



West London Line Group



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**Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum Keynote Seminar:
Next steps for the rail network in England: strategic priorities, high-speed rail and future of Network Rail**
Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG Thursday, 3rd March 2016

Questions for Panel Speakers from the West London Line Group

Question 1

Crossrail (or the Elizabeth Line) – but with no mention yet of its station at Old Oak Common – will add an extra 10% to the present capacity of London’s metro systems, but, having had nine years’ growth as a high-profile, well-patronised and efficient mover of many people between major traffic nodes and interchanges, may be close to capacity when HS2 opens in 2026.

Just one year later in 2027, in addition to Birmingham’s demands on them, HS2’s London facilities will also have to cope with new traffics from Liverpool, Manchester and a whole range of cities and towns in the North West.

In the recent past, 150 petitions have been presented against Euston, with 50 of these promoting Old Oak Common to be the temporary or permanent London terminal for HS2.

Even if Euston is built, how far will the present plans for Old Oak Common and the Elizabeth Line be sufficient to service HS2 and would not both benefit from close access with other rail links here?

Question 2

In the HS2 document of July 2013, entitled “HS2 Operation and Train Types”, there were four Guiding principles to ensure that the UK can reap the full benefits of HS2. One of these reads:-

- “HS2 must be well integrated with other transport networks so door-to-door journeys are as fast and convenient as possible.”

The West London Line Group would contend that such integration planned at Old Oak Common is not as good and as comprehensive as it should be.

However, the Group is encouraged to learn that there are now moves to remove the restriction on building above the HS2 box at Old Oak Common as this could allow the Group’s proposed 5 or 6 12-car platform facility to be put on top of the HS2 station and linked directly into the HS2/Elizabeth Line/GWML Hub.

With this upper facility linking the West London Line with both the Midland Main Line via the Dudding Hill Line and the West Coast Main Line, it would, with existing and proposed services, both (a) allow many, many other areas to be connected to each other either directly via, or by interchange at, Old Oak Common such as:-

- High Wycombe – SE London – Ebbsfleet
- Bedford – St Albans – Clapham Junction – Guildford
- Stansted – Gospel Oak – Hounslow – Basingstoke

and (b) with these new catchment areas underpin the regeneration success of the new city at Old Oak and Park Royal.

Could we please ask that, before any office building is allowed in the airspace above the HS2 station, serious consideration be now given to installing a new 5 or 6 12-car platform facility between the HS2 box and any development above?

Question 3

People are significantly less likely to travel by rail if the rail part of their journey involves more than one change. At the moment (apart from those at Clapham Junction, Brixton or along the Morden leg of the Northern Line) no-one south of the Thames – from Exeter to Ramsgate – can reach HS2 without changing trains twice and, despite having to pay for HS2, are much less likely to use it and travel north by car instead.

To echo and augment the Prime Minister's stated expectations of HS2 when he said that, "[HS2] is going to unite our country, drive economic growth, make sure our economy shares growth between the North and South..." and his desire for us to, "get ... value for money from this HS2 investment," we would strongly urge the linking of HS2 and HS1 together via the West London Line and south-east London.

Moreover, with London's low-rise sprawl compared to the more compact sizes of other cities, we believe that the capital needs to be served by a number of stations on the country's High Speed Rail networks.

We would advocate at least two HS2-HS1 routes, one with calls at Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick and Tonbridge, the other serving Waterloo (possibly), Peckham Rye and Ebbsfleet. These would ensure that virtually everyone across the whole of southern England would be within one change of both High Speed networks, as well as everyone on the whole of the HS2 spine being able to travel easily to and from many destinations on the Continent.

Would you please allow this by amending the HS2 Bill for the insertion of a junction and short curve between the eastern end of the HS2 platforms at the Old Oak Common Hub and the North Pole Road bridge on the West London Line?

Question 4

Will sufficient funds be made available to ensure the removal or the rafting over of the Elizabeth Line depot at Old Oak Common, since its retention as present in the middle of the MDC area is liable to render the whole of the area unattractive to private sector investment and may put at risk the heralded homes, jobs and associated social and economic benefits?

Question 5

How soon will HS2 produce visuals showing double-deck trains on its tracks and in its stations?

Thank you

Mark Balaam
Chairman