

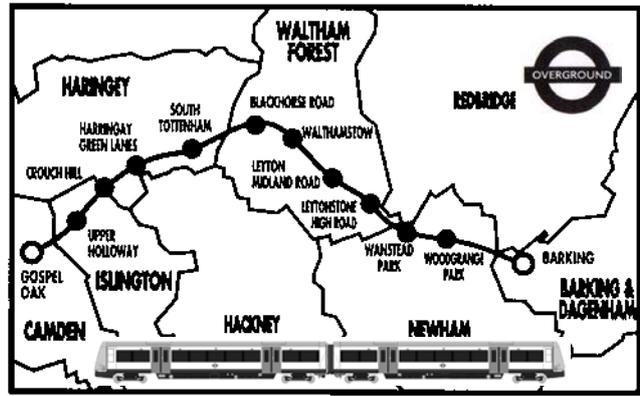
BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

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NEWS RELEASE

20th June 2013



CHANCELLOR LOBBIED FOR URGENT £25M LOCAL RAILWAY INVESTMENT

**London MPs & Assembly call for Government Spending
Review to include Barking – Gospel Oak rail *infill*
electrification scheme to ease overcrowding
and cut pollution**

“Everybody in the world believes Barking – Gospel Oak should be electrified”

Howard Smith, Chief Operating Officer, TfL London Rail

North East London rail users are waiting expectantly for Chancellor George Osborne’s Spending Review next Wednesday. While electric power cables are being installed on railway lines in North West England and Scotland, a 10-mile gap remains in North East London’s electrified rail network. This means that many long distance freight trains which travel hundreds of miles on electric railway lines still need diesel locomotives to haul them. Transport for London (TfL) also has to keep a special fleet of eight 2-carriage diesel trains that can no longer carry all the passengers that want to use them. The obvious answer is to ‘wire up the gap’, but so far it does not seem obvious to the Department of Transport (DfT) or HM Treasury.

With £25m already pledged by TfL, rail users and industry sources estimate that a Government contribution of around £25m is all that should be needed to allow Network Rail to start work, which should cost no more than £50m.





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There are compelling reasons for urgently progressing with this small “infill” electrification scheme:

- While TfL has 57 electric 4-carriage (shortly to become 5-carriage) trains operating the rest of the London Overground network, it needs the special fleet of eight 2-coach diesel trains^[1] to run the Barking – Gospel Oak branch of the North London Line^[Map 1]. **If the line were electrified, TfL could operate its network with an all electric train fleet and dispose of the non standard diesels.**
- With the introduction of Oyster fares and other TfL improvements, the **Barking – Gospel Oak Line has seen a phenomenal growth in passenger numbers** like the rest of the London Overground network. The line connects the c2c London, Tilbury & Southend Line, District Line, Victoria Line, North London Line (NLL) ^[Map 2] and a number of major bus routes. To carry all these extra passengers in comfort, TfL has already extended its electric trains from 3 to 4 coaches and has now ordered a further 57 carriages to lengthen the trains to 5 coaches^[2]. But TfL cannot buy new diesel coaches or complete new trains as there are none that meet current UK emissions regulations.
- **The Barking – Gospel Oak route is an important rail freight artery across North London.** It links numerous rail freight terminals between Barking and Tilbury Docks and the new London Gateway port at Thames Haven^[3]^[Maps 3 & 4] (recently visited by the Prime Minister) to the rest of the country. It allows freight trains to avoid crossing the busy and congested Great Eastern Main Line (Liverpool Street – East Anglia) between Forest Gate and Stratford. Freight trains may run for many hundreds of miles over the electrified West Coast Main Line to the West Midlands, North West England and Scotland but invariably are hauled by a diesel locomotive throughout because the ten miles between Gospel Oak and Woodgrange Park (1½ miles west of Barking) is not equipped with overhead electric wires. Meanwhile many electric locomotives are in store, being scrapped or sold to Eastern Europe due to lack of work in the UK.
 - In 2007 TfL published a rail freight strategy envisaging electrification of the route and proposing a large development at Barking to handle continental gauge rail traffic arriving off HSI (Channel Tunnel Rail Link) and forward trains to the rest of the country via Barking – Gospel Oak. This traffic is steadily developing.
 - In 2008 major rail freight haulier EWS, now DB Schenker (DBS) published a list of 33 most needed electrification infill schemes which included Barking – Gospel Oak, Dagenham Dock/Ripple Lane Exchange Sidings and the Thames Haven Branch.
 - In 2009 Network Rail published its Network Electrification Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS) which rated Barking – Gospel Oak as its highest priority “infill” scheme^[4].
 - At a pre 2010 election rail debate (17/03/10) BGORUG Vice-Chair, Richard Pout, learnt from Graham Smith, former Planning Officer of DBS, author of the EWS list of 33 “infill” schemes referred to above and recently appointed as Director General of the new Rail Delivery Group, that within three years of electrification, around 50 electric freight trains a day, which had previously been diesel hauled, could be using the NLL or Barking – Gospel Oak Line to cross North London, a major benefit for emissions targets^[5].

