

**AN ENDURING LEGACY**

**EAST LONDON LINE GROUP  
1990-2010**



**ITS WORK TO ACHIEVE  
A NEW REGENERATION  
RAILWAY**

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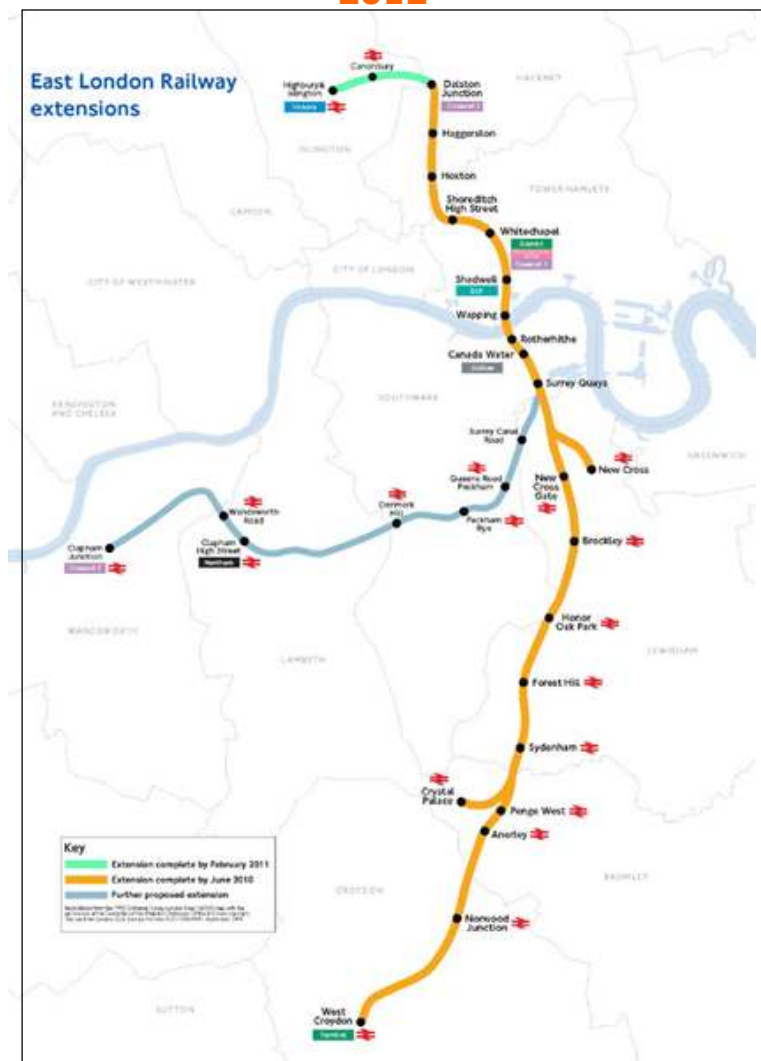
## THE EAST LONDON LINE GROUP 1990-2010

### ITS WORK TO ACHIEVE A NEW REGENERATION RAILWAY

1990



2012



This short history sets out the efforts and successes of the East London Line Group. The East London Line extensions for which the Group has campaigned are either open or well under way.

The new system of getting around much of North, East and South London is part of London's first truly orbital railway network, and creates the 'regeneration railway' which has been the Group's underlying objective.

## **The East London Line Group's purposes**

The ELLG always subscribed to a specific mission. The Group was a joint body representing the common interests of the London Boroughs, local businesses and developers, regeneration agencies and public/private partnerships along the route of London Underground's East London Line and its planned and proposed extensions.

It aimed to achieve the earliest possible construction of the East London Line Extensions, for the strong regeneration benefits, the extra transport capacity and the overall value for money.

It has been a 20 year story, based on an initial project created by London Underground.

Supporting and stimulating a new urban transit system needed in outline just 4 miles of new and reopened railway. Would the Group have still done it, if we'd known how long, tortuous and fraught the task would be? Yes we would! – though everyone wished it could have been a much quicker and simpler process to open the line.

What has sustained the Group throughout the 20 years has been the certainty that extension of the East London Line is a vital, unifying regeneration project for London and its suburbs. This belief has stimulated excellent working relations between local boroughs, private sector bodies and partnerships, alongside our many friends and allies across London's political parties and the diverse communities of stakeholders and supporters.

The end result is a railway which creates new links and access to jobs and education. It also provides a huge boost to local economies as part of urban renewal and economic growth.

## **Origins of the East London Line Group**

The Group, formed in 1990-91, has always been a multi-sector organisation. It merged local boroughs seeking regeneration and transport improvements, developers needing and benefiting from new transport capacity and accessibility and sub-regional partnerships focused on social and economic renewal.

### **London railway projects around 1990 – large scale schemes**

There had been huge interest in the preceding years in new railway projects linked to economic growth and renewal, now that the London economy was resurging from its mid 1980s depression. A study of Underground capacity and the 1989 Central London Rail Study focused on new radial lines via Central London, including Crossrail, Thameslink 2000, Jubilee Line Extension.

The government enforced links between transport projects, developers and other beneficiaries, and expected significant funding contributions from those interests.

The Canary Wharf development scheme had been re-invigorated under the leadership of the Canada-based Reichmann brothers and sought a new Central London tube from Waterloo. It offered £400m instead of promoting its own private sector tube railway. This focused the Government's and London Underground's attention onto a modified Jubilee Line Extension (JLE), with other schemes taking a slower pace.

In 1990, the East London Rail Study enabled competing bids between development interests about which route the JLE extension would take east of Canary Wharf.

