

London Travel Watch

Watford Station Closure Panel

Thursday, 14 June 2012

Watford Colosseum, Rickmansworth Road, Watford WD17 3JN

Speakers:

Panel

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Gail Engert
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Applicant – London Underground

Limited

Keith Foley
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Objectors

Richard Harrington, MP
Councillor Peter Jeffree
Carol Hockley
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Councillor George Derbyshire
Paul Embleton
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A **SESSION 1**

Introduction

B [Session started at 10.00]

C THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is David Leibling, and I am the Chair of this Panel. I'm the Deputy Chair of London Travel Watch which is conducting this meeting. It is a meeting in public rather than a public meeting, but we're delighted to see so many people here.

D Could I just answer one query that has been raised as to why we're meeting during the day rather than in the evening. And I know we have had one or two people who have said could we not have had the meeting in the evening. We felt that it was better to have it during the day because of the amount of time that we have allocated to this. If we had had an evening meeting, it would have gone possibly well into the late evening, and therefore would have been very inconvenient. We have given everybody the opportunity to make their comments, and we have had a very large number of comments. And I would assure you that it is not the number of people that is helpful to us in making our recommendations. It's the quality of the responses that we've had. And I'd like to thank everybody for those responses that we have received.

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G The colleagues that I have on the Panel with me are Gail Engert and David Barry, both members of the London Travel Watch Board. Vincent Stops is the officer in charge from London Travel Watch. And we also have Keletha and Kath at the back who are helping us as well.

H There is a sheet going round for you to sign in, and I would be grateful if you could sign in. If you don't get an opportunity while it's going round, perhaps you could do so before the end of the meeting. I'd also like to welcome our two representatives from London Underground Limited – who will introduce themselves in a moment when they make their presentation – Keith Foley who is Head of Transport Planning and Steve Hunter who is responsible for the technical aspects of this particular project.

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I'll just make an announcement about the emergency arrangements. There is no fire alarm test expected today, so if the fire alarm goes off then please leave the hall immediately, and the stewards will direct you to a safe place which is on the far side of the underpass, so well away from any potential danger in this part of the building.

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So the purpose of today's meeting is threefold: firstly to hear about the reasons for the proposal to close the station and services to and from the station. And LUL are going to give us a short presentation on their supporting statement which has been circulated and respond to some of the comments that have been made in the objections that we've received.

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Secondly it's an opportunity for you to outline your objections to the proposal and any other comments that you have. And we have a number of people who we have asked to speak – who have asked to speak – and we'll start off with them, but there should be plenty of time for anybody else who wants to make any comments. And we have read all the correspondence. As you can see, we have a fairly thick file here of papers that we have received, and they have all been carefully studied. And finally the subcommittee will discuss the issues. And we will discuss the issues in public, and it will be an opportunity for us to question the participants.

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Specifically our role as a committee is to assess the hardships that would occur if the closure proceeds. If there are any hardships, are there any measures that have already been recommended or could be taken to alleviate that hardship? And we can make any other comments that are relevant. It is not our role as a committee to make a decision on the closure. That is clearly the responsibility of the Mayor of London, and we will be submitting a report to the findings – to the Mayor and also to the Secretary of State for Transport by 2 September this year. So we're here to hear the case, to assess the issues, and then present a recommendation to the Secretary – to the Mayor of London.

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VINCENT STOPS: The Mayor of London.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Obviously this project – the closure plan is very, very dependent on the Croyley Rail project, and there is a separate procedure in process for that under the Transport and Works Act which we are not specifically discussing, although obviously there are a number of issues that do overlap with this project. There is going to be a public hearing for

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that in October when people will have the opportunity to put their case specifically related to the Croxley Rail Link project. But obviously it very much interacts with our decision, which is part of that overall project.

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Apologies for absence

[10.05]

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THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Unless there are any other procedural issues, we'll now move on to the agenda, and the next item is apologies for absence. Has anybody – if anybody has any person that wants to be recorded as hoping to have attended but have been unable to do so, perhaps they could let Kath know at the back when they leave, and their name will go on to the record of the meeting.

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Declarations of interest

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[10.06]

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THE CHAIRMAN: We are obliged to declare our interests. The standing interests of the members of the Panel are on the London Travel Watch website. I should – two of us should declare that we are Freedom Pass holders, not that that's directly relevant to the decision. I live in Pinner and therefore do use the Metropolitan line. My colleagues live further away and are not regular users of the Metropolitan line. I don't think there are any other issues that we need to declare – interests that we need to declare.

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Presentation from London Underground Limited (LUL)

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[10.06]

THE CHAIRMAN: Right, I'm now going to ask London Underground Limited to make their presentation. So if you'll excuse us we're going to go over there so that we can see the presentation.

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KEITH FOLEY: OK, good morning ladies and gentlemen, members of the Panel. I've been asked hold the microphone so that the entire presentation can be recorded. So please excuse me holding this and potentially tripping over the wires. My name is Keith Foley. I'm the Head of Transport Planning at London Underground, and we're going to give you a short presentation today on most of the issues that have been raised through the consultation period of this process, but also some of the background as to the very reason why we're here in the first place.

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AUDIENCE: Excuse me, sir. Excuse me. Can you speak loudly and properly holding –

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KEITH FOLEY: Sorry, can you hear me now? Is that better?

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AUDIENCE: [indicates yes]

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KEITH FOLEY: Sorry. Thank you. OK, so firstly just a reminder of some of the context we're talking about here. So the Metropolitan line station that we're particularly focused on is Watford Met station which is here on the green branch of the Metropolitan line. On the map here we've shown some of the key areas – so the Watford Hospital, Vicarage Road Stadium, the Harlequin Centre. And we are currently here at the Colosseum. Please forgive me for explaining your own local area to you but there are obviously members of the Panel who are not residents in Watford, so this is useful background context for some of those.

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We're about a two-kilometre walk from the town centre to Watford Metropolitan line station. The station currently has – around 2,500 people enter every day, and the same number exit every day. And statistically for London Underground that makes it the 25th least used station across the network. So no comments on that. That's just a statement of fact.

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One of the other facts that has been part of our consideration is that Watford Met line station has seen a gradual decline by about three per cent in overall usage since 2007 to the 2011 numbers, whereas the other Watford – sorry, the other Metropolitan line stations in the area have seen about four per cent growth. So there is a discrepancy in how the usage and demand – changes actually happening between Watford Metropolitan line and the rest of the Metropolitan line stations.

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So the only reason we're here considering closing services to the Metropolitan line station in Watford is because of the proposal for the Croxley Rail Link. We would only proceed with closing Watford Met station if the Croxley Rail Link goes ahead. So we need to put some of the context for you for that.

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So Croxley Rail Link has been on the cards for a number of decades now and has been promoted by different promoters at different times based on sort of political context. Where we are today, Hertfordshire County Council are the key promoters of the scheme as the transport authority in this area. And London Underground are co-promoters of the – or co-sponsors – of the Transport and Work Act orders that would be necessary in order to build the scheme, and we would then be the operators and maintainers of the service.

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So you can see – oh, I beg your pardon. We've got on here the link. This would be a new viaduct across the road and the canals, and then the service would run along the red line here up to Watford Junction station. So then two new stations – one at Ascot Road and one that would serve the hospital and would link into the services on the current DC lines where the London Overground service runs through Watford High Street and then into Watford Junction. So that would be how the service would operate going forwards.

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The Croxley Rail Link has been subject to an immense amount of scrutiny as to the benefits that it would bring to the area. And Steve will take you through shortly some of the benefits. But it has a very good business case. So the benefits against the costs are demonstrated as overwhelmingly positive. And as I say, Steve will take you through that shortly.

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So the proposal itself: we've put a couple of images. So this one will be one of the new stations – the type of design we'll be working with. So the key thing here is that we're only going to close Watford Met if this goes ahead. So we need to always keep that in mind please. So the whole scheme is consistent with many current public policies. So it's consistent with the Mayor of London's Transport Policy. It's consistent with national policy. It's certainly consistent with Hertfordshire County Council's transport policies as well in terms of regeneration and bringing developments to the local area.

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The two new stations are also going to serve effectively the opportunity areas where there is development proposed. The Watford Health Campus would be served by the new Watford

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Hospital station. So the two working together going forwards would continue to bring more opportunities into that local area: more jobs and certainly more demand for that area.

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One of the additional things we can bring with the Croxley Rail Link is for all those – each of the new stations to have complete step-free access, which is something we don't have on all our stations at the moment as you're all aware. But we can design that here and build that in, which creates better opportunities for travel for customers who currently have trouble using some of our stations and services.

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OK, I'm going to hand you to Steve to take you through some of the detailed benefits.

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STEVE HUNTER: Thank you very much, Keith. Can you hear me at the back OK? Now as part of the analysis, having a look at what the impact that closing the station would be, we did a survey of Watford Met station passengers in 2010. As part of that survey we interviewed over 1,000 passengers, which is equivalent to about a 27 per cent response rate – 27 per cent of the passengers who are typically using the station over the weekend or a weekday. In my experience that's actually a very high response rate for this type of survey, so I think that we are very confident the analysis we've done from that survey is robust and representative of what's happening in the station.

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Now one of the key things that the survey showed us is that about 70 per cent of the trips from that station are being made by residents of Watford, and presumably the majority of you in the room are within that 70 per cent of people. So the most common destination for those people is obviously – or not surprisingly, perhaps – central London. And if you look at figure J in supporting statement it actually shows in a little bit more detail where people who are travelling from Watford Met at the moment into London along the line go. And the blue dots are the destinations where we think they're going to. And looking at the postcodes that the people answering the survey gave us of where they live, over 50 per cent of them will actually be closer under the Croxley Rail Link scheme to a new or newly served Met line station.

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The rest of the passengers – the other 30 per cent – are people who –

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[interruption: a clock fell off the wall]

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STEVE HUNTER: The clock has just fallen off the wall. [laughs]

[laughter]

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STEVE HUNTER: It's not every day that happens. The other 30 per cent are people who are making trips which start somewhere down the Met line, and those are the orange dots on that same figure. And those are coming into Watford from the destinations that are in Watford.

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The presentation – this is a simplification of figure H, I think, in the supporting statement. We've taken some of the lines off just so you can see it on the screen, but if you want to see it in more detail then perhaps look at the supporting statement, and I will show you some areas on this map.

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Now there are some key areas I want to show. Excuse me. I'm going to turn my back on you to point at the screen. So obviously we've got the area around the existing station – this sort of area here. (Oh, pressed the wrong button.) And these people will be slightly further from the station at Ascot Road than they are currently. We know that and that is being taken into account as part of the assessment of the Croxley Rail Link scheme.

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Up north of the park we've got another area of users who are currently walking through the park or using other means to access Watford Met station. Now in the future those passengers will be closer to a Met line service at Watford Junction station. However, there's no reason that they won't continue to walk or use their means of access there going to Ascot Road at the moment.

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[murmurings from the audience]

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STEVE HUNTER: Well some of the passengers currently drive to get to the Watford Met station, and actually it would be rather more convenient for them to drive to Ascot Road. And while Cassiobury Park might be a nice way through at this time of year, I'm sure there are times of year when it's dark and rainy that actually it's not a terribly attractive way to get to the station.

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Now the other side we've got a large number of people in the area of Ascot Road all the way around down through here – Watford Hospital – these are people who are currently using the station and right the way up o Watford High Street, Watford Junction, and all of these people will be closer to a station than they are at the moment.

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Now in terms of the time – this graph is figure M, I think, in your supporting statement. I'll explain this a little bit, and bear with me please. On this graph we show in red over this side the people whose journey time is extended. They've got a longer journey time under the scheme. And in green we've got the passengers who've got a shorter journey time with the Rail Link scheme. The numbers up this vertical axis, going upwards we've got the number of people who benefit, and going down the number of people who disbenefit. And of course these are the same scale, so the distance upwards is the same as the distance downwards.

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Going along the middle – excuse the wobble – on the horizontal axis, this is the number of minutes that people's journey time changes. So over here we can see that the maximum that any passengers experience increase in journey time is about 15 minutes. There is a slight difference between this presentation in terms of time and the previous statement I made about people living closer to the stations. Obviously some of the stations will take slightly longer to get to London or be closer to London, so there's a little bit of variation around that. But we're quite similar. We're saying that there are about 707 people who are slightly worse off as a result of the scheme, and 680 people who are better off. So it's a little bit of a difference from 50-50 but it's very close.

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I already said that nobody who is worse off is worse off than more than 15 minutes. Actually the majority of people are in this area which is around one or two minutes. Now the analysis behind this takes into account the mode of transport that people we interviewed were currently using to get to Watford Met station. So that allows for the fact that some people are driving, some people are walking, and different ways of getting there. And these are all passengers who live in Watford who are going down towards London.

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On the other side we can see there is a much bigger distribution of the people who save time. So there's a little bit of clustering in one minute, but we've got a lot more of an even distribution – people saving up to 20 – more than 20 minutes. We've actually got quite a lot of

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people who are saving – if you add all of these bars up here between 15 and 24, that actually makes a material number of people who are saving more than 15 minutes.

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Now if we take account of all of those impacts, we end up showing that for the passengers who are residents of Watford, existing users of the Met line, on average they are better off by one minute.

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[murmurings from the audience]

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STEVE HUNTER: Well please bear with me. As I explained, these are existing passengers who are using Watford. This is not the only benefit of this scheme. I'm just explaining that in terms of people who are currently using the station that actually they are already better off.

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This is the other half of the figure that was included as figure H. These are passengers who are coming in to Watford. And so you can see that there are a number of people who told us they're accessing Cassiobury Park and the Boy's Grammar School. And in terms of where people are coming from on the Met line, these people will be further from a station than they are at the moment. However, actually in terms of the catchment of people coming in from the West Coast Main Line, from London Overground, from St Alban's Abbey, there will be a connection from these stations at Ascot Road. And that connection will actually bring a significant number of people closer to these destinations from that direction, which will obviously offset the disbenefit to some degree.

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If we're looking at other big destinations in Watford, we've got the central area of the High Street and shopping centres, Watford Hospital. We've got the Girls Grammar School. Now people going to these destinations will be a lot better off with the Croxley Rail Link scheme than they are at the moment. They'll be able to use a station which is much closer to where they're going. Again the fact that it is currently very difficult or a long walk from this side of Watford to get to these areas and to the Girls Grammar School means that this survey of existing passengers won't pick up additional people who might choose to use this link in the future. And the overall business case takes that into account.

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If you look at the overall same impact – the average time impact for passengers who are coming into Watford – they get an average of four minutes per passenger, and this is largely

A because for people coming in to the shopping centre, it's actually much more convenient for
B them. As I've said, this presentation – or this part of the presentation – concentrates on the
C impact to existing passengers. The Croxley Rail Link scheme will substantially increase the
D number of people who are living within the catchment of the Metropolitan line. That will lead to
E more users in the future.

C Making connections to the services of Watford Junction and across to this area of Watford:
D there are currently no convenient public transport services from this direction. That will
E increase the number of passengers. So we start off from a position where existing
F passengers are actually better off as a group with the Croxley Rail Link scheme. And on top
G of that we have benefits to new passengers. We've got the benefits of potential regeneration
H we're creating opportunities for, and that's what contributes to making a strong case for this
I scheme.