COST CONFUSION

The Government keeps referring to electrifying the Barking – Gospel Oak Line as “costing £90m”. However, this was an early ‘guesstimate’ from Network Rail, this included wiring the connections to the Midland and East Coast Main Lines at Kentish Town and Harringay respectively, sidings at Dagenham and the new line to the London Gateway port^[6]. Subsequently at a Network Rail electrification briefing for the railway supply industry in June 2012, Barking – Gospel Oak was costed at £50m!^[7]





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In fact, there is no accurate costing of the work as Network Rail is only now carrying out the GRIP 3^[8] evaluation study, at TfL's request, and expects to report in the autumn, although some early results should now be available.

- In 2006 TfL employed consultants to carry out preliminary study of electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line. The study made a basic estimate of the overall cost at £45m which included a 40% optimism bias for risk and contingency and still found the business (benefit) cost ratio (BCR) of the scheme came out at 3.9 which TfL said “is very good for a rail scheme”.
- The Mayor's Commissioner of Transport, **Sir Peter Hendy CBE**, told the London Assembly's Transport Committee on 17th April that he expected the full cost to come in a long way under the £90m “guesstimate” and reiterated TfL's pledge to contribute £25m towards the full cost of electrifying Barking – Gospel Oak.
- Rail industry sources have estimated the full cost of Barking – Gospel Oak electrification at £45m.
- The Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG)^[9] believes that the final outturn cost will be £40-50m based on similar ‘infill schemes’ in Scotland where innovative engineering solutions have dramatically reduced electrification costs to below £2m per single track mile.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT

The rail industry press have supported Barking – Gospel Oak electrification, both *Modern Railways* and *RAIL* magazines regularly cover the issue, with **well known transport journalist, Christian Wolmar**, most recently adding his support in an article in *RAIL* 722^[10].

Clean Air in London (CAL) has also written to Treasury Chief Secretary, Danny Alexander, reminding him of the environmental benefits of removing diesel trains from this busy North London orbital rail route^[11].

Three North East London MPs and the London Assembly have also supported the campaign.

- **Islington North MP Jeremy Corbyn** has asked several Parliamentary Questions and along with **Leyton & Wanstead MP John Cryer** met Transport Minister Simon Burns in February^[12] to press the electrification case.
- Also in February, **Caroline Pidgeon CBE AM**, then **Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee** wrote to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)^[13], supporting BGORUG's objection^[14] to Network Rail's failure to fund the electrification scheme in its Strategic Business Plan published in January.
- Caroline Pidgeon followed this up with a letter to Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne in March^[15], asking for this important infrastructure scheme to be included in the forthcoming Budget. She referred to Network Rail's assertion to the 7th March meeting of the Assembly Transport Committee that failure to electrify the Barking – Gospel Oak route before the opening of Crossrail in 2018 would add to the cost and complexity of the work. This prompted a reply from Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander regretting the failure to include the scheme in the Budget but promising to consider it again in the 26 June Spending review ^[16].





