



BGORUG notes for meeting with TfL – Monday 19 November 2018 – with TfL responses

Present

TfL

Jon Fox – Director, London Rail
Geoff Hobbs – Director, Public Service Transport Planning
James Pickard – Community Partnership Specialist,
Public Affairs & External Relations

BGORUG

Graham Larkbey – Chairman
Jerry Gold – Executive Committee member

Agenda

- a). Current situation
- b). Latest likely date for Class 710s to enter service, and plans for the interim period
- c). Suggested options, including transferring other TfL-held rolling stock, obtaining rolling stock from elsewhere, additional bus services etc
- d). Compensation to passengers

Current situation – listed in order of speed of remedies

BGORUG recognises that the current situation - no electric 4-car trains (now almost a year late) and only 6 2-car diesel trains now available to operate a service which requires 7 available for service and 1 spare for maintenance – is not TfL's fault.

However, with regret, we have to say that TfL's response to the situation has been complacent, with too much keeping fingers crossed and hoping it will go away, and a total lack of candour in telling passengers and their representatives what is happening and why. TfL took the point being made.

TfL stated the current plan is for driver training to start by the end of November, but it cannot be guaranteed that the 710 software will definitely be OK to permit this. Progress with the software has been sufficient that the training of Driver Instructors has now started.

30/11 Update- Driver training is now set to begin in December.

i) Reduced Saturday & Sunday service

Unacceptable, but BGORUG recognises it makes the best of a bad job.

<u>Problem</u>	<u>BGORUG proposal</u>	<u>TfL oral response</u> <u>19-11-2018</u>	<u>TfL written response</u> <u>30-11-2018</u>
1. Present vague publicity on electronic media variously speaks of 15 – 45 mins intervals, 15 – 30 mins intervals, or lists of cancellations identified by time from Barking or Gospel Oak.	Posters for each station to show actual times of trains scheduled to run. Display prominently at entrances and on all platforms. Also place PDF copies on TfL website.	Will consider this.	The timetables have so far not been available from ARL in time to create station-specific timetables, especially as consistent times from week to week had not been confirmed. However, station-specific timetables are now being produced for the website, and will be sent to stations for them to print out and display. As ever, we encourage customers to check before they travel by using our journey planner, when using the weekend service on the line.

<p>2. Uneven service with 30 mins or greater intervals is total breach of “turn up and go”</p>	<p>Re-write timetables to provide all-day 20 mins interval service.</p>	<p>Are considering this.</p>	<p>We looked into this but unfortunately have been unable to do so. Given the issues last May, there is much less flexibility when it comes to introducing new train paths onto the Network Rail system at relatively short notice. Furthermore, even if permission had been granted, London Overground driver shifts are planned on a network-wide basis, meaning changing the time of a GOB train could affect a driver being able to take a train on another route.</p>
<p>3. “Just missed” connections at Gospel Oak particularly bad with intervals over 15 mins</p>	<p>Immediate and rigorous enforcement that BGO trains MUST NOT depart (or close doors) if an approaching E/B NLL is in sight. The connection MUST be made.</p>	<p>Will consider this – but for weekends only.</p>	<p>Trains will have to run to the scheduled timetable.</p> <p>The current plan is to introduce 10tph on the North London Line(NLL) (peak and 8tph in off peak) from May 19. When 710 are delivered, there will be 4 trains per hour on the GOB and 10tph on the NLL (Peak). More trains on the NLL will improve the connection for customers wishing to interchange.</p>
<p>4. Reduced service unacceptable.</p>	<p>Immediate weekend hire of suitable 4-car EMUs to enable normal service to be restored. Target date Saturday 1st December. (See appendix)</p>	<p>Note the suggestion.</p>	<p>We looked at all options to acquire alternative trains, including using the Class 378 units currently in use on other parts of the London Overground network. However, these proved not to be feasible for various reasons, including driver training, train length and reducing services on other parts of the network.</p> <p>We continue to run the supplementary bus services which have been providing additional capacity from Leyton Midland Road and Leytonstone High Road on weekday mornings.</p>

ii) Inadequate and unreliable M-F service

Totally unacceptable. It makes a mockery of everything the London Overground now stands for, and threatens TfL's reputation for competence in running an efficient metro service on which passenger can rely.

