this process will mostly be staff time and will be contained within the present staff budget. There will be some additional administrative costs. Should members choose to conduct a public hearing in Watford then

room hire and possibly recording and transcription may be necessary. These additional costs should be less than £5000.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Timeline for the Watford station closure**

23 February 2012	First notice in two national and 1 local newspaper
2 March 2012	Repeat of notices in newspapers and posters put up at all Metropolitan Line stations
3 March 2012	Start of objection period
27 March 2012	Closure panel appointed
6 April 2012	Close of objection period, 'Proposal' date
Early July 2012	Possible site visit, public meeting and hearing in Watford
1 September 2012	Deadline for the completion of the process and submission of the panel's report to the Mayor.