### **London railway projects around 1990 – smaller schemes**

The Greater London Council had been abolished in 1986 so there was no authority to define priorities across the capital city, while London Regional Transport was a nationalised business under detailed Government control.

This meant that the case for other, smaller projects in East London had to be argued by local combinations of boroughs and other partners. They needed to persuade central organisations of the merits of their case.

The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) was stimulating new access proposals. Docklands Light Railway (DLR) had opened Stage 1 in 1987, and powers were granted for the Beckton extension in 1989. A City Extension was under way, funded by the previous Canary Wharf project. Campaigning led by Lewisham Council stimulated a DLR extension giving direct cross-river access to Canary Wharf.

The willingness of local boroughs and new City Challenge agencies to find £10m (8% of the project) convinced Roger Freeman MP (Minister of State for Transport) to allow a parliamentary bill for the DLR Lewisham project in 1990. A bill for Croydon Tramlink was allowed to begin on a similar basis that year.

There was good reason for feeder routes to the riverside regeneration area, especially Canary Wharf. However Inner London accessibility was less important if it wasn't related to Docklands. The arc of deprivation to the east of London had its local needs and opportunities mostly ignored.

## Initial plans for East London Line extensions

The new corporate structure within the Underground resulted in the ELL general manager only having a few stations to manage. So in 1988 he looked to extend his railway!

Making better use of this short distance cross-river shuttle had been in planners' minds since the 1970s, when authorised plans for the Fleet / Jubilee Line to serve Lewisham were withdrawn once a Docklands tube became a higher priority.

The initial ELL extensions were primarily devised as a transport opportunity to use the recently closed (1986) Broad Street railway viaduct northwards towards Dalston. Southwards it would use a long-closed alignment between Surrey Quays and Peckham<sup>1</sup>.

It was a transport answer seeking justification for its offer. What were the economic and social renewal questions which it could answer? In the absence of a strong national or regional funding arrangement for regeneration, the rationales needed to be devised by the local boroughs, interested developers and sub-regional partnerships.

Developers were at that time keen to stimulate early progress with an ELL extension, because of major property development opportunities at the former Brick Lane Brewery at Shoreditch and at Bishopsgate Goods Yard. Local boroughs and



partnerships also saw the transport, social, economic and regeneration benefits.

London Underground, whose idea was crystallising into a potential Highbury-Peckham shuttle, saw the transport case for the railway but could not go ahead with a Parliamentary Bill because the scale of developer contributions was not sufficient.

### The old railway legacy attracting developers

Frustrated with the continual drip-feed of high aspirations but minimal progress, the founding members of the East London Line Group (ELLG) decided in 1990 that London Underground needed a strong 'supporters club' to advance the case for the project. They would be unconstrained by the formal relationship that London Underground and its parent, London Regional Transport, had with the Department of Transport. London Underground also welcomed the creation of the Group.

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<sup>1</sup> Studies for a Liverpool Street – Whitechapel – Surrey Quays – Peckham route had been undertaken in 1986 by British Rail.

An important catalyst for the Group's *formal* creation was a remark by Roger Freeman MP. On a visit to Bishopsgate Goods Yard on Friday 27 September 1991, he implied "If you want this railway, you'll need to lobby for it".

"East London Line Case", written by Michael Schabas in February 1992, summarises the early project and its context.

## Group membership

Organisations supporting the foundation of the East London Line Group were:

- Local Boroughs: Hackney, Islington, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets
- Development interests: Grand Metropolitan Estates (Brick Lane property), London & Edinburgh Trust and British Rail Property Board (Bishopsgate Goods Yard), London Docklands Development Corporation (Docklands access and property)
- Training and regeneration interests: Bethnal Green City Challenge; Central & Inner London North, London East, and South Thames Training & Enterprise Councils; East London Partnership; Hackney, Deptford and North Peckham Task Forces.

The initial Steering Group was chaired by Sir Alan Shepherd of Grand Metropolitan Estates. In 1994 the chairman was Bob Williams, also from Grand Met.

A Working Group of officers was established, primarily from local boroughs and development interests, with a secretariat service provided by Tower Hamlets officers.

External consultants were required from the start to provide expert advice on political and policy issues and technical evidence. Initially these were Michael Schabas (from Canary Wharf) supported by Steer Davies Gleave. The main consultancy work was led from 1993 by Jonathan Roberts and a team at Citigate, initially funded by Lewisham Council and later by the Group as a whole. An annual subscription was levied from members to pay for publicity work and consultancy.

## The first five years to 1995

The Group's immediate priorities were to:

- help all interested parties and stakeholders lobby effectively for project priority within London Regional Transport and in Government
- ensure that London Underground would be allowed to seek powers for the project
- object to the Crossrail Bill (then in Parliament) whose route would block the line of an ELL northern extension in the Whitechapel-Shoreditch area
- update the transport and regeneration cases for the scheme to form a basis for promotion and early implementation<sup>2</sup>.

Powers could be obtained by a Private Bill or a new authorising process, a Transport & Works Order (TWO) under the 1992 Transport & Works Act. Parliament was grumbling

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<sup>2</sup> A wider case needed to be argued politically, because the Department's own project valuation mechanisms were very restricted in what they would allow beyond transport-related benefits. The main extra value which could be measured was a committed financial contribution from third parties.

about the time devoted to railway Private Bills. An Order seemed simpler, with a public inquiry comparable to major road schemes.

The supportive lobbying was successful. Steve Norris MP was the Minister for Transport in London in the re-elected Conservative Government, and allowed preparatory work in 1993 by London Underground for a TWO application for the Northern extension to Dalston. The Crossrail scheme was amended to allow the two railways to co-exist in the Whitechapel-Shoreditch area.

