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TfL fined £25m over Jubilee line delays



Penalty fare: Transport for London has had to pay about £25 million over delays to the Jubilee line upgrade

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Transport for London has had to pay about £25 million in penalties to Canary Wharf's owner because of delays to the Jubilee line upgrade.

Canary Wharf Group, housing the European HQs of global banks, ploughed hundreds of millions into the Jubilee line project in the late Nineties.

As part of the deal it demanded strict performance figures be reached by the end of 2009. But a series of failures and delays as a result of the failed public-private partnership agreement meant its deadline was not met and TfL has been paying it huge fines ever since.

Transport bosses agreed in the original deal between CWG and London Underground that "new signalling and train control systems will be introduced, enabling a service of up to 30 trains per hour in the morning and evening peak hours by December 2009".

Work on the line was delayed four times and the upgrade project has repeatedly been described as a "fiasco" by critics on the London Assembly. The delays cost nearly £16 million in lost fares as a result of weekend line closures, it emerged last year.

The Standard understands that although the penalties are continuing, the last fine will be paid in March when the Jubilee timetable changes - allowing 30 trains to run every hour.

Lib-Dem Assembly member Caroline Pidgeon, who chairs the transport committee, told the Standard: "Users of the Jubilee line have faced years of misery as the upgrade programme over-ran. "To learn now that millions of pounds has been shelled out to Canary Wharf Group, while passengers have not been compensated, adds insult to injury."

More than 30 million passengers have been affected by repeated closures of the line at weekends.

CWG said: "There have been penalties but they are not related to disruption, rather to the performance capability of the line prior to the upgrade."

The group is now part-financing the Crossrail station at Canary Wharf. TfL said: "There was no credible plan to complete the Jubilee line upgrade under the legacy we inherited from the former PPP arrangements.

"We have quickly turned that around, completing the upgrade in July 2011 and increasing capacity and reliability for our passengers.

"More trains are being run on the line than ever before and further trains will come into operation this spring to deliver a total increase in capacity of 33 per cent, providing space for an extra 12,500 passengers every hour. CWG has made a financial contribution towards the cost of the improvements and upgrade of the Jubilee line."

Ms Pidgeon added: "It is time the Mayor and TfL were honest with Londoners over the real cost of this long-standing fiasco.

"We are entitled to know the details of every penny that has been spent."

Clashing carriages 'are safe'

Jubilee line carriages are crashing together as trains slow down, severely jolting the passengers inside, because couplings are wearing out.

Bodywork on the trains is damaged when the ends of the carriages smack together, particularly when slowing to come into stations.

London Underground today said safety was not being threatened. An overhaul of the 15-year-old fleet will take until the end of June, only weeks before the start of the Olympics, for which the line is the main Tube route.

A source claimed that 12 trains of the 63-strong fleet have had to be taken out of service for the hydraulically operated couplings to be replaced.

A senior source said: "Some carriages have severe dents in them where they have come

together violently as the train decelerates. Not surprisingly, this alarms the passengers."

The line was converted to automatic train operation last June. Nigel Holness, LU network services director, said: "This wear and tear is entirely consistent with trains of this age and is not related to the increase in speed of trains as a result of the upgrade. It poses no safety risk."

He insisted no trains had been taken out of service because of the problem. "As part of our maintenance regime we have begun replacing the parts," he said. "This maintenance is having no impact on service."

LU has failed in its promise to have "visible and helpful" staff at many ticket barriers, a London TravelWatch survey found.

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