



# West London Line Group



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## – PRESS RELEASE –

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### **WEST LONDON LINE GROUP WELCOMES LORD ADONIS, RAIL MINISTER, TO THE WEST LONDON LINE**

Last Thursday, 19 February 2009, the West London Line Group was delighted to host Lord Adonis, the Minister for Rail, on a visit to the West London Line and to brief him on the many issues being faced by its users.

During the visit, which was attended by the four local authorities served by the West London Line, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the London Boroughs of Brent, Hammersmith & Fulham and Wandsworth, the Minister rode in the cab of a Southern Class 377/2 from Wembley Central to Clapham Junction to appreciate the opportunity for a variety of infrastructure improvements, including the hazardous Platform 17 at Clapham Junction.

Following the visit, Mark Balaam, Chairman of the West London Line Group, said “We were particularly delighted that Lord Adonis accepted, via Andrew Slaughter’s office, our invitation to visit the Line. We understand that this may be the first time that a Rail Minister has accepted such an invitation from a voluntary passenger support group.

“The Minister appeared extremely interested in the points raised with him and we hope that progress will be made on many of them. First and foremost is the need to strengthen the Southern West London Line service in the peaks and to restore its direct link to Gatwick Airport and Brighton.

“Second, we are asking for proper co-ordination over the opening of Imperial Wharf station so that its building and fit-out will not only provide a hospitable environment for passengers, but also dovetail with improvements needed in new tracks and trains to accommodate the massive increase in demand expected when the station opens. We trust that this will avoid another debacle to replicate that when, at the last moment, Shepherd’s Bush West London Line station’s opening was delayed for a year, regrettably blighted by inadequate station construction and train timetabling to deal with demand there.

“We also put proposals to the Minister for an orbital overground rail link between Heathrow and Ebbfleet via the West and South London Lines, which would not only provide key links to benefit many Londoners and visitors, but also deal with the problem of the Ealing ‘ghost bus’.

“In view of the myriad interrelated issues on the West London Line and elsewhere, including the intense concentration of new developments expected all along the Line’s core corridor, we also asked the Minister for a strategy focussed on the West London Line to cover the Line’s development up to and beyond the Olympics.”

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Photographs and Notes to Editors attached. All enquiries to Mark Balaam, Chairman, West London Line Group on 07843 234002



Lord Adonis, Minister for Rail, and Mark Balaam, West London Line Group Chairman, receive an update from John Slaughter, London Borough of Wandsworth, on Clapham Junction's planned redevelopment on the station's overbridge during the Minister's visit to the West London Line on 19 February 2009.

Photograph by Nick Woollven, WLLG



At West Brompton station discussions continue between members of the West London Line Group and representatives from the Department for Transport, train operators and local authorities following the Rail Minister's visit to the West London Line on 19 February 2009.

Photograph by Nick Woollven, WLLG

Notes to editors: -

1. The West London Line connects Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction via West Brompton, Kensington Olympia and Shepherd's Bush. Passenger services on the West London Line are provided by Southern and London Overground. Southern trains run every hour between East Croydon and Milton Keynes (not calling at Willesden Junction) with extra peak trains and London Overground operates a half-hourly service between Clapham and Willesden, with extra peak trains running directly to and from Stratford via the North London Line.
2. The West London Line Group was established in 2004, with its predecessor, the West Brompton Station Users' Group, having been set up in 1999 following the re-opening of the National Rail platforms at West Brompton. The West London Line Group continues to urge the relevant rail organisations to provide improvements to rail services and facilities on the West London Line. In particular, it is pressing London Underground to improve ticketing and other passenger facilities at West Brompton before the tenth anniversary this year of the re-opening of its National Rail platforms. The Group also produces and distributes travel information to existing and prospective users of rail services on the Line.
3. The Southern service between the West London Line, Gatwick Airport and Brighton was severed in December 2008, along with the Arriva Cross-Country service between Manchester, the Midlands, Reading, the West London Line, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and Brighton. In order to avoid closure procedures that would have otherwise been necessary, the DfT has provided, in substitution for this long-distance daily rail service, a once-a-week service between Ealing Broadway and Wandsworth Road, now dubbed 'the Ealing ghost bus' (see also 4 below).
4. The West London Line Group has produced proposals for an orbital overground rail service between Heathrow Airport and Ebbsfleet (for Eurostar) via the West and South London Lines, which would provide key links to benefit many Londoners and visitors \*.

Not only would this allow those in south-east London and Kent to reach the UK's principal airport without having to change twice in central London, but it would also establish new links between south-west London and (i) London City Airport via the DLR extension to Woolwich Arsenal and (iii) Eurostar at Ebbsfleet.

It would also deal with the problem of the Ealing 'ghost bus' by traversing the now unserved rail links between Ealing and Wandsworth.

5. In May 2008 the West London Line Group published a chronological list of developments expected in the West London Line corridor, showing an estimated 93,000 increase in residents and 4,700 hotel bedspaces in the Line's station's catchments by the time of the London 2012 Olympics \*. These increases do not include the additional numbers of both within reach of the Line through its new interchanges with the Central Line at Shepherd's Bush, the new catchments served by the Southern WLL service between Hemel Hempstead and Milton Keynes and, via the interchanges at Watford Junction and Milton Keynes, on the West Coast Main Line network.
6. There are two London 2012 Olympic venues in the West London Line corridor. These are Earls Court Exhibition Centre (Volleyball) and Wembley (Football) which are close to West Brompton and Wembley Central stations respectively.
7. The West London Line Group works closely with key organisations in the rail industry and with the local authorities served by rail services on the West London Line, principally the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the London Boroughs of Brent, Croydon, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow and Wandsworth. The Group receives welcome financial support from the Earls Court and Olympia Group and other local businesses.

\* Copies of the documents asterisked at paragraph 4 and 5 above are at [www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk](http://www.westlondonlinegroup.org.uk)