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- On 3rd May the four London Assembly Members whose constituencies cover the Barking – Gospel Oak line:
 - Andrew Dismore (Barnet & Camden)
 - Jennette Arnold [North East (Hackney, Islington & Waltham Forest)]
 - Joanne McCartney (Enfield & Haringey)
 - John Biggs (City & East)

jointly wrote to the Chancellor in support of funding the electrification^[17].

- On 22 May **Walthamstow MP and a Labour front bench spokesperson for Home Affairs, Stella Creasy**, also wrote to the Chancellor supporting the electrification case^[18].
- On 5th June the full London Assembly called upon Chancellor Osborne to ensure that electrification was funded in the June Spending Review and completed before the opening of Crossrail in 2018. **A Motion proposed by Jennette Arnold OBE AM received unanimous cross party support from the Assembly**^[19].

The Full text of the agreed Motion was:

This Assembly recognises that the full electrification of the Barking to Gospel Oak Line is necessary, and calls on the Government to ensure funding is set aside in the June 2013 spending round to finance this long-overdue project and ensure that this funding does not come at the expense of spending on tube infrastructure upgrades.

The London Assembly believes that electrification of the line is necessary to ease unacceptably high levels of overcrowding and improve air quality. To achieve this, the Assembly calls on the Mayor to lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure that electrification can be introduced before Crossrail opens in 2018.

This Assembly commends the efforts of Transport for London to catalyse the project by offering to contribute £25m towards the £90m cost of the scheme. Should, however, the Barking to Gospel Oak Line not be funded by the Government or Network Rail, the Assembly calls on the Mayor to work with TfL to secure an alternative means of delivery.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM, said:

"Commuters on the Barking to Gospel Oak line have suffered an inadequate service for too long. Today the Assembly is calling on the Government to deliver the funding needed for electrification to benefit the thousands of passengers who use this vital line, as well as lowering the environmental impact and improving connectivity with the rest of the London rail network

"Mayor Boris Johnson must make a strong case to George Osborne to finalise funding for this long-awaited upgrade. If electrification fails to be secured in June's Spending Review, the impact will be severe delays to this project and increased costs to the tax-payer. Passengers have already endured years of poor conditions – crammed into carriages like sardines – and now is the time to act to improve their journeys."





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THE MAYOR'S VISION

Mayor of London Boris Johnson wrote on 22 May^[20]:

I have been arguing for substantial improvements to be made to the Gospel Oak to Barking line for some time. TfL has committed £25m to the electrification scheme and my officers and I are taking the case directly to the Department for Transport and HM Treasury at every available opportunity. I wrote to the Chancellor prior to the budget and discussed the matter personally with the Secretary of State, most recently last month. Any further support from Members of the Assembly and indeed other interested stakeholders in making case would of course be welcome.

The Mayor's recently published *2020 Vision*^[21] asks for a 10-year funding settlement for TfL to allow a number of projects to go ahead, one of which is an electrified Barking – Gospel Oak Line, extended to the new Barking Riverside development.

NO ELECTRIFICATION IS NO ALTERNATIVE

Echoing Jennette Arnold, BGORUG Vice-Chair, Richard Pout, said:

“We have been pressing for this investment for six years. During that time passenger numbers have continued to grow. Now even the first train from Barking at 06:18 in the morning is packed solid as are the evening peak trains from Gospel Oak. Our 2-carriage trains are swamped, cattle travel in better conditions!”

“As an economist I would argue that that more investment in infrastructure would help grow the local economy. The Government would secure greater access to a wider job market in a neglected part of North East London and greater job creation along the North Thames corridor all for an investment of £25m or less!”

- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT RICHARD POUT ON 07970 722991,
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OR E-MAIL info@barking-gospeloak.org.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS FOLLOW ON PAGE 7

MAPS 1 – 4 FOLLOW ON PAGES 9 – 12





**Electrify Barking – Gospel Oak
NOW!
Sign the e-petition to Government
TODAY!**

■ SIGN THE ELECTRIFICATION E-PETITION!

Thanks are due to local blog *South Tottenham.org* for setting up an e-petition for Government funding of Barking – Gospel Oak electrification on the HM Government web site:-

[Sign the petition](#) to support the long overdue electrification of the Gospel Oak – Barking section of London Overground. The line has seen a massive increase in passenger numbers in recent years and now suffers from frequent overcrowding.

As [RailFuture](#) explain, upgrading this line from diesel would:

- Reduce overcrowding
- Improve air quality
- Benefit freight links to London's new port
- Provide alternative routes for North London Line trains

Transport for London, the rail industry, passenger groups and London's Mayor all support this upgrade. Yet funding was dropped at the last minute from the Budget.

Demand Chancellor George Osborne supports public transport in June's Comprehensive Spending Review by signing the petition at:

<http://bit.ly/electrifyGOB>

Once you've signed the petition, spread the word:

[Share on Facebook](#)

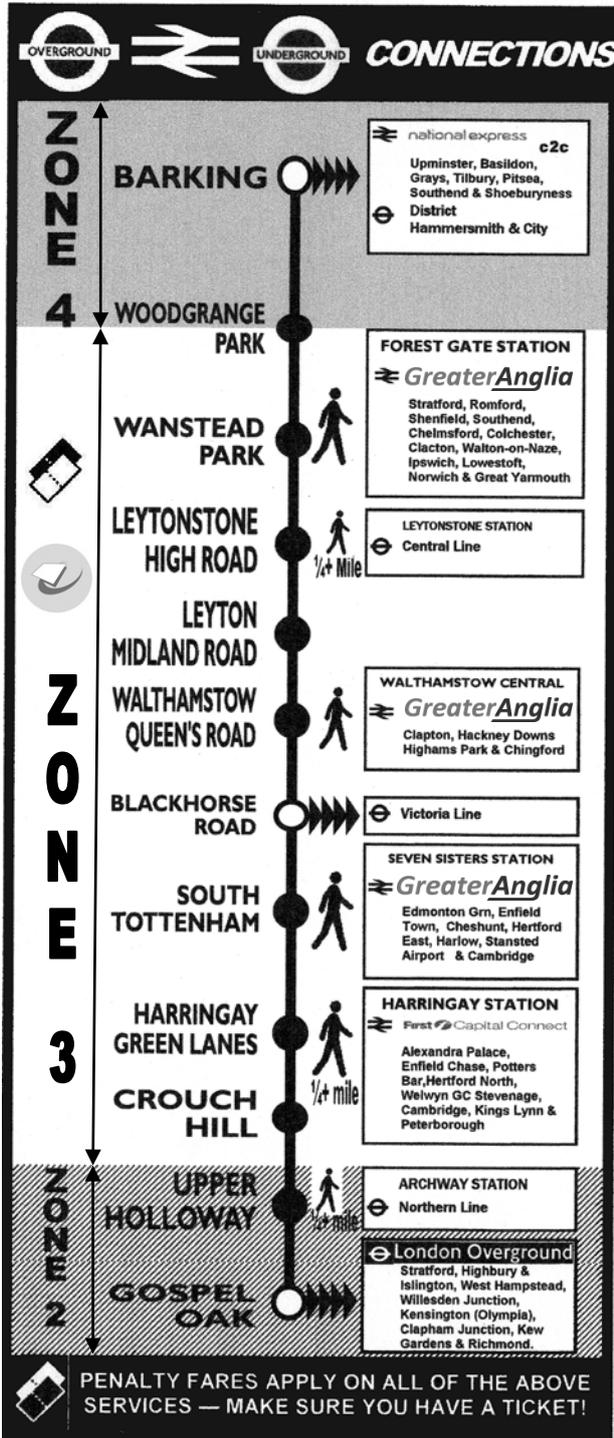
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. 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, recently extended by TfL to November 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.

