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TfL ready to order more trains from Bombardier

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Bombardier's Derby train building plant will see its order book bolstered shortly with Transport for London on the verge of signing contracts for new London Overground rolling stock.

Next week's TfL Finance and Policy Committee meeting is expected to advise the TfL board to authorise the purchase of new Class 378 trains and the signing of leases to 2027 for this additional rolling stock .

The new trains are required as part of the London Overground Capacity Improvement Programme which will extend existing four carriage services to five cars by December 2014. This follows a 160% increase in demand for travel on the old Silverlink Metro routes since 2007, when TfL gained responsibility for running services on the lines, and which rises to 280% when the extended East London line, now also part of the Overground network, is factored in. Demand is forecast to increase by a further 25% on the existing Overground network by 2021.

TfL says discussions have taken place with Bombardier Transportation and QW Leasing regarding the additional carriages plus two new trains that will allow East London line service frequencies to be increased. Discussions have also taken place with the European Investment Bank which may be prepared to part-finance the additional rolling stock.

Commercial details regarding the train order will be discussed in private during the Finance and Policy Committee meeting next Wednesday (23 January). London Overground currently has 57 4-car Class 378 Capitalstars which suggests that to create 5-car trains the new order will be for 67 carriages, including the two new 5-car sets, with an approximate value of £60m.

To allow 5-car trains to operate a number of infrastructure requirements will be required and the committee is also expected to approve these at the meeting. Works will include additional stabling at Silwood Triangle and Willesden; reconfiguration of New Cross Gate and Willesden maintenance depots; platform extensions, signalling and associated system works; and enhancement of turn-back sidings.

Design for the infrastructure improvements is currently progressing from GRIP 3 to GRIP 4 and invitations to tender for the enabling works will be issued by the end of January 2013. Main works will be tendered from March and awarded in July to allow construction to start in September this year.

TfL says the benefit:cost ratio for the five carriage option is better than any other feasible train lengthening option, as the engineering challenge and costs increase disproportionately with increases in train length. It says that it may be desirable to provide further additional capacity by the mid 2020s and this ties in with both the end of the current rolling stock lease arrangements and potential changes connected with High Speed 2. As part of the London Overground Capacity Improvement Programme provision is being made to accommodate 6-car trains where reasonably practical.

Capitalstar Class 378: Bombardier will build new carriages to create 5-car train set



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