



West London Line Group



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DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE WEST LONDON LINE 2009 – 2019

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The West London Line Group has produced these proposals for enhancements to stations and other infrastructure on the West London Line (WLL) and West Coast Main Line (WCML) between Willesden Junction and Wembley Central.

The aim of this document is to review the present state of the economy and overall demand patterns for travel via the WLL across inner west and south London and areas farther afield and to indicate the main improvements most likely to be achieved to meet rising levels of demand for the existing Southern and London Overground services and future ones looked for by these and/or other operators on the WLL, e.g., on the Heathrow – Ebbsfleet IPS and Greenford – Clapham Junction/South East London metro destinations' corridors.

While many of these are aspirational, most of them are presently physical possible, with relatively short time-frames and ready to deliver benefits quickly.

Implementation would mean that all stations would be able to accommodate eight-car trains, with at least the key interchanges able to accommodate twelve-car trains by 2013. More forward-looking comment in Network Rail's Sussex RUS looks to trains of 16 cars. The WLL is known to have been able to cater for the movement and stabling of 18-car trains for Eurostar, including the now empty depot at North Pole, now that such services have been transferred from Waterloo International to St Pancras with the depot transferred to Temple Mills (near Stratford).

The present position and expected development should be seen in the context of: -

1. the actual growth rates in rail usage generally that are being proven again and again across the UK rail network to be significantly higher than forecast;
2. the particular increases in the usage of both London Overground and Southern services on the WLL;
3. the lack of any sign of lessening demand on the WLL, despite the present recession;
4. the past record of strong resilience in West London compared to other areas of London and the UK in economic downturns;
5. TfL forecasts in T2025 for growth in London's residential populations and employment areas;
6. the strength, range and critical mass of existing business and residential traffic generators and interchanges that are on the WLL and/or served by other rail or tube services at WLL stations;
7. the recent and forthcoming changes to WLL services to give direct links with many more diverse locations, including:-
 - six new locations in South London (from December 2008);
 - six new locations in central Hertfordshire, Leighton Buzzard, Bletchley and Milton Keynes (from February 2009);
 - all stations east of Willesden Junction on the North London Line to Stratford (in the weekday peaks from April 2009 and all day from December 2010); and

- those to be served by the successor to the Ealing 'ghost bus' (in the new South Central franchise and assumed to start from December 2009 or May 2010);
8. the increased number and range of transport services which interchange with these more extensive WLL services;
 9. the density, scale and potential speed of future developments throughout the WLL corridor, as indicated in the WLLG publication, "West London Line Developments 2008-2015";
 10. the additional rise in profile and usage of the West London Line as an Olympic-standard rail facility up to and during the London 2012 Games;
 11. further increases as a legacy of the West London Line's exposure during the London 2012 Games;
 12. the length of time taken for most rail projects in the UK to come to fruition;
 13. the relatively low level of importance that has traditionally been given to all aspects of the WLL and thus the inadequate response to meeting passenger needs for rail services and station facilities on the WLL;
 14. the threat of worsening disparities, especially in terms of platform lengths, between the WLL and other networks across Southern England, particularly the WCML, SWT, BML, SLM and Kent networks. This is most clearly underlined given the proposals within Network Rail's South London RUS and more recently in its Control Period 4 documentation and within the Department for Transport's South Central Franchise Specification to lengthen most South London platforms to 10- or 12-car trains. Meanwhile, there are no such proposals yet to ensure that the relatively small number of platforms on the WLL will be able to accommodate more than 4-car trains. This will mitigate further against running through trains between these networks and the WLL and so, given this context, all WLL stations should provide for train lengths of at least eight cars, with twelve-car trains being accommodated and sixteen-car trains planned for at the key interchanges of Clapham Junction, West Brompton, Kensington Olympia and Shepherd's Bush;
 15. the advantages in terms of passenger convenience during the disruption within those London main line stations serving much of south east England — with the Thameslink project affecting London Bridge and Blackfriars and the nine-year tube station redevelopment affecting Victoria — of running longer trains from the south to North Pole Depot via the WLL, being able to call at all stations between Clapham Junction and Shepherd's Bush inclusive;
 16. the advantages in terms of passenger convenience during the disruption caused by the redevelopment of Euston main line station of running longer trains from the north to either Kensington Olympia, the proposed freight loop, Clapham Junction or Waterloo and all such trains being able to call at most, if not all, intermediate stations on the West London Line;
 17. extending such platforms that require lengthening on the WLL are likely to have a much higher cost/benefit ratio than at the vast majority of stations on the National Rail network, since they will be used by four different passenger flows, i.e., commuter arrivals and departures in both directions at all WLL platforms in both peaks, rather than stations with just two commuter uses, (i) London-bound on the 'upside' in the morning peak and (ii) country-bound in the evening with minimal use of the downside platform with usually almost no dwell time on the platform.

The West London Line Group is therefore recommending that the following enhancements are undertaken (from north to south): -

Existing Stations and Infrastructure

1. Clapham Junction (Platforms 1 and 2) The upgrading and restoration of both platforms will be required, plus associated signalling and trackwork. There may be positive advantages for enhancing track connections in the immediate area, i.e., linking the Windsor Lines with these platforms and making full use of Kensington Sidings for turning and/or stabling trains for present and future WLL/SLL services. Both platforms should be designed to accommodate 12-car trains, and, later, 16-car trains. On-platform facilities should include a waiting room/café and a staffed information point.
2. Clapham Junction (Platforms 16 and 17) Of all the projects proposed in this document, this would probably involve the longest timeframe as it would need additional land (some of which is not thought to be owned by Network Rail) to be acquired, plus the rebuilding of Falcon Road bridge and straightening the present alignment of Platforms 16 and 17. Both these platforms would need to be 8-cars long as an absolute minimum, but given the general move to extend platforms elsewhere to 10-12 cars, these should also accommodate 12-car trains, and later 16-car trains.