E Now as part of the project we've undertaken a transport assessment which is looking at the
F traffic and wider impact of the scheme – the sort of impact beyond the passengers on the Met
G line. This feeds the environmental impact statement, you'll see, which has also been
H undertaken. Now overall the forecast from this transport impact assessment showed that
I around 300 trips will be removed from the highway network at the peak time. Now this is a
combination, and it's a net figure which takes into account some passengers who are
currently driving to the Watford Met station who will now live close enough to Ascot Road or to
one of the new stations so they won't have to drive anymore. It includes some passengers
who are driving to their final destination, either to central London – in a small number of cases
– or driving further into London. And these will actually become Metropolitan line users. And it
takes into account the impact on existing passengers.

H There are some roads that will see small increases in traffic. The majority of these are under
I five per cent. There are two road sections which the traffic increases by more than five per
cent, but they are currently relatively lightly used roads with a modest increase in traffic, and
the percentage increase perhaps isn't the best measure in that case.

I In contrast we've got around four times as many local road sections where there is forecast to
be a reduction in traffic. Now the level of traffic and the level of congestion translates quite
closely to the pollution impact of the scheme, which is one of the issues that has been raised

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by the Panel. And of course if you're taking highway traffic off the roads you'd expect there to be less pollution overall, and that's what the environmental statement says. It isn't a huge change in pollution. But it is a positive change.

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Now I'm going to hand back to Keith at this point.

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KEITH FOLEY: Thank you Steve. OK, so one of the other issues that Travel Watch asked us to ensure we covered today was the issue of station access. I can say that there are definitely plans at the new Ascot Road and Watford Hospital stations to improve both pedestrian and cycle access to the sort of key destinations in the area. That was one of the specific things that came up through the consultation process. And also one of the things that we were asked to look at as well is the bus services.

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Now Hertfordshire have the Quality Network Partnership which will take a look at bus services. And they are reviewed regularly. And the W30 service is currently planned to run until the end of 2013. It's already procured until the end of the 2012-2013 financial year, and there are no plans to change that service or discontinue that service. But what the transport authority will do is continually monitor the services and the local area to ensure that their services are providing what's necessary. So any change that would occur as a result of the Croxley Rail Link and the closure of Watford Metropolitan line station would be considered as part of that ongoing review of the bus services in the local area.

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We were also asked to look at car parking. And there will be around 200 spaces provided at the new Ascot Road station to ensure that those people who want to drive to the station have that opportunity. Now Steve has already mentioned our Traffic Impact Assessment Statement, and we know that generally on the whole there will be a reduction in traffic. So what we're expecting here is people will be making some journeys to the new station to park, but those are displaced journeys from Watford Metropolitan station on the whole. And a final point: we have no plans to change the car parking prices at Ascot Road compared to what they would be at Watford Met.

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So, in terms of costs as well – sorry, in terms of season ticket costs – so this slide shows the existing services with Watford station in fare Zone 7. So the new service would run – this is the route alignment for the Croxley Rail Link – we're showing Ascot Road station and Watford

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Hospital station would both also be in fare Zone 7. So those two new stations, the fares that would be charged from those stations at all times of the day would be exactly the same as would be charged at Watford Met station. That's a key point.

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Watford High Street station, that would now also be served by the Metropolitan line in addition to the Overground service, is currently in fare Zone 8 and would remain in fare Zone 8. So the fares that apply at that station today would continue to apply and would apply to Metropolitan line services that run through that station as well. I think the key point for us to highlight here is that Metropolitan line services here are an increased opportunity from Watford High Street, so the fare zones that are charged there at the moment, that is the appropriate fare for that station. Obviously customers then who wish to use Watford High Street have an additional service there that they could use post the Croxley Rail Link, but not just limited to the Overground service but the Metropolitan as well.

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Watford Junction station is in the special fares zone. The fares there are set by – sorry – the fares there are set by London Midlands services, and the fares there would apply to Metropolitan line services as well. Again, this is not a change to what happens at that station. Just the provision of Metropolitan line services at that station is an increased travel opportunity there. So the key point in terms of fares is that the two new stations are in the same fare zone as Watford Met station.

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So funding. There have been some comments in the objections period about whether Croxley Rail Link is worth building in the first place. So the Department of Transport is providing the bulk of the funding for this project going forwards, and in order to secure that funding the project team have had to demonstrate to the Department of Transport that there is a good return for that investment. Everyone knows that there is not a lot of public money around at the moment, so any public money spent has got to generate an economic case for where the investment is going.

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In general the Department for Transport will not invest in projects that have a benefit to cost ratio of less than 1.5 to one. So that is where the expected generated economic benefit to the area has to outweigh the cost of the scheme by more than 1.5 to one. The benefit to cost ratio of the Croxley Rail Link is 2.6 to one, and that case assumes the closure of Watford

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Metropolitan line station. That is a key component of the overall project in order to generate that 2.6 to one.

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If we retain the Watford Met station, because of the change in the way that we would have to operate – because that would increase our operating cost at London Underground in terms of staffing, in terms of how we would operate the services, in terms of the revenue that would be generated by the services, and also some of the capital costs of delivering the project because we'll be recycling some of the equipment from the existing station into the new stations – the scheme costs rise, the benefits drop, and the benefit to cost ratio drops to 1.4 to one.

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So I'm afraid back to the 1.5, that would make it very difficult for the Department for Transport to justify the funding of the Croxley Rail Link were that to be the case, were we to change the scheme to include Watford Met. So clearly here not closing Watford Met station does jeopardise the Croxley Rail Link. It doesn't rule it out completely, but it does put it in very serious jeopardy.

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The reason why this – or a key reason why this changes is the changing in the usage of the services. If we were trying to retain Watford Met station and serve Watford Junction, we would have to effectively change the frequencies. And there are – the number of people that would be attracted to the new services would drop, and therefore that economic regeneration, the revenue for us, and the general social benefit that comes from that scheme is substantially lower. (I apologise for my throat.)

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So we have a – we have had a number of alternative proposals suggested to us as part of the consultation, and of course as London Underground and Hertfordshire County Council we've been considering alternatives all the way through this scheme development. So a couple of the key proposals that are viable in terms of how we would operate, one includes a spit service – so the services that come up through the peer group [?] at Moor Park and then split – the proposal or the suggestion is that we run some trains to Watford Junction and some to Watford Metropolitan line station.

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By doing that, there are a number of things that come into play here. We would need more physical trains to be able to do that because some of the trains – in the future, the trains that

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come up here, obviously some would serve along this branch and some would serve along this branch. In order to be able to generate enough train service to serve both Watford and Watford Junction, we'd need more trains. So we'd need to buy more trains. And the trains are a very, very big part of the project costs, the scheme costs. So effectively that would make that benefit to cost ratio I was speaking about earlier substantially worse again.

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But also the services we would offer would be of a lower frequency on both branches. And higher frequency services attract people to them. We've proven that time and time again with changes we make on London Underground throughout history. I've been with the company 16 years and I've seen us increase services by one or two trains an hour on sections and we see more traffic, more people come to use those services in the coming years. Good services attract people to them. The level of service we would be able to offer on those would not generate an attractive service in general, and so we wouldn't see the travel growth that we were expecting from the investment in the Croxley Rail Link.

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A second option was to run literally just a shuttle service between Watford and Croxley. Now again, so the assumption there would be that we would run all the mainline services that were coming up to Croxley up to Watford Junction and deliver all the benefits that Croxley Rail Link is expecting. So there's no cost in terms of social benefit and the service delivery to the Croxley Rail Link scheme. However, to run a shuttle service between Watford and Croxley would need a couple of capital cost investments. So again we would need more rolling stock because all the trains that we would have in service are currently accounted for in terms of the way we would run the rest of the services. So to run Watford to Croxley we would need new trains into the service.

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We would also need to provide reversing facilities at Croxley because there is no reversing capability at the moment. We have no way – we would bring the trains south and then we would need to build the facility to turn the trains round and send them back north again without them impeding the service that's coming down from Watford Junction. Now that needs a capital investment – probably a bay platform so that the train could come in and sit to allow passengers to alight at Croxley. And we simply do not have the capital money to invest in doing that. The service would also probably run about every half an hour because of the way that we could operate that.

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So in general again, whilst it is a service rather than closure of the station, it's not an attractive service throughout the day, and we again know that in general we would lose patronage over time on a service that low. So we would be investing heavily in capital costs, but we would see patronage drop from where it is at the moment.

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Somebody – we were handed a note this morning from our colleagues on the Panel: someone suggested, well, don't buy new trains. Use the existing trains that you're currently retiring from service. That's not viable for us. We've looked at doing that on different parts of the network elsewhere. All of our facilities are being converted to maintain and service the new train fleet that we've bought. So we would have to be providing additional maintenance facilities for those old trains. We would also need to be making sure we retained spares for those new trains. And in terms of the way we would roster our drivers, we would need to make sure we had a complement of drivers who were trained to use both sets of fleet. And that is, again, an additional operating cost. So providing that shuttle service, whilst it sounds simple, in terms of how London Underground would actually be able to provide that, it would increase our costs significantly, and we would not expect many people to actually end up using that in the long run.

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Other options proposed are to run services in Amersham and Chesham down, and then we actually have a piece of infrastructure today which will provide the ability to run from Rickmansworth and then around the corner here effectively and then to run either to Watford Met or to Watford Junction, and we have had both proposed to us. There are – in terms of the number of people that currently make that journey, there are very, very few people that make that journey, and obviously they would currently travel to Moor Park then change to get the northbound service. Obviously in the future that capability is still there for people who wish to do that, to come to these stations. And all of the arguments that Steve put forward about location of Ascot Road and Watford Hospital compared to where people are travelling to in the area stand. So for people who are travelling to the area, those stations are in good locations for the destinations of people in Watford.

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We would – again, we would need additional rolling stock to run that service. And we would probably need to buy at least two trains to run a half-hourly service. And the cost of those two trains – but also we would need to, at that point, with the increase in fleet size we would need to buy new facilities for stabling them overnight because we would have run out of slots. That

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increases the capital costs again. For the number of users – we would expect about 500 a day, is the numbers that we would expect from the numbers of people using that at the moment – we would be talking tens of millions of pounds. And London Underground cannot justify that expenditure, and we don't have that capital money available at the moment.

B

So that – those service options – we wouldn't expect them to be particularly heavily used, and we don't have the finances for them either. So those are the three main options that were put to us for alternatives.

C

THE CHAIRMAN: Keith, we are running over.

D

KEITH FOLEY: Yes, we're finished. This is it. So we will just finalise by putting a map up showing this is what the journey planner would look like in the post Croxley Rail Link world should we go ahead with the scheme as it's currently intended.

E

So our key message here is that Croxley Rail Link is a good scheme. And London Underground would only close Watford Metropolitan line station if Croxley Rail Link goes ahead. Croxley Rail Link is the appropriate response to the hardships that would be caused by the Watford Met station closure, and it delivers journey time improvements as a group for customers who currently use Watford Met station. We accept there are individuals – I would expect many of you in the room – who would personally end up with a longer journey time, and we accept that. But effectively the overall group already benefits, and we would be attracting more people to the Watford area, and services would overall be improved for customers in Watford. So that is us. Thank you.

F

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THE CHAIRMAN: Vincent, Richard Harrington has to leave and wants to be allowed to speak now.

H

VINCENT STOPS: Right.

[audience murmuring]

I

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Keith and Steve, for that. We will be taking some questions in a moment but Richard Harrington MP has to leave – had to leave 10 minutes ago

A – and has asked whether he could possibly make his statement now. Slightly out of order, but I hope you will excuse me if I do allow him to speak.

Statement from Richard Harrington MP (Objector)

B [10.43]

RICHARD HARRINGTON: Thank you. Shall I stand up?

C THE CHAIRMAN: Do you mind sitting? And then it's easier for the recording and so on.

RICHARD HARRINGTON: A bit like the Leveson Inquiry.

D [laughter]

E RICHARD HARRINGTON: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for asking me and for moving the order about because I just didn't want anyone to be under any illusion about my permission. I'm very much in favour of the Croxley Rail Link scheme. And both the Mayor of Watford and myself campaigned heavily with ministers etc to assist this process. So I don't want to be accused of hypocrisy.

F However, I do feel – and we took extensive – Mr Chair, I'm not making a political point here, but both the Mayor and myself – who are from different political parties, as it happens, although it's irrelevant in this case – we took extensive surveys of residents, and it's very clear to us that there are a significant number of people – rather more, I think, than your survey shows – that would be suffering some kind of hardship as a result of this closure.

G
H
I And it just seems to me – and the gentlemen from London Underground and yourself, I think we would all agree it was a very professional presentation, but it does understate the effect that it would have on local people for a number of reasons. I'll just give one or two as just examples because I know this is a very short speech. But there are a lot of – a lot of people, for example, have mentioned about Watford Boys Grammar School. But a lot of people use – school children – students, they're called these days – use the Metropolitan rail link to go to

A schools such as Rickmansworth and Merchant Taylors'. They're not recorded in this, but a lot do use that.

B Secondly, a lot of people use the Metropolitan line who are not necessarily local residents but come to use this facility and the park – other facilities in Watford. And again they would not be considered. And it's thousands of people do this. I'm very pleased they do, as Watford's representative. And I'm sure our local residents would agree. But that's absolutely critical to them.

C And it just seems to me that given the fact that the Watford Metropolitan station is going to be there – it's going to be used for storing the rolling stock – and given the fact the building has to be preserved because it's a Grade II listed building, how much more can it cost to have – even peak times to have it manned – personned – to use that, given that these days most people are with Oyster cards and other electronic things.

E So I do feel this needs looking at very carefully because it will be used anyway. Nowhere else can be used to store the trains. They've always started from there. They've always been used from there. And I think it's the compelling result of my surveys; it's the compelling message I got. So I would ask that we do not want – I'm speaking personally but I think on behalf of most of my colleagues including the Mayor – we do not want to prejudice the Croxley Rail Link scheme because we think it's very good for the prosperity of Watford. But I think there is a very significant case to keep this open. And I cannot believe that the cost compared to all of the millions of the whole scheme is that significant. And I do hope that you'll take that into consideration. And thank you very much for your time.

G [applause]

H **Members questions**

[10.46]

I THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed. We'll now have the opportunity for the Panel to ask any questions specifically to the London Underground representatives. David and Gail, do you want to –?

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GAIL ENGERT: Not at this stage. Did you have any questions?

B

DAVID BARRY: Yes, I just wanted to ask a point about the issue of the turning loop which you mentioned, that if you had a shuttle service you would require a turning loop. Can you –

C

AUDIENCE: Excuse me. I can't hear you.

DAVID BARRY: Right, the question – it's getting used to where the microphone is – right. You mentioned that the difficulty with running a shuttle service was the requirement to have a turning loop, and there has been some discussion about whether a turning loop is physically possible as well as economically possible. Could you expand slightly on that?

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KEITH FOLEY: OK. Can you hear me with that? Is that OK? So it wouldn't be a turning loop. It would literally be the trains would run into the platform, and then we'd have a crossover that would allow them to run back the other way. But if we just did that, we would interfere with the other services that come down. So that wouldn't be viable for the operation of the overall Croxley Rail Link. So we'd probably need a bay platform, so that would be an additional platform –

E

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DAVID BARRY: Right.