### **Project definition during 1992-93**

One of the earliest and fundamental successes of the Group was to identify the purpose of the railway. Poor accessibility to inner London, related to road congestion, and a lack of urban railways orbiting Central London, had to be addressed. Transport was too dependent on Central London which had a finite capacity.

There was extensive discussion in 1992-93 between London Underground (LU) and the Group about the scheme to be submitted for powers. LU was hoping to bid to takeover inner London lines to create an 'Outer Circle' railway – not a quick or easy option.

Privatisation of British Rail (BR) was proceeding through a parliamentary bill at this time, emerging as the Railways Act 1993. This was likely to cause a hiatus in planning through services, so would limit the initial scope of the ELL extensions.

BR's Network South East (NSE) subsidiary had already resisted an extensive Underground extension into North and South London. For example NSE stated that ELL access into South London be limited to a short extension from Surrey Quays to Peckham Rye with a low service frequency, four trains per hour. Underground trains would have to reverse at the first available point, East Dulwich<sup>3</sup>.

Unsurprisingly this proposition offered an unattractive business case for a new Southern Extension. London Underground focused its efforts for an application on a Northern Extension from Shoreditch to Dalston Junction along the former Broad Street viaduct.

The viaduct would have two railway links. The first was a ramp from the existing ELL at Whitechapel via Bishopsgate Goods Yard to the Broad Street viaduct. This would support major redevelopment of the Goods Yard and at Brick Lane brewery, and allowed for a new Bishopsgate Central Line interchange once Crossrail was built.

The second was a link using the former track-bed beyond Dalston Junction onto the North London Line. This would enable eventual extension to Highbury & Islington or

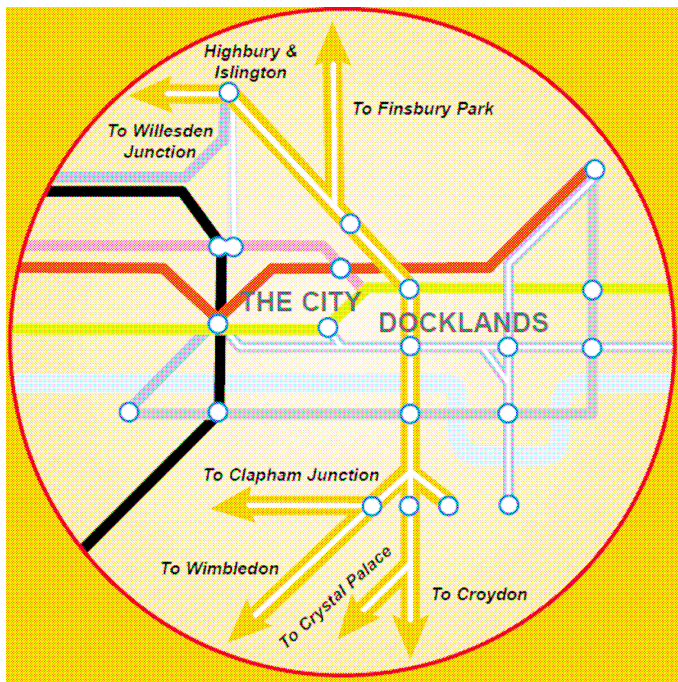
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<sup>3</sup> Options for links were reviewed between Surrey Quays and Peckham. The most practical alignment followed the former railway line, closed to passengers in 1911! Whichever routeing was adopted, the business case for this extension depended most of all on the frequency of trains and their eventual destination. Going only as far as Peckham / East Dulwich caused most of the new costs but generated insufficient benefits, so a better case would rely on going further.

beyond, if allowed. For the time being, the plan was to run an Underground shuttle service from Dalston Junction to New Cross / New Cross Gate.

The East London Line Group's position was not totally identical with London Underground. The Group gave absolute support to the route proposals, but, in developing its evidence for the public inquiry, it did not accept that the Underground was the only possible operator. If private sector train operators were to become mandatory on the main lines, then why couldn't they run on Underground tracks between North and South London via the main-line sized East London Line?

This view was augmented by the Government granting permission for a TWO application while insisting that the scheme would need to be a PFI joint venture with the private sector.



So, well before the inquiry took place in autumn 1994 at the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street, the ELLG was championing a main line 'distributor' railway orbiting Central London. Specific options for routes through the suburbs varied over the years but the core objective was a through railway not a shuttle. This maximised the spread of accessibility and economic and social benefits.

### Options for the new distributor railway

#### A turbulent two years – 1994 and 1995

1994 was a year both of progress and retrenchment. The inquiry went ahead, and the Group strongly supported the project. It also pressed for more consideration of opportunities for cost-effective through trains to serve main line destinations beyond the basic London Underground scheme. It noted the wider potential benefit if a Southern Extension were also pursued in due course.

However there were also adverse factors. The development market weakened seriously after 'Black Wednesday' in September 1992 and further wobbles in the next two years. The fundability of major infrastructure projects was thrown into doubt, whether or not schemes were linked to private sector contributions. By 1994-95, London had seen the JLE struggle to be funded and the Crossrail Bill rejected, while other projects were delayed. In those circumstances, it was fortunate that the ELL extensions were locked into a legal application for powers, and were tied in policy



terms to a PFI process which allowed project continuation even if developers were no longer able to sustain their interest.

1995 brought some hope for the project on several fronts – and also one huge scare that was nearly terminal!

On the positive side, the Northern Extension inquiry inspector submitted his report to the Department of Transport on 17 February, supporting the extension with some changes and safeguards. The Department didn't make a decision in 1995, despite lobbying, but issued a 'minded to approve' letter on 27 September, inviting further comments on proposed safeguards and amendments.