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<p>5. Ever since the PIXC-busters were withdrawn in July (despite assurances they would continue until 4-car 710s were introduced), the peak service has been unable to cope with demand. This has led on a daily basis to intolerable overcrowding, to passenger being left behind and to late running.</p>	<p>Earliest possible hire of suitable 4-car EMUs to enable normal service to be restored. Target date 17th December. (See appendix)</p>	<p>This suggestion has already been pursued, the conclusion being that there is no likelihood of other TOCs being willing to do this.</p>	<p>We agree with you that the current situation on the Gospel Oak to Barking line is extremely disappointing. London Overground is one of the most reliable train operators in the country and the current service on this line falls far short of the level of service we aim to provide to customers.</p> <p>The Mayor has personally spoken to the President and Chief Executive Officer of Bombardier to express his extreme disappointment at the continuing delays and to demand his organisation does everything possible to get the new trains into passenger service as quickly as possible.</p> <p>We share your frustration at the situation and, together with Arriva Rail London, we are fully focused on ensuring Bombardier delivers the trains as quickly as possible.</p> <p>In the meantime, the measures we have taken to protect the weekday service through an amended weekend timetable appear to be working, although we completely appreciate and apologise for the inconvenience caused to weekend passengers.</p>

<p>6. Since the heavy maintenance spare unit was sent off-lease in July, the service has become unreliable, with multiple cancellations on many days.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	
<p>7. Since another unit was sent off-lease on 10th November - leaving just six units to run a six train timetable, the overcrowding, late running and cancellations have become immeasurably worse.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>We are working as hard as possible to ensure its supplier, Bombardier Transportation, delivers the new electric trains as soon as possible, and to minimise disruption to its customers in the meantime.</p> <p>To allow train maintenance work to be carried out to increase the likelihood of a reliable weekday service, trains will run less frequently at weekends, when passenger numbers are lower. This will continue until the new trains begin to be introduced. We will publicise these temporary changes and will continue to work closely with Arriva Rail London and its train maintenance contractor to avoid unplanned cancellations.</p> <p>We will also continue to run supplementary bus services in addition to the scheduled train service to provide additional capacity from Leyton Midland Road and Leytonstone High Road on weekday mornings. These stations are particularly busy during the morning peak, and the buses provide passengers with an alternative route should they wish to use it.</p>

<p>8. Despite vague assurances from TfL to the contrary, all the information available to BGORUG points to the six remaining 172s going off-lease on 31st December, thus leaving no trains at all to run the service.</p> <p>TfL are now indicating that 710s will enter service in mid-December, but given the nature of the problems being faced with commissioning them and the extent of approvals and training still necessary, BGORUG (nor other informed commentators) can place any reliance on such hopes.</p> <p>There is a serious prospect of there being no train service from 1st January.</p>	<p>Plan NOW to obtain sufficient suitable 4-car EMUs to enable AT LEAST a 20 mins. service to operate from 2nd January. (see appendix)</p>	<p>There is now a high probability of retaining 172s until 710s are available to replace them.</p>	<p>We have co-ordinated an agreement to retain the existing 2 car diesel units into the new year, beyond the previous December 9 return date. These units will transfer to the West Midlands gradually now from January to the end of March.</p>
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iii) Contingency plan for further problems with 710s

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<p>9. Once the present problems are overcome and a full 710 service is in operation, there will remain a risk of teething problems which result in the fleet being withdrawn for safety reasons – as happened with Scotrail's new 385s for nine days in October.</p> <p>Scotrail were able to deal with this without significant inconvenience to passengers because they had suitable spare stock available to step in.</p> <p>TfL has no spare stock suitable for instantaneous transfer to BGO.</p>	<p>Start planning NOW for longer term and / or short notice operation of BGO with other stock. (see appendix)</p>	<p>Will supply a written response by the end of this week.</p>	<p>As above</p>

iv) Compensation for passengers

<u>Problem</u>	<u>BGORUG proposal</u>	<u>TfL oral response</u> <u>19-11-2018</u>	<u>TfL written response</u> <u>30-11-2018</u>
<p>10. The present situation is no less bad than that faced by passengers on Thameslink, Great Northern and Southern in recent years.</p> <p>It is particularly galling that it is occurring after a botched electrification programme which inflicted twice as much disruption as passengers were led to expect, and which even in spite of these delays 4-car electric trains should have started operating nearly six months ago.</p>	<p>Regular BGO passengers – including any who have been forced to desert to other routes during the present troubles – should be compensated with one month's free travel.</p>	<p>Note the point made and acknowledge that TfL has not provided the service expected.</p> <p>Will consider - and also consider posters to more clearly explain the problems.</p>	<p>TfL is very sorry for the inconvenience this will cause and will continue to work closely with all parties to introduce the new trains and meet the full timetable as soon as possible.</p> <p>We have apologised to customers and explained the situation with the new trains, including through posters at stations, emails, the press and social media.</p>

v) North & West London Lines

Request briefing on planned improvements to these services.