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KEITH FOLEY: And then you'd run into that and then run back north. Physically in the space there is land. We'd be taking land away from the car park probably, so there would be a disbenefit for other people who currently use that station. So yes, physically there are some limitations, but I think we could probably find a way to make that work. But the cost of the scheme is what would really rule that out because that would not be a cheap piece of infrastructure to put into place.

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DAVID BARRY: So it's the cost of putting in the additional platform and the cost of the additional trains for the shuttle service that you're concerned with.

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KEITH FOLEY: Yes, absolutely. Yes. And actually that would really be – if we had had the opportunity before the MP had to leave – would have been my response to that. Sort of the

A cost element of keeping the station open, it's not how much it costs us to staff the station – although that of course is a consideration. It's really how much it costs us to provide the infrastructure to run that service throughout the day – or even just at peak times – is an additional infrastructure cost over and above what we already have.

B DAVID BARRY: And the infrastructure cost is primarily the additional platform.

KEITH FOLEY: For a shuttle service it would be that and the additional train slots.

C DAVID BARRY: And the additional train slots.

D KEITH FOLEY: Yes.

E THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to ask two questions. Firstly it's been suggested that if there is any problem on the section of line between Watford Junction and Watford High Street, that could disrupt the Met line services, and at least at the moment the two services are separate so that if there is any disruption on the DC or the main line, passengers still have the opportunity to use the Metropolitan line. What provision will there be to make sure that if there is any disruption at Watford Junction, the services will still continue? Obviously retaining the Watford station would provide an alternative. I'll come back to my second question in a moment.

F KEITH FOLEY: OK. Well in effect this is not vastly dissimilar to most of our other services where we either share track either with our own services or with other train operating companies. Our ability to recover from the disruption is one of the key components about how we would put the service together. And that's another one of the reasons why in terms of the split service option we wouldn't want to send trains to Watford Met because the amount of time we could actually sit the trains at Watford Met station in terms of scheduled layover – so ability to recover time were they to lose time – would be almost as low as we have to schedule to allow the crew to change ends and then depart again.

H So that would be a very, very unreliable service without any disruption because even just with people holding in the doors, small problems we have in the City when we've just got the sheer volume of people on and off, causes the trains to run a few minutes late at times, and we wouldn't be able to recover those in time to run south. So actually by running up to Watford

A Junction we are inherently providing more service reliability because we have the ability to give the trains the appropriate amount of layover recovery that we would want to schedule.

B But you're right. There is an opportunity or a potential for London Overground services to be disrupted, and therefore the interaction between the Watford – sorry, between the
C Metropolitan services and the Overground services to have a sort of cross-contamination of that disruption. However the provision of more services through that section actually in itself provides more inherent reliability for the people in that area to have a service when there are problems. So if the Overground has a problem, and customers along that section will still have the Metropolitan line service as an alternative option, so that provides sort of inherent reliability cover between the two services. So – and the amount of disruption we would expect to see on the Metropolitan line because of that small section of interlining would be very low.

D THE CHAIRMAN: And the frequency of the service that you're planning along the Croxley link?

E KEITH FOLEY: Along the Croxley link we already intend to run six trains an hour. It's a 10-minute service.

F THE CHAIRMAN: And that compares with four trains an hour to Watford at the moment.

KEITH FOLEY: It depends on what time of day we're talking about.

G THE CHAIRMAN: I'm talking about during the general service as opposed to the peak service.

KEITH FOLEY: During the day we run a 10-minute service to Watford Met.

H THE CHAIRMAN: No, I think it's now four trains an hour.

KEITH FOLEY: Off peak. Off peak, oh beg you're pardon. Sorry. Off peak, yes, four.

I THE CHAIRMAN: The other issue where there seems to be some discrepancy is the question of the number of pupils at the grammar school – the Boys Grammar School. We came one

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morning to watch the arrivals and departures and we counted about 200 boys coming into the school about 8.30 in the morning, whereas your figures show a much lower number, and I just wondered if you have any explanation for that difference.

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[laughter from the audience]

STEVE HUNTER: Well, there obviously is some variation from year to year in the number of boys that are coming in, but actually –

C

[further audience interruptions]

D

STEVE HUNTER: Please have some decency. Thank you. If you look at the number of children who are coming through those gates and childrens passes, 200 of a day is more than would – that would be every child coming through the station would be going to Watford Grammar School, and I don't think that that is what anyone expects. I'm not quite sure what happened on the day you were there. Certainly we had a very high sample of boys that were coming through the station to go to Watford Grammar School when we did the survey. We're not helped in terms of the fact that the travel plan for the school which would normally give us this kind of information isn't very up to date and isn't very specific. But there will be some variation. I can't explain why there were 200 when we had far fewer than that. But I don't think that 200 is actually a normal – any more normal figure than the number we have.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anybody from Watford Grammar School here who could possibly comment directly on that?

G

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AUDIENCE: They're out of school right now but I have to say that my son attends the grammar school and I often walk against the children going to the grammar school going the other way. And there is probably about 200 of each of about three trains which come in in the morning. So I think your observations of a morning were quite correct. There probably are about 200 children on three trains, and particularly the one that comes just before 8.30 will have been the most busy one. But based on the school's own figures for 30 per cent using the train, you've got that 30 per cent. Very few use other routes apart from Watford Junction.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Watford Met?

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AUDIENCE: Watford Met. Beg your pardon.

THE CHAIRMAN: OK. I think that's just something we need to bear –

B

KEITH FOLEY: Absolutely, but I don't believe that there could be 200 people off every train – 200 children off every train.

C

VINCENT STOPS: With respect, we'll have a look.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well we spent some time from 7.30 till 10.30 watching comings and goings. Right. I think that is all the direct questions we want to ask. So I now please –

D

AUDIENCE: When did you do that observation?

VINCENT STOPS: 15 May.

E

THE CHAIRMAN: 15 May.

F

AUDIENCE: Because a lot of the GCSE and A-levels kids were on study leave. So that's another element [inaudible] two school years in your count [?].

THE CHAIRMAN: OK, thank you for that point.

G

Objectors to the closure of Watford Station

[10.59]

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THE CHAIRMAN: Right, we now have the opportunity for people from the floor to talk. We are going to go through a list of people who have got specific points they want to make. There will be an opportunity for others to make their points. I would urge you please a) to keep your presentation or your comments as short as possible, and secondly try to avoid making points that other people have made. They have all been recorded. They are being recorded. And that will enable as many people as possible to speak. The two councillors, Councillor –

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A VINCENT STOPS: Derbyshire I think would want to go first, followed by Councillor Jeffree,
and then Carol Hockley and then Isobel Doherty is the order I've got.

B THE CHAIRMAN: So if you'd like to come forward, that will help.

C GEORGE DERBYSHIRE: Thank you very much. I'm Councillor for Park Ward, and Park
Ward covers both sides of the park. So it is the area where there is – a large number of the
residents are users of the station. Let me say at the outset that I am not against the Croxley
Rail Link. I see the overall advantages for the economy of Watford of the Croxley Rail Link.

D But not at the expense of Watford Met station. I think it's – and I think I'm going to
demonstrate that that's entirely unnecessary and in fact not in the interests of the Croxley Rail
Link. I think it would be advantageous to retain that station. A number of points have been
made already as to why it could be useful to retain it. I'm going to add to those points.

E Let me first address the issue of impact. You said in your introductory remarks, Chairman,
that impact on users of the station was one of the main considerations that you were going to
take into account. You've just got to look at the number of people here this morning to see the
strength of feeling in this part of Watford against this proposal. That in itself shows that the
impact is going to be considerable.

F Now the major business case, which I think was published in 2010 – the major business case
for the Croxley Rail Link – I think that was biased from the outset against the retention of
Watford Met station. I just want to give you an example. No doubt in your papers you've got a
copy of the major business case. Let me refer you to section 17.3 of the major business case.

G The major business case, section 17.3, it says that the closure of Watford Met it sees it as
having "a worsening access to rail transport for only a small number of residents in the
Cassiobury Park area". A small number. We've already heard that the people who the user
journeys of Watford Met are in the region of 1.4 million a year. 1.4 million is actually not a
small number of user journeys. [laughs] I mean that's pejorative.

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It's a significant number of user journeys, and even if – and I don't accept their estimate that the promoters are suggesting that if the Croxley Rail Link – if the Watford Met was retained and the Croxley Rail Link went ahead and some sort of service was provided, that half of this 1.4 million would actually go to Ascot Road. Now I don't accept that estimate.

B

But if you accept the estimate, you've still got 700,000 user journeys. A lot of people every day are going to be disadvantaged by the cessation of passenger services at the station. I say passenger services because it's important to recognise that the capital infrastructure is going to be retained because all the rail tracks, signalling is going to be required for the overnight stabling of trains which can't be accommodated at Watford Junction. So let's remember that point.

C

D

In the same section that I've just noted – 17.3 of the major user case – it says that the Croxley Rail Link will improve the access – “will bring to residents in southwest and central Watford better access to rail where significantly more residents” – and then in brackets it says “(of poorer areas) will gain benefit”. So there we have it. [laughs] What this is saying is that OK, there is the case for providing access for these people in poorer areas, but we're going to take it away from people who live in more well-off areas.

E

F

Now that's absolutely totally unacceptable as a criterion for such an important issue. 17.3 – it is pejorative. Why do they feel it necessary to characterise the residents of the Cassiobury Park in this way? It shows to me that it was a bias against the retention of Watford Met station right from the outset.

G

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Now let me go on to the case of the impact. The – and now I go to the recent statement of case made 2012. The recent statement of case, it seeks absolutely throughout – as we've heard this morning – it seeks to minimise the impact on the current users of Croxley Rail Link. And it points out that the Watford rail link is in the lowest 10 per cent of level of users of stations on the Underground network. So what? It's the 10th percentile. But are you suggesting that all the stations that are in the ninth, eighth, seventh – you know, even lower ranking – you're going to close them because they use less than Watford rail link? [laughs] I don't think you are.

I

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The fact that it's lower doesn't mean to say that it's not providing a very important social service. Now the – and even if in your case, as you suggest, that if the Croxley Rail Link came online into the station and Watford Met was retained that it would drop to being the sixth least used station on the network. Now I'm actually going to challenge that – and I think this is an important point and the Chairman has also already started probing this assertion that you make. And it's this: that the data on which you're making these assertions is totally out of date.

B

C

The data, as it says in the footnote in this May 2012 doc, that data was collected in mid 2010. All your documents show that that data is collected, that surveys were collected in May 2010. Now what that's done, it's actually – it actually doesn't take into account significant developments which have had an impact on the use of the station and in fact has increased the use of the station. The Chairman has made the point about Watford Boys Grammar School. But what is interesting in your slides and in your presentation you make absolutely no mention of West Herts College.

D

E

I don't know whether the Chairman is aware of this but on Hempstead Road there is a wonderful new further education college which has been built which is three times larger – three times larger – than the college that was operating on that site in mid 2010 when you did this survey. It's got significantly – many part-time students, significantly more students than Watford Grammar School.

F

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Now I tell you, because I live on the route where people walk from Watford Met station to West Herts College, Watford Met station is now being used by a significant number of people who attend West Herts College. This document totally fails to take that into account. Your presentation totally failed to take it into account. And I suggest to the Panel that they actually should look at this because those numbers are actually significant.

H

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any other specific issues to do with hardship? Because that's our prime concern.

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GEORGE DERBYSHIRE: It's the hardship on those students who are going to West Herts College who will be deprived of that facility. If they didn't have that facility they'd have to go to Ascot Road which is twice the distance. So that is the hardship of those students. And they

A are a significant number. These are students – West Herts College services not only Watford
but it's servicing southwest Hertfordshire and northwest London, and those people are
B coming up on the Met line. That's a significant hardship, in addition to the hardship that would
be imposed on residents who use the station for going to work and for other purposes. So that
is a hardship.

C Another development which they've totally failed to take into account is this place where we're
sitting now – this beautiful restored entertainment venue. This came online in October 2011,
didn't it? Less than 12 months ago. Watford Met station is now used extensively. The
D audience for this venue are drawn from Watford, but not only from Watford; again, from the
surrounding areas. And a significant number of people now come into this venue, this
entertainment venue – marvellous entertainment, wonderful programming – actually come up
to Watford Met. They will be disadvantaged. They would be disadvantaged if that –

E THE CHAIRMAN: I'm going to have to draw you to a conclusion because I do want many
people to have an opportunity to talk. So if you could round up now, that would be helpful.

F GEORGE DERBYSHIRE: I want to make one more point – this is an absolutely significant
point – if I may. If you'll allow me two minutes to make this point, the point is about train
frequency. Now I want to refer you to section 11 of this document. Section 11 of this
G document draws attention to – may I refer you to section 11.11 – and it draws attention to
what is called the subsurface upgrade, and it recognises that if Watford Met is not retained
and the Croxley Rail Link comes in, that the Metropolitan line will not be able to achieve the
train frequency that would have been achieved if the Watford rail link had not been brought
into operation and Watford Met had been retained. Absolutely essential.

H At the moment the peak train per hour frequency at Watford Met is eight trains per hour.
There's nothing in here that suggests that can be maintained, the reason being the platform
capacity and the interleaving with the DC London Overground. There is nothing in here to
I support – suggest that they can support even the current – at peak times the current eight
trains per hour which run from Watford Met. And they accept that they're not going to be able
to achieve the 10 trains per hour that they would have wanted to achieve under the
subsurface upgrade.

A

So here we have £100m-plus capital expenditure on a scheme, which is predicated on the closure of Watford Met station, which is going to deliver less trains per hour for the line generally which would have been delivered if the scheme hadn't gone ahead and Watford Met had been retained. That cannot be sense. It just cannot be sense.

B

THE CHAIRMAN: I will ask London Underground to respond to that point at the end. I'll ask them to respond to all the points at the end rather than specifically related to yours.

C

GEORGE DERBYSHIRE: That cannot be sense. So on the grounds that I've given, the impact which has definitely been underestimated, developments – significant developments – have not been taken into account, and the fact that the actual level of service will not be as good as would have been provided if the station had been retained under the subsurface development, this cannot be allowed – this closure cannot be allowed to go ahead on that basis. It's actually disadvantageous to the Croxley Rail Link because by retaining Watford Met station, as you yourself pointed out, there are advantages. And it would enable, in my view – and there is nothing in here which suggests I'm not right – it would enable a better service generally on the Watford Met line if some trains –

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I really must draw you to –

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GEORGE DERBYSHIRE: – from Watford Met could be interleaved.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

GEORGE DERBYSHIRE: Thank you very much.

[applause]

H

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm afraid I am going to have to be rather more rigorous about timekeeping if as many people as have asked to speak actually get the opportunity to talk.

I

PETER JEFFREE: This is Councillor Jeffree.

THE CHAIRMAN: Councillor Jeffree.

A

PETER JEFFREE: Thank you. Thank you.

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THE CHAIRMAN: If you could be as forthright as possible, please.

PETER JEFFREE: I'll be as forthright as possible and I'll try and avoid repeating everything George has said except on one point. George has really – sorry, to start with just to declare my interest, I'm Peter Jeffree. I'm a councillor for –

C

AUDIENCE: I can't hear you.

