

## **BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP**

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# **RELIEF OF OVERCROWDING MEETING WITH LOROL 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2008 & BGOLUG RESPONSE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Following a request by LOROL (London Overground Rail Operations Ltd., formally MTR Laing) at the Group meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008, Executive Committee members Richard Pout and Glenn Wallis met with LOROL representatives Stewart Griffin, Service Delivery, Oliver Bratton, Performance & Planning and Mungo Duncan, Customer Services Special Projects, at Overground House on 26<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the proposals made by BGOLUG since late September 2007 to relieve current overcrowding on peak services.

## **BACKGROUND**

This issue was raised with the EC in September 2007 when it was realised that TfL had no plans to increase peak passenger capacity on the Barking-Gospel Oak route until the introduction of 8x2-car Class 172 *Turbostar* DMUs on a Monday-Saturday 15-minute frequency timetable in late 2009 (Sunday timetable to be every 15-minutes from 2010).

In late September 2007, London TravelWatch, TfL and MTR Laing were circulated with a submission from BGOLUG detailing the overcrowding occurring at that time and outlining proposals to reduce it during the period leading up to the introduction of new DMUs which the Group maintained should be 3-car units and not the 2-car units it was planned to order.

At this early stage the Group stressed the need to retain all eight units of the Silverlink Class 150 Sprinter DMU fleet in order to provide the capacity required to keep overcrowding to tolerable proportions prior to new stock arriving on a re-signalled railway allowing an all day 15-minute frequency (4tph) operation.

The Group demonstrated through an indicative morning and evening timetable (Tables IA & IB) that it was possible to provide a limited peak 15-minute frequency service for an hour with five units and proposed implementing this with an extended 20-minute frequency (3tph) service as soon as possible. It was accepted that Class 150 availability would be under extreme pressure while TfL's chosen London Rail Concession operator, MTR Laing, was required to supply two units for the Bedford-Bletchley service but this requirement was expected to be only short-term.

The Group received immediate support from London TravelWatch. LTW's Rail Officer, Jerry Gold visited Leyton Midland Road on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2007 and reported the 07:40, 08:00 & 08:20 departures from Barking crush loaded, the latter especially so (also 2½ min. late), while the 08:40 was crowded in all doorways. The 08:00 departure from Gospel Oak had all seats taken and heavy standing in the front coach. LTW fully supported the Group's contention that conditions would get worse as soon as London Overground publicity commenced and the line's existence became more widely known. LTW fully supported increasing the high peak service to 4tph as soon as possible.

**TABLE 1A: PROPOSED ADDITIONAL 3TPH SERVICES & ADDITIONAL UNIT FOR MORNING 'HIGH PEAK' (Sept 2007)**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Unit	Departure		Arrival	Departure		Arrival	Forms
1			exEast Ham CS	06:20 P7/8		06:57	07:00
2	06+00		06+26	06:40		07:17	07:30
3	06:20		06:56	07:00		07:37	07:45
4	06:40		07:16	07:20		07:56	08:00
1	07:00		07:36	07:40		08:17	08:20
5	07:15		07:51	07:55		08:32	08:40
2	07:30		08:06	08:10		08:46	09:00
3	07:45		08:21	08:25		09:02	09:20
4	08:00		08:36	08:40		09:17	stable/shed
1	08:20		08:56	09:00		09:37	09:40
5	08:40		09:16	09:20		09:57	10:00
2	09:00		09:36	09:40		10:17	10:25
3	09:20		09:56	10:00		10:37	10:55
1	09:40		10:16	10:20		10:58	stable/shed
5	10:00		10:36	10:40		11:15	11:25
2	10:25		10:59	11:08		11:43	11:55
3	10:55		11:29	11:38		12:13	12:25

**TABLE 1B: PROPOSED ADDITIONAL UNIT FOR EVENING HIGH PEAK & ADDITIONAL 3 TRAINS PER HOUR (Sept. 2007)**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Unit	Departure		Arrive	Departure		Arrive	Forms
2	14:55		15:29	15:35		16:12	16:15
1	15:12		15:49	15:55		16:32	16:35
3	15:35		16:09	16:15		16:52	16:55
5	15:55		16:29	16:35		17:12	17:15
2	16:15		16:49	16:55		17:32	17:45
1	16:35		17:09	17:15		17:52	18:00
3	16:55		17:31	17:35		18:12	18:15
5	17:15		17:51	17:55		18:32	18:35
4	17:30		18:04	18:10		18:46	18:55
2	17:45		18:21	18:25		19:02	19:15
1	18:00		18:36	18:40		19:17	stable/shed
3	18:15		18:51	18:55		19:32	19:35
5	18:35		19:11	19:15		19:52	19:55
4	18:55		19:31	19:35		20:12	20:15
2	19:15		19:49	19:55		20:32	20:35
3	19:35		20:09	20:15		20:52	20:55
5	19:55		20:29	20:35		20:10	21:25
4	20:15		20:49	20:55		20:30	stable/shed
2	20:35		20:09	21:15		21:50	21:55
3	20:55		21:29	21:38		22:13	22:25
5	21:25		21:59	22:08		22:43	22:55
2	21:55		22:29	22:38		23:13	23:25

