

Boris Johnson pledges to introduce driverless tube trains within two years

Boris Johnson has pledged to introduce driverless trains on the London Underground network to prevent transport unions holding the capital to ransom with “pointless” drivers’ strikes.



Boris Johnson has vowed to use driveless trains to combat the unions

By [Murray Wardrop](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/murray-wardrop/) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/murray-wardrop/>)



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The Mayor of London said some key lines would be fully automated within two years, with several others served entirely by driverless trains by 2018.

The move will intensify the row between Mr Johnson and drivers’ unions over the series of strikes which have disrupted travel for millions of commuters in recent years.

“I don’t want to sound confrontational but if there’s going to have to be a fight over this then I’m the person that can do it,” Mr Johnson said in an interview with the [Evening Standard](http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-24038821-boris-makes-his-case-for-driverless-tubes.do) (<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-24038821-boris-makes-his-case-for-driverless-tubes.do>) .

The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) already uses driverless trains. Automatic Tube trains also run on the Victoria, Central and Jubilee lines, but they are still manned by drivers.

Under Mr Johnson's plans, the Northern line will be fully automated by 2014 and the Metropolitan, Circle and Hammersmith and City lines will follow suit in 2018.

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This would mean the majority of the network would be served by driverless trains by the end of the decade.

Mr Johnson added: "The revenue that comes into the DLR from automation, from making sure that you don't have personnel doing things that are unnecessary, greatly exceeds the cost of running it.

"You can use that revenue to invest in new systems. I want to be the mayor who delivers that."

Mr Johnson has previously had to contend with 23 London Underground strikes during his four years in office.

The RMT union described driverless trains as "lethal and unworkable", while Aslef, Britain's biggest drivers' union, said it would "vigorously" fight any attempts to eliminate the need for drivers.

"I want to stress that in making these reforms of the Tube, I believe it's going to be possible to work with the unions," he said.

In a thinly-veiled attack on his rival Ken Livingstone over his links with transport unions, Mr Johnson added: "There may be some union bosses who won't agree but I'm not funded by them and I'm not supported by them."

Mr Johnson also refused to rule out running for a third term as Mayor despite claims of a bid for the Conservative Party leadership.

He said he "regrets" previously saying he would serve a maximum of two terms.

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