D

PETER JEFFREE: I think we've got no sound on that side. Can you hear me at all? Oh, that's better. I can hear myself now. I'm Peter Jeffree. I'm the other Lib Dem Councillor for Park Ward. I am a user of the service: not an everyday user because I'm now largely retired, but a regular user. And I am in this important group north of the park who will suffer at least a 15-minute increase in journey time. I'm going to try to avoid repeating what George has said, which is about hardship and impact, and I'm really going to focus on mitigation, and the mitigations I'm interested in are the three options which we've already seen presented which offer some kind of retained service at Watford Met.

E

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So taking them in order, the first one is the interleaved service, or what you referred to as a split service. And just picking up very briefly on George's point that the planned frequency into the junction – Watford Junction – for the CRL is six to eight trains per hour. As we've already heard, London Underground are anticipating about 2018 – that's just two years, I think, after the opening of the CRL – they expect to see a demand driven elsewhere in the network of 10 trains an hour. And as we've heard, that can't be delivered at Watford Junction. Now CRL state they've considered providing that extra service at Watford Met, but then go on to talk about the significant operational complexities of providing that service.

G

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I raise the issue – if you like, the sceptic in me says why are the operational difficulties in merging a service within your own control on two Met lines any more difficult than merging the Watford Junction service with London Overground? The Met station clearly has capacity to provide anything from four to 10 trains an hour into the network, so when added to the planned six to eight from Watford Junction the combined service would clearly meet all future

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A needs that you could anticipate. I'm not suggesting you would run eight from both, but there is a huge reserve of capacity there.

B Now CRL also state in their response to questions on this from London Travel Watch that a shared service would have a negative impact elsewhere in the network. And again I'm not a railway expert but I struggle to understand why a potentially increased level of service actually provides less service further down the network. An increased frequency providing less service doesn't make sense to me.

C And then CRL talk about the value – we've heard about the value and the return on investment and so on of the CRL, and it is truly impressive of course. But they compare – they just compare the two options – the split service and the CRL as it's currently planned – and they talk about the net present value, and I won't bore people with the complexities, but in calculating net present value on a project a score of zero indicates that the project is achieving the planned return on investment.

E Now clearly both the CRL with its positive score of £100m, and a split service with a positive score of £25m, far exceed the expected return on investment. And I mean I'm not familiar with these ratios that the powers that be set – the 1.5 to one or the 1.4 to one – but frankly the difference is pretty marginal. And of course we have no insight into how those have been calculated, and perhaps a little bit of creativity could be put to making a split service work financially.

G The second one is the Croxley shuttle, and I won't spend too much time on that because it's already been described to you. But I do challenge this assertion that you need to spend money on additional platform at Croxley. My understanding is that given that you've got the north curve just south of Croxley, you should be able to run shuttle services through the station using existing platforms, reverse using the north curve, and then return on the opposite platform.

H AUDIENCE: [inaudible]

I PETER JEFFREE: Thank you. Well I'm glad others agree. Again, I'm not a railway expert but it doesn't sound too difficult to me. And of course the infrastructure is already there.

A Again we get this claim in the papers that the shuttle would jeopardise the network, but I can
only see it jeopardising the network if there is a technical failure. And we've had a discussion
B about what happens if there is a technical failure on the Watford Junction CRL line. I mean
really that should be the exception. And with the frequency we're talking about on the CRL,
which is eight per hour – that's roughly one every eight minutes if my sums – is that right?
Yes, roughly one every eight minutes. There really ought to be time to interleave those with a
shuttle service. It doesn't sound too difficult to me.

C And yes, there is a capital cost, but as we've already heard, a shuttle doesn't challenge any of
the assumptions on the CRL itself. It just adds a bit of extra cost. And you've already got, as
D you've heard, what was described as an overwhelmingly positive return on investment on the
other. I just suggest maybe it should be a little less overwhelmingly positive, but still positive,
and you can do both. And so that's mitigation two.

E And then finally the west Herts service which for me is much the most attractive of the three
options. Now going back to the basis of the CRL itself, one of the prime stated objectives of
the CRL is to improve east-west connectivity into west Herts. And I really don't believe the
CRL delivers that. It delivers improved east-west connectivity within the borough of Watford.
F But it doesn't actually do anything, as far as I can see, to improve east-west connectivity into
the rest of Hertfordshire. It doesn't improve on the business that you have now of a change –
a quite difficult change with limited disabled provision and so on – at Moor Park, and a waste
of time while you change trains. That isn't addressed at all. A proper east-west service would
deal with that, as referred, using the north curve. And it is technically feasible.

G And I mean I just pick up – in that context, I just pick up the point that one of the presenters
made which says more services attract people to them. And there's a kind of assumption in
my reading of the figures that things are being run down because they don't get – we're not
H getting the customers or we're not going to provide a service because we haven't got the
customers. As you've said, provide a good service, the customers will come.

I Now an east-west service – a west Herts service from Watford Met would of course fully
mitigate all the problems with closure because, guess what, it wouldn't close. And of course
you'd have an east-west service from the Met interleaving at Croxley, and you could swap

A platforms and it would all be very simple to integrate with the southbound services. The
B London Travel Watch raised the further option of running western services from the Junction
using the CRL lines and the north curve. Now an obvious observation that I would make on
that is adding services into the Watford Junction service when it's already getting to the limit
of capacity is likely to challenge that service. So I don't see that you can do that without
retaining a service at the Met.

C But my logic says actually what's to stop you technically running east-west services from the
junction and from Watford Met, and southbound services from the junction and Watford Met.
D In other words, from both destinations you can choose – or from both points of departure you
can choose whether you travel south or you travel west. And the interchange is obviously at
Croxley. It's just a question of interleaving the services north at Croxley. It doesn't sound too
difficult to me. And the beauty of this is that you might start with a frequency of eight trains to
10 trains per hour combined with the two. You've actually got capacity there to increase up to,
let's say, 16 trains an hour. And you future proof the thing –

E THE CHAIRMAN: I really must draw you to a conclusion –

F PETER JEFFREE: I'm just about at the end.

G THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

H PETER JEFFREE: So I think my final conclusion is there is actually no physical impediment
to keeping the Met open and interleaving services between the Met and the Junction. There's
no significant infrastructure cost apart from the cost of rolling stock. And the cost of rolling
stock is only required by increased frequency. Increased frequency is driven by customer
demand. Customer demand creates revenue which pays for the rolling stock. So as far as I
can see, there is no logical justification for closing the Met station. Thank you very much.

I THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

[applause]

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it Carol?

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VINCENT STOPS: Carol.

B

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask you to be as brief as possible because –

CAROL HOCKLEY: I will be very brief because – can everyone hear me first of all? Hello?

C

AUDIENCE: Yes.

CAROL HOCKLEY: Can you hear me? [laughs]

D

AUDIENCE: Yes.

E

CAROL HOCKLEY: I'll be very brief because a lot of the points have already been covered, I'm pleased to say. I'm Carol Hockley. I don't live in Hertfordshire but I've been asked to represent various residents of Cassio Metro which is close to the Metropolitan line, particularly the younger people that travel in every day – the commuters that go into London for work, and that are single – not married couples, not older people. As I said before, most of the people that have spoken – or the two gentlemen who have spoken – have covered most of the points. But I would like to just read out a brief statement that has been produced by these residents that are unable to attend due to work commitments and it being during the day.

F

G

It would be easy to keep Watford Met open. There are no significant additional capital costs involved, and only a very modest operational cost to keep ticket office work – hardly likely to derail the CRL development. The fact is that the Met sits smack in the middle of a very varied and densely populated residential area, and serves commuters throughout the Watford area who live within easy walking and cycling distance to. The station is currently the stop for the boys attending the grammar school as well as users and visitors of the Colosseum, West Herts College, and of course the park.

H

I

Closing the station will affect people differently depending on where they live, but mainly the new Ascot Road station, albeit people are saying is only 15 minutes further to walk from the furthest point, that's very subjective because it takes some people different lengths of time to

A

walk. Also it depends on the weather conditions how long it's going to take to walk there, and whether people have got children or there are young people, old people doing that walk. So I don't think it's fair to state actual times of how long these things are going to take.

B

It seems that at a time when we should be doing everything we can to reduce road traffic and encourage more people to use public transport, we should do absolutely everything in our power to keep stations open rather than close them. Add to this the current proposals to develop Cassiobury Park making it more attractive to visitors, closing the station serves nobody and would be very wrong. Thank you.

C

[applause]

D

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Isobel Doherty.

VINCENT STOPS: And then Paul Embleton after that.

E

THE CHAIRMAN: Paul, if you'd like to come forward so that you're ready for the next –

VINCENT STOPS: Is Paul here? If you'd come on to the front seat. Paul Embleton.

F

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you seeking to speak?

AUDIENCE: Yes, sir.

G

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. I'll get to that in a moment.

VINCENT STOPS: We'll get to you.

H

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

ISOBEL DOHERTY: Can you hear me?

I

AUDIENCE: No.

A ISOBEL DOHERTY: Can you hear me?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

B ISOBEL DOHERTY: Well I think every point I've asked really has been covered save for my
C third: the blight costs to people's – the value lost of people's property has actually been taken
into account in the figures, because the new section of rail will obviously blight some people's
houses, and the loss of the station will blight the prices of people's houses in the Cassiobury
estate not being on the doorstep of a transport link. That was my only – everything else has
been covered.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

D VINCENT STOPS: Thank you.

[applause]

E VINCENT STOPS: Paul Embleton. And we've got Helen Rice and Lester Wagman after that.
If people could come forward as I – so we can –

F PAUL EMBLETON: Yes, good morning. Paul Embleton from the Cassiobury Residents'
Association. I support wholly the two councillors and the lady from Watford Metro. There is
one significant point I think to add to this, and that is safety. Whether it is West Herts College
G or the Colosseum or the grammar school or access from the north of the park to other schools
via the Met station, you do not have to cross a main road. And this is a vital point. There is no
main road crossing. We get asked by new parents about the best way to school, and we say
walk across the park in twos, that's fine. Use the Met. Many of them do.

H You know, the traffic levels in Watford are absolutely appalling. They seem to be increasing
year by year to meet the projected 50 per cent increase by the end of this decade. That being
so, with the proliferation of new housing near the station with the reduced parking provided,
I as I mentioned in my submission, it seems absolutely idiocy to shut a station right in the
middle of this housing adjacent to all these facilities including three fairly substantial centres

A of education. And remember there are school children that use the Met to go to Harrow or other schools away from Hertfordshire.

B The last point, if I may, is I'm the one who mentioned orbital routes. And, you know, Beaching [?] really killed us for orbital routes, and it is something that really needs to be borne in mind. Amersham to Watford, wherever it is, is a viable orbital route. First mentioned in 1947. I first heard of it in 1967. And I think it is something – I think there will be a business case as the levels of traffic increase. Thank you very much.

C [applause]

D THE CHAIRMAN: Helen?

VINCENT STOPS: Lester, if you could come and –

E HELEN RICE: Hello. My name is Helen Rice. I'm a local resident so I'm going to be quite brief because I am merely speaking from the point of view of someone who lives near the Metropolitan station. And I just want to reiterate that there will be a lot of people not here today because of the fact that, you know, everyone is working, people are in school. I myself am a teacher and I – because I don't have any – have to teach any lessons this morning I was able to persuade the deputy head that it was all right to come to this meeting. She said that was OK. I should be here. But I have to say it was very embarrassing, and I don't like asking for time off for things that are non-essential. So it's been very difficult to get here, and I know that there must be a lot of people – other people in my situation and plus people who are using the Metropolitan line who today had to go up into London to work and can't afford to take any time off.

H Just a few points. I don't think it's a very realistic thing to say it's the 25th least used station on the Tube network because of course any outlying station is going to be used less than the more central stations. And as far as I'm aware Croxley station that's staying open is really used less than Watford Met, I would suggest. And all these documents detailing the number of people that use the station, I mean I use the station quite a lot and I've never been asked by anybody where I'm going or what I'm doing. So I don't quite know, you know, when these surveys were taking place.

A I use the Metropolitan line station to go to work sometimes – not all the time – and to go into
B central London to visit friends, to see friends because I used to live in south London and it's
C my only way of keeping contact with some of my best friends to go into central London. So
the extra 15 minutes – and it will be at least 15 minutes if not more – is going to be a
significant problem for me, because obviously if I'm going into central London and want to
have a drink, I can't drive back from Ascot Road station. I'll have to either walk – which will be
very unsafe – well, compared to my current journey of a few minutes, which will be, you know,
not comfortable for me to walk 15 – at least 15 if not longer from Ascot Road.

D And plus, OK, so the other option is to get a taxi, and I'm sure there will be taxis waiting out
there. But my experience of Watford taxi drivers is in the evening they charge you very high
prices for going an extremely short distance, because I have sometimes travelled back from
Watford centre to my flat and I find them very high priced for what is actually just a one or
two-minute journey. So I imagine that will be a considerable cost.

E I don't know whether this point is relevant but it's something that's occurred to me. You say
that the decision to close the station will be taken by the Mayor of London, but I just wanted to
say that of course we don't vote for the Mayor of London, and it's not an issue that's been
raised. And I just don't know whether it's relevant but obviously we're beyond London. We're
not in a London borough, and I just – I'm not entirely comfortable with somebody – an office
F that we don't elect actually making this decision for us. It's just something that I've thought of.

G THE CHAIRMAN: I'm afraid if I just interrupt on that point, that is the way the law of the land
goes. It's not something that we have any –

H HELEN RICE: OK, perhaps so. But I'm just pointing out that I'm not –

I THE CHAIRMAN: Your point is noted.

HELEN RICE: I'm not terribly comfortable with that. The other thing that again, which hasn't
been raised, which again I don't know is relevant, but the line that they're intending to use for
the Croxley Rail Link is of course there, and it's a disused line that was closed because no
one was using it. It was a link that I think went from Ascot Road up to Watford Junction. And

A

no one was using it so it was closed. Clearly obviously it didn't have the link to the Metropolitan line, but I think that's another issue that hasn't actually been raised.

B

I've been using the station since 2007, so the data that you've taken from 2007 – you said it was from 2007 to 2010 or 2011 or something – again, that's a very short timescale to be taking data. And since – that's since – those years are actually the years when I've been using it. So I've added to the number of passengers.

C

The other point I wanted to make was there are a lot of people in opposition to the Croxley Rail Link because it's going to involve the closure of Watford Metropolitan station, and if you could come to some agreement where the Met line station would stay open, I think there would be less opposition to the plan to create the Croxley Rail Link.

D

I objected – I wrote an objection to the Secretary of State saying, you know, obviously I wasn't for the Croxley Rail Link, and I've had a letter from the Croxley Rail Link asking me to withdraw my objection and putting forward their case. And obviously as it stands at the moment I wouldn't dream of doing that because there is no compromise and no way that London Underground are prepared to – you know, it's going to cost them a bit more money in terms of staffing probably, and I think that's what their consideration is, not the consideration of the local users who are using it a lot, and I'm actually even – I'm more convinced now after listening to London Underground and listening to all the comments that the Croxley Rail Link is not as beneficial as has been promoted.

E

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THE CHAIRMAN: Can I just ask where you actually live?