+ = Empty Coaching Stock

■ = 15 minute frequency service

LTW further suggested removing the third seat from the existing 3-seater rows in the Class 150 DMUs to counter passenger resistance to standing in the narrow aisles. LTW further advised: -

- The current Network Rail *Rules of the Plan*, show a headway of 9 minutes between stopping passenger trains and 7 minutes for freight trains over the most restricted section of the line (assumed to be both up and down lines between South Tottenham East Junction to Leyton Midland Road with Harringay Park Jn. box open).
- All 8 Silverlink *Sprinters* would transfer to LOROL on 11/11/07 **but** LOROL would be committed to supply 2xsets (presumably +1 spare) for Govia's (now branded London Midland) Bedford-Bletchley service until December 2008.<sup>1</sup>
- There were 4 former Wessex Trains Class 153 *Super Sprinter* type 72 seat single car units in store at the now closed Eastleigh Works and these could be used to augment the ex Silverlink DMU fleet should attempts to secure another Class 150 fail.
- London TravelWatch agreed with us that alterations to the timetable to increase capacity need not wait for a national timetable change but should be implemented as soon as the resources were available.

No comments were received from TfL (Transport for London) or MTR Laing.

Group EC members Graham Larkbey and Glenn Wallis met with LOROL MD Steve Murphey and Oliver Bratton on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 to discuss the TfL takeover the following Sunday and the peak overcrowding issue. While sympathetic, they could only state that they exploring all possibilities to relieve overcrowding, but had no proposals to make and were not able to comment on our indicative timetable. Near the end of the meeting, it emerged that LOROL were to only take on six of the eight Silverlink Class 150 units as GoVia had released LOROL from the Department for Transport (DfT) franchise requirement to supply two DMUs for the Bedford-Bletchley service. The remaining two units were to be returned to their owner, Angel Trains.

It was pointed out that the group had proposed utilising the full fleet of eight units, when available to operate a 6-unit, 4tph service, during the full morning and evening peak periods but LOROL insisted that they were only contracted to operate the current timetable until December 2009 and they had made a commercial judgement that they only required six units to do that.

Following this meeting the Group appealed to TfL and LOROL, copied to London TravelWatch, to retain the full Class 150 fleet until decisions on the overcrowding issue were made. The Group received the support of LTW but no reply from TfL or LOROL.

The two Class 150 units returned to Angel Trains, 150121 (the 2005 PIXC-buster unit) and 150127 were immediately leased to First Great Western.

At a special public meeting of the Group, convened to allow TfL and LOROL attendance (they had not attended the normal September meeting), the Group presented a further updated paper on the overcrowding situation and a further indicative timetable (Tables 2A & 2B). The main change was the proposal to run a 20-minute all day Monday to Saturday service (4tph) since there seemed little point in reverting to 2tph for four hours in the middle and end of the day. Again a one hour 15-minute "high peak" (5tph) service was included in the morning and evening on Monday to Friday. In view of LOROL's insistence that Class 150 reliability could be greatly improved it was felt that briefly diagramming 5xClass 150s twice a day was achievable without imposing too greater risk on service reliability. LOROL still had no comment to make on the original proposal and agreed to take

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<sup>1</sup> The Group felt it unlikely that the commitment to supply two units for the Bedford-Bletchley route would be enforced until December 2008 as GoVia could source its own DMUs from Tyeseley Depot.

