

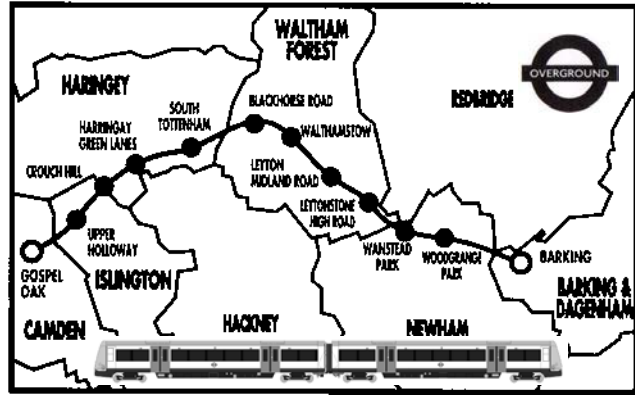
BARKING – GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

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NEWS RELEASE

20th March 2013

MPs & ASSEMBLY MEMBERS PRESSURE GOVERNMENT ON ELECTRIFICATION AS FOCUS SHIFTS TO THE TREASURY

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

Howard Smith, Chief Operating Officer, TfL London Rail

Local MPs and the London Assembly Transport Committee are pressing the Government to stop blocking much needed investment in the Barking – Gospel Oak railway line to reduce diesel emissions and relieve serious overcrowding.

Two MPs, Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) and John Cryer (Leyton & Wanstead), met Transport Minister Simon Burns on 5th February. They pointed out that electrification of the line had the whole hearted support of the rail industry and that Transport for London (TfL) had already offered £25m toward the scheme and stressed the importance of Government making a direct contribution or authorising Network Rail, which also strongly favours the project, to finance the remaining cost.

The Barking – Gospel Oak Line User Group (BGOLUG)^[1] had provided a briefing prior to the meeting. BGOLUG Secretary Richard Pout said, “We are grateful to Jeremy Corbyn for arranging to meet the Minister and put forward the overwhelming case for electrifying the line.”





MPs & ASSEMBLY MEMBERS PRESSURE GOVERNMENT ON ELECTRIFICATION

The Department for Transport (DfT) believed that the estimated cost of electrification of £90m was too expensive, but as yet, no proper cost study has been done. BGOLUG contends, supported by industry sources, that the overall cost should come in at no more than £50m.

Richard Pout added, “Jeremy Corbyn told me the meeting went quite well and that the DfT finally recognised that the Barking – Gospel Oak Line was not some North East London backwater but in fact was part of a national strategic freight route!”

“The Department has produced numerous arguments against electrifying the line, the only purely diesel operated line left in North East London. These have all been extensively answered and left us with the feeling that the Department’s resistance was simply down to pure dogma and obfuscation.”

At their meeting at City hall on 7th March, Members of the London Assembly’s Transport Committee quizzed representatives from TfL^[2] and Network Rail about Barking – Gospel Oak route electrification. Following a request from TfL, Network Rail had started a more detailed examination (GRIP 3)^[3] of the actual costs of electrification, Network Rail emphasised it was very unusual for them to do this when a project was not fully funded. This demonstrated their support for the scheme and their concern that following the opening of Crossrail in 2018, increased traffic levels over the Barking – Gospel Oak route would make electrification more difficult to plan.

Answering questions from Andrew Dismore and Jennette Arnold, TfL managers said that due to a lack of new “off the shelf” diesel trains^[4], the only way to provide additional coaches to relieve the extreme peak overcrowding was by providing the overhead wires and infrastructure so that longer electric trains could operate over the line. TfL believed that the DfT was now convinced of the necessity of the scheme and that it agreed to its inclusion in the Chancellor’s last Autumn Statement only for the Treasury to block it at the last moment. The Committee agreed that Chair, Caroline Pidgeon should write to the Chancellor to ask that he allow electrification to take place^[5].

Richard Pout concluded, “We learnt a lot from TfL and Network Rail at the Transport Committee meeting. BGOLUG has received fantastic support from the Assembly Transport Committee^[6] in its fight to get the line electrified and civilised travelling conditions for passengers.”



← A London Overground 4-car, soon to be 5-car, electric train which is used on all London Overground services except the Barking – Gospel Oak Line which has 2-car diesel trains ↓



