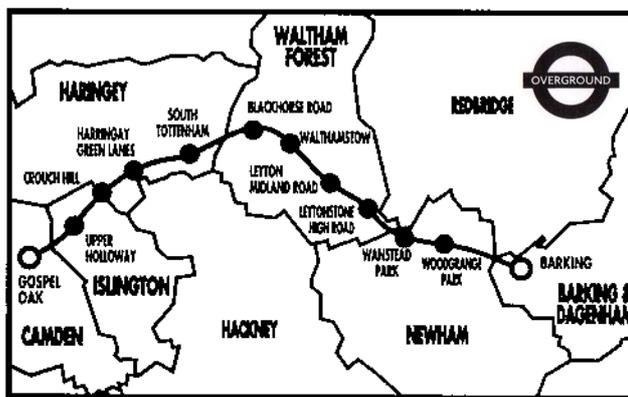


BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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NEWS RELEASE

3rd April 2012

BRIAN PADDICK BACKS VITAL INVESTMENT IN LOCAL RAIL LINE



**Lib Dem Mayoral
candidate gives support to
rail users' campaign for
electrification and more
coaches on London
Overground's Barking –
Gospel Oak Line**

Brian Paddick, the Liberal Democrat candidate for Mayor of London gave his whole hearted support to efforts to secure much needed investment by members of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group (BGOLUG)¹ when he travelled on the line recently.

Along with Lib Dem Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee, Caroline Pidgeon AM, he joined morning commuters from Barking on Friday 23rd March to see how a recently added relief train had eased the overcrowding for part of the morning rush.

At Woodgrange Park, while waiting for the relief train Brian spoke with a member of the station staff and saw that the line through the station was already electrified, BGOLUG members explaining that the line was already electrified at both ends and in the middle, at South Tottenham, but needed around £30m to “fill in the gaps” and electrify it throughout.²





Caroline Pidgeon AM, Brian Paddick and staff await the departure of the already full and standing 07:47 Gospel Oak train at Barking with BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout (far left) on Friday 23rd March

Freedom of Information requests and answers to questions by Caroline Pidgeon show that following a break down in negotiations with the then Secretary of State, Labour's Lord Adonis, soon after taking office, Mayor Boris Johnson has personally done nothing further to advance the case for electrification and has twice declined to travel on the line see the problems for himself.³

Transport for London (TfL)⁴ have included the line's electrification with 4-coach trains in recommendations to the Government for the next 5-year rail investment period which is to be announced by Secretary of State Justine Greening in around three months time.



BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout, said, "It is crucial that TfL's proposals for London Overground are adopted and we need to bring maximum pressure to bear on the Government over the next three months."

If the Barking – Gospel Oak Line were electrified throughout, 3 or 4-coach electric trains like this one, seen working a North London Line service at Gospel Oak could operate to and from Barking.



BRIAN PADDICK BACKS VITAL INVESTMENT IN LOCAL RAIL LINE

He added, "Electrification is also needed for the increasing number of freight trains including new services from Europe coming from the Channel Tunnel to Barking over the high speed line."

The new London Gateway Port at Thameshaven will soon start to come on stream and is expected to generate 30 trains a day, most of which will use the Barking – Gospel Oak Line.⁵

On Board the 07:59 Woodgrange Park to Hampstead Heath relief train, Brian and Caroline noted how the train, running 9 minutes behind the one they had left Barking on was soon standing room only.

Said Richard Pout, "Because London Overground has only 8 of these 2-coach diesel units⁶, there are no more trains available to further boost peak services. Evening peak trains are now every bit as overcrowded as in the morning."

At Blackhorse Road, BGOLUG's Assistant Secretary, Glenn Wallis explained how the busy interchange with the Underground's Victoria Line was about to get a 'make over' from TfL. However, original proposals which included new shelters had now been scaled back to consist of new seating, new signs and a repaint. The existing, open shelters will remain and bicycle ramps, paid for by Waltham Forest Council are being removed from the station footbridge.

"This is the busiest intermediate station on the line," said Glenn Wallis. "The many passengers waiting here deserve better, larger waiting shelters."

At Harringay Green Lanes Caroline Pidgeon commented, "While there have been clear improvements in the service since I last travelled the line with User Group members in 2009 further improvements are still needed. Above all we must keep up the pressure to ensure that the line is finally electrified. This would deliver better services for passengers as well as making a useful contribution to reducing air pollution."

Brian Paddick said, "The Barking to Gospel Oak Line User Group has done a great job in campaigning for improvements in train services. This is an increasingly popular line and that must mean improvements to it have to continue."



Caroline Pidgeon AM, Richard Pout, Brian Paddick and Glenn Wallis 23rd March 2012



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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Formed as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight Dr. Beeching's closure proposals in the 1960s, the Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group has continued to represent the line's passengers and campaign for improved services and station facilities, and also for the electrification of the only non-electrified railway in North East London.
2. There is currently no decision to electrify the 12-mile Barking – Gospel Oak Line or associated freight sidings at Barking for Channel Tunnel freight trains or at the new London Gateway container port at Thames Haven. The rail industry reaffirmed the urgent need to electrify the Barking – Gospel Oak route several times last year with the publication of Network Rail's second *London & South East Route Utilisation Strategy*, TfL's recommendations to the DfT for the second High Level Output Specification, due to be announced "by July" and the *Initial Industry Plan 2011*, initiated by the recent McNulty report. There has been no progress on electrification since negotiations on funding between the Mayor and the then Secretary of State broke down in 2008.
3. Jennette Arnold AM is Chair of the London Assembly and a Labour Assembly Member for the North East Constituency (Hackney, Islington & Waltham Forest). In 2008, along with BGOLUG, she asked London Mayor and Chair of the Transport for London Board, Boris Johnson, to accompany her on a visit to the Barking – Gospel Oak Line to see the overcrowding at first hand. Boris declined. Last Friday (30th March) he declined a fresh invitation from BGOLUG, made on 16th March, stating, as in 2008, that he had a full diary.
4. Following the transfer of responsibility for the former Silverlink Metro services from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2006, Transport for London (TfL), let the London Rail Concession to London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL), a joint Hong Kong/German owned venture, to operate the London Overground network from November 2007 until March 2014, with the option of an extension to early March 2016.
5. As part of the London Rail Concession contract let by TfL, LOROL undertook to order, in conjunction with rail leasing company Angel Trains, 8x2-car Class 172 *Turbostar* diesel multiple units from the former British Rail Engineering plant at Derby, now owned by Bombardier Transportation. Delivery of these trains took place in mid 2010. The current 8 diesel 2-coach trains could be lengthened by at least one new coach built by Bombardier at Derby. Some work to adapt platforms would be required, especially at South Tottenham. Even if the line were subsequently electrified and



electric trains introduced, many of the country's train operating companies would welcome the displaced diesel trains.

6. In 2007 the Department for Transport awarded a grant of £18.5m from its Transport Innovation Fund, match funded by Network Rail's Discretionary Investment Fund for a £37m scheme to increase the clearances (W10 loading gauge) between Woodgrange Park and Willesden to allow an alternative route to the North London Line for the passage of 9' 6" high cube international shipping containers from the current and planned Essex and Suffolk ports. The scheme also funded re-signalling between Wanstead Park and Upper Holloway to double the number of trains that could be run, allowing TfL Rail to run a 15-minute interval passenger service and more freight to be carried. The clearance work for W10 loading gauge was carried out during autumn 2008, but the re-signalling was not completed until the end of 2009.

