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Five-car Overground plan moves ahead

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LONDON OVERGROUND is set to have its fleet enlarged by the end of next year, if plans now being considered by Transport for London go ahead.

It's been revealed that there have been discussions about more trains and vehicles with Bombardier in Derby, which built the present Class 378 fleet a few years ago, and also with the Overground ROSCO, QW Leasing.

The additional investment is being proposed because Overground passenger figures are rising sharply and are projected to increase by another 25 per cent within a decade.

TfL says London Overground passenger figures have risen from 33 million a year on the former Silverlink Metro network to 88 million now. When the modernised East London Line is added, the annual total is almost 128 million.

The TfL Business Plan envisages the lengthening of all 57 Class 378 units to five cars from the December 2014 timetable. There may also be up to five additional trains, which would again be of five cars. The costs have not been revealed, but seem likely to be at least £120 million for the rolling stock, with infrastructure and depot upgrades on top.

A report to be considered by TfL's Finance and Policy Committee on 23 January says: 'Extra capacity (longer and more frequent trains) has already been provided, as the level of growth is in line with forecasts, but there is now severe overcrowding on some sections of the network at peak times. Demand is forecast to increase by a further 25 per cent on the existing Overground network by 2021, based on population and employment projections in the London Plan. If left unaddressed, widespread severe overcrowding is expected to occur.'

Upgrades in the plan include additional stabling at Silwood Triangle and Willesden, reconfiguration of the depots at New Cross Gate and Willesden to accommodate a five-car fleet, platform extensions, signalling and associated work. Various infrastructure upgrades would also be needed, particularly the lengthening of turnback sidings.

A planning application for new sidings at Silwood Triangle was submitted to the London Borough of Lewisham on 30 November, and the council has sent TfL a 'positive pre-application advice letter'. The Committee will also be told that negotiations are well advanced to purchase land next to the existing depot at New Cross Gate.

If the Committee gives the green light, the plans will then be passed to the main TfL Board for final approval, probably before the end of the month.

The discussions have been taking place as it was revealed that the new Overground link across south London from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction carried its one millionth passenger on 10 January, having been open exactly a month.

Transport for London's chief operating officer for rail, Howard Smith, said: "The popularity of the new service across south London is as we expected given that it connects the major interchange of Clapham Junction in the west with the developing area of east London. Demand has been growing steadily since it opened."

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Paul, London

Overground would never be able to take over Bromley North branch, owing to the obstacle that is the full to capacity tracks between New Cross and St Johns. So this is an unrealisable dream I'm afraid. I understand the chosen solution is to extend the DLR from Lewisham to a new combined station at Catford and then on to Grove Park where it will use the alignment to Bromley North.

And to all those northerners complaining about this investment, Greater Manchester had the chance to create a Mayor that would have fought for investment as Johnson does and Livingstone did before - but spurned it. I also recall Manchester voted against the road charging scheme that would have funded improvements to public transport. So it's no wonder public transport investment flows to London where it actively encouraged and used wholesale.

MikeB, Liverpool

John Gilbert.

I understand that, if Northern do hire locos (DRS Class 47s!) and coaches, it will come into effect BEFORE the electrification is actually complete. Therefore, it will have to be diesel haulage.

Garth, Chippenham

Far better to put loco & coaches on the Manchester - Scotland route, it could perhaps then be considered an intercity route once again, instead of outer-suburban. That of course comes into the too difficult category.



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[Overground 'M25' circle is complete](#)



Don't stay silent, talk to **CIRAS**



Melvyn Windebank, Canvey Island, Essex

It seems the same mistake put hat happened when the DLR was built has been repeated with the Overground namely not building/upgrading stations to allow for future growth. A policy of do it cheap spend much more!

As to stations then TfL should look model used on the DLR and upgrade smaller stations like Kensal Rise to the DLR model with full platform length roofs and lifts and where demand exists escalators to create stations fit for to-day and not the 19th Century!

I have read that 5 carriages is the maximum length these trains can become? If this is true then how do we cope with future growth?

The success of the South London Line extension proves how right it was to replace the old service that only used two carriage trains which only were full in rush hours.

As to the South London Line completing the circle well if the service was further extended from Clapham Junction to Richmond an even bigger second circle would be created!

Before Boris became Mayor suggestions that the Crystal Palace service should be extended to Clapham Junction were made, if this did happen and was extended to Victoria it would re-instate some links recently lost and with Overground into Victoria and Euston would help the build the case form Crossrail 2!

Finally, extension of the New Cross branch to either Hayes or Bromley North would bring major benefits to South East London with better access to Canary Wharf with a single change at Canada Water.

(TfL is also considering six-car trains for Overground in due course, so five is not apparently the limit.—Editor.)

John Gilbert, Cradley, Herefordshire

If loco-hauled trains are to be used between Manchester and Blackpool can we PLEASE have them electrically-hauled? It would be just like the wet lot running things in this benighted country to use diesels. (After all diesels were used to haul the new Pendolino coaches from the Channel Tunnel to Manchester over wholly electrified lines!!! Mad - they're mad!)

Gerard, London

Extending the New Cross branch would be useful but extending it to Hither Green via St Johns and Lewisham would be a great idea also extending the DLR to Bromley North from Lewisham via Hither Green and Grove Park would be brilliant then if the plan goes ahead with the Bakerloo Line extension south of Elephant to Lewisham then taking over the Hayes Branch would bring South London a brilliant number of Connections

Darren P, Newcastle

New Trains for the South! and this is News? re-engineered 319's for Manchester? I'm half expecting them to just patch them up and a lick of paint! One point they were talking about refurbishing the 319's prior to cascade but with budget cuts we'll just be given the trains as is and told to make do and be lucky we have trains which are less than 30 years old!

Richard, Maidenhead

Best solution for Bromley North would be to extend the Overground from New Cross, with a flyover north of Grove Park to access the branch. TfL could take over St Johns.

MikeB, Liverpool

Whilst good news, the Thameslink debacle drags on with no sign of a resolution and, as a consequence, it is doubtful that Northern will have any re-engineered Class 319s for the completion of the Lancashire Triangle electrification scheme. It is now rumoured that loco-hauled stock is being considered as a stop-gap for Manchester - Blackpool services, to allow 150s and 156s to be used to alleviate overcrowded commuter services.

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