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**TABLE 2A: PROPOSED MONDAY-SATURDAY 4XUNIT  
3 TRAINS PER HOUR SERVICE & ADDITIONAL UNIT FOR  
MONDAY-FRIDAY MORNING 5TPH 'HIGH PEAK' (Nov. 2007)**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Unit	Departure		Arrival	Departure		Arrival	Forms
1			exEast Ham CS	06:00 P7/8		06:35	06:40
2	05+45		06+10	06:20		06:55	07:00
3	06:00		06:34	06:40		07:17	07:30
4	06:20		06:54	07:00		07:35	07:45
1	06:40		07:14	07:20		07:55	08:00
2	07:00		07:34	07:40		08:15	08:20
5	07:15		07:49	07:55		08:30	08:40
3	07:30		08:04	08:10		08:45	09:00
4	07:45		08:19	08:25		09:02	stable/shed
1	08:00		08:34	08:40		09:15	09:20
2	08:20		09:54	09:00		09:35	09:40
5	08:40		09:14	09:20		09:55	10:00
3	09:00		09:34	09:40		10:15	10:20
1	09:20		09:54	10:00		10:35	10:40
2	09:40		10:14	10:20		10:55	11:00
5	10:00		10:34	10:40		11:15	11:20
3	10:20		10:54	11:00		11:35	11:40
1	10:40		11:14	11:20		12:55	12:00

+ = Empty Coaching Stock      □ = 15 minute frequency service

the new proposal away for examination and comment. LOROL further proposed the reduction of the 3-seater rows in the Class 150s by one seat and the Group agreed to this providing the single seats by the doors were labelled as "priority" seats.

By the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 public meeting and Group AGM, neither LOROL, nor TfL had commented upon either of the two proposed indicative timetables submitted. TfL was not represented at the meeting but LOROL stated that it was having real difficulty in timetabling a 15-minute frequency service and was having problems with platform occupation at Barking. A separate meeting to discuss our proposals was requested by LOROL and agreed to. This meeting took place as noted in the Introduction on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

### MEETING WITH LOROL ON 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2008

At this meeting LOROL stated that they had looked at our proposals and their timetable planner had expended a great deal of time in trying to get them to work but it had not proved possible. The issues LOROL raised were: -

- There were substandard platform reoccupation times at Barking and Gospel Oak.
- A 15-minute frequency service would require six units not five.
- Due to *Rules of the Route* constraints it was not possible to increase the number of empty stock workings to get the additional unit(s) from the depot to the line.
- All empty stock workings could only consist of one unit (2-car) because of the short bay platform at Willesden Junction Low Level used for reversal.
- The timetable planning work had thrown up severe problems requiring to be solved in order to deliver the planned 15-minute frequency service in December 2009.
- Evaluating our proposals had used up considerable timetable planning resources which would not be available again as these were now fully committed to planning for the autumn 2008 blockades.

**TABLE 2B: PROPOSED MONDAY-SATURDAY 4XUNIT  
3 TRAINS PER HOUR SERVICE & ADDITIONAL UNIT FOR MONDAY-  
FRIDAY EVENING 5THP 'HIGH PEAK' (Nov. 2007)**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Unit	Departure		Arrive	Departure		Arrive	Forms
2	15:00		15:34	15:40		16:15	16:20
5	15:20		15:54	16:00		16:35	16:40
3	15:40		16:14	16:20		16:55	17:00
1	16:00		16:34	16:40		17:17	17:30
2	16:20		16:54	17:00		17:35	17:45
5	16:40		17:14	17:20		17:55	18:00
3	17:00		17:34	17:40		18:15	18:20
4	17:15		17:49	17:55		18:30	18:40
1	17:30		18:04	18:10		18:45	19:00
2	17:45		18:19	18:25		19:02	stable/shed
5	18:00		18:34	18:40		19:15	19:20
3	18:20		18:54	19:00		19:35	19:40
4	18:40		19:14	19:20		19:55	20:00
1	19:00		19:34	19:40		20:15	20:20
5	19:20		19:54	20:00		20:35	20:40
3	19:40		20:14	20:20		20:55	21:00
4	20:00		20:34	20:40		21:15	21:20
1	20:20		20:54	21:00		21:35	21:40
5	20:40		21:14	21:20		21:55	22:00
3	21:00		21:34	21:40		22:15	22:20
4	21:20		21:54	22:00		22:35	22:40
1	21:40		22:14	22:20		22:55	23:00
5	22:00		22:34	22:40		23:15	23:20
3	22:20		22:54	23:00		23:35	to WN TMD
4	22:40		23:14	23:20		23:55	to WN TMD
1	23:00		23:34	23:40		00:15	to WN TMD
5	23:20		23:54 P7/8	to E. Ham CS			

+ = Empty Coaching Stock

■ = 15 minute frequency service

LOROL then, at the conclusion of that part of the agenda handed over the work of their timetable planner for us to examine at our leisure.

### POST MEETING REVIEW

Examination of the draft timetable workings of their planner revealed that the current morning and evening empty stock movement timings had been retained and that LOROL had been attempting to convert the entire 3tph section of the current timetable to 4tph, something that the Group had accepted as impossible from the outset with the reduced fleet of six DMUs. That was why only a limited one hour 4tph period had been proposed.

It was accepted that LOROL's list of objections would have to be disposed of before any further progress could be made.

- The platform reoccupation times were the same as in the current timetable.
- A limited 1-hour 4tph operation could be demonstrated (& had been) to require only 5 units not 6.
- In order to comply with the *Rules of the Route* any revised proposal would have to retain the existing empty stock timings to and from the depot.

- Empty workings to and from Willesden TMD can avoid the low level bay platform at Willesden Junction by using the trailing crossover between the down and up “DC Lines” at the “country end” of the low level station. Therefore 4-car (2x2-car) ECS movements could be planned. A less attractive alternative involves running via Primrose Hill and reversing at Camden Road and Gospel Oak.
- It is not apparent what the problems affecting the introduction of the December 2009 4tph timetable are. The route will have been re-signalled by that time and while the turnaround times at Gospel Oak and Barking are as tight as currently, this aspect of the current timetable is working fairly well.

On this basis a further timetable proposal had been drafted, with the aim of being as proofed against LOROL “bullets” as possible.

- **Table 3A** details the service start up retains all the current ECS workings, requiring the first one, the **05+11** from Willesden TMD to be formed of 2x2-car units and reverse at the “country end” of Willesden Junction Low Level. The regular very early arrival of this train at Gospel Oak shows that there is enough “slack” in the schedule to allow this variation. The ECS move from East Ham has been retimed after checking against the current working timetable and is able to reverse at either Barking Platform 7 or Upney Junction and form the **06:15** departure ahead of the **06:20** Up Tilbury Line departure from Platform 8. Providing the variously timed **6L09 07:10 – 07:40** Wembley Yard to Dagenham Dock empty car train is not timed and not run any earlier than **07:40** it will miss the 4tph period during which the *Rules of the Plan* would exclude freight. The **4M51 08:25** Tilbury Freightliner Terminal – Daventry would require little or no retiming to avoid 4tph, certainly no more than a brief recess at Ripple Lane Goods Loop. The main freight retiming would be the separation of the **6X48 13:09** Dagenham Dock to Wembley Yard and the **6M80 13:12** Dagenham Dock to Calvert, which are timetabled impossibly closely now, except that the former train regularly runs up to a hour late. During 3tph operation the *Rules of the Plan* only permit one freight train between every passenger train.
- **Table 3B** details the afternoon and evening service. The **7V60 18:25** Purfleet to Acton Yard would require a later timing to miss the 4tph period, again not to upset pathing on the Tilbury Line it could be recessed at Ripple Lane. **4M57 13:33** Daventry to Tilbury Freightliner Terminal, **4L40 16:59** Oxford Cowley to Purfleet and **6L48 16:24** Garston to Dagenham Dock, may all require slight retimings at Wembley (4M57 & 6L48) and Acton (4L40) in order to slot into the 3tph service upon arrival at Gospel Oak. In order to retain the same empty stock timings back to Willesden TMD and comply with the *Rules of the Route* the service returns to 2tph operation after the 20:55 departure from Gospel Oak.
- **Table 3C** details the proposed Saturday service which is 3tph throughout (except for the first half hour eastbound) since it seems pointless having the current 3tph “peaks” on a Saturday and 3tph throughout until 20:55 would make more sense for shoppers and other leisure travellers. There are currently three freight trains which currently use the line on Saturdays and as mentioned above they may require some slight retiming to match with the 3tph service.

It is now felt that everything has been done to meet the concerns (real and imaginary) of LOROL in providing a robust proposal that will provide immediate relief for the line’s hard pressed passengers (pun intended) in the period preceding the next battle with TfL, the formation of the Class 172 *Turbostars*.

This proposal should settle once and for all whether TfL and LOROL intend to conduct a dialogue of the deaf or a dialogue of equals.

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**TABLE 3A: FURTHER REVISED PROPOSAL  
FOR MONDAY-FRIDAY MORNINGS**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Circuit	Departure		Arrive	Departure		Arrive	Forms
1+2						05+45 (05+11 exVN TMD)	06+00 (Circ. 1) 06+15 (Circ. 2)
1	06+00		06+26				
3			Ex East Ham CS	06:15 (Plat No. 7/8)		06:50	06:55
1				06:35		07:10	07:25
2	06:15		06:49	06:55		07:30	07:40
4						06+18 (06+07 exVN TMD)	06:35
4	06:35		07:09	07:15		07:50	07:55
5						06+47 (06+13 exVN TMD)	07:07
3	06:55		07:29	07:35		08:10	08:15
5	07:07	Stands 3 min UH	07:44	07:50		08:25	08:35
1	07:25		07:59	08:05		08:40	08:53
2	07:40		08:14	08:20		08:55	17:10
4	07:55		08:29	08:35		09:10	09:15
3	08:15		08:49	08:55		09:30	09:35
5	08:35		09:09	09:15		09:50	09:55
1	08:53	Stands 3 min UH	09:29	09:35		10:10	10:15
4	09:15		09:49	09:55		10:30	10:35
3	09:35		10:09	10:15		10:50	10:55
5	09:55		10:29	10:35		11:10	11:15
<b>&amp; EVERY 20 MINUTES UNTIL (see Table 4B)</b>							

+ = Empty Coaching Stock

■ = 15 minute frequency service

**TABLE 3B: FURTHER REVISED PROPOSAL  
FOR MONDAY-FRIDAY EVENINGS**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Circuit	Departure		Arrive	Departure		Arrive	Forms
1	15:55		16:29	16:35	2 min stand UH	17:12	17:25
4	16:15		16:49	16:55		17:30	17:40
3	16:35		17:09	17:15		17:50	17:55
5	16:55		17:29	17:35		18:10	18:15
2	17:10		17:44	17:55		18:30	18:35
1	17:25		17:59	18:10		18:45	18:55
4	17:40		18:14	18:25		19:00	19:15
3	17:55		18:29	18:40	2 min stand UH	19:17	TO WN TMD
5	18:15		18:49	18:55		19:30	19:35
2	18:35		19:09	19:15		19:50	19:55
1	18:55		19:29	19:35		20:10	20:15
4	19:15		19:49	19:55		20:30	20:35
5	19:35		20:09	20:15		20:50	20:55
2	19:55		20:29	20:35		21:10	21:25
1	20:15		20:49	20:55		21:30	TO WN TMD
4	20:35		21:09	21:15		21:50	21:55
5	20:55		21:29	21:35		22:10	22:25
2	21:25		21:59	22:05		22:40	22:55
4	21:55		22:29	22:35		23:10	23:25
5	22:25		22:59	23:05		23:40	23+50 WN TMD
2 ¶	22:55		23:29	23+35 ¶		23:58	00+11 WN TMD
2 ¶	BGOLUG INFRINGES	PREFERRED RULES	OPTION OF	23:35 ¶ ROUTE		00:10	00+16 WN TMD
4	23:25		23:59 (P7/8)	00+01 E. Ham			

+ = Empty Coaching Stock

□ = 15 minute frequency service



**TABLE 3C: PROPOSED SATURDAY TIMETABLE**

GOSPEL OAK		BARKING				GOSPEL OAK	
Circuit	Departure		Arrive	Departure		Arrive	Forms
1						05+45 (05+11 exWN TMD)	06+00
1	06+00		06+24	06:35		07:10	07:15
2						06+18 (06+07 exWN TMD)	06:25
3			Ex E. Ham CS	06:55 (P No. 8)		07:30	07:35
2	06:25		06:59	07:15		07:50	07:55
4						06+47 (06+13 exWN TMD)	06:55
4	06:55		07:29	07:35		08:10	08:15
1	07:15		07:49	07:55		08:30	08:35
3	07:35		08:09	08:15		08:50	08:55
2	07:55		08:29	08:35		09:10	09:15
4	08:15		08:49	08:55		09:30	09:35
<b>&amp; EVERY 20 MINUTES UNTIL</b>							
1	19:15		19:49	19:55		20:30	20:35
3	19:35		20:09	20:15		20:50	20:55
2	19:55		20:29	20:35		21:10	21:25
4	20:15		20:49	20:55		21:30	TO WN TMD
1	20:35		21:09	21:15		21:50	21:55
3	20:55		21:29	21:35		22:10	22:25
2	21:25		21:59	22:05		22:40	22:55
1	21:55		22:29	22:35		23:10	23:25
3	22:25		22:59	23:05		23:40	23+50 WN TMD
2 §	22:55		23:29 (P7/8)	23+31 E. Ham §			
2 §	BGOLUG INFRINGES	PREFERRED RULES OF	OPTION ROUTE	23:35 §		00:10	00+16 WN TMD
1	23:25		23:59 (P7/8)	00+01 E. Ham			

+ = Empty Coaching Stock