TfL said that some of the present service gaps on the West London Line and between South Acton and Richmond will be removed in the December 2018 timetable, and it is planned that all will be dealt with in May 2019.

Update 30/11 - It has not been possible to remove gaps to the extent we would have liked. This is for the same Network Rail reasons outlined above, However, we have been permitted some very minor changes to close up a few gaps in the timetable in December. This will again be reviewed ahead of the May 19 change.

vi) Other matters

BGORUG wishes to discuss several other matters – most notably concerns about station capacity at Blackhorse Road in light of new developments in the locality. However in view of the urgency and workload to deal with current events, we suggest deferring these if TfL agree to meet us again within three months.

TfL Agreed.

Appendix



Appendix to Notes for meeting with TfL – Monday 19 November 2018

Post-meeting note by BGORUG

Lack of time meant this appendix was not discussed in detail at the meeting. However in general discussion TfL made clear that hire of 4-car Electrostars from other operators had been pursued but the conclusion was that there is no likelihood of other TOCs being willing to do this. Options for use of other types of rolling stock had also been examined, but TfL considered that in each case there are significant potential risks which, as matters now stand, outweigh the benefits.

Alternative trains to work on BGO line

General

1. The preferred stock would be 25kv AC 4-car EMUs with -
 - a) Train mounted CCTV for OPO at stations with no platform mounted OPO equipment – i.e. no mirrors or cameras.
 - b) Closest possible similarity to London Overground's existing Class 378s. This is to minimise any driver and maintenance staff training needs.
2. Effectively this means the following classes of Electrostars -
 - 377/2 14 units operated by GTR – Southern
 - 377/5 23 units operated by South Eastern
 - 379 30 units operated by Greater Anglia
 - 387/1 29 units operated by GTR – Great Northern
 - 387/1 45 units operated by GWR
 - 387/2 27 units operated by GTR – Gatwick Express
 - 387/3 6 units operated by c2c
3. BGORUG recognises that use of Electrostars on BGO would require tests such as gauge clearance and platform stepping distances, but we know that such tests can be carried out very quickly – one night should be sufficient – and given the similarity to LO's 378s which have already operated along the line we would be very surprised if any significant problems were found.
4. Also, some of LO's own 378s might be shortened from 5-car to 4-car.

Weekend hire of Electrostars

5. Given the generally lower service levels on Saturdays and Sundays, any operator should be able to hire units to LO to enable restoration of the normal six train service.
6. The easiest option would seem to be c2c 387s. Their six units only operate M-F, with maintenance concentrated at weekends. It is unlikely that all six need two full days maintenance every weekend, so hire of (say) two units each Saturday and Sunday should be feasible. As LO already stables 172s at c2c's East Ham depot, this option would be the easiest operationally.

Weekday hire of Electrostars

7. The immediate aim would be to hire sufficient Electrostars to reinstate – in conjunction with LO's existing 172 diesels – the normal 6 or (preferably) 7 train service. This would imply hiring 2 or 3 units, possibly from more than one TOC, with routine maintenance carried out at LO's Willesden depot.
8. Best immediate availability would seem to be from GWR where the fleet is underutilised. Completion of electrification to Newbury, scheduled for January, will reduce the number of spare units, but they will still have sufficient units spare to allow for several to be converted for eventual operation on Heathrow Express. BGORUG does not know if this conversion work has started, but even if it has the case for slowing it down given the urgent BGO need would be strong.
9. Hire from other TOCs would mean either squeezing their maintenance spares, shortening a small number of trains (i.e. from 12 to 8 cars or 8 to 4 cars) and / or using spare older trains to release them.
10. So far as squeezing maintenance spares is concerned, we understand that this would cause considerable difficulty for Southern where their fleet is both hard-pressed and having to provide cover for defective 313s, and also difficult for Gatwick Express as this operation has just found it necessary to take an additional unit from sister operator Great Northern. However this GN to GE move provides evidence that trains can be switched between operators if the need and the will is there.
11. BGORUG recognises that shortening trains from 12 to 8 cars, and even more so from 8 to 4 cars, would be ill received by the passengers affected. However TfL has a duty towards its BGO passengers and if necessary should be prepared to vigorously press their case both to other TOCs and to their DfT masters. In support of TfL, the Mayor should press the case with the Secretary of State for Transport.
12. Releasing Electrostars by use of spare older trains would also be a concern for the passengers affected, although less so than for shortening trains. The reality is that TOCs adopt this practice when it suits them, a current example being on London North Western where some modern class 350s are being replaced by currently off-lease older 319s.
13. Scope for using older stock to release Electrostars (379s) may exist on Greater Anglia who we believe may have more 317s than it needs for normal service.

