

Caroline Pidgeon AM, Chair of the Transport Committee

London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London, SE1 2AA

Valentina Licata
Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)
One Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN

13 February 2013

Dear Valentina

Consultation on Network Rail Strategic Business Plan Control Period 5 2014-19

I am writing on behalf of the London Assembly Transport Committee to comment on Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan for Control Period 5, 2014-15. Our response focuses on the need for investment in the electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking Line and it draws on our previous work on this issue; principally, our response to the Initial Industry Plan (November 2011) and the Route Utilisation Strategy (March 2011).

We are concerned and disappointed that despite the strong support for electrification from the Mayor, TfL, and rail industry stakeholders, Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan for Control Period 5 does not currently provide for this urgent upgrade of the Gospel Oak to Barking Line. The Assembly believes that electrification of the line is necessary to improve connectivity with the rest of London's rail network and deliver the much-needed increase in passenger and freight capacity on the line. It would enable longer trains to run on the route, and the removal of diesel-car trains would help to improve local air quality. The lack of funding is restricting TfL from introducing longer trains on the route, and the indications are that this will exacerbate overcrowding.

We have consistently called for investment in electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking line, in full support of the Mayor and TfL's work on this issue. We further note that TfL has offered to contribute £25 million of the cost of the electrification and platform lengthening at stations along the route. The Government must now provide funding to Network Rail to facilitate the required investment on this section of the line.

We continue to support the Mayor and TfL in their lobbying for electrification of the line. We would urge you to challenge Network Rail to reconsider funding for electrification of the Gospel Oak to Barking Line in Control Period 5, and we hope to see this reflected in ORR's Periodic Review when it is published in June 2013.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Pidgeon AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

Copied to:

Caroline Pidgeon AM, Chair of the Transport Committee
The Mayor
Sir Peter Hendy, Commissioner, TfL