The funds allowed by the ORR to Network Rail for the redevelopment of this station presently appear to exclude the cost of this land acquisition and associated bridge works for this platform lengthening.

3. Latchmere Curve The doubling of the Curve is presently scheduled to be completed by late 2010. However, the West London Line Group is strongly urging that this should be completed as soon as possible to allow the existing growth of demand on the West London Line, together with its substantial fillip expected on the opening of Imperial Wharf station in the second half of 2009, to be accommodated as soon as the station opens.
4. Secondary Lines east of Clapham Junction The Sheepcote Lane, Kensington, Ludgate and Battersea Reversible Lines should be upgraded (if necessary) as passenger lines and so maintained.
5. Cremerne Bridge See below
6. Imperial Wharf (Platforms 1 and 2) A fully-enclosed shelter should be installed on both platforms. Both platforms should also be extended northwards, with an emergency footbridge between and road accesses to and from both platform extensions. Both platforms must be a minimum of 8-cars long, but preferably should accommodate 12-car trains and later 16-car trains.
7. West Brompton (Platforms 3 and 4) Improved shelter has already been requested for the southbound National Rail platform. Similar improvements to passenger shelter should be made on the northbound NR platform. Both these platforms must be extended, either north and/or south, to accommodate 12-car trains and, later, 16-car trains. Northward extensions would facilitate a new access to the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre and a west-east travelator to Earl's Court Underground station. Enhancements such as these could be attached as Section 106 conditions to future planning consents for the redevelopment of the huge Earls Court - North End Road and the Seagrave Road car park sites, the latter with direct access to these platforms at their southern end.
8. Kensington Olympia Freight Loop A freight loop/passenger train terminal holding facility for trains of up to 12 cars and preferably 16 cars from either the north or the south should also be installed between West Brompton and Kensington Olympia stations.
9. Kensington Olympia The existing southbound platforms should be removed and the track slewed to allow installation of an island platform (Platforms 3 and 4, both 12-cars long as a minimum, preferably extended to 16-cars) between it and the existing centre rail, with alterations to the existing footbridge to allow access to the island platform and Russell Road. Normal usage would be as follows: -

- Platform 1 – District Line (if interchange demand from services on the WLL from the north is sufficient, then through trains should run to/from Mansion House at least in the peaks);
 - Platform 2 – northbound for through WLL services;
 - Platform 3 – reversible/flexible. To be used as a freight holding area and/or a terminal/holding platform for trains to/from either north or south;
 - Platform 4 – southbound for through WLL services.
10. This development, plus other station upgrades, could be part-funded by Section 106 arrangements upon consent being granted for the development of the four contiguous NW Warwick Road sites.
11. Shepherd's Bush Both WLL station platforms must be extended to accommodate 12-car trains and, later, 16-car trains to allow long-distance passengers from both the southern and northern Home Counties to reach the West End via the Central Line.
- The power changeover point should be moved to the platforms here as this would (i) add to the capacity of the line, and (ii) mitigate the two problem areas of (a) non-performance in cold weather of pantograph motors in a section of the WLL on North Pole embankment which is very exposed to the weather, unlike the more sheltered location of Shepherd's Bush station, and (b) loss or damage to pantographs and damage to the A40(M) overbridge if pantographs are not, due to driver error and/or mechanical failure, able to be lowered on the move before that point.
12. North Pole Depot Ensure that at least four 12-car trains and, later, 16-car trains from points south of, or on, the WLL can be held and reversed here.
13. Lines west of Willesden Junction The trackwork and signalling in the area between SW Willesden Sidings and Acton Main Line station should be improved, doubled and OLE installed, to allow sufficient capacity for metro-type services to be operated between at least the SLL, the WLL and Ealing Broadway.
14. Lines between Willesden Junction and Wembley Central The Willesden Relief lines must be improved to allow passenger trains at least to travel at higher speeds.
15. Wembley Central Platform 7 and its accesses should be remodelled to allow at least 4-car, and preferably 8-car, trains on the South Central WLL service to terminate there.

Future potential stations and other infrastructure developments

All the entries below are at no more than at outline concept stage. Each would be subject to feasibility and cost-benefit analyses, planning and other consents.

1. Battersea High Street A new station to serve the North Battersea area which must accommodate at least 8-car, and preferably 12-car, trains could be built here. Alternatively, the need for this station could be met by the installation of a pedestrian bridge either within or alongside the existing Cremorne Railway Bridge that would link North Battersea with Imperial Wharf station.
2. Cremorne Bridge Pedestrian Walkway – see above.
3. North Pole A new station to serve the North Kensington and North White City areas could be built here. This should be built with a single island platform to accommodate at least 8-cars and preferably 12-car trains. An island platform would allow cross-platform interchange here for passengers between NLL stations and Heathrow Airport.
4. Old Oak A new station able to accommodate at least 8-car, preferably 12-car and later 16-car WLL trains and providing an interchange between the WLL and Crossrail could be built here.