

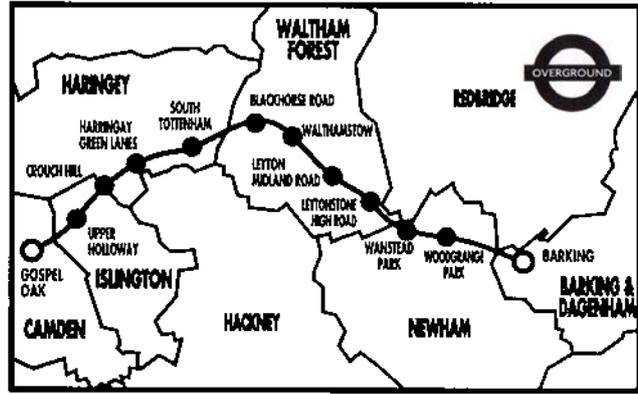
## BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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## NEWS RELEASE

21<sup>st</sup> January 2013

# VITAL ELECTRIFICATION SCHEME FALLS INTO A £5BN FUNDING GAP!

## Continued Government refusal to fund Barking – Gospel Oak electrification threatens to stall plans for extra carriages for crowded trains

The Network Rail Strategic Business Plans launched with a great fanfare on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January, had a lot to say about the Barking – Gospel Oak railway line, including electrification and platform lengthening to allow longer trains with more coaches to relieve chronic peak time overcrowding. However, when rail users started to comb through the small print, they discovered that Government had failed to fund the electrification of the line so diesel trains were set to stay!

The Network Rail Strategic Plans<sup>1</sup> detailed all the investment, maintenance and renewals that the company wanted to carry out in the 2014-2019 period of Railway Control Period 5 (CP5) following consultation with the rest of the railway industry and was their response to the Government's High Level Output Specification (HLOS), announced last July ( see [http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20120717\\_e\\_bulletin.pdf](http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20120717_e_bulletin.pdf)).

### SHORT LIVED DELIGHT

Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group (BGOLUG)<sup>2</sup> members were delighted that lengthening platforms for longer trains to relieve overcrowding and electrification of the line to allow the existing diesel trains to be replaced were all in the plan and had the continuing strong support of the rail industry. Their delight was short lived however, when it was discovered buried in the small print of a supplementary document that the electrification scheme was one of several schemes, valued together at £4.9bn that the Government was not funding.





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### DfT INTRANSIGENCE

Said BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout, "We were amazed, but not totally surprised by the Department of Transport's (DfT) intransigence and continuing resistance to approving a scheme supported by whole rail industry. The DfT prefers to allocate £billions towards electrifying a currently disused railway in Buckinghamshire<sup>3</sup> but cannot spend under a £50m on a busy railway in the North East of London."

On 9<sup>th</sup> December, when asked about Barking – Gospel Oak electrification by *Modern Railways* magazine, Mayor Boris Johnson commented, "It's something that I think the Department certainly agrees is the right way forward. It was yanked out of the Autumn Statement at the last minute, we're keen to see it restored, we're fighting for it and we're confident we'll get it in. It would be fantastic to get rid of the diesel trains and have an all-electric railway."

Mayor Johnson told London Assembly Transport Committee Chair, Caroline Pidgeon AM on 19<sup>th</sup> December<sup>4</sup>, "TfL continues to make the case for this scheme. I strongly support the electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking line, which would permit the introduction of longer London Overground passenger trains, and bring significant benefits to the UK rail freight industry.

However the commitment you seek can only be made by the Department for Transport and Network Rail, as the line is part of the National Rail network. TfL has offered a contribution to any funding package, reflecting the benefits for Overground services, but to date the balance of the required funding has not been forthcoming from Government."

The following day Transport Minister Simon Burns, when answering Jeremy Corbyn MP, said that Transport for London (TfL) had offered to contribute £25m towards Barking – Gospel Oak electrification<sup>5</sup>. The Islington North MP is to meet to the Minister on 5<sup>th</sup> February to discuss the funding impasse. The DfT had itself had offered £25m towards electrification in 2009, but withdrew the offer in 2010 and was currently offering nothing.

