



This note was compiled by BGORUG Executive Committee Member, Jerry Gold. It was submitted to TfL for its agreement/amendment on 6th February 2019. In spite of two reminders, TfL has not responded. TfL has been advised that BGORUG interprets this lack of comment as being its acceptance of this note being a true record of the meeting.
BGORUG 13th March 2019

Note of meeting with TfL – Thursday 31st January 2019

Present

TfL

Jon Fox – Director, London Rail
Rory O'Neill – General Manager, London Rail
James Pickard – Community Partnership Specialist,
Public Affairs & External Relations

BGORUG

Glenn Wallis – Secretary
Jerry Gold – Executive Committee member

The meeting was a follow up to the meeting held on 19th November 2018
http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20181119_stock_crisis_meeting.pdf

Note to TfL re. Note. As much of the discussion took place in shorthand based on our common understanding of the issues, this note contains some expansions of what was said in order to make it more easily understood by lay readers when the agreed note is published on the BGORUG website.

I. THE CLASS 710 CRISIS

a) Update

TfL confirmed that a Class 378 electric train temporarily reduced to 4-cars had started service on Monday 28th January, replacing a Class 172 diesel train transferred out off-lease that weekend. A further two Class 172s will leave in mid-February, to be replaced by two more 4-car Class 378s. The final three Class 172s will go in mid-March, but service requirements on their normal London Overground lines mean it will not be possible to transfer any more Class 378s to the Barking – Gospel Oak service.

TfL said they are in daily dialogue with Bombardier (manufacturer of the new Class 710 electric trains), with weekly communication between the Director, London Rail and Bombardier's President and Chief Executive. Bombardier state that Class 710s will be ready by mid-March when the last Class 172s depart, but have not given a specific date. In any case, being ready for delivery is not the same as being ready for entry to

passenger service, as Arriva Rail London (ARL – TfL's contracted operator of London Overground services) would need to carry out further tests and train their drivers.

TfL is working with ARL to plan the speediest possible entry to service. They are also working with Bombardier to ensure the best possible reliability, e.g. by providing riding technicians to deal immediately with any faults.

The position therefore is that there will be a gap from mid-March in which only three trains (instead of the required six) will be available for service, and it is uncertain how long this will last. TfL stated they are working with ARL on timetable options for running a 30 mins. frequency service with three Class 378s (instead of the normal 15 mins.), but pointed out that with 4-car trains instead of 2-cars passenger capacity would be the same – possibly greater due to the Class 378s having fewer seats per car but much more standing space.

b) Possibility of operating a 20 mins. service with three trains

BGORUG suggested that with the better performance of electric trains, coupled with reduced terminal turn-round times achievable as spare drivers would be available to “double-end” the trains, it should be possible to operate a 20 mins. service. They made the case that reduction to 30 mins. would very seriously affect passengers with tight daily schedules fixed around work times and (for example) child care arrangements, and that a 20 mins. frequency would be much less damaging.

TfL took this point, but doubted that a 20 mins. frequency would be feasible. However they invited BGORUG to look at the details themselves and report back.

Post-meeting note: BGORUG looked at what they considered the maximum likely achievable running time reduction, combined with shorter terminal turn-rounds, and now agree that a 20 mins. service is not possible.

c) Weekend services

BGORUG expressed concern that once only three trains are available, it would be impossible to operate a 30 mins. weekend service as time out would be needed for maintenance; indeed there might be no service at all. TfL said they are looking at options with ARL (and Bombardier as maintenance contractor) and are not in a position to comment further at this stage.

d) Action to minimise duration of reduced services

BGORUG said they have no confidence in any Bombardier forecast of when Class 710s (already a year late) will be ready to enter passenger service. They believed TfL must plan on the basis that a reduced three train service could have to operate for many months. It was very regrettable that matters had reached a situation where such a service is inevitable, and it would be quite unacceptable for it to persist any longer than absolutely necessary.

To protect weekend services BGORUG repeated their suggestion from the 19th November meeting that TfL look to hire Class 387 trains from other operators. c2c would be the most obvious source, as their East Ham depot is adjacent to Barking, but there are other operators who have such units spare at weekends. Class 387s are technically similar to TfL's 378s and hopefully just one day conversion training might suffice for drivers. TfL agreed to look at this in the event that their discussions with ARL conclude that their own 378s can't provide the weekend service. However TfL felt that drivers might need a full training course on Class 387s and that this requirement could conflict with the need to train them on Class 710s as quickly as

possible.