The Group was very active in supporting London Underground's initiatives to take forward the PFI / joint venture proposition. It assisted with political and stakeholder liaison, and in seeing what the Group's members could offer in the way of station works and other station site opportunities. It also helped to leverage European Objective 2 and City Challenge funding for initial regeneration of the ELL's catchments,

London Underground had reformed its corporate structure and was focused on achieving external commercial deals using its Business Development department overseen by David Bailey who in due course became LU's Commercial Director<sup>4</sup>. LU's focus was to have a broad prospectus, to stimulate commercial deals and achieve the ELL extensions project. It aimed for fast-track delivery, with no limits on service extensions – London Underground was agreeing with the Group!

This process excluded immediate action on a new TWA Order for additional extensions. However the ELLG discussed internally the right railways to be considered for extensions southwards.

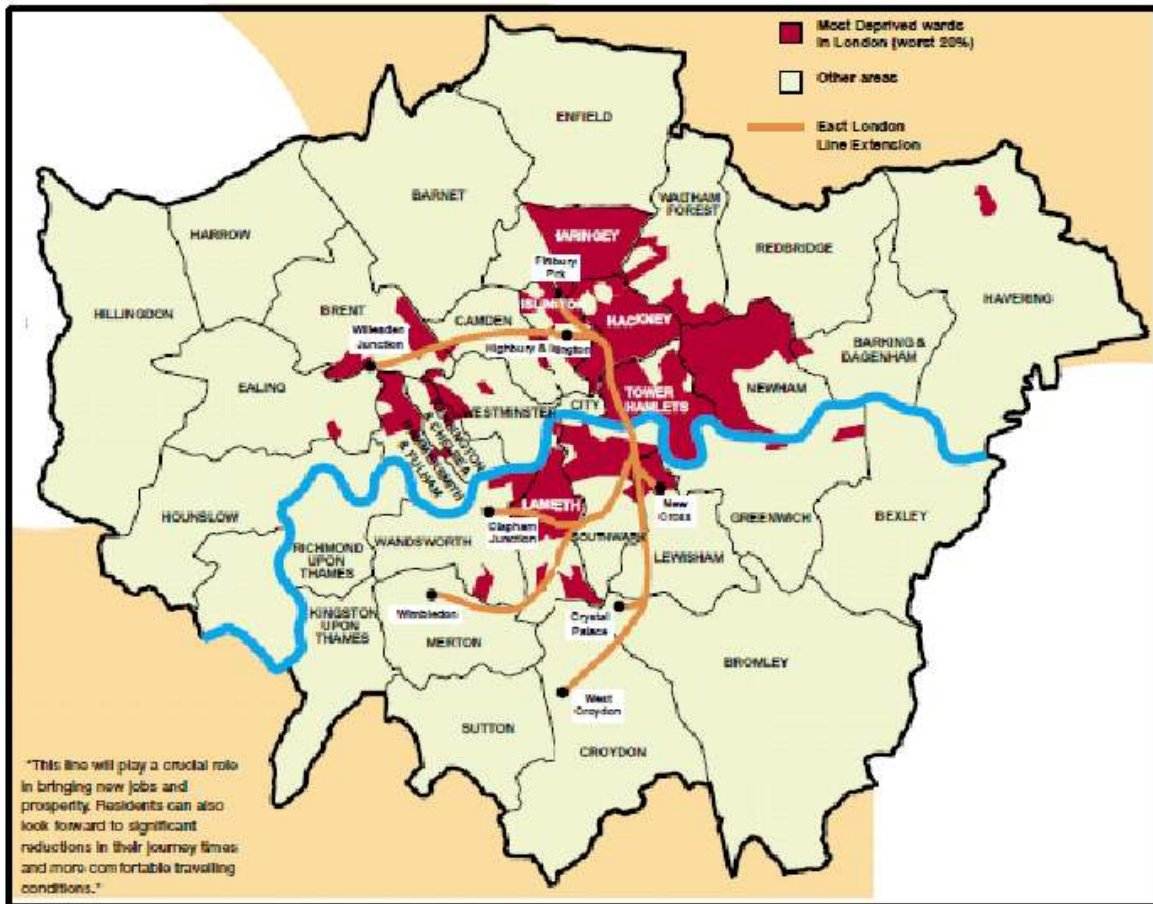
The best opportunity was for a relatively simple link into South London via New Cross Gate, and perhaps also via New Cross, as these connections required less additional work than via Peckham. It would be important to achieve through running because additional Southern termini would allow higher frequency services on the core East London Line and the Northern Extension. This should create additional business case benefits and wider economic and regeneration gains.

In consequence, the Group expanded its membership to embrace more of South London. Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Merton and Wandsworth joined in due course, along with relevant stakeholders such as the South London Partnership. The group's chairmanship had by then moved from Grand Met to Dalston City Challenge (DCC), who had a direct interest in the success of the Northern Extensions scheme. The extension was part of DCC's core objectives, as it served much of the catchment from Shoreditch to Dalston. Dr Richard Simmons served as ELLG Steering Committee chairman in 1995<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> One LU business development manager who attended an ELLG Steering Meeting was Richard Bowker, later to be Chairman and Chief Executive of the Strategic Rail Authority.

<sup>5</sup> Dr Richard Simmons is now Chief Executive at CABE.



### Regeneration is a fundamental reason for the East London Line Extensions

The East London Line Group also had discussions with Railtrack, which had taken over the national main line railway infrastructure from April 1994, and was then still a public sector business. It was clear from the start that Railtrack was less inhibited than Network South East about offering train ‘slots’ on its tracks to more users and operators – that was one way it could earn more revenue. However it would clearly take some while for Railtrack to develop a coherent process for train slot assessment and allocation, within a commercial context.