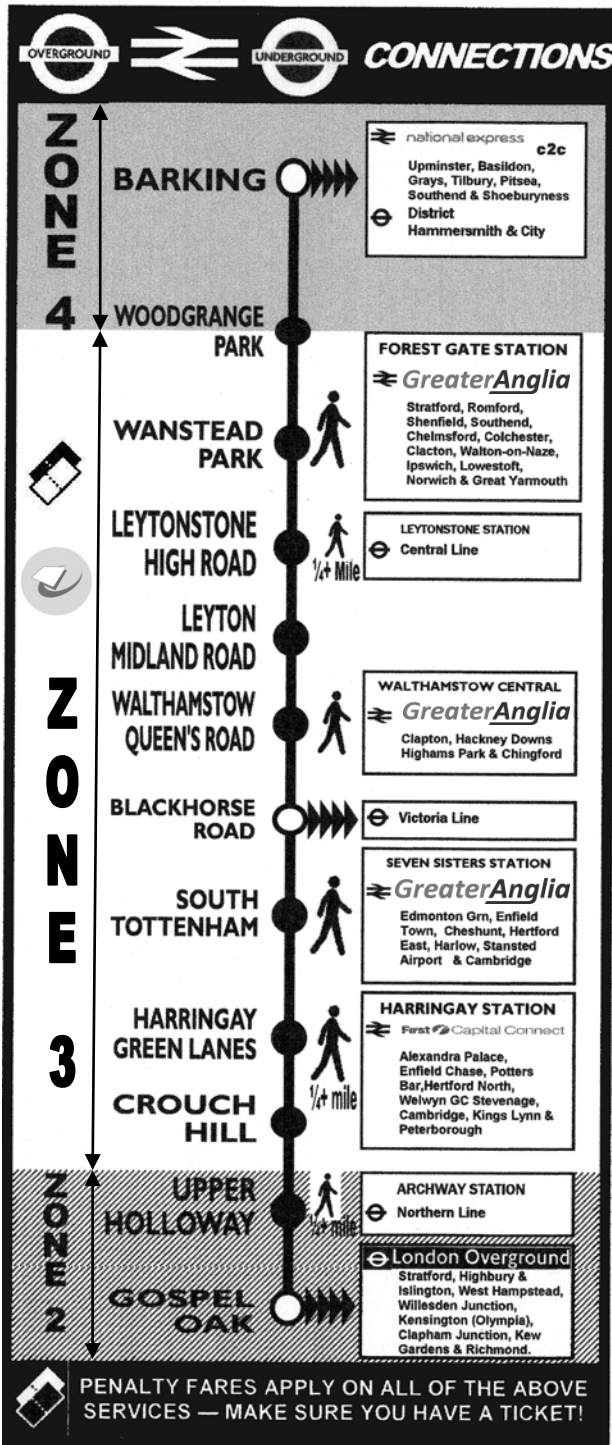
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Formed as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight Dr. Beeching's closure proposals in the 1960s, the Barking – Gospel Oak Line 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. A copy of BGOLUG's briefing to Jeremy Corbyn MP can be found at http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130205_electrification_Jeremy_Corbyn.pdf.
2. 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.

3. Project development

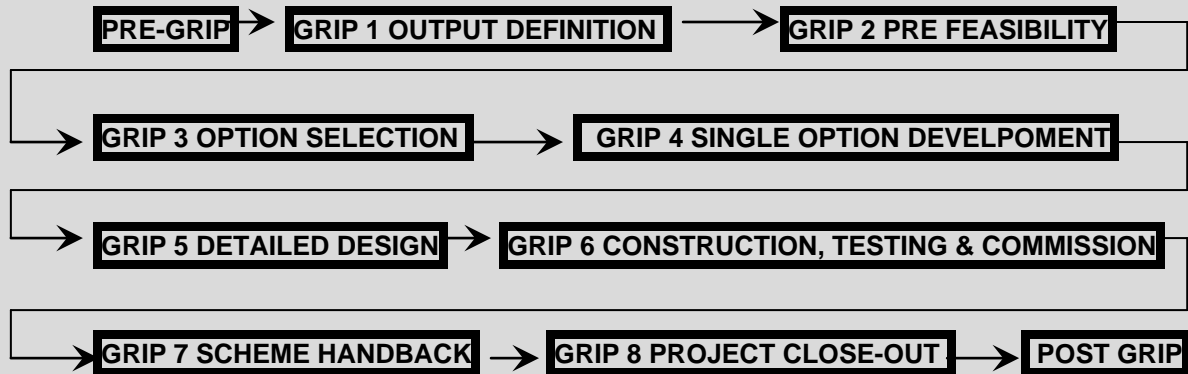
Our projects are managed through the Governance of Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) framework. The constituent projects are at varying stages of development within this framework. The final specification for each project and the construction plan are not confirmed until completion of GRIP 4





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GRIP STAGES 1 – 8 OVERVIEW



The GRIP framework is a multistage process that runs from pre-project definition through to full construction and project close-out. The earlier stages of GRIP are associated with project definition, pre-feasibility, and option selection. It is estimated from these GRIP stages that have informed the majority of enhancement projects that are new to CP5 (funds set out in the HLOS are given fixed level of funding for Network Rail to deliver against within CP5, consequently it is not appropriate to provide a full list of projects for each fund at this stage).

A recent review by Nichol's (the independent reporter) concluded that: '.....RUS and GRIP are robust processes that are comparable to good practice in other delivery organisations.'

Source: Network Rail Strategic Business Plans 2014-2019 *Enhancements*

4. An industry source advised BGOLUG:

The existing Class 172^[2] engines do not comply with the latest emissions regulations, which have moved from Stage 3a to 3b. This would require some redesign and possibly exhaust after-treatment which would indeed be difficult to fit in, but not impossible. For a small number of vehicles the cost would probably be prohibitive, but that is not the main factor in not purchasing more DMUs. Electrification is the obvious answer for Gospel Oak – Barking so the chances of a new DMU running for many years on the route have to be small. After that the leasing company has to market them up against much cheaper and more efficient older units, unhindered by new emissions regulations since these are not retrospective.

*Bearing in mind there is only so much money, would you buy DMUs or EMUs?
(DMU = Diesel Multiple Unit; EMU = Electric Multiple Unit)*

5. See http://www.barking-gospel oak.org.uk/history/20130311_London_Assembly_letter.pdf and to read the London Assembly's press release see http://www.london.gov.uk/media/press_releases_london_assembly/chancellor-urged-fund-gospel-oak-barking-line-electrification-budget.

6. The London Assembly Transport Committee recently responded to a BGOLUG request and wrote to the Office of Rail Regulation calling for the electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line to be funded and proceeded with in its Periodic Review for Control Period 5 2014-2019. http://www.barking-gospel oak.org.uk/history/20130213_GLA_Transport_Comittee_comments.pdf