### CATCH 22

The DfT is funding a project to relieve chronic peak period overcrowding by lengthening platforms for either 3-coach diesel or 4-coach electric trains, but this project cannot go ahead until Network Rail know which type of train to plan for.

In a recent email to a BGOLUG member, London Overground<sup>6</sup> summed up the TfL case for extra coaches and electrification, ".....Demand for the Gospel Oak to Barking service has grown very strongly; in 2010 we introduced the new trains, with a capacity one third higher than the original rolling stock, and in 2011 we doubled the [off peak] frequency to four trains per hour. We have also squeezed in an extra AM peak train, but have reached the maximum frequency we can achieve and trains are now as crowded as they were before we doubled the service in 2011.

Our recommendations to the government for the next High Level Output Specification, published in August 2011, included electrification of the line and 4-car electric trains, which was reiterated in the Mayor's Rail Vision in February 2012 and in meetings with Department for Transport (DfT) officials. Network Rail recommended the scheme as part of the core electrification strategy in the Network Rail Utilisation Strategy, Electrification in October 2009, and recommended that the scheme should be "prioritised for delivery in Control Period 5 (2014 to 2019)" in the Initial Industry Plan in September 2011. Electrification and longer trains were also recommended in the London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy, December 2010...."

TfL advertised for potential suppliers of 3 or 4-car diesel trains last May but has yet to order any new trains or coaches for the Barking – Gospel Oak service.





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Network Rail told BGOLUG, “...As most stakeholders are still keen on it [electrification] happening, Network Rail is working on further developing the business case, refining the cost estimates and seeking funding contributions from a number of parties to try and progress the scheme independently from the Control Period funding process. This is still work in progress.”

“We need Network Rail to start a proper study so that the costs can be nailed down once and for all, at the moment estimates between £50m and £90m are in circulation and these include connections to the Midland and East Coast Main Lines as well as the Thames Haven branch to the new Thames Gateway port,” said Richard Pout. “We believe that Barking – Gospel Oak electrification, utilising the latest cost cutting methods used elsewhere in the UK, would come in at well under £50m. The funding gap can be bridged, we will be making representations to the Office of Rail Regulation showing how and insisting that this essential electrification start as soon as possible.”



A London Overground electric train running off the overhead wires at Gospel Oak while working a westbound North London Line service to Clapham Junction. Will these trains ever run between Gospel Oak and Barking?

Extracts from the Network Rail Anglia Route Summary Business Plan (Ref. SBPT210 version 1.0) relating to the Barking – Gospel Oak route appeared in a recent BGOLUG e-bulletin ([http://www.barking-gospel oak.org.uk/history/20130108/\\_e\\_bulletin.pdf](http://www.barking-gospel oak.org.uk/history/20130108/_e_bulletin.pdf)) but the main points were:

- Demand for London Overground services on the North London and linked lines had rocketed with passenger numbers increasing by over 300% in four years.
- Constraints on increasing traffic on the North London and linked lines are:
  - long signalling headways and the large number of junctions on the NLL
  - weight restrictions for freight trains on the Gospel Oak – Barking line
  - constraints on westbound services from Thameside across Gospel Oak Junction





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- Stated Specific Service aspirations for CP5 for London Overground:
  - Introduce a fifth carriage to the CL378 train fleet on the North London line to cater for future demand. This to include the associated infrastructure modifications and enhancements required to operate the longer trains
  - Introduce a third carriage on the CI172 DMU train fleet (Gospel Oak to Barking)
  - Electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking route to allow for longer (CL378) trains to be operated which would replace the existing DMU fleet
  - Release further capacity on the North London Line with a strategic reduction in freight traffic over the route by utilising opportunities created by W10 clearance on cross country routes between Felixstowe and the West Midlands
  - Provide suitable sidings for additional carriages added to the CL378 train fleet
  - Increase the operational flexibility of the network by extending the existing bi-directional signalling on the West London Line to incorporate Willesden Junction
  - Increased service levels on Sundays
- Significant renewal and enhancement works in CP5:
  - Gospel Oak – Barking
    - Platform extensions
    - OLE electrification
    - Lea Bridges reconstruction (total 10 bridges) [River Lea Viaduct]
- Infrastructure maintenance and renewals in CP5:

### Renewals and Enhancements

There is a significant volume of planned bridge strengthening works between South Tottenham and Woodgrange (sic.) in CP5 together with possible OLE installation between Gospel Oak Junction and Woodgrange Park Junction. A joint access strategy will be facilitated and agreed between both projects to optimise access which may involve either a significant series of 54 hour possessions at weekends or a significant blockade east of South Tottenham West (sic.) Junction.

### Train Induced Vibration Effects

The Gospel Oak to Barking line has seen a significant increase in public complaints due to vibration. We are initiating a study to determine the cause of this. The potential outcome of this is unknown (as is whether the findings could have any financial impacts on Network Rail). We are therefore unable to specify the extent of currently unplanned work, if any, that may be required in CP5. The situation is being investigated through monitoring and this may be supplemented by ground investigation.

The crucial admission that electrification is not funded came in a separate document, *Enhancements* where a list of schemes described in the main documents that were unfunded appeared:

### Enhancement Schemes Baseline

In the IIP the industry set out its views of desirable infrastructure enhancements for CP5. The Governments' HLOSs and SoFAs<sup>7</sup> provided funding for many of the projects we identified, and a number of 'new' schemes. There were, however, a number of projects that were proposed in the IIP that were not included for funding in the SoFAs.

This does not necessarily mean that these projects will not be pursued; we will continue to discuss options for funding with our funders and stakeholders. However, we have excluded their costs from our baseline plan for CP5. We will continue to review the costs and benefits of schemes, and assess whether there will be any scope to deliver these as part of some of the existing plans.

Below is a list of the currently projects not currently in the baseline:

Gospel Oak to Barking electrification  
[...]

- ENDS -

## CONTACT DETAILS & NOTES FOR EDITORS FOLLOW





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### NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. See [www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/strategic-business-plan-for-cp5/](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/strategic-business-plan-for-cp5/)
2. 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.
3. “The Department says that Gospel Oak – Barking wiring was shelved because the cost, at £90m, is too high. Compared to the Oxford – Bletchley Greenfield site, the inner-London route suffers from difficult working conditions with viaducts, cuttings, and an intensive service all complicating any future electrification work. Network Rail is reviewing ways of getting the project cost down.” *Modern Railways*, November 2012. BGOLUG believes this figure is a guesstimate as there is little justification for such a high figure.
4. **Mayor answers to London  
Electrification of Barking to Gospel Oak Line**

*Question number*            3826/2012

*Meeting date*                19/12/2012

#### **Question by** *Caroline Pidgeon*

*Will you commit to ensuring that this section of railway is electrified before the end of your Mayoral term?*

#### **Answer by** *Boris Johnson*

*TfL continues to make the case for this scheme. I strongly support the electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking line, which would permit the introduction of longer London Overground passenger trains, and bring significant benefits to the UK rail freight industry.*

*However the commitment you seek can only be made by the Department for Transport and Network Rail, as the line is part of the National Rail network. TfL has offered a contribution to any funding package, reflecting the benefits for Overground services, but to date the balance of the required funding has not been forthcoming from Government.*





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### 5. **Gospel Oak-Barking Railway Line**

20 December 2012

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent (a) information, (b) advice and (c) reports he has received on the case for electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak section of the North London Line; and if he will make a statement. [134793]

**Mr Simon Burns:** Although there is no new funding available, the Department is working with Transport for London and Network Rail to review the case for electrification. A detailed breakdown of the £90 million cost of electrification has been provided by Network Rail. Transport for London has provided its business case for using longer electric passenger trains and has offered £25 million towards the cost of electrification.

6. 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. 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.
7. SoFA = Statement of Funds Available.