### ELL closure – nearly for ever

The nearly terminal event was the planned closure of the existing East London Line for about six months from 25 March 1995. This was to strengthen the Thames Tunnel (then over 150 years old), refurbish equipment and stations and build a new Jubilee Line Extension interchange station at Canada Water.

Major delay followed a last-minute listing of the Tunnel by English Heritage, who insisted on any strengthening retaining the Brunel design. No agreement had been reached between London Underground and English Heritage by the end of 1995 for an acceptable solution. There was a risk the line could be closed for ever. The tunnel was in the ‘Top Twenty’ of catastrophic risks for London Underground. If it failed, flooding

could affect much of the system. This was a gloomy end to 1995 for the project as a whole and for the Group.

## **From Railtrack to SRA – 1996-2000**

There was continuing worry about the Thames Tunnel closure. The Transport & Works Act Order process proved to be the very opposite of quick and simple. The Group had hopes that the London Underground PFI and Railtrack could between them achieve an effective joint venture process, and was keen to assist with defining the Southern Extensions and any further Northern Extensions, now that Railtrack was on board. It became clear that there could be a change of Government in 1996 or 1997, with other consequences for policies and priorities, so time was spent liaising with opposition parties.

The Thames Tunnel crisis was resolved in 1996 with an agreement on technical specification between London Underground and English Heritage advisers. However the bigger problem was that LU was now cash-strapped and could not afford the total bill for ELL closure and reopening without stopping other projects. The final cost of the 3-year closure and other works was over £100m.

With all of LU's 400-plus capital projects being reviewed, the East London Line Group was forced to campaign to just save the railway in early 1997, let alone secure the extension project! The underlying concern was that the line might stay closed at least until a full ELL extension project was ready to open.

The main arguments were:

- as a cross-river railway, re-opening ELL would reduce road congestion on adjoining river crossings
- the Jubilee Line Extension was under construction to support Docklands and open up inner city areas, and to stimulate access to Canary Wharf – significant benefits would be lost if the JLE could not interchange with the ELL
- much public money was invested in City Challenge and other economic and social projects in inner East and SE London - at least £190m during 1992-98. LU's use of its own public resources should align with Borough and regeneration priorities.

Fortunately the London Regional Transport Board decided to proceed with the work, in February 1997.

Powers for the Northern Extension were still awaited throughout 1996, leading to parliamentary questions and stakeholder protests to the Department of Transport about the inefficiency of its Transport & Works Unit. A second 'minded to approve' letter was issued on 13 June. The ELL extension appeared to be the unfortunate guinea pig in trialling the new Order-making procedure. A new Transport Secretary, Sir George Young MP, finally approved the powers on 13 January 1997. They came into effect on 10 February and had a five-year validity.

If decisions were taken in 1997, contracts could be let in 1998 and work finished in 2000, within the lifetime of the next Government.

Taken together, the go-ahead for the Thames Tunnel work and the Northern Extension announcement gave a fresh lease of life to positive campaigning by the Group.

The ELLG had already helped to secure support for the railway in important quarters:

- it was in the next group of schemes recommended for priority in the Government's May 1996 Transport Strategy for London (published by the Government Office for London)
- the London Planning Advisory Committee argued that it should be the next London railway project to go ahead, at the December 1996 East London Transport & Regeneration conference, where Transport Minister John Bowis MP offered his support
- high level supporters included London First, the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Central London Partnership, all of whom became East London Line Group members.

### **Railtrack as a route for funding**

£200m was thought to buy a complete railway, including the refurbishment of the existing railway and its extensions. A private finance route for funding was still essential, not least with the shortage of public sector funds. London Underground was in no position to afford the capital cost. Railtrack was privatised in May 1996, and this was seen as a good opportunity for new funding as it owned the tracks needed to reach key destinations in North and South London. London Underground hosted a PFI conference in April, inviting the private sector to participate in shaping the project.

By February 1997, the next steps were:

- Railtrack to complete its review of line capacity and potential for improvements in North and South London (due summer 1997) – options in South London included routes via Surrey Quays, New Cross Gate and New Cross
- LU to get on with discussions with Railtrack, the Rail Franchising Director and the Rail Regulator
- all parties had to agree what constituted the best project to put out to tender
- the new Government should give top priority to the full ELL extensions and agree a funding contribution to secure the project's financial go-ahead as the next London rail project.

A franchise framework would need to be developed for the East London Line operations – would it be part of an existing franchise or a new one? Clearly everyone was having to adapt to the new privatised railway terminology and its basis of operating and project permissions!

With Group support, Lewisham Council prepared a brochure advocating a Southern Extension to East Croydon via Forest Hill. Meanwhile the Labour Party mapped out a 'Rail M25' including an extended ELL via Surrey Quays – Peckham. Powers for a Southern Extension might be secured as part of the Thameslink 2000 scheme.

1997 turned out not to be a breakthrough year, but with a General Election the Group was busy briefing stakeholders and parliamentarians about the potential for an early win with extensions. The Group wasn't alone. London business organisations such as London First and London Chamber of Commerce & Industry were concerned about the shortfall in transport capacity which was stifling the capital city economy.

It was likely that the next Government might be led by Labour, whose front benchers were advocating strong intervention in public transport with a 10 year Transport Plan

and large scale investment in publicly important projects. Rail privatisation might also be reversed.