2. See <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/mediacentre/archive/27861.aspx>.



3. **London Gateway**
The Manorway
Stanford-le-Hope
Essex SS17 9PD
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1375 648300
Fax: +44 (0) 1375 648312
Email: enquiries@londongateway.com
Web: www.londongateway.com

4. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20090727_Electrification.pdf and http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/2009_July_Response_to_Draft_Electrification_RUS.pdf.

5. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/2010_April_newsletter.pdf page 3.





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6. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130218_e_bulletin.pdf.
7. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20121101_e_bulletin.pdf.
8. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130320_press_release.pdf.
9. Formed as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight Dr. Beeching's proposed closure of the line in the mid 1960s, the Barking – Gospel Oak Rail 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.
10. See <http://www.christianwolmar.co.uk/2013/05/rail-722-barking-gospel-oak-line-is-londons-cinderella/>.
11. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130524_clean_air_in_london.pdf. Simon Birkett is the Founder and Director of Clean Air in London. Contact: M: +44 7803 56 24 74; T: @CleanAirLondon; F: facebook.com/CleanAirLondon; E: simon@emailbirkett.com; W: <http://cleanairinlondon.org>. Register for email updates at <http://cleanairinlondon.org/register>.

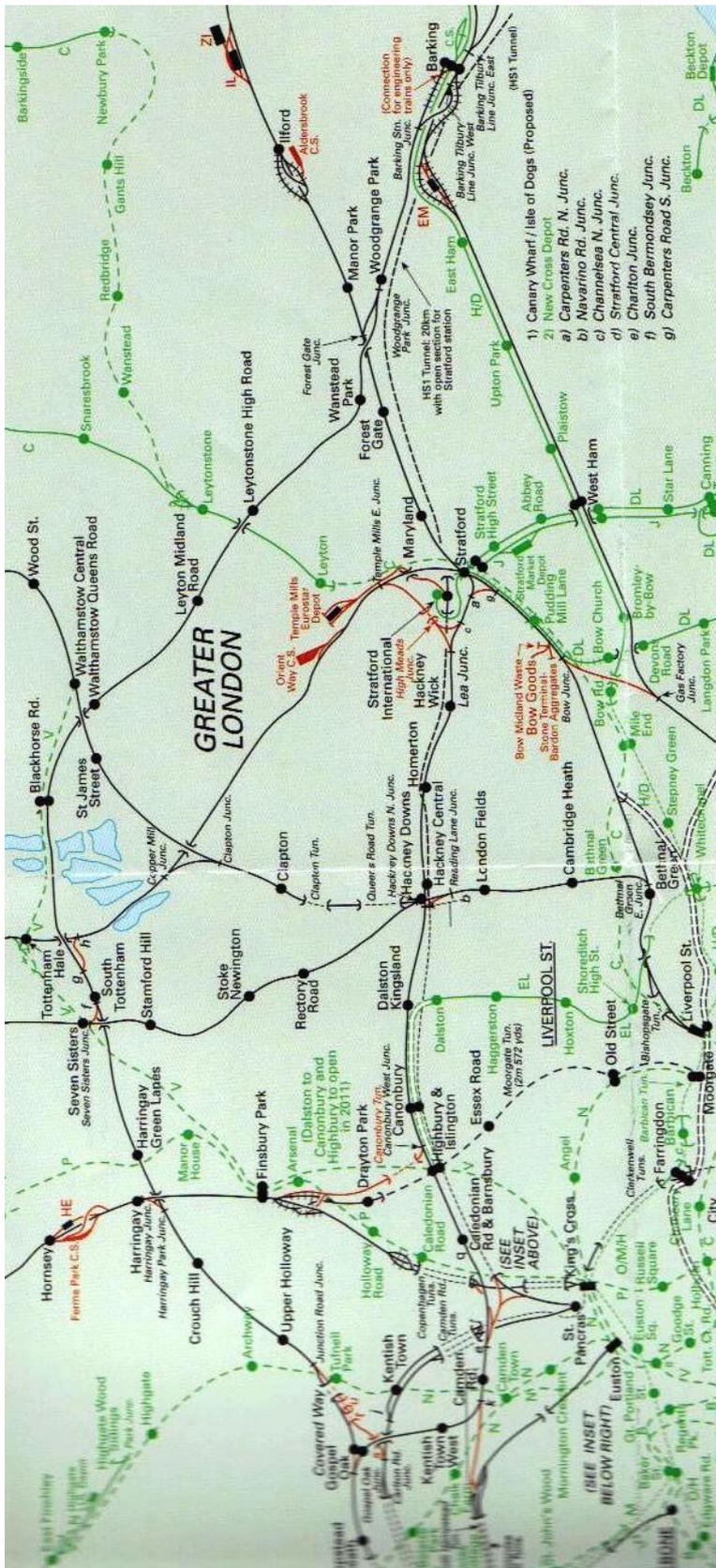
2013 is the European Commission's 'Year of Air'. We want continuity and the further tightening of health and legal protections.