G

HELEN RICE: I live in the Cassio Metro –

H

THE CHAIRMAN: Metro. So that's south of the –

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HELEN RICE: It's south of the park, and I've – the Ascot Road station is at least 15 minutes if not more. But it was interesting that the councillor who lives north of the park is also going to have an increased journey time of 15 minutes.

THE CHAIRMAN: OK, thank you very much indeed.

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VINCENT STOPS: Thank you. Lester Wagman.

[applause]

B

VINCENT STOPS: We've got a Sylvia Ashford and a J Morse after that, if they would come forward.

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SYLVIA ASHFORD: I didn't opt to speak.

VINCENT STOPS: OK. You're Sylvia?

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SYLVIA ASHFORD: Yes.

VINCENT STOPS: OK. So J Morse and Henry and Sylvia Moring.

E

J MORSE [?]: I didn't say I wanted to speak.

THE CHAIRMAN: OK. Fine, thank you.

F

VINCENT STOPS: Henry and Sylvia Moring?

HENRY MORING [?]: Not speaking.

G

VINCENT STOPS: OK. John Price. Michael Dutton. Michael, if you'd come –

THE CHAIRMAN: Could you give me your name?

H

JOHN JACKSON: John Jackson of SAWTAG. S-A-W –

VINCENT STOPS: Yes, we've got you on the list.

I

LESTER WAGMAN: Thank you. Can I just do the same sound check? Can people hear me? I'm happy to shout if you can't. Lester Wagman. I'm here represented the self-styled Save

A

Watford Met campaign which I launched in February 2011. My credentials for being here, I'm a resident of the Cassiobury triangle area – the area south of the park. I'm a father of three. I'm a working person, so I've taken the day off to be here because I think it's important. I'm a commuter. I use the service regularly. And I also use the London Overground as well on occasion.

B

C

And I want to make the points about hardship, because those are the ones which we've been asked to focus on today. I want to point out that we talk about additional journey times, and there has been a lot of talk of how many extra minutes. But what's important to notice is that for a lot of people they already walk 10-plus minutes to get to Watford Met station. So that additional 15 minutes means a 25-minute journey to the station. And that, for me, for where I live, that's the self-same reason why I don't use Watford Junction station, because it takes 25 minutes to walk there. Now actually I'm a cyclist and I sometimes cycle there. But there are a lot of people who aren't cyclists, or they walk.

D

E

There is a huge area affected by people who are the so-called "disbenefiters" – I'm not sure whether that's a real word or not – but the people who are worse off from the scheme. They are those who live on the north side of Cassiobury Park particularly, those who live in the Cassiobury triangle area on the south side of the park, and a huge swathe of people who live on the south side of Rickmansworth Road north of Wippendale Road who will also have far further to walk.

F

G

I particularly also want to dwell on the hardship to – the hardship to the school users. And I'm not just including the Watford Grammar School boys. With respect to the figures that are collected, they are woefully inaccurate. There are at least 500 a day people using the station from the school. You've only got to stand there on the street corner, as you from the committee did, from 7.30 onwards to see how many there are. Waves and waves and waves of children walk past my house actually where I live.

H

I

And I can also tell you that the way they walk – boys and teenagers being as they are – they're not very attentive to how they walk. So some will walk in the road. Some will walk on the pavement. The alternative is they're going to have to walk 1.2 kilometres along Rickmansworth Road, which is the most direct route from Watford Grammar School – Watford Boys Grammar to Ascot Road Station, where the pavements are narrow, the traffic is heavy –

A and will become heavier if people are driving there – and there are a number of roads to cross. Albeit they are provided with pelican crossings, it's going to be quite a slow and ponderous journey – and let me say a dangerous one.

B Now one of my children also travels out of Watford using Watford Met to a school further into London. And it concerns me that when she leaves the house at 7.20 in the morning, for a vast proportion of the year it is dark, which means that children will be walking along a dark, busy A-road in all weathers. Now OK, they can put raincoats on. Quite right. But it's the safety aspect. I don't have to be an expert in road safety to be able to tell you that it is young people C between the ages of 11 and 14 who are the most susceptible to road deaths in this country.

D Now of course they can be careful and they can take care. And every parent encourages their child to do that. But this is a huge unnecessary amount of risk that a lot of children are being put to. Those who come into Watford Grammar School, those who travel out of Watford to schools in the area – like Rickmansworth and Merchant Taylors' – and those who travel E beyond. And there are quite a number of them I can tell you from personal experience.

F I'm not going to dwell on the flaws in the statistics which have been collected, although when I questioned at the public enquiry how – the public consultation meeting that was held in Watford last year – when I questioned how their figures were collected, they were collected G on two weekdays in, I can't remember, I think it was 13 or 14 July – I'm sure the gentlemen from London Transport have probably got the answer to that – when, as it has been pointed out, there aren't that many children going to school, and frankly that's a woefully inadequate H sample.

I I'd just like to conclude my piece by talking about the alternatives and questioning whether those alternatives have been properly considered. And the alternatives, of course it's not really for members of the public like myself to think of the alternatives. It's for the transport experts and professionals to do this. But very little consideration has been given to a Watford circular bus which would connect Watford Junction and Watford town centre, Watford High Street, Watford Hospital, the business park, Watford Met and the town hall, and back to Watford Junction. And if there were a bus service that ran every 10 minutes along that route, I think you'd find without building the Croxley Rail Link – and I'm not opposed to it – it would be a very well-used service.

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Second point, we've talked about shuttle services, and everybody is focusing on shuttle services from Croxley being the nearest station. I'd also like to point out that there should be considered, in my opinion as a commuter, an alternative shuttle which runs from Moor Park through to Watford, perhaps with alternate trains, if the Croxley Rail Link is built, running through the Croxley Rail Link and to Watford – existing Watford Met station. And the reason for that is that there are more platforms at Moor Park, and there are many people who travel from Watford Met who to save an extra five minutes by getting on a fast train whenever they can find one will actually change trains already at Moor Park station and change on to the Amersham fast trains which have been reduced in recent years. But up to a year ago there were quite a lot of them.

The final point I want to make about the Croxley Rail Link itself, and I'm drawing this from significant anecdotal evidence of my own because, as I've said, I also use the London Overground service from Watford High Street, is there are a huge number of people who use the London Overground to travel north to Watford Junction, and then change trains and take the fast train on the Midlands service into London Euston. And I predict that quite a number of the people who will be using the Croxley Rail Link stations, if they are ever built, will do exactly the same because the journey time on the Met line into central London will be 50-plus minutes, 55 minutes.

People generally don't use the London Overground service which also provides a 50-minute or a 55-minute service from Euston to Watford Junction. They don't use it for the whole length of the route, and primarily the reason for that – not using it for the whole length of the route – is because it takes too long. And that's why they travel north and then change. So I wonder whether anyone has consulted with London Midland as to whether or not they are expecting the huge influx of people who will be changing trains at Watford Junction to use the southbound fast trains – only takes 25 minutes from there at worst – into London Euston. I think I've probably made all the points I wanted to cover. I'm happy to answer any questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

LESTER WAGMAN: But I would just finally say that I have a petition here which I have drawn to the attention of the Panel on which there are currently 1,159 signatures. Now there was a

A question raised about whether or not some of these are anonymous. I have a printed copy here which I'm happy to leave with people to use, but I haven't circulated it before because of data protection issues.

B THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed.

VINCENT STOPS: Thank you.

C [applause]

VINCENT STOPS: Michael objected as part of the TWA process but it came –

D MICHAEL DUTTON: Well it is as well, but most of it's been covered.

VINCENT STOPS: Sorry, sorry. It came through to us via that process –

E MICHAEL DUTTON: Yes, that's right. Yes.

VINCENT STOPS: But you're very welcome. OK.

F MICHAEL DUTTON: Sorry about that. Most of it's been covered, which is fantastic. But I would ask London Transport a couple of things. The Metropolitan line timetable changed in December – I think it was the 12th – near the same time as the Croxley Rail Link was proposed. It used to run the trains every 10 minutes off peak. And the other thing that's happened from that is it's stopped the fast Moor Park services during the day which are absolutely fantastic. I could walk from my house in Rickmansworth Road and be in Finchley Road in 35 minutes, which was fantastic for me.

H The other thing I also – George Derbyshire actually proposed the idea of the link to Rickmansworth, which was fantastic. You actually ran it one weekend when there was engineering works, and it was fantastic because I could actually change at Rickmansworth and get on the fast line service to Marylebone which really did save a lot of time.

I

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The only other thing that I would like to say about this is that I don't understand why the old Watford West is not reopened. I have had something back from one of these people saying that it would cost extensions of platforms. You're going to do that anyway, but it also would help to, as a businessman, supply Tolpits Lane with a station which is desperately needed because if I need to go see my accountant, I have to get a cab. So anyway, that's all I have to say. And thank you very much.

B

[applause]

C

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

D

VINCENT STOPS: We've got John Jackson. We've mistakenly called you Jacobson, didn't we? Robert Caton.

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ROBERT CATON: I'll have to stay here I'm afraid. It takes me a long time to get up.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to come forward now and then we can give you an opportunity to talk.

F

VINCENT STOPS: And John Malcolm we've got last. Is John Malcolm here?

JOHN MALCOLM: Yes.

G

VINCENT STOPS: Did you want to talk, John?

JOHN MALCOLM: I'll ask a question if I may.

H

THE CHAIRMAN: OK, fine.

VINCENT STOPS: Come forward. Come forward those two, then – Robert Caton and John Malcolm. That would help.

I

ROBERT CATON: Can you hear me from here?

A

VINCENT STOPS: No. We need to record what you're saying.

B

THE CHAIRMAN: Can we bring a microphone to him?

C

VINCENT STOPS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you got a portable microphone?

D

TECHNICIAN: No, sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh. Well, we will let – if you can try and talk from there, we'll try and relay what you're saying.

E

VINCENT STOPS: OK. John Jackson.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Jackson, you come from an organisation called SAWTAG.

F

JOHN JACKSON: SAWTA. That's the South and West Transport Action Group.

THE CHAIRMAN: South and west of where?

G

JOHN JACKSON: Well it's the south and west of England, and we have a local member in Carpenters Park.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I would ask you to confine your remarks strictly to this particular project, please. We have read your very lengthy submission so far. I'm certainly not expecting you to read the whole of what you've given me here.

H

JOHN JACKSON: Right.

THE CHAIRMAN: We can record that –

I

JOHN JACKSON: I'll read the summary and the main points though.

A THE CHAIRMAN: If you would, please. Thank you very much indeed.

JOHN JACKSON: Hello? Can you hear me?

B AUDIENCE: Yes.

C JOHN JACKSON: Good. It's John Jackson of SAWTAG. I'm very glad to be here today after the august company of the MP for Watford, and I'd just like to remind people it's come very late, but there were Prime Minister's Questions on High Speed 2 which goes this way, and also on the third runway at Heathrow, which is in suspense at the moment. And these were at Prime Minister's Questions yesterday. So it's a very live issue, and I'll try and restrict myself but –

D THE CHAIRMAN: You will restrict yourself if you don't mind.

[laughter]

E THE CHAIRMAN: Hardship. We're particularly concerned about the hardship of people who live in the Watford area and who are directly affected by the closure of the station.

F JOHN JACKSON: Right. Well I started my report raising three major points. This report – sorry, this report opposes the closure of the Watford Metropolitan line station on three major grounds. And the first one was retaining peak, which has been spoken to, football, which hasn't – and I'll add a few words – and special traffic, and possibly building up traffic. Both the Metropolitan line and the West Coast mainline Watford suburban lines serve nearby Wembley Stadium extremely well already. Also – and I say train portion working must be advanced to best practice elsewhere. I'll give you a suggestion a little bit later.

H This is the second one. I'd like to facilitate the forming of an extended London Overground network so this all links up –

I THE CHAIRMAN: Well I think that's out –

A

JOHN JACKSON: – through the extracted government policy of better protection critical in developing rail infrastructure and interchange. And then thirdly – and I'll speak to this briefly again – there are essential safeguards to be put in place to protect the truncated alignment through Watford Metropolitan line station.

B

Now I say on footballing, you haven't got the right site at Watford Hospital. You should have the site further down at the back of Watford Football Club where there's an old junction – now this hasn't been shown on any of the –

C

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, this is not – we can't discuss the alignment of the Croxley link. We're talking specifically about closure of the station at the moment. So if you could just concentrate on –

D

JOHN JACKSON: Well what I'm suggesting, sir, is that until a proper station is provided for Watford Football Stadium, they have connecting buses from Watford Met. They build up traffic for home games, and the station is not lost in that regard. But what I wanted to say – and I appreciate some information from London Underground here – there was a triangle – we've had the north curve one mentioned at Rickmansworth way – but there is also a triangle immediately outside Watford Football Stadium. There was a direct line that took you from the Watford suburban line and it took you up to Croxley. Now this doesn't appear on any of your plans, and there was also a Bakerloo Line depot there. So I'm wondering what to goodness has happened to all this. Has it been completely forgotten?

E

F

AUDIENCE: Yes.

G

[laughter]

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JOHN JACKSON: Right, I'll go on. As I say, the connecting buses will run from a retained Watford Metropolitan station direct to the stadium. I won't re-raise that point on the – save to the stadium. I'll go to secondly, you know, this was written before, of course, Boris Johnson's re-election. He was re-elected so the same policy applies. And he is intending to extend London Overground as one of his manifesto pledges to these parts. The lady teacher – I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name – she mentioned the difficulty you have in this regard. But I hope that you can spell out to Boris Johnson that we need a connected east-west network

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here, not just a closure of a station. And my particular bits to add to this, and I quote the Acts – the Watford Metropolitan station was built under them – the Act of Parliament in 1912, and I give further connections there. But –

B

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask you to refer specifically to the closure of Watford station.

C

JOHN JACKSON: Yes, that's the Act of Parliament which should be examined, because it may, in view of the vicinity of Cassiobury Park, it may contain protective covenants that say the station should be open forever, or something of that sort.

D

JOHN JACKSON: It's an Act of Parliament.

E

VINCENT STOPS: We are worried about –

F

JOHN JACKSON: It's an Act of Parliament.

VINCENT STOPS: Other people can worry about those Acts of Parliament. We're worried about the issues of hardship should London Underground close this station. My advice is that you address that, or the Chair should ask you to leave the platform.

G

JOHN JACKSON: I'll go on to thirdly. OK, I'll go on to thirdly. There was an item in the Rail magazine recently – I've passed a little bit of it to you to give the reference – you'll see it down on the bottom left. And they were also discussing St Albans. Now my suggestion, which follows the gentleman in the red shirt – again I didn't catch his name – he was saying a lot of people like to take mainline trains and change trains at Watford Junction or Moor Park or wherever. Now what I'd like to suggest is that you run 12 coaches out of Euston. That will help with the Channel Tunnel coming – the High Speed 2 link coming. Get some more capacity. Those trains run to Watford Junction. They separate. Four coaches go to St Albans –

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THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. This really is not relevant. I must ask you to stand down, Mr Jackson. Thank you very much for your contribution.

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VINCENT STOPS: Thank you. We've got Robert Caton. I think we're going to try and hear you, Robert, from where you are.

B
THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Caton, if you could speak up and then I will try and relay your comments.

