

news release

08.05.2013

Immediate release

Funding for Electrification for Barking to Gospel Oak needed now

Local Labour Assembly Members are putting pressure on Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne to provide funding for the electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak line in his June spending round. The funding was originally included in the Autumn Budget only to be withdrawn.

The Assembly Members argue that electrification is necessary to ease the current overcrowding and improve air quality. The investment needs to be awarded from the Treasury as soon as possible to ensure that electrification can be introduced before Crossrail opens in 2018. Transport for London have offered to contribute £25m towards the £90m cost of the scheme.

It will also fill in a missing link for freight trains – with the massive new Port opening on the Thames, which will benefit London’s economy, we want to maximise its benefits without clogging up London’s roads.

London Assembly Member for Barnet and Camden Andrew Dismore said:

“Electrification is essential if my constituents are to be adequately connected with the rest of London’s transport. There is significant overcrowding on this route and urgent steps need to be taken to address this.”

London Assembly Member for North East Jennette Arnold OBE said:

“The current lack of funding to this line prevents TfL from introducing longer trains on this route and the result is that passengers are horribly overcrowded. Demand is outstripping capacity and proper investment could help alleviate this.”

London Assembly Member for Enfield and Haringey Joanne McCartney said:

“Electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line has widespread support from all sides, including TfL, the rail industry and passenger stakeholder groups. The Government is the only stumbling block in the way of granting the much needed electrification to this route as the funding, originally included in the Treasury’s Autumn Budget, was withdrawn.”

London Assembly Member for City and East John Biggs said:

“We urge the Chancellor to include electrification of this route in June’s spending round. Any delay will increase the costs to this much needed programme.”

Ends

Notes

Andrew Dismore is the London Assembly Member for Barnet and Camden

2. **Jennette Arnold OBE AM is the London Assembly Member for North-East London, (Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest)**
3. Joanne McCartney is the London Assembly Member for Enfield and Haringey.
4. John Biggs is the London Assembly Member for City and East London, including City of London, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham.
5. Letter from Labour London Assembly Members to Chancellor George Osborne attached.

For more information please contact Press Officer Sophie Kimber, on 020 7983 5639. Number not for publication.

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Date: 03 May 2013

Dear Mr Osborne,

RE: Funding for the electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line

We are writing as local Assembly Members to urge you to provide funding for the Barking – Gospel Oak Line which runs through our constituencies. We believe that it is essential for the Government to fund this electrification programme as part of Network Rail's 2014-19 Strategic Business Plan.

Electrification is necessary to improve connectivity with the rest of the London transport and is an investment that will help to reduce significant overcrowding on this route for passenger travel and freight traffic. The current lack of funding is preventing Transport for London (TfL) from introducing longer trains on this route exacerbating the already real problem of overcrowding on the line as demand is outstripping capacity. Not only that, electrification would improve London's air quality as there would no longer be a need for diesel-car trains.

At the Transport Committee in March, we heard that if the funding is provided in June 2013, it would enable Network Rail to run electric trains on the line before the opening of Crossrail in 2018. Any delay would lead to access becoming more difficult once Crossrail has opened, and increase costs to this programme.

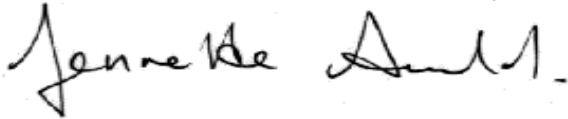
Electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line has widespread support from the Mayor of London, local Assembly Members, TfL, the rail industry and passenger stakeholder groups. It appears that the Government is the only stumbling block in the way of granting the much needed electrification to this route as the funding was originally included in the Treasury's Autumn Budget only to be withdrawn.

We understand from Danny Alexander's letter to the London Assembly Transport Committee dated 27th March 2013, that the Treasury were hoping to consider this proposal again for the spending round in June. We also understand that TfL have offered to contribute £25m towards the £90m cost of the scheme.

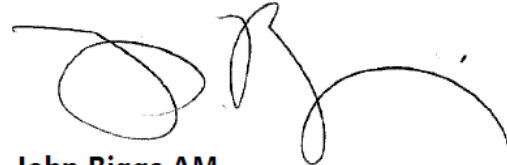
Direct telephone: 020 7983 5524 **Fax:** 020 7983 4953 **Email:** Joanne.mccartney@london.gov.uk

Along with the London Assembly's Transport Committee, we urge you to include electrification of this route in June's spending round. Any delay will hinder the transport links in North London as capacity will continue to be stretched and any further delay will increase the costs to this much needed programme.

Yours sincerely



Jennette Arnold, OBE, AM
London Assembly Member for
North East London (Hackney,
Islington and Waltham Forest)



John Biggs AM
London Assembly Member for
City and East



Andrew Dismore AM
London Assembly Member
for Barnet and Camden



Joanne McCartney AM
London Assembly Member for
Enfield and Haringey