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## TfL 'increasingly successful', but fare rises loom

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TRANSPORT FOR LONDON is described as 'increasingly successful and efficient' in its provision of services in the third annual report of the Independent Investment Programme Advisory Group.

Meanwhile TfL is bracing itself for a reaction from passengers when many fares rise later this month.

The advisory group was formed in May 2010 by the Mayor of London and the Secretary of State and is responsible for providing independent assurance and expert advice to the Mayor on the economy, efficiency and value for money of the TfL Investment Programme.

That programme includes, among other things, the modernisation and capacity increases of the Underground and London Overground and the increased development of commercial opportunities on TfL's estate.

The report identifies several projects which it commends for best practice, including the Victoria line upgrade, London Underground's track replacement programme, where a very good safety record has been achieved, and the upgrade at Bank station, where costs have been trimmed without reducing the effectiveness of the scheme.

However, TfL remains under fire over fares, although this month's increases are slightly lower than first expected, at an average of 2.7 per cent. Originally they were to be 3.1 per cent, but the Chancellor's decision to cap National Rail regulated increases at last July's RPI of 3.1 per cent caused TfL to think again.

TfL increases have also been delayed as a result of the recalculation. They should have come into force by now but instead will start on 19 January.

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#### James Palma, London

New trains and upgrading the network takes time and believe it or not, money. Who is going to pay for these? The fare payer, so the fare payer, of which I am one, needs to put their collective hands in pockets to pay for improvements to their/our services. But the company needs to manage that money effectively.

As such only a limited quantity of upgrading and new trains can be supplied at any one time, and to the best of my knowledge there are plans in place to upgrade the Bakerloo and Piccadilly, once the upgrading of the SSL network and trains is complete. Imagine doing all that work and testing new trains all at the same time, talk about disruption and throwing money away.

And with regard to ordering trains without drivers cab? Not a problem.

Central, Victoria and Jubilee line trains now drive themselves, with the driver's role being to push buttons to close the doors. Yes, there are arguments about other responsibilities, but lets be realistic here to day basis, across the majority of the automatic network, that is what happens. The driver's role should be as it is on the DLR, where it is good to see a person behind the voice, who is approachable and is able to answer questions, immediately, not after wandering round a deep level station for ages, not sat in a dark cab behind a door, which people may not even realise is there and with a barrier between the tunnel wall and the cab side to stop people getting to the cab anyway!

My argument is based on experience and very good knowledge of the LU system and its working, not bravado, or protecting my job, or making a statement politically or otherwise.

#### Melvyn Windebank, Canvey Island, Essex

It's the failure of Mayor Boris to order any new underground trains since he became Mayor nearly six years ago that is now causing problems to decide on what to order next !

The oldest tube trains are now on the Bakerloo Line but that line does not have a large passenger usage and so new trains for it can't be justified !

The Piccadilly Line also needs new trains and usage justifying this but it would be a large order making orders for other lines less likely but with a combination of growth of users and modernisation that allows more trains to run than are available for service then more trains for Jubilee and Northern Lines ( with Battersea Extension and split of Northern Line upping further trains needed !). One possibility for Piccadilly Line might be to transfer Rayners Lane branch to District Line and order for "S" Stock trains if they will fit and change Piccadilly Line to largely run to Heathrow with part service to Ealing Broadway to replace District Line. One advantage would be all S stock operation between Rayners Lane to Uxbridge !

So what to do - given Northern and Jubilee Lines use similar trains then a order for say 20 trains of the type now used might provide a solution but would such a small order be justified and at what cost?

One radical solution would be a new larger fleet for jubilee line ( although doors that align with PEDS on JLE would be needed!) releasing current stock to up total on Northern Line and maybe replace Bakerloo Line trains?

It looks like whoever becomes Mayor in two years time has not got the same benefits Boris got from Ken with new S stock and Victoria Line trains on order !

With development of Crossrail / Thameslink schemes and expanded Overground perhaps its time to look at whether tube network needs reconfigured outline combining outer London above sections with main network and confinement of tube size trains to tunnelled sections ?

One final thought I doubt if boasts of " not ordering trains with a drivers cab will soon be broken !".

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