Of necessity the ELLG was lobbying the opposition, while ensuring the scheme stayed alive with the existing government. The TWO process had been a huge disappointment in overall timescale. It had at least deferred difficult decisions into the path of the new government. There might then be freer thinking about how the inner London networks were opened up. The Group was now liaising with Railtrack as well as London Underground.

On 25 March 1998<sup>6</sup> the ELL reopened to passengers. This marked the start of a new life for the railway, the communities it served and the ELLG. Group members helped with LU's marketing campaign and within 10 weeks of re-opening the line had regained its pre-closure traffic and passenger numbers were still increasing.

There was an emerging need to reinforce relationships with higher levels of London government, as the incoming Labour government in May 1997 had committed to reinstate a regional tier of government in London.

Richard Simmons had stepped down as Group chairman and became Director of Development and Environment at Medway Council. His successor, Tony Hawkhead, chief executive of the East London Partnership, was chairman for a short while before becoming chief executive of Groundwork UK.

A search for a new chairman revealed Archie Galloway, a senior councilman in the Corporation of London. The new railway was likely to extend north and south around Central London. His central position meant he could be impartial to various route options. A new station was also planned on the edge of the City at Bishopsgate Goods Yard! Little did we realise that its opening would be 13 years on.



**Archie Galloway OBE**

The Labour government elected in May 1997 was stuck with a private sector main line railway. The public sector London Underground required large scale capital and renewal works, which the government couldn't afford – but privatisation was not an option.

A 'Public Private Partnership' (PPP) was devised for the Underground and launched on 14 July 1998 in the Comprehensive Spending Review. The year 2000 was the deadline for terminating public sector funds to the Underground. Long term partnerships of 15-20 years were planned between LU and infrastructure companies. Investment and maintenance were estimated as £10 billions on the existing network.

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<sup>6</sup> Transport Minister Gavin Strang MP re-opened the ELL officially on Tuesday 24 March 1998.

The ELL had already received its upgrading investment, but the Government acknowledged that inclusion of some low cost extensions to the existing network was under review, possibly as a PPP contract option. In August 1998 the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State, John Prescott MP, informed London Regional Transport that the Government were content in principle for London Underground to start work to secure powers for the East London Line's southern extension.

The process included formal consultation and project development to design stage, with an Environmental Impact Assessment, proposed environmental mitigation and drafting of another TWO. There would be a further decision by Ministers later in 1999 on whether the Southern Extension would proceed through a TWO including a public inquiry. The Group hoped it would be much quicker this time round!

The final decision on the extension of the Line, including funding and contracts, would then rest with the Mayor of London, once elected in 2000, as the future owner of London Regional Transport, London Underground and their successors. At this stage, everyone was expected funding to be sourced through a PPP.

The Group's main activities during 1998 and 1999 supported these processes. There was a positive environment, and genuine scope for early go-ahead and funding. The Group was consulted extensively about its views for priority extensions. London Underground modelled a range of London semi-orbital and commuter services, using 4-car trains with 18 trains per hour each direction, with good benefit/cost results. Further options were possible depending on termini and the scale of investment, eg intensive signalling and extended platforms for longer trains. This showed that an attractive service frequency was the strongest criterion in stimulating ridership on suburban routes within Greater London.

### **Railtrack to fund the ELL**

The surprise came in June 1999, when the preferred PPP deal was announced by John Prescott. There would be three infrastructure concessions. Railtrack and London Underground were to negotiate a concession by the autumn for the sub-surface lines (Circle, District, ELL and Metropolitan). Railtrack would therefore manage and invest in the East London Line.

Concessions could last 25-30 years to pay for £2-3bn investment on top of maintenance. The schemes would need to show value for money compared to public sector funding. Controls on performance standards would be overseen by a 'Tube Regulator'.

Government wanted a 'joined-up London' with through trains between Railtrack and LU. There was explicit support for the East London Line infrastructure links between Railtrack and LU and for new orbital and cross-London services for passengers, including longer distance trains. John Prescott referred to services "from Brighton via London Gatwick and East London to North London and beyond"<sup>7 8</sup>. Political support for East London Line

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed analysis, see the ELLG archives: "Report to ELLG Steering Committee on 8 July 1999: London Underground sub-surface lines and Railtrack: Assessment of government statement 15 June 1999, Commons Debate 16 June 1999, and other recent events", Jonathan Roberts, Citigate Westminster.

extensions was restated by various interests at a 'Transport Vision for London' conference on 29 June.

While the East London Line extensions were capable of fairly quick delivery by Railtrack, there were still many official and logistical milestones to overcome and much supportive work for the East London Line Group to undertake.

Following John Prescott's statement, four ELL infrastructure links were being considered:

- Whitechapel-Dalston-Highbury
- Dalston-Finsbury Park
- joining up at New Cross Gate
- Surrey Quays-Peckham.

None of these links were guaranteed, and others might be defined and adopted. The Department did not publicise a route between Peckham and Clapham Junction, but mentioned a route via Streatham to Wimbledon which was part of London Underground's ELL extension proposals. If all went well, it was hoped that Heads of Agreement between Railtrack and LU would be ready in autumn 1999, for vetting before final negotiations were signed off in 2000.

Concurrently the Government defined the transport powers of the new Mayor of London in the 1999 Greater London Authority Act. John Prescott had also established a shadow Strategic Rail Authority (sSRA) under the chairmanship of the former Eurotunnel and PFI Partnership head, Sir Alistair Morton. This was to provide strategic rail guidance, financial control and overseeing planning of the private sector main line railways. It would manage rail franchises. The sSRA would become the SRA in the Railways Act 2000.