Temporary conversion of LO 378 units to 4-car

14. BGORUG understands that one of LO's 378/1 (East London Line DC units) is currently away at Ilford for interior refurbishment and exterior repainting. If this programme was temporarily suspended one of the ELL's allocation of dual voltage 378/2s could be released and temporarily revert to 4-car formation for operation on BGO.
15. This option has the merit of being fully within TfL's control so would not require co-operation from other TOCs, and would require little or no staff training.

More options

16. The current uncertainty with the commissioning of the new 710s for BGO means that in addition to looking for rapid solutions to the present unsustainable position of only six 172s to cover six daily diagrams, TfL should be making contingency plans for the possibility that 710s do not become available for service for many weeks or even months, and (like the recent temporary grounding of ScotRail's new class 385s following discovery of a brake fault) for possible fleet withdrawal after entry to service.
17. Most the options so far put forward in this paper would be intended to be short term. With the exception of Great Northern taking 365s to release 387s, none are likely to be acceptable or even practical for the TOCs concerned for more than a few weeks.
18. TfL therefore needs to be pursuing further options – in some cases requiring greater co-operation from other TOCs.
19. The first preference for BGO would still be for release of Electrostars with on-train CCTV, for which the following possibilities occur to BGORUG.
20. Options to achieve this could be to for off-lease 319s or 365s to go to c2c or Greater Anglia, or (using their DC capability) to South Eastern. None of these TOCs depend on the on-train CCTV capability of the Electrostars they would temporarily surrender. South Eastern would have the advantage that both 319s and 365s have previously operated on their routes, so the likelihood of gauge clearance or platform stepping distance problems should be low.
21. The last resort option for BGO would be to accept the need to plan for operation of trains which do not have on-train CCTV. BGORUG accepts that this would raise significant issues regarding door operation, but nothing is insuperable and in the worst case scenario we believe that taking LO and TfL Rail together there are sufficient spare staff to enable guards to be re-introduced if necessary. The options we can suggest would be as follows.
22. Class 315s released from TfL Rail Liverpool St. - Shenfield. In this context whilst, very regrettably, TfL have allowed 315s replaced by Crossrail 345 units to go for scrap (despite BGORUG having raised this proposal with them as long ago as April 2016 and at regular intervals since) we understand that 7-car 345s have just been (or are about to be) replaced by 9-car units on Paddington – Hayes duties. Transfer of these 7-car units to the Liverpool St. Shenfield line should allow more 315s to be released for possible use on BGO. To minimise staff training needs, we would propose that 315s remain at Ilford depot for maintenance and that they be driven by spare TfL Rail drivers with LO drivers as conductors for route knowledge.

23. The alternative would be for TfL to lease 319s or 365s directly for use on BGO. These would require significant training of LO drivers and Willesden maintenance staff, also as both have unique electrical equipment there is a risk of finding signalling immunisation issues. However there is the example just this year of ScotRail facing the same uncertainty about delivery of new trains as TfL now faces. In response they got 365s (a design which was totally alien to them) on lease and into service in just ten weeks, including having to modify door step-plates. This demonstrates that if the will (including political will) is there, such things can be done.

Costs

24. All the suggestions put forward in this paper would carry costs which in the first instance would fall on TfL. BGORUG recognises that TfL's finances are presently under strain, but we consider that as the present BGO situation is intolerable for passengers TfL has a clear duty to do whatever it takes to restore and sustain the normal scheduled service – just as we believe it has a duty to compensate passengers for the dreadful service they are now receiving.
25. In reality we would expect TfL's costs to be recoverable from Bombardier who must be liable for what is now at least a twelve month delay in delivering serviceable class 710s.
26. If the contractual arrangements between TfL and Bombardier do not permit of cost recovery, then TfL would simply have to bite the bullet for having agreed such lax terms. However we would be hugely surprised if TfL were in this position, given their success in obtaining liquidated damages from Bombardier for the late deliver class 378s in the early days of London Overground.