For weekdays BGORUG wish to see restoration of the full six train service as quickly as possible. Given that it could yet be many months before Class 710s are available to achieve this, they consider TfL should start detailed investigations and negotiations now to use older electric trains which are presently out of use – most likely classes 315, 319 or 365. BGORUG recognise that (as discussed at the 19th November meeting) there would be many hurdles to overcome, but that it is incumbent on TfL to look at every possibility. TfL noted BGORUG's views.

2. SUPPLEMENTARY AND REPLACEMENT BUS SERVICES

a) Recent withdrawal of weekend supplementary buses

BGORUG asked if the weekend supplementary buses, introduced when the train service was reduced to 15 / 30 mins. frequency to allow maintenance time for Class 172s, are still running. TfL said they had been withdrawn after the second weekend in January as they were little used. The public had been told of this, but the buses remain available on call.

BGORUG were not surprised that the buses were little used; indeed they had seen this for themselves. However, they considered this was partly because of the routes of the buses (see section b) below). BGORUG also queried whether the passengers had been clearly told of the withdrawal, as distinct from reference to buses being removed from the weekend service publicity. BGORUG had only become aware of this by noticing an apparent absence of buses on the road and posters at stations. TfL undertook to supply copies of the information issued to the public regarding the withdrawal of weekend supplementary buses. *Post-meeting note:* This information has yet to be supplied.

b) Future use of buses

TfL said they are considering running supplementary buses on weekdays when a 30 mins. train service operates, and would operate them at weekends if the outcome here is no train service.

BGORUG said the issue of low usage needs to be addressed. Part of the problem is the design of the services which TfL introduced in 2016 against BGORUG advice, particularly the split in service across Walthamstow and the use of double-deckers on the western route which (in order to avoid low bridges) imposes a route which entails a very long walk from some stations. BGORUG would submit a note on this matter.

3. STATION-SPECIFIC TIMETABLE FOR REDUCED WEEKEND SERVICE

BGORUG complained that TfL has failed to deliver the individual station posters showing actual departure times (as distinct from generic posters showing information about cancellations) which had been promised following the meeting on 19th November. TfL disagreed that they had promised such posters. They felt that the latest version showing first and last trains on a line basis and advising use of TfL's electronic media for details is satisfactory. BGORUG said this is not adequate as not all passengers use smartphones or other electronic devices.

BGORUG also complained that both on station posters and on the TfL website the full 15 mins. weekend service continues to be shown. TfL said they would consider this.

4. “JUST MISSED” CONNECTIONS AT GOSPEL OAK – RECONSIDERATION OF POLICY

BGORUG had been disappointed that TfL had decided against weekend relaxation of the policy that Barking trains must depart Gospel Oak absolutely on time (or indeed early given the “30 seconds” door closure rule), even if this means doing so in the face of interchange passengers arriving on a North London Line (NLL) train. They reiterated that on existing timings “right time” departure from Gospel Oak means a the train has to wait time at Upper Holloway, and with the better acceleration of electric trains this margin in the schedule would be even greater. BGORUG said with a 30 mins. weekday service it would be even more intolerable than now that interchange passengers should see a Barking train depart just as their NLL train runs in. TfL said they would discuss this with ARL to see what could be done, but would make no promises.

5. One month free travel

BGORUG expressed appreciation that TfL had agreed to provide one month free travel to Barking – Gospel Oak passengers once a full electric 710 service has been introduced. They further commended TfL for securing additional Bombardier funding for this, thus leaving the contractual penalty payments for late 710 delivery intact for other uses. In reply to questions about how they envisage implementing this undertaking, TfL said they are considering options for a fair way of doing this, and that they would consider any BGORUG suggestions for the principles to be adopted. BGORUG would submit a note on this matter.

6. RECOMPENSE FOR USE OF MORE EXPENSIVE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES SINCE WITHDRAWAL OF PIXC-BUSTERS

BGORUG asked that regular passengers should be recompensed for higher fare routes used to avoid the overcrowding that has occurred since the *PIXC-busters* were withdrawn in July 2018, using the formula that had eventually been agreed for the 2016-18 Network Rail line closures. TfL undertook to consider this.

7. PUBLICITY / SIGNAGE FOR “OUT OF STATION” INTERCHANGES

BGORUG welcomed the expansion of advertised “out of station” interchanges, e.g. Archway – Upper Holloway, but pointed out that signage for these is often inadequate. They proposed doing a survey, and TfL said they would be pleased to consider a report.

***8. BLACKHORSE ROAD – STATION CAPACITY IN RELATION TO LARGE NUMBER OF NEW FLATS UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

***9. DECEMBER 2019 TIMETABLE**

***10. NIGHT OVERGROUND**

***11. LONDON OVERGROUND TWITTER RESPONSES**

*Time precluded full or any discussion of these matters. Agreed that BGORUG would make written submissions.