Simon Birkett has been presented with the London 2012 Sustainability Ambassadors Award for his outstanding contribution to achieving a truly sustainable Olympic and Paralympic Games in particular for his focused commitment to tackling air quality, climate change and sustainability issues.
12. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20121101_e_bulletin.pdf.
13. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130213_GLA_Transport_Comittee_comments.pdf.
14. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130219_BGOLUG_comments.pdf.
15. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130314_electrification.pdf and http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130311_London_Assembly_letter.pdf.
16. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130410_London_Assembly_Note.pdf and http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130327_Treasury_Letter.pdf.
17. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130508_electrification_letter.pdf.
18. See http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20130522_Stella_Creasy.pdf.
19. See <http://www.london.gov.uk/media/assembly-press-releases/2013/06/mayor-must-lobby-osborne-to-address-in-spending-review-says-assembly> .
20. Question No. 1399/2013 by Jennette Arnold OBE AM 22nd May 2013 <http://mqt.london.gov.uk/mqt/public/question.do?id=46289>.
21. See <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/mayor/vision-2020>.





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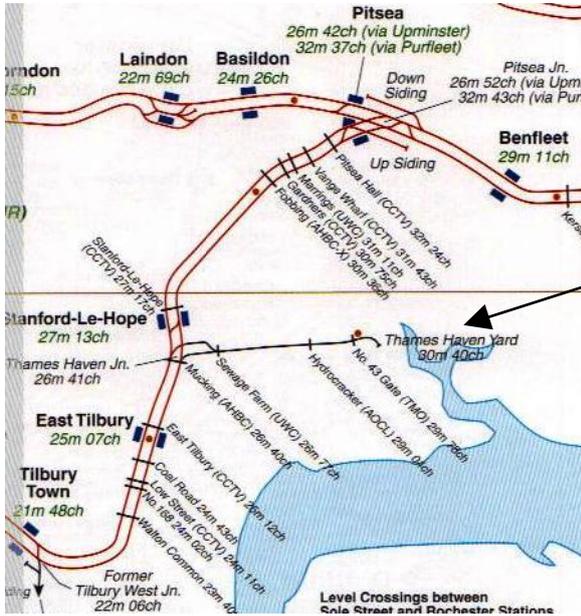
Map 3

Extract from Modern Railways 2011 Map of London's Railways





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Map 4
Location Map
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Map 5
General site plan
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