Collectively these were dramatic changes, and the Group was enthusiastically supportive about the opportunities for the East London Line in its briefing to stakeholders, Government and elected members. The ELLG launched a substantial promotional brochure for the project at The Guildhall on 15 June 1999<sup>9</sup>, the same day as the government's statement. Never had a campaign achieved such a quick win! There was one worry within the Group – about keeping a core all-stations service to support inner city regeneration if the prospect of longer distance limited stop trains were to arise.

Heads of Agreement were signed in early October 1999 between LU and Railtrack, leading to detailed negotiations, and to Railtrack beginning the process of raising the £billions required for modernisation of the sub-surface Underground lines.

### **Railtrack deal cancelled – Southern Extensions inquiry go ahead**

On 17 November 1999, ELLG members Lewisham and Southwark were informed that the Deputy Prime Minister had authorised LU to submit its full application for the East London Line southern extensions. This was a now a live project.

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<sup>8</sup> Connex, which ran services through New Cross Gate, was interested in establishing eastern 'Thameslink'-style services via Croydon, ELL and Finsbury Park, as well as its new service to Watford, Milton Keynes and Rugby via the WLL (which still operates in a modified form).

<sup>9</sup> "First for the New Millennium", ELLG, 1999.

What no-one could foresee was a rapid combination of three factors:

- The knock-on effect of a major train crash, the Ladbroke Grove accident of 11 October 1999. Railtrack had already been subject to considerable criticism for its management processes, and the accident's underlying cause was quickly identified as a long-reported problem with a signal position – effectively Railtrack's fault. This posed political difficulties for a Government proposing to sign off a new PPP involving Railtrack.
- There was growing concern about the company's performance with the delayed West Coast Route Modernisation where costs were escalating.
- The advantages of through east-west main line rail services via the Metropolitan or District Lines had proved insufficient to justify major new links, during the Railtrack-LU discussions.

John Prescott pulled the plug on the Railtrack-LU PPP on 30 November 1999. Negotiations with Railtrack on the future of the main sub-surface lines were suspended<sup>10</sup>. Discussions were allowed to continue between Railtrack and London Underground on the future of the East London Line, together with the shadow Strategic Rail Authority (sSRA). This was because talks had demonstrated the considerable viability of the ELL extensions proposals. The sSRA was being asked to take on the role of project promoter, because ELL's future was with through services over the main lines.



The new ELL/Jubilee Line Canada Water station opened on 17 September 1999<sup>11</sup>, initially only for ELL trains, and as a Jubilee interchange from 20 November 1999. The whole Jubilee extension was open fully by 22 December.

**Access to Canary Wharf is achieved via Shadwell (DLR) and via Canada Water (Jubilee Line)**

Events in 2000 proceeded positively, despite the apparent reversal with the loss of the Railtrack-LU PPP<sup>12</sup>. The outstanding events of the year were of course the election of the new Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, the former GLC Labour Leader, who stood as an independent candidate, and the election of Assembly Members to the new Greater London Authority. All main candidates were briefed by the East London Line Group and as Assembly Members received regular briefings afterwards.

Steve Norris (Conservative) and Susan Kramer (LibDem) were also candidates for Mayor and knowledgeable about public transport. Both were subsequently appointed by the Mayor to the new Transport for London (TfL) Board. Frank Dobson, the Labour

<sup>10</sup> In due course a third LU PPP (not involving Railtrack) was adopted for the sub-surface lines. This became Metronet.

<sup>11</sup> Canada Water was the first entirely new station on the ELL since the Wapping to Liverpool Street extension opened on 19 April 1876 with stations at Shadwell, Whitechapel and Shoreditch.

<sup>12</sup> Railtrack continued to lose support – the Hatfield accident on 17 October 2000 and further project and financing problems during 2001 led to insolvency proceedings. A new Government-backed infrastructure business, Network Rail, took over the main line infrastructure from 3 October 2002.



candidate, was also familiar with Inner London railway matters as he represented the parliamentary seat of Holborn & St Pancras.

The creation of TfL as an executive agency of the Mayor at last began the process of establishing a regional strategy for transport planning and operation. The Mayor would prepare and publish a Transport Strategy. Other pan-London strategies were to be developed, including spatial planning (the London Plan), economic growth and environmental priorities, all of which were important to the Group with its regeneration objective.

With the strategic jigsaw taking shape, practical progress was also achieved by the railway partners. On 9 February 2000, the sSRA openly expressed its support for the schemes, stating that within ten years "a wide range of cross London services will be running via the East London line". LU submitted its application to the Department for powers to construct the Southern Extensions on 17 March 2000, with an objection period running to 2 May. John Prescott confirmed on 25 May that there would be a public inquiry into LU's application.

The Southern Extensions allowed links at New Cross Gate with Railtrack's route to Forest Hill, Crystal Palace and Croydon, and from south of Surrey Quays on the ELL to Old Kent Road on the South London Line. A new intermediate station at Surrey Canal Road<sup>13</sup> was planned on that section of line.

The Group prepared written support evidence for the public inquiry, which took place in Southwark. It had already been working with other supporting organisations to ensure a clear range of evidence from stakeholders. The London Underground team had worked very closely with Lewisham and Southwark Councils to ensure a high level of local consultation about the proposals to mitigate impacts in the area of the new links in south London, including across public space south of Surrey Canal Road station. Lewisham Council had committed to provide £5m funding towards the Southern Extensions in July 2000.

After the first week of evidence in November 2000, the Inquiry Inspector terminated the proceedings, as there were no more objectors and many depositions of support. Only three objectors turned up to oral evidence. The line's promoters and supporters, including Archie Galloway, also gave oral evidence. The favourable report written by the Inspector was with the Department before Christmas 2000.

