

# LONDON ASSEMBLY

Holding the Mayor to account and investigating issues that matter to Londoners

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## OPERATIONAL NOTE

2013/105

Wednesday, 10 April 2013

## Government's opportunity to review Gospel Oak-Barking line electrification in June could avoid spiralling costs

The London Assembly's Transport Committee has heard from [Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury](#), about the next opportunity for funding the electrification of the Gospel Oak-Barking line<sup>[1]</sup>. No details were provided in last month's Budget, despite an announcement delivering £3 billion a year on infrastructure, but his letter suggests that the proposal may be reconsidered in the next spending round in June.

Caroline Pidgeon AM, Chair of the Transport Committee, said:

"We were disappointed when confirmation of funding for the Gospel Oak to Barking line electrification failed to materialise in the Budget, but are hopeful that the Government will choose to sanction these line improvements as a priority when it reviews the plans in June. Electrification will deliver huge benefits to both the local area and London as a whole, including improvements to the rail network connectivity and a reduced environmental impact.

"Full funding must be confirmed this year or, due to the impact of Crossrail's construction, costs will rise far beyond the current estimates<sup>[2]</sup>. Confirmation this year will mean this significant milestone for Britain's rail infrastructure can go ahead without further delay or spiralling costs."

In March, Caroline Pidgeon wrote to George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to urge him to fund the proposed electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line in the Budget. Transport for London (TfL) has offered to contribute £25 million towards the estimated £90 million cost of the scheme<sup>[3]</sup> and the electrification also has the full support of the Mayor, Transport for London (TfL), the rail industry and passenger groups.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

1. [Letter from Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury](#), on electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line.
2. Network Rail, at a recent Transport Committee's meeting (7 March), stated that full funding must be made available in 2013 to stop additional costs[2]. After the opening of Crossrail in 2018, the funding needed to enable electric trains to run on the line will accelerate due to access issues. (link)
3. Question to Transport Minister, Simon Burns, on Gospel Oak-Barking Railway Line

*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.

4. Information on the [London Assembly's Transport Committee](#).
5. Caroline Pidgeon AM, Chair of the [Transport Committee](#), is available for interview. Contact details below.
6. As well as investigating issues that matter to Londoners, the London Assembly acts as a check and a balance on the Mayor.

**For more details, please contact Sheena Craig in the Assembly Media Office on 020 7983 4603/4283. For out of hours media enquiries please call 020 7983 4000 and ask for the Assembly duty press officer. Non-media enquiries should be directed to the Public Liaison Unit, Greater London Authority, on 020 7983 4100.**

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