C
ROBERT CATON: As I think you know, I'm a member of the London Passenger Committee [?] [inaudible] –

THE CHAIRMAN: We welcome you back to one of our meetings. [laughs]

D
ROBERT CATON: Thank you. What I want [inaudible] the situation having sat [inaudible]. It's very important and there will always be people that need it. But in this case I think the position is quite clear. There will be considerable hardship if this station closes. Can I first of all say, then, that one of the reasons given for the closure [extension?] was that [inaudible] taken away from Watford Junction and the service is now worse than it was in 1960 when came into being. [inaudible] alternative [inaudible] But I have to say that [inaudible] I'd be interested to know that the same reasons were given [inaudible] as they were years ago. For instance, increased operating costs. [inaudible] And I don't see any of those [inaudible] and the costs of the [inaudible] in relation to the costs of the whole scheme is £160m. So I think [inaudible].

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[applause]

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THE CHAIRMAN: And finally – I gather everybody heard there. Thank you very much indeed.

VINCENT STOPS: John Malcolm.

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JOHN MALCOLM: I'm a resident of Cassiobury. I live in Parkside Drive. I'm retired. I'm an economist. The question I would like to ask is – or the questions – what was the discount rate that you take in order to do the cost benefit study? And secondly, has the cost benefit study been checked by an independent person who is competent in such studies?

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed.

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[applause]

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THE CHAIRMAN: I think I'm going to ask Keith to answer those two questions directly. Or is it Steve?

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STEVE HUNTER: That would be me.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

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STEVE HUNTER: The discount rate, I presume as an economist you're familiar with the Treasury – Her Majesty's Treasury Green Book. They give a standard discount rate for any public sector investment project which is 3.5 per cent. In terms of whether it's been checked by an independent person, the answer to that is clearly yes. The Department for Transport did a thorough review of the project – of the business case for the project – last year, went into it in some detail, asked us a number of questions, and satisfied themselves in approving funding for the project that the cost benefit analysis met their guidance, which follows good practice.

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KEITH FOLEY: I would just add to that that of course part of that process, this project was competing for funds with other projects across the rest of the country. So the DfT had a pot of money they could allocate to transport projects across the country, and this project was one of 30 to 40 projects that were submitted to compete for those funds. So there was a very rigorous process that we had to go through as a project team with the DfT to ensure that the benefit cost ratio and all the assumptions that went underlying to that were robust.

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THE CHAIRMAN: OK, I think that answers that point quite conclusively. We now have an opportunity for a 10-minute break. I make it 11.53. So if we meet back, say, at 12.05, there will be refreshments outside if you want to purchase them. And if we could be back for 12.05 then we will have our discussion. Thank you very much indeed.

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[Session ended at 11.55]

A **SESSION 2**

Objectors to the closure of Watford Station (cont'd)

B [Session started at 12.07]

C THE CHAIRMAN: Could we reconvene please. I've got three people who didn't have a chance to make their comments before.

VINCENT STOPS: Mr Raffi? Raffi Katz, Malcolm Meerabux – Councillor Malcolm Meerabux – and Avtar Chaggar.

D THE CHAIRMAN: If you'd like to come forward please. And then I would again urge you just to keep to the relevant points. Mr Katz.

E RAFFI KATZ: Hello. My name is Raffi Katz, and I'm a resident. At the beginning of this meeting Keith said on behalf of London Transport that residents living north of the park may as well walk to Ascot Road. I do this. This is exactly the walk I do on my way to work. From just north of the park it takes me, walking quickly, 25 minutes. My wife has also done this and it's taken her nearly 35 minutes.

F [applause]

G VINCENT STOPS: OK, so Councillor Meerabux, are you still here?

H THE CHAIRMAN: OK.

VINCENT STOPS: And Avtar Chaggar. No? OK. Avtar?

I MALCOLM MEERABUX: All right. I hope you can all hear me. Is that OK? A lot of what I was going to say has already been said. I did quite a bit of research and have got lots of pages here. So I'll just do a bit of a re-jig. Right. OK. I just feel with this whole project there is a little

A

bit of the M25 with this scheme, because remember when it was first built they said it was going to relieve congestion. And it's become really a car park, as we all know locally.

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Now this question of hardship always worries me when it's raised because we could so easily underplay it. Example: can we put a value on youngsters facing longer journeys, as a resident said? And there are many parents who are worried about these longer journeys. What about the pressures on family life? Can we just then be rushed to far-flung stations on, as you all know, our very already congested roads.

C

We've got to be clear here, this scheme isn't simply about relieving our own internal congestion problems and all the harm it causes but will ramp up infrastructure pressures on what is already the most densely populated town in England. As you all must know, hundreds of homes are planned for Ascot Road, the Health Campus and the Junction station. The solution? Close the Met station.

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But I hope the Panel is aware that the Met station reduces harm because it answers five very important questions. And the questions it answers is to do with accessibility to place of work or education or leisure facilities or even entertainment, equality for all groups in our society, especially at times when many families are faced with soaring insurance premiums and heavy power costs. What of our economy in terms of our entry [?] needs to this country. And it also provides value for money. Now it's certainly at the moment deliverable, and the Met station does, with its present structure and with slight adjustments, could continue to meet our needs.

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I just want to finally say – a question for the Panel: isn't the Mayor looking at pushing through driverless trains? Because there is much talk about financing this project, but I thought the aim was to make things more efficient and more cost effective. And much of what I already was going to say has already been said. But I just want to emphasise that we are a very, very congested town. And to me we don't need less public services and less public transport stations. We actually need more. And actually the whole idea of maybe adding an extra one – you know, in terms of two and closing one – doesn't to me seem to be very logical. So on that note, I dissent. But I would like an answer in terms of efficiency and the Mayor's push for driverless trains.

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And the other point I was concerned about is I did notice that perhaps – I don't know whether it's me, but has there been a reduction in services in terms of what the Met station has actually been providing over the years? And is part of this sort of running down of the station in order to meet maybe some agenda? On that note, I'll end. Thank you.

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[applause]

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VINCENT STOPS: Mr Avtar, you haven't written to us. I see you've got some notes. If you could send them to us that would be useful.

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MALCOLM MEERABUX: Thank you very much.

VINCENT STOPS: Thank you.

E

MALCOLM MEERABUX: My name is Meerabux, by the way.

VINCENT STOPS: Oh sorry. Oh, you're Councillor Meerabux. Ah, apologies.

Consideration of the closure by Members

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[12:14]

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THE CHAIRMAN: Right, we have now finished the question time, and the meeting will now take the format of the Panel having a discussion amongst ourselves as to the various issues. And it may seem rather strange that we're sitting in a straight line here having a meeting, and you're all sitting out there and obviously you're welcome to listen. I'm going to start by asking one or two questions to London Underground, raising some of the issues that the speakers have raised. And I'd like to thank you all for making your comments.

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Just a simple one, first of all. Somebody talked about the possibility of going from Ascot Road or Vicarage Road to Watford Junction and then taking a fast train. That means you're going from Zone 7 into town. What would the fare be for that particular journey?

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A KEITH FOLEY: I couldn't answer off the top of my head, I'm afraid. I'm sure that's something we can provide for you but I can't answer that off the top of my head.

B STEVE HUNTER: Can I just point out on this plan that there are existing Met users who are already living much closer to Watford Junction and still for a reason of benefit to themselves are making the local, the access down to Watford Met station to use the slower service down there.

C THE CHAIRMAN: So presumably they're not going all the way into town. They may be going to –

D KEITH FOLEY: They could be accessing Harrow or Wembley –

E STEVE HUNTER: But they are also going all the way into town. There are certain locations that if you're trying to get to the vicinity of Baker Street, if you would prefer to be on a much less crowded London Underground train that you're guaranteed a seat when you leave – and the reasons are very personal between people, but there are some people who according to that logic would just jump on a train at Watford Junction station because they live, you know, really very close to it up here. But yet they choose to use the Met line for reasons of personal –

F KEITH FOLEY: It would depend on their ultimate destination in the centre of London, because obviously going in to Euston is very beneficial for that sort of City area, but one of the advantages for some customers on the, sort of the Amersham branch at the moment, some choose to use the Metropolitan line to Baker Street instead of the Chiltern services because of the various different access points and the opportunities when they get further down, either changing on to the Jubilee line at Finchley Road or into Baker Street – the ability to go immediately into the centre or down into the West End. So there's a number of different destinations. So there will be an attractiveness to the Metropolitan line service from those stations.

H I But I think the point is valid that people do make that journey north to Watford Junction. The provision of the Croxley Rail Link and the Metropolitan line services there of course is

A beneficial for the customers who already do that because it reduces their time to wait for the trains because we'll be running a higher frequency service for people who do exactly that.

B THE CHAIRMAN: There are a whole series of issues – it was partly in your paper, which I
found a little bit difficult to follow – about the fact that you would be running 10 trains an hour if
the Croxley link was not approved. You currently run – I'm talking about the off peak – you
currently run four trains now. That was reduced from six trains an hour, as I think Mr Katz
C said, in December last year. And the Overground is currently three trains an hour. Are there
any plans to increase that? And it doesn't seem to me that there is a great difficulty in
interleaving services if you've only got three trains an hour to interleave with. Could you just
explain exactly what the whole issue – and the question about how easy it would be to
interlink a shuttle service because I don't think we fully – either a shuttle service or an
D alternate service. And then perhaps you'd also like to comment on the idea of using the north
curve as a reversing opportunity.

E KEITH FOLEY: Shall I start there because I think that's the quickest to answer.

F THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

G KEITH FOLEY: So using the north curve, yes you could do that. I think I would need to check
the track layout but I think we'd need to do some work on the north curve to bring it up to
H standard. I'm not actually convinced we've got the reverse and crossover in the curve, but I
don't – I can't say convincingly that that's the case. But I don't think that's there. So I think we
would have capital infrastructure costs on the north curve for reversing anyway.

I The current drivers would have to change ends through the train which takes longer as well.
That means the train resources that would be necessary to run the service would increase.
And the point I made about the shuttle service in any respect still stands in that we don't have
rolling stock available to run that service. So that would need provision of additional rolling
stock. One of the gentlemen talked about rolling stock – surely we can make that work
somehow. There's two ways we could make it work. We absolutely could do this. Of course
we could. We could not run trains somewhere else and run them there instead.

A But the trains where we currently plan for the post subsurface upgrade – I'll talk on that
B because that comes back to the train frequency in the earlier question – effectively they all
C generate more social benefit, they serve more customers in their current planned capacity
D than they ever possibly could by using them to effectively travel backwards and forwards
E between Croxley, Watford Met or even to Rickmansworth. The number of customers that
F would be attracted to that service at probably a half-hour frequency would be very, very low.
G Someone also pointed out that I said provision of services generates traffic. And that is true,
H but at that service level we would not expect much traffic growth from that.

C The trains themselves, this scheme is budgeted about £116m. The train provision in there,
D depending on the final cost of the train when we actually procure it, could be anywhere
E between 10 and 15, 20 per cent of that cost. The train – rolling stock – is a big part of the
F capital cost. So it's disingenuous to say that that's an easy thing for us to resolve because it is
G a very substantial part of the capital cost from the Croxley Rail Link, and therefore if we were
H going to do anything different or additional, effectively from our overall budget that would be a
I large cost as well. So that covers the sort of – the Croxley shuttle, I think.

E In terms of how we would run the services, in the off peak yes, we could interoperate the
F services. We can always find ways of interoperating the services. We've got some very, very
G capable schedulers that can make that happen, and we do that all across the network all the
H time. So there would be ways of making that work, but again it's how are we using that train
I resource that we've got, because part of the reason why we dropped the trains in service is
because the trains were out for maintenance. So there is an increased pressure on our
maintenance schedules and stuff if we put more trains into service in the off peak. So that
would be a very real cost – a very real direct cost to us. There would also be obviously
general wear and tear, but there is a risk that we would need to procure more rolling stock as
part of our overall scheme.

H In terms of the peak level services, the ability to interoperate does reduce dramatically
I because of the volume of traffic we've got and the signalling capacity that would be on the line
at a point in the future because we're obviously procuring our upgrade services to facilitate
the level of service we think is appropriate going forwards for the life of that project.

A And one gentleman was talking about running services from both Watford Junction and
Watford Met and running them down. Well of course one of the things in terms of the
interoperation, the biggest factor for us is where do the trains go because at the moment the
B real driver, the thing that this generated the business case for, the vast cost for the
subsurface upgrade is the traffic – sorry, the services we can operate south of Harrow in
particular because that's where the bulk of the demand is. And that aims at 28 trains per hour
C south of Harrow running up to 32 – sorry, 32 running to the north side of the Circle line where
it interacts with the Circle and the Hammersmith and City services. There are only – so there
are only 32 train paths going through the north side of the Circle and 28 into Baker Street.

D We also have to remember we're trying to serve Uxbridge as a major traffic demand centre,
Amersham and Chesham, and then Watford as well. So for every train we run from the
Watford branch, effectively in order for that to serve south of Harrow, that has to come away
E from one of the other branches. And the way that the services are planned at the moment is
optimal for the traffic that we see on each of those branches and for the expected traffic
growth that we're expecting to see across the whole of the Metropolitan line based on the
F things that other people have mentioned today or land use developments – yes, and general
planned investment in those areas.

G And of course we continually monitor that, and we make changes to the service patterns and
plans as you guys well know on a regular basis because we respond – you know, I'm always
F keen to point out we are a public body. We are here to do the very best we can with public
services. So we constantly monitor that. But the interleaving in the peak service is just where
G would we send those trains? We couldn't make that work. We could interact them in terms of
meshing them together at the north end, but it's where would they go on to go.

H THE CHAIRMAN: And the effect on having reduced the service from six trains an hour to four
trains an hour in December – the December timetable update? Any comment on that?

I KEITH FOLEY: The early part of the year saw – shortly after the introduction of that timetable
– saw the best performance figures we've ever seen on the Metropolitan line in the history of
the way we collect the stats. And so the particular target we have from government on excess
journey time, we've been measuring since the mid 90s. And we hit levels that we'd never
seen before on the Metropolitan line shortly after that. I can't comment on current levels

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because I don't have them on my mind. But I saw recently that our overall performance was as good as it's been for many years, and better. And that's part of the overall operating in a sense more reliably because we're putting good recovery margins in where we need to.

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THE CHAIRMAN: And passenger flows? Any impact on passenger flows?

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KEITH FOLEY: In effect we're operating better capacity because we're operating more of the schedule that we were intending to operate. And because there is less delays inherent in the structure of the timetable as well, that means that we are – that the overall excess journey time that people are experiencing has dropped, so that is an overall improvement for customers.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Any other?

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GAIL ENGERT: I'd like to say –

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I was going to ask you –

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GAIL ENGERT: I thought one of the most interesting speakers was about the walk to Ascot Road. We did that walk. The pavements were awful. I can't imagine it in wet weather. It was – or in the dark. And the amount of children certainly we saw – and I wanted to know – it was quite vague in the answer saying we will be doing upgrades. I really wanted to know exactly what was intended to be done to that. And I think perhaps it's the council that could answer that question.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Does London Underground want to make any comment on it? It's outside your direct area.

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KEITH FOLEY: Steve.