## **2001-2005 – the make-or-break years**

Impetus and support for projects can only last so long. So far the Group had been campaigning for ten years. Powers were happening but funding was not. However other aspects of the project were positive:

- the newly-created Strategic Rail Authority started its operations on 1 February 2001 and took over the job of leading project promotion for the extensions from LU because of the extent of interworking with main line services

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<sup>13</sup> Known as Deptford Park in earlier ideas for a Surrey Quays-Peckham link.

- LU continued to provide technical design and assessment work
- the extensions were ranked alongside the West Coast Route Modernisation and other national schemes as a top priority for the SRA
- the new GLA and a vigorous Mayor were determined that strategic schemes such as the ELL extensions should be accelerated
- LU had been designing the Northern Extension to Dalston to a level suitable for detailed costing, and this work was due for completion in Autumn 2001
- optioneering was underway for the extension services north and south, with the outer limits being Willesden Junction via Highbury and Camden, Finsbury Park, New Cross, Croydon, Wimbledon via Streatham and Clapham Junction via Brixton
- although costing more, this was still much less expensive than a new tube.

Responding to the wider potential scope of services, Group membership and the campaigning work expanded. New members by now included London City Airport, and Renaisi (Hackney's regeneration agency). There was an enlarged range of London-wide and sub-regional stakeholders.

The clock was ticking on the Northern Extension's five year time limit, which would expire on 10 February 2002. So there was great urgency with the Mayor, TfL, SRA and LU about signing off contracts and committing initial funding, while recognising that once this was done, there would be property compensation claims even if the project were stopped at a later stage.

The Group and its allies maintained pressure for a go-ahead in good time for the deadline, and also sought a positive decision on the Southern Extensions whose funding and construction timetable would clearly be later. If a final go-ahead could be given in 2001 by the Mayor, construction could begin by 2002 with the initial extensions complete by 2005.

### **A start on construction**

On 2 April 2001, the SRA announced a funding package of £39 million designed to kick start project development. It saw the extensions as an essential pre-condition for the creation of an "Orbirail" service around London. The funding enabled London Underground to continue with detailed design work, with a view to issuing compulsory purchase orders and beginning initial engineering work on the Northern Extension later in 2001. The SRA, TfL and London Underground formed a project development group to plan the final stages towards construction.

The Mayor, in his transport strategy published on 10 July, reaffirmed his commitment to the scheme, stating that he wanted the extensions implemented as an early priority. London boroughs and partnerships were including the scheme as a top priority in their local implementation plans for transport, funded by TfL.

The Government agreed to the Southern Extensions on 9 October 2001. Main line links were approved at New Cross Gate (the Southern route to Croydon etc), and from Surrey Quays to Old Kent Road on the South London Line (linked to Peckham and beyond).

The Transport Secretary, Stephen Byers MP, said: "Together with proposals for a northern extension, the scheme aims to improve public transport for poorly served areas, reduce interchange and congestion, integrate the ELL with main line rail services, light rail and buses and provide additional capacity for growing demand... These improvements to rail services will in turn generate economic and regeneration benefits for the areas served. London Underground and the Strategic Rail Authority will now develop their plans for the project and submit their proposals for funding within the SRA's overall Strategic Plan and the Government's 10 Year Plan rail budget."



**The Northern Extension works were launched at Dalston Junction on the morning of December 5<sup>th</sup> 2001. (left to right) Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, Stephen Byers MP, Secretary of State for Transport, Tony McNulty MP, Minister of State for Transport, Richard Bowker, Chairman and Chief Executive of the SRA, and Paul Godier, MD of London Underground.**

The full scheme was now put at £600 million, to be completed by 2006, including the Southern Extensions to Wimbledon, Crystal Palace and West Croydon. Ken Livingstone said: "Today heralds the start of a long overdue new phase of rail construction, the like of which has not been seen since Victorian times. This northern extension of the line will play a crucial role in bringing new jobs and prosperity to north-east London. It will be followed by other major projects including Crossrail and, in the longer term, the Hackney-South West tube line. My aim is to increase London's rail capacity by 40 per cent over the next ten years."

### **The Bishopsgate saga**

However, during that morning's event came the news that a legal injunction had been placed on works at Bishopsgate Goods Yard! Just as with the 2½ year delay caused in 1995-98 by English Heritage's last-minute listing of the Thames Tunnel, this was another last-minute hold-up caused by a further desire to retain heritage – the original Braithwaite Viaduct within the Bishopsgate Goods Yard site. Conservation interests thought that East London Line should not be the cause of its demolition, and that it could be used for other community and arts purposes. The Prince's Foundation also supported the community ideas.

So ELLG members rushed off to a 'Council of War' meeting at Catford that afternoon. Clearly legal processes would have to take their course, but the greatest risk was that inner London would be denied its long-wanted and already overdue regeneration and transport project, with unknown further consequences for delay, project costs and funding.

The Group went into overdrive during 2002, to assist the project promoters and with widespread support from stakeholders and elected members. The specific route of the

ELL extension actually avoided most of the viaduct so eventually a compromise solution was agreed by the Culture Secretary of State, which the Group welcomed.

Following the decision to grant Grade II listing to much of the Braithwaite Viaduct in March 2002, the Group undertook a publicity exercise to promote the regeneration benefits of the scheme and the view that more regeneration could be delivered as a result of the ELL extensions than of the regeneration of the Goods Yard alone. £10 billion investment was identified in a survey undertaken by individual boroughs, which the full ELL extensions would assist or underpin.

A brochure was launched at an event in July 2002 at the London Development Agency,



attended by the LDA, MPs, TfL Board members, council leaders and representatives from business