

London's orbital railway gets the green light



Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor have reached agreement with the Department for Transport (DfT) on a funding package to build phase two of the East London line extension.

The project will link Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction at a cost of around £75m. It will form part of London Overground, and will extend the high standards provided on TfL's existing services to other parts of the Capital's rail network, particularly in south London.

The extension will create an orbital railway around the Capital,

providing direct links to the City and Docklands.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson said: 'This is tremendous news. We can finally get cracking on a vital section of track that will orbitise our Overground rail services.'

'I promised Londoners that, where funds were made available, we would build the improvements they need.'

Phase two will run through Southwark, Lambeth, Wandsworth and Lewisham, providing four trains an hour in each direction between Clapham Junction, Surrey Quays and Dalston Junction.

Peter Hendy, **Transport Commissioner**

'The extension to Clapham Junction will provide significantly improved access to the City and Docklands and will allow us to extend the high standards provided on our existing London Overground network – staff at all stations, Oyster pay as you go, frequent services – to south Londoners.'

Ian Brown, **Managing Director London Rail**

'This agreement on funding means we can complete the missing link in our London Overground orbital network – a rail equivalent of the M25.'

Inside • Blackfriars improvements underway • More Overground trains promised • LEZ reprieve announced



Major improvements begin at Blackfriars

Blackfriars station is undergoing a major overhaul as part of Network Rail and the DfT's commitment to upgrade the Thameslink network.

As part of this project, the Tube station closed on 2 March and will not re-open until late 2011, as much of the foundation work for the mainline station rebuild will take place at Underground level.

The work will improve interchange facilities between the Tube and National Rail services. Enhancements will include step-free access, an enlarged Underground ticket hall and better access to refurbished platforms.

The Tube station will be rebuilt with a new control room, ticket hall, plus enhanced customer information and security systems.

London made easier with Google

The popular Google maps have successfully helped people find their way around the Capital. Now, thanks to a partnership with TfL, they are even easier to use.

Google has used the famous Underground map to show Tube stations and lines in relation to London, illustrating the relationship and distances between streets, buildings and major attractions.

Once users have searched for their chosen London location, they can click on the 'more' option on the right-hand side of the screen. By selecting 'transit' they can see the Tube lines laid over their map.

To try it out, go to www.google.co.uk/maps

TfL campaign warns of drug driving risks

Nine per cent of young London drivers think it is acceptable to drive after using cannabis, new research has revealed.

The study was conducted on behalf of TfL at the end of last year. The findings have been released to support the latest campaign aimed at young drivers who speed, drive without insurance or drive under the influence of drugs.

In 2007, 17 to 25-year-olds were involved in 555 collisions in London that resulted in a death or serious injury.

Chris Lines, Head of the London Road Safety Unit at TfL, said: 'It seems that some young drivers wrongly believe that using drugs will have no effect on their ability to drive. This couldn't be further from the truth.'

Fast fact

Penalties for drug driving are the same as for drink driving. Offenders face six months in prison, a £5,000 fine and the loss of their licence for at least 12 months.



Fresh perspectives: plan your London travel with Google

Upgrade promises more Overground trains

Work is now underway on the London Overground upgrade to double the current number of trains on some parts of the network.

The £326m scheme, which will be carried out over 18 months, will mean various services will need to be suspended at different times. However, TfL

will run replacement buses.

When work is complete, there will be longer platforms at stations to allow more carriages per train, which will increase capacity and reduce overcrowding. The changes will boost transport links in east London ahead of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For travel information, go to tfl.gov.uk/travelnews

Fast fact

London Overground will run up to eight trains an hour during peak times on parts of the network when the upgrade is complete, with a more reliable timetable.

LEZ reprieve for smaller vehicles

Mayor Boris Johnson is planning to suspend the third phase of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) due to its financial impact on small businesses already hard hit by the recession.

Phase three, due to begin in October 2010, would mean around 90,000 owners of smaller vans and minibuses who use the LEZ each year, would face a bill of up to £2,000 for pollution abatement equipment, or £15,000 for a new vehicle. The alternative would be a £100 daily charge or fine of £500 for entering the zone.

Any proposed changes are subject to public consultation and will need to be confirmed by the Mayor once he has reviewed the outcome. TfL is advising that those affected should not take any action until the results of the consultation are confirmed.

View the New Bus for London designs

The winning designs and up to 50 other entries from the New Bus for London competition are on display at London Transport Museum in Covent Garden until 29 March.

The free exhibition, which is open on weekends, is part of the 'Magic Bus' season at the Museum, comprising a series of talks and events for children and adults.

For more information, go to www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whatson



Winning entries from the New Bus for London competition

Taxi fare increase



An average taxi fare increase of 3.4 per cent for the next financial year will come into effect on 4 April.

The rise will help taxi drivers maintain their earnings and cover increased operating costs, which have risen by 3.7 per cent this year. The price of diesel fuel also rose by 4.1 per cent.

Ed Thompson, Taxi and Private Hire Director at TfL's Public Carriage Office, said: 'These new fares take into account the increased costs over the year of running a black cab. The increase reflects changes in national average earnings and encourages taxi drivers to provide a top quality service in London.'

A 40p metered extra will also be charged if fuel prices hit 147.1p per litre between 4 April 2009 and 1 January 2010.

Visitor Oyster on Stansted Express

Passengers buying tickets for the Stansted Express can now purchase a Visitor Oyster card thanks to a new deal with TfL.

The agreement means people arriving at the airport terminal or station can buy a Visitor Oyster card with their ticket. By doing this, they can easily access the Capital's buses and Tubes without needing to queue for a ticket when they arrive in London.

The Visitor Oyster card is pre-



loaded with £10 pay as you go credit, and people can easily top up their credit at Tube stations, Travel Information Centres and newsagents across London. Also, there is no time limit to the card so it can be used for future visits to the city.

Extra funding promised for key Exhibition Road tourist area

TfL is to provide an extra £10m for major improvements to Exhibition Road in west London's museum quarter.

It will be a major boost to the £3.3m already committed by TfL

as part of its 10-year Business Plan. The funding will enable work to start earlier than planned on improving access and the environment around the area's key visitor attractions. The transformation will be complete by the end of 2011.

Chesham Tube services improved

London Underground has announced that Tube users will get direct services all day between Chesham and central London, following a consultation last year.

The through-services are planned to start in 2011 after new trains are delivered on the Metropolitan line. The new service will also make using the line more convenient for off-peak passengers.

For more information

Further details are available from: Group Government & Stakeholder Relations, Transport for London, Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL. Telephone: 020 7126 4126, email: gsl@tfl.gov.uk

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