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STEVE HUNTER: I – if Roxy was –

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to stand up and –

A VINCENT STOPS: This is Roxanne Glaud, for the record. Hertfordshire County Council.

B ROXANNE GLAUD: Good morning, everyone. I am Roxanne Glaud. I work for Hertfordshire
County Council. With respect to the road safety issues, as part of the Southwest Herts
C Transportation Plan, we are currently looking at the access routes between Ascot Road and
to key destinations which would include Watford Grammar School, Cassiobury Park, and
other key destinations that people normally use at the current station which is Watford Met.
And we are also looking at those other routes as well from the Watford Hospital to link into the
development proposals.

D THE CHAIRMAN: Do you accept that it's a poor walking environment, and do you anticipate
doing anything?

E ROXANNE GLAUD: We are doing stuff. So we have actually – we do have a group of
consultants who work for us on a term contract [?]. They have actually walked the route
themselves and are looking at improvements. We have also set up meetings with – although I
would say a number of objectors have raised concerns about Watford Grammar School, we
haven't had an objection from the TWE [?]. But we are working with them and are scheduling
to have a meeting with them to sort of put forward what are some of the earlier proposals that
we are looking at in terms of making a better walking route to the school. We also as a county
F have at present the Southwest Herts Cycle Strategy which also promotes a number of cycle
links and which we would be looking to take on board any routes from Ascot Road as well as
Watford Hospital to link in to key destinations of where people are going. So those bits of
work are currently ongoing.

G THE CHAIRMAN: Bearing in mind that one of our responsibilities is to report on mitigation or
potential mitigation of hardship, I think it would be very helpful if we could have something in
writing from Hertfordshire about this so that we can include that in our report please.

H ROXANNE GLAUD: OK.

I THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks.

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GAIL ENGERT: Another part of that, when we did walk round, was that there was the Watford Hospital station. And that's going to be all nice and level access, but the actual route to get there is up a hill, down a hill, with very few pavements. And there won't be any parking. So I wonder how disabled people will be able to access that accessible station.

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ROXANNE GLAUD: And that too is currently being looked at as part of this additional exercise, which is being looked at now in advance of Croxley Rail Link.

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GAIL ENGERT: Again, I think we'd like something in writing about that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. David?

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DAVID BARRY: I'll start with just an observation relating to the school, which is that the school of course has a travel plan and I know that inside the Greater London area travel plans are consulted with local authorities around the possibility of improvements – things like, you know, an extra crossing beneath the ones identified. So there will be as part of the information what we would like would be to have some understanding of how you were working with the school on that. And that would relate to the issue that has arisen of an apparent discrepancy between the surveys that the member of boys using the school and our own observations when we made our field trip where there is a discrepancy.

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The second point I was going to make – which is actually relating to London Underground and not Hertfordshire Council – is the comment that was made about the shuttle option. And we did have a discussion earlier about the shuttle option to Croxley, but someone suggested a shuttle to Moor Park. And I just wanted to check if that's been explored and if there are objections to it which I presume London Underground have – are similar to the objections to the Croxley shuttle.

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KEITH FOLEY: Yes, the – I mean the primary reason for us not providing that is back to rolling stock cost because rolling to Moor Park is even further, so that would require even more train resource. In the –

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DAVID BARRY: So it's the additional trains?

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KEITH FOLEY: The additional trains is the overwhelming reason why we wouldn't do that. But the – to run it during the peak down to Moor Park we would be interfering with the mainline service running down into central London. And whilst, yes, there are more platforms at Moor Park, they are all used for the southbound through service. So any reversing that we were trying to do off those platforms would interfere with the operation of how many services we could run into central London. So running that shuttle service would use more trains and would probably result in a lower frequency into central London.

THE CHAIRMAN: OK.

AUDIENCE: Isn't that the same for Rickmansworth?

THE CHAIRMAN: The gentleman is asking whether the same problem occurs at Rickmansworth, or you've got more flexibility at Rickmansworth or –?

KEITH FOLEY: We have reversing sidings at Rickmansworth, and we could – there is probably more opportunity to run a shuttle service between, well, any of the stations sort of north of Croxley and Rickmansworth, but again I come back to my point on the rolling stock and the capital cost of operating that service. We just would not generate enough traffic using that service to even vaguely come close to the purchase cost of a train, let alone the ongoing maintenance costs of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: And if somebody – if the train service is only every half an hour, it may still be quicker to go to Moor Park and join to an existing service –

KEITH FOLEY: Absolutely. That is a very good point because if you were stood at one of the other stations, that would be what you would do. You would take the first train and change.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right. We have a paper that has been put together by the Secretariat. Those of you who have the paper, it's document C. And I'm proposing to go through basically section 5 with my fellow panellists to find – put together some of the comments that have been made this morning, comments that we've already received, and some of the very helpful answers that we have from London Underground.

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It seems to me that obviously one of the critical areas is this question of whether you can run either alternate services to Watford station and to Watford Junction, or a shuttle service of some description either to Croxley or to Amersham, to Rickmansworth and further northwest from there. I think I'm convinced that the argument that the economic case for running the shuttle service is quite – the argument against running a shuttle service to me is quite sound. I don't know whether either of you have any comments on that. David?

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DAVID BARRY: Well my comment on that would be that it seems to me that the key probably identified is the requirement for additional rolling stock. That's seems to me to be the issue. And it is – you can see that you can't run it without additional rolling stock. And I understand there are other issues about interleaving services and so forth, but it does seem to me that that is identified as being the really critical issue. Would London Underground like to comment? It's the extra rolling stock – really it's the critical issue. Is that a fair comment?

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KEITH FOLEY: Depending on which – the extra rolling stock is critical for any of the variants we've discussed. Absolutely. And any of the variants other than the one to Rickmansworth it would be the pathing [?] that we could run into the peak into the south of town. So therefore the opportunity cost, I guess, or the disbenefit to the Metropolitan line users as a main – you know, the 300,000 to 400,000 that use the service every day as opposed to the 2,500 that use Watford Met. So for all variants except Rickmansworth, it's rolling – sorry, all variants it's rolling stock absolutely. I would agree with you. I think for the other variants there is an additional reason why we wouldn't do it.

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THE CHAIRMAN: And just looking at the opportunity of running an alternate service to Watford and Watford Junction rather than the same way as you do at the moment to Chesham and Amersham, presumably the problem there is that the frequency of the service would be too short, and also presumably you've also got the difficulty of the fact that the running time from Croxley to Watford Junction is very different from the running time to –

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KEITH FOLEY: That's right.

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THE CHAIRMAN: So the actual timetabling issue –

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KEITH FOLEY: The timetabling would be very difficult. I'll refer to what I said earlier that we've got some very skilled schedulers who I'm sure could make it work in one way or other. It would be sub optimal, I think. But the biggest issue there really is the fact that you've got a low frequency on both options which means we wouldn't generate the benefit from Croxley Rail Link that the whole case is predicated upon. And for users of both branches you end up with a low frequency service, and we know from all our economic work and from what we've done with services in the past that low frequency services do see patronage decline.

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So we would expect if we reduced the frequency at Watford Met that people would start to use other services, and given Ascot Road and Watford Hospital stations are actually closer for over 50 per cent of those people on those blue dots there, we would expect them to migrate away from that Metropolitan station at Watford anyway.

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THE CHAIRMAN: I must say I have been rather concerned about some of the figures that people have given from the floor in terms of walking time because I wonder whether some people are confusing the walking time that they currently do to Watford and then the extra time to Ascot Road and adding those together and saying that's the extra time rather than the total time. Certainly when we walked it, it was nothing like 15 minutes. Is there anything else that we want to discuss in terms of the scheduling of the services.

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VINCENT STOPS: Chair, could I just ask that one question? People are going to see when they go to Watford Met station in the future trains parked there in the morning and leaving to go to central London. And they are going to find it strange, like they do on bus services, that those buses are empty. Dead working, they call it. Can you tell us, you know, how those trains – what time of the day they would leave Watford Met station empty and why they couldn't be carrying passengers?

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THE CHAIRMAN: And how many of them there would be.

KEITH FOLEY: OK, well how many? No more than three, because that's the opportunity we have there. They would be leaving early, early morning because they would be forming part of the early morning service. So again, I can't give you accurate – because this would depend on how we actually schedule the services going forwards, and it will vary as we increment our

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services to the end state post subsurface upgrade. But I can be pretty confident that they would be before sort of 6.15, 6.30 in the morning they would be departing Watford.

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THE CHAIRMAN: So relatively little value to potential commuters.

VINCENT STOPS: Thank you.

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DAVID BARRY: Similarly at night, when do you stable them at night roughly?

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KEITH FOLEY: Stabling at night, they would be – again I can't give you accuracies. It could be anywhere between – you know, the first one could be as early as 11.00 pm but could be as late as sort of 12.30. They could be the last three trains that go up there. It very much depends on how we ended up actually doing the scheduling. But it would certainly be post sort of 10.30, 11.00 at night.

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DAVID BARRY: Does the stabling schedule vary significantly?

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KEITH FOLEY: It depends on what else is going on at the time. But yes we do – the stabling options vary all the time based on maintenance schedules as much as anything because we won't be able to maintain the trains at Watford. They will literally just be stabling. So there will be – sometimes those trains will actually form a trip out of the depot up to the stabling location because the train will have been prepped ready for service next morning the last thing at night and then sent up there. And other times they'll go up there. They'll form a first train south into a depot. So then they can do the prep for the rest of the day's service. So it does vary. But either way on just a simple siding which literally is just used for stabling overnight rather than any work on the trains whatsoever, it will always be very early morning and very late night.

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DAVID BARRY: Oh yes, no. What I was pushing for was forming the impression what you're saying really there is no such thing as a timetable for stabling trains. There's no consistent timing. You wouldn't be saying that a train is always going to be stabled at 11.30 or something.

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KEITH FOLEY: No. I mean at any given location it probably won't vary tremendously from one timetable to the next. You know, 10 to 15-minute variation maybe. But between locations it

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varies wildly depending on the level of service we're trying to operate. And so for example late at night there's very few trains going south into town, so the last train is stabling at the south end of the line would be a lot earlier than the last train stabling at the north end of the line.

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STEVE HUNTER: Keith, would tying in a timetabled service into that depot, that would commit you to those times more than you'd want to do that?

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KEITH FOLEY: Yes. Yes.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I briefly alluded to point 5.3, the walking / cycling plan, and I think part of that is the improvement to the road system, better crossings will make it easier for people to come. And specifically we've talked about the number of pupils coming from Watford Grammar School. I think we take the figure in the LUL paper as probably being in error based on the evidence that we have here. There is the contrary argument that a little bit of exercise for young people might be a good thing rather than a bad thing.

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GAIL ENGERT: They looked very fit actually when we saw them. And then there's also the children going out as well which somebody else alluded to – children travelling from the Met station.

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STEVE HUNTER: The children travelling out from the station will be the same as any of the other passengers travelling out from stations. Of course they're not, I'm sure, all concentrated around Watford Met station itself. So some of them will obviously be living closer to Watford Hospital, and there will be a chance for more children who live closer to Ascot Road, Watford Hospital High Street to get the service to those very schools that we talked about. So there is an opportunity for improvement to those schools as well as the impact on, yes, those people who no doubt live very close to the Met station at the moment.

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KEITH FOLEY: And there are also other schools along the route alignment that we would be offering greater opportunity with the –

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THE CHAIRMAN: We did talk to one or two children who were going to Rickmansworth.

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GAIL ENGERT: Yes, who had different – we could identify the children by the different uniforms.

VINCENT STOPS: Chair, I'll take the opportunity of going up to Watford station and having a count a couple of times.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's not a very typical time anymore, unfortunately, with the sixth forms –

GAIL ENGERT: It isn't because the sixth form will be doing exams.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we could perhaps see if the school themselves –

VINCENT STOPS: If the school knows.

GAIL ENGERT: Yes, ask the school.

THE CHAIRMAN: The next point was the issue of additional car journeys. Your modelling has shown that the car journeys will go down. Obviously having a 200-space car park at Ascot Road may persuade people who would otherwise have walked to Watford Met to go –

STEVE HUNTER: There are 70, I think, spaces at Watford Met at the moment. But there are other people who park around the area, I believe, that don't park in the formal car park. And so I don't think there is a – it actually formalises it and puts it in one controlled place. I don't – you know, we're not expecting vast numbers of people to start driving to that station.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I think you've undertaken that the car parking will be no more expensive than at Watford at the moment.

KEITH FOLEY: That's our intention.

THE CHAIRMAN: Or the equivalent, because there was some query about the car parking charges at Watford Junction.

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VINCENT STOPS: Yes, Chair, we've actually now agreed, between myself and LUL, that their suggestion of £4.70 was wrong. Watford Junction station is £7.

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KEITH FOLEY: Yes, but £4.70 is the off-peak charge.

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VINCENT STOPS: £4.70.

THE CHAIRMAN: But there are a number of other public car parks around that area that you can use that would be cheaper. Are there any other issues as far as journey time we need to talk about?

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GAIL ENGERT: I don't think so.

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VINCENT STOPS: Chair, might I ask on that traffic one the issue of the very localised addition of congestion was raised. I wonder if Hertfordshire County Council will recognise that. We heard the modelling figures there is only a few extra per cent on a certain number of roads, but clearly if there is an additional number of pupils that are being driven to the college, the school or to Cassiobury Park, there will be a local congestion issue that hasn't been estimated by –

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STEVE HUNTER: Yes, well in terms of the school obviously we're very close to the station. Actually the number of additional cares I think would be very small. And we are actually of course taking traffic out of that area which is currently going to the Watford Met station and moving then to Ascot Road. So with all these things there is a balance. West Herts College was brought up as well, and that's quite an interesting one because they are actually a supporter. They've written to the Secretary of State in support of the Croxley Rail Link scheme. So I don't think – you know, their location is obviously between Watford Met station –

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THE CHAIRMAN: They're almost equally distant with the Junction station.

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STEVE HUNTER: And we've got the same issues with this building here, actually, that – I mean I walked across from Watford Met station last night to remind myself, and actually I think to get closer I might have rather walked from Watford Junction. So it's balanced between them. And the traffic assessment takes into consideration the fact that there are

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some locations where there will be a small increase in congestion, and appropriate measures. For example, getting into Ascot Road – the Ascot Road car park – appropriate measures are designed into the scheme to reduce the impact.

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THE CHAIRMAN: I suspect it will be easier to get into that junction than it will be to get into the station - the current station car park which is not very accessible.

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STEVE HUNTER: I'm sure that's true. Yes.

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THE CHAIRMAN: And obviously I have sympathy for the people who live in the Watford Metro estate south of the – immediately south of the station who may well have moved in. On the other hand that building was probably built after the project was in its gestation period if it wasn't in its final form.

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AUDIENCE: Yes it was. Yes. It's because the latest version of Croxley Link dates back to 1997, it would be. And Watford Metro, although it was in the Watford forward plan, they were – its implementation dates had not been set. So you're absolutely right.

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STEVE HUNTER: But it is – has been there long enough for it to be taken into account in the figures and the survey, and also in the overall business case.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, I'm thinking of the people who bought there with the expectation of being at the station –

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GAIL ENGERT: Being at the station, yes –

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THE CHAIRMAN: And now it being pulled out – potentially being pulled out from them. I think pollution levels go very much with car journeys, so I don't think we need to address that anymore. And I think we have now talked enough about car parking – the points there. Fares – again, I think you have reassured us that the fares from Ascot Road and the hospital will be Zone 7 so there's no penalty there. It would be interesting, as I say, to know what would happen to people going from those stations to Watford Junction to get a fast train.

Presumably they'll have to pay the Zone 9 or special fare even though they're starting in Zone 7? [laughs]

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KEITH FOLEY: Honestly don't know. I'm afraid we can't answer.

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STEVE HUNTER: I doubt if –

ROXANNE GLAUD: Yes.

[laughter]

C

STEVE HUNTER: Yes.

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THE CHAIRMAN: The only thing is then anybody who currently walks from the north and then walks to Watford Junction will have to pay higher fares if they –

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KEITH FOLEY: I think the point that I think my colleague, Steve, mentioned during the presentation there is that people who currently actually live closer to Watford Junction but choose to walk to Watford Met, they obviously have the opportunity to walk to Watford Junction now and in the future. So that remains the same. The opportunity we're providing is a Metropolitan line service at Watford Junction in addition to the services they currently have there. So effectively the loss or the disbenefit to those users is the additional time to access Ascot Road or Watford High Street. Or actually for some of them those stations are actually closer than Watford Met as well.

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So there are winners and losers in that. I think the travel cost piece is they have that issue now and they make a decision to go and to take a further journey to access public transport. Now that's not always walking. Sometimes it's cycling. Sometimes it's through a car journey. So that situation remains, going forwards, but just the pattern of those customers' choice changes. And we're providing additional choice at Watford Junction with the Metropolitan line service as well.

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VINCENT STOPS: Chair, I mean that is a debate. But I don't think there is a debate that LUL have previously provided passengers who have missed out – who have lost out financially for a period of years – and I quote the east London line here –

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THE CHAIRMAN: Wasn't there also a commitment on the Moorgate closure?

VINCENT STOPS: Some compensation – and I think on Moorgate as well. And so I've written it down here with a view to going back and researching that a bit and coming to see, because there will be a small handful of people that if they choose their closest station it will be Watford Junction, whereas it used to be Watford Met station and will pay an additional amount. So I hope to have that debate with the team a little bit later.

AUDIENCE: Excuse me. Just on fares, would Watford Junction now come into the Freedom Pass scheme?

KEITH FOLEY: Is it not –

THE CHAIRMAN: Watford Junction is on a Freedom Pass if you use – it will be for the Met service and the Overground.

AUDIENCE: It's not. I got a penalty fare once at Watford Junction. I was told my Freedom Pass only carried me, in those days –

VINCENT STOPS: Which train would your service be on, sir?

THE CHAIRMAN: Ah, were you travelling before 9.30?

AUDIENCE: No, no.

VINCENT STOPS: When was that? That was before the days of London Overground.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

VINCENT STOPS: If you're on a London Overground train tomorrow you could use your Freedom Pass.

GAIL ENGERT: And the same will apply to the Met.

A DAVID BARRY: It does have to be a London Overground train. If it's a long distance train coming through Watford, it doesn't apply.

B THE CHAIRMAN: No, you can't use your Freedom Pass on a London Midlands service.

AUDIENCE: Or on a – who is it runs it now?

C THE CHAIRMAN: Southern.

AUDIENCE: From Clapham Junction –

D THE CHAIRMAN: No.

KEITH FOLEY: The rules on validity or otherwise of Freedom Passes at Watford Junction would stand, effectively.

E GAIL ENGERT: So they could be used on the Met.

KEITH FOLEY: Yes.

F GAIL ENGERT: On the Croxley link.

KEITH FOLEY: Yes, sorry. I'm looking to my colleague –

G AUDIENCE: I think that my understanding is you'll be able to use the Freedom Pass there, but obviously people in the Watford area just outside of London are unable to get –

H THE CHAIRMAN: If you're a London user.

AUDIENCE: Yes, because it's paid for by the local authorities and the local authorities here make that decision.

I THE CHAIRMAN: The lady did make the point about why does the Mayor of London make this decision. Of course the Mayor of London is making a cash contribution into this project.

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VINCENT STOPS: Both running the services and the operating costs, yes.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Right, moving on, I think again paragraph 5.8 we've talked about road safety issues. I think if we can get the reassurance from Hertfordshire about their plans, that will be helpful.

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GAIL ENGERT: Especially lighting as well.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. The benefit issue, I think again you've given us sufficient information there. The loss – we haven't talked at all about local bus services. Again, somewhat conflicting information about the frequency of that. I don't know, Roxanne, do you want to talk at all about the bus services?

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ROXANNE GLAUD: With respect to the bus services, I think in our supporting statement we have indicated that the W30 currently runs along Watford Met station. And that is still contracted at present to run until 2013 as, unlike London where the services are run by the Mayor and sort of sponsored, in Hertfordshire all services are commercially run. And what we have tried to do within Hertfordshire is create what we call Quality Network Partnerships. In this way we work with operators in terms of, you know, making sure we have the best services on the network. And it is something we would be doing as part of Croxley Rail Link in terms of reassessing the services once Croxley Rail Link comes on board. We would be trying to work with the operators to make sure we have the right services sort of linking in. As you are aware we cannot force them to operate services, but we do see that there is a need to work with them in terms of making sure that we provide the right links for where people need to connect on those services. So it is a continual work in progress.

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AUDIENCE: Excuse me. Just a point. The W30 only runs via Watford Met through rush hour. The last one is 8.30. And the first one out via Watford Met is a little over 20. [?] Through the rest of the day – [inaudible]

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ROXANNE GLAUD: Points of view. [?]

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

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VINCENT STOPS: We have had a late contribution from our John Cartledge about bus services which I've included in an addendum. I think the thrust of that is large pinches of salt, you know, outside of London in the commercial bus environment.

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THE CHAIRMAN: But I think we should recognise that the new train service will provide much better service from Ascot Road and the Vicarage Road area into town, and although the councillors are a little dismissive about the fact that a difference between the more prosperous and the less prosperous areas of Watford, it is an area of lower car ownership around Ascot Road and Vicarage Road. So those people will be significant beneficiaries – that's of the scheme rather than of course specifically Watford Met station which will offset some of the issues about buses. Any other issues on buses?

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GAIL ENGERT: Is there some alternative – I just wanted to ask about – sorry to – Watford Grammar School children – is the alternative they could take a bus from Ascot Road?

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ROXANNE GLAUD: That I cannot give any confirmation on.

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ROXANNE GLAUD: They don't, but one of the things we are looking at and would be working with the school is in terms of improving the access in terms of walking and cycling along that part from Ascot Road leading to the school. As part of the Quality Network Partnership we could work with the operators to see if that is a viable service. But I mean if the numbers you have indicated are correct in terms of 500 students, we would see quite a number of buses trying to shuttle these kids. So I think we need to look at things in a measured approach in terms of what's best –

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GAIL ENGERT: In London there are special school buses, aren't there –

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KEITH FOLEY: And elsewhere in the country actually.

ROXANNE GLAUD: And elsewhere. I think with the whole thing we would be looking in terms of a measured approach –

A THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not sure the distance really justifies a bus. I think a bit of exercise would probably be more valuable.

B ROXANNE GLAUD: I mean which would be linking into the health –

GAIL ENGERT: It might deter people from using cars to take children to school. That was my point.

C VINCENT STOPS: 500 pupils was one of the consultee's net figure –

ROXANNE GLAUD: OK.

D VINCENT STOPS: I think we were talking less than 500, but more than 70.

E THE CHAIRMAN: OK, the next point is 5.11, re-running the Bakerloo line to Watford Junction, which we haven't discussed. I don't think that really needs any further discussion, does it?
F And the point about Watford – I don't think there's anything else to say about Watford Junction – Watford station serves more local passengers than Watford Junction. I think we've addressed that issue. We haven't talked at all about the capacity of Watford Junction station which might be over capacity if the project goes ahead. Again, this is more a project thing rather than specifically about Watford, but presumably modelling has been done at Watford Junction. I mean there is ample platform capacity at Watford Junction, isn't there, because we've got –

G KEITH FOLEY: There's ample platform capacity and neither Network Rail nor the station operator have had any objection.

H THE CHAIRMAN: And there is no problem about going through the gates. There's quite a –

I DAVID BARRY: Well the relevance of that to us, I think, Chair, would be simply that if someone who currently uses London Met, if their nearest station were Watford Junction and the mitigation of the harm of the closure of London Met was they had to go to Watford Junction, and Watford Junction was very overcrowded, then there would be an issue. But I

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think the indications are that the levels of additional use expected, which is part of your business plan, are not at the moment indicating a problem of that sort.

THE CHAIRMAN: There was a figure somewhere, what extra passengers would go through Watford –

THE CHAIRMAN: Six per cent? Yes.

DAVID BARRY: We have to accept that we can't entirely predict the future, because I remember that when the London Docklands Railway was originally opened it went over capacity in its first week because it was full of tourists. So sometimes schemes succeed rather too well.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sure the residents of Watford will be delighted to welcome tourists.

[laughter]

THE CHAIRMAN: Increase the economic prosperity of the town. We talked about improved bus services. We've talked about alternative services. And we've also talked about the east-west link and the practicalities of that. So that's all those points. There are a number of objections that have been raised that we can't take into consideration such as the impact on property values, noise from construction and operation, the visual impact of the viaduct. I'm afraid those are outside our terms of reference. So I think that comes to the end of your paper then, Vincent.

VINCENT STOPS: I think so, yes. There was – I put an addendum around. If I could just talk to that, these are things that turned up after – I think it was after 12.00 up until – after I'd sent other reports but before 12.00 noon yesterday. I think we've agreed now with LUL about the parking charges at Watford Junction station. They are £7 for the peak hour. The bus services, John has written to us and I think he copied you all in about the issues of bus services and advising us to take that pinch of salt in terms of bus service, and that's inevitable outside London.

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A Mr Axford [sp?] wrote to us and challenges LUL regarding the bay platform issue. He's – and I think LUL have actually agreed that there is land available for that bay platform at Croxley to allow that at Croxley station. He didn't think a 15-minute service would jeopardise the proposed service from Watford Junction. Mr Axford pointed out that the differential between Watford Junction station and Watford station in cost to off peak travel is more marked in the off peak rather than the peak. And I'll look into that for you. Mr Axford talked about the resilience of actually having two services, and I suspect that does come into a hardship issue, the fact that there are two services – effectively two independent services almost – into Watford.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I just ask a question on that? Would there be any reversing facility between Croxley and Watford Junction if you couldn't run through to – I mean the most likely possibility – the most likely disruption is between Watford High Street and Watford Junction, isn't it, if there is any problem on the DC line.

KEITH FOLEY: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's the most likely place if you get –

STEVE HUNTER: That's the worst place. I'm not sure it's the most likely place for there to be disruption.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right, OK –

STEVE HUNTER: That would be the place that has the most significant impact on the service.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Would there be any reversing facilities between there and Croxley?

STEVE HUNTER: No.

KEITH FOLEY: Because we wouldn't expect – again it comes back to cost of the provision of a potential mitigation there, and the cost of providing crossovers within the scheme is potentially higher than the sort of disbeneficial impact of the service –

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THE CHAIRMAN: So if you couldn't run trains through to Watford on the Watford – the Croxley Watford link, you'd reverse them at Moor Park presumably.

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KEITH FOLEY: There is a number of different things we could do. We could send more towards the Amersham branch. We could reverse at Rickmansworth. We could – we could – tip out at Croxley and reverse off the – coming up to the station in the same way as we do on the Jubilee line going into Charing Cross at times. That would be extreme. So we wouldn't expect to see that sort of complete non-availability of that route on a very frequent basis at all.

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VINCENT STOPS: But you'd agree resilience is less.

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KEITH FOLEY: No I don't, because in effect we are running to one branch now and we're running to another branch again in the future. So resilience wise we have the same –

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VINCENT STOPS: Watford has got two –

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STEVE HUNTER: But from Watford Junction, if there is an interruption down the West Coast Main Line, which I think is considerably more likely than just on that little section from Watford Junction station, you will be able to just all jump on to the Met line and straight into town. So I think the resilience will be better.

G

KEITH FOLEY: It depends on resilience to what. Resilience to the Metropolitan line service, I think there is no change because if we have a service interruption at the north end then our ability to run the services around that remain the same. So I don't think there's an impact on resilience of running to Watford Junction instead of running to Watford Metropolitan line station. In terms of the resilience for our customers – so people currently using High Street for customers who currently use Watford Junction, their resilience goes up because they have more service opportunities. So if there is a problem on the Overground further into town, then for people at Watford High Street they have a Metropolitan line service as well in the future, whereas at the moment they would only have the Overground service and so they would see severe problems. So we would actually be increasing customer journey resilience.

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VINCENT STOPS: Correspondence from Karen England, she wrote us a letter yesterday that raised no new issues I didn't think.

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THE CHAIRMAN: No.

VINCENT STOPS: And we've got one additional letter from Raffi.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Oh yes, you spoke, didn't you, Raffi.

VINCENT STOPS: Raffi here, which I've let you see. And that, I think, is all of it, Chair.

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THE CHAIRMAN: We are just about to wind up the session. Have we got any other questions? I'm happy to give the floor the last – we've got a minute of discussion. If anybody has any burning issues that they really think haven't been addressed or where we have misinterpreted you, yes.

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VINCENT STOPS: Please come forward so we can record it.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

LESTER WAGMAN: Yes, hello, on the safety aspect can I just readdress through the Panel to – in the response that you seek from Hertfordshire County Council that I'm very interested and intrigued to know how it's likely they're going to improve the safety of walking along Rickmansworth Road because the pavement is very narrow, people's front gardens come right up to the end. So are they proposing to compulsorily purchase front gardens to widen the pavement or put in a cycle route? I think that's a pertinent question for them to answer in their response to you

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THE CHAIRMAN: Or find an alternative route that doesn't go along the main road.

LESTER WAGMAN: Or find an alternative route which doesn't take even longer to walk that people are happy to use, yes.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Well it's exactly 13.00 when we were due –

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VINCENT STOPS: We will ask that question.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank our visitors from London Underground for their helpfulness and openness in answering some difficult questions. And I'd like to thank everybody – and Hertfordshire as well for their response to the specific questions we've raised. And I'd like to thank all of you for coming along and spending three hours with us this morning. I think it's been an open and fruitful discussion, and I think if I may compliment you on everybody being very well behaved. We haven't had any hecklers or interruptions or –

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VINCENT STOPS: And we will still continue to run –

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THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we will be – as I said, we have to report by 2 September. We will be putting our report together over the next couple of weeks, so if anybody has any last-minute thoughts, any burning issues that they think we haven't addressed, do write to Vincent at the London Travel Watch address. And our report will be published – do we publish it before we send it to the Mayor or after?

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VINCENT STOPS: At the same time, I suspect. Yes, we'll not do it way before 2 September, I would have thought. What will happen now is I think you'll direct us – you have directed us. We will put a report together that members can see. When we've agreed that, we will publish it probably at a London Travel Watch Board meeting. That will probably be the best. And everybody who has corresponded with us whose address we have, we'll let have that report.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed. I formally close this meeting.

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[Session ended at 13.05]

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