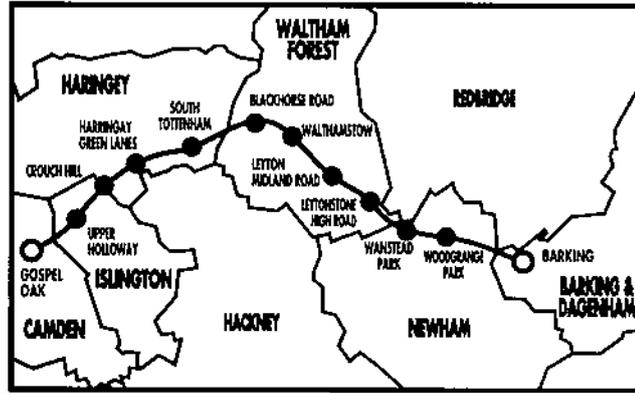


BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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NEWS RELEASE **13TH MARCH 2008**

FEWER SEATS ON LONDON OVERGROUND SO MORE CAN STAND!

London Overground to remove seats from Barking-Gospel Oak Line trains in bid to ease peak time overcrowding!

Transport for London (TfL) has sanctioned the removal of some seats from trains on the Barking to Gospel Oak Line to make room for more standing passengers. Operator London Overground will start removing a seat from all rows of three seats in the trains over the coming weeks.

“We reluctantly agreed to the proposal to widen the aisles in the trains by removing seats”, said Graham Larkbey, Secretary of the Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group (BGOLUG). “It is hoped that the wider aisles will encourage standing passengers to move away from the doorways and create space for more passengers to stand in relative comfort”.

BGOLUG insisted that the work should not affect the ability of London Overground to provide the four trains required to run the line’s timetable and that the single seats by the doors must be labelled as Priority Seats for the use of the disabled, the elderly, expectant mothers and parents carrying children.

BGOLUG has been in protracted discussions with TfL and London Overground since last September to increase passenger capacity on the seriously overcrowded peak period trains. “In spite of this, in November London Overground allowed two trains to go off lease that could have been used to run more services and reduce peak-time overcrowding. These trains are now working in the West Country”, said Graham Larkbey.



FEWER SEATS ON LONDON OVERGROUND

Continued

“TfL and London Overground maintain that there is now no way to run more trains or lengthen the existing trains and that apart from removing seats there is nothing to be done until new 2-car diesel trains, which they claim will have 30% additional passenger capacity, arrive at the end of 2009. That is completely unacceptable to us,” said Graham Larkbey.

“We warned TfL back in September that the existing 20-minute peak frequency service was seriously overcrowded, especially in the mornings,” said BGOLUG Committee member Richard Pout. “Putting the line on the Tube map and accepting Oyster Prepay has increased the peak overcrowding as we predicted.”

“BGOLUG is convinced that London Overground could run an extra train in the peaks that would give a 15-minute frequency for the busiest 75-minutes and provide welcome relief for passengers until the arrival of the new trains at the end of 2009. Of course we still insist that these new trains must be of 3-carriages and not the 2-car trains ordered by London Overground,” said Richard Pout.

BGOLUG is also pressing for the toilets on the present trains to be recommissioned. They were sealed up by London Overground when they took over the service from Silverlink Metro in November 2007.

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For further information contact Graham Larkbey on 07972 508543

The Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group was first formed in the mid 1960s as the Barking-Kentish Town Line Committee (the then western terminus) when the line was recommended for closure by the infamous Beeching Report. Since then it has sought to represent users of what was the “Forgotten Railway”, campaigned for and secured improvements in both services and station facilities. While the recent transfer of responsibility for the line’s passenger services from the Department for Transport to Transport for London as part of the latter’s *London Overground* is welcomed, there is still plenty for the group to achieve, including electrification, extension of the service westwards to Willesden and Clapham Junction and the provision of a “turn up and go” service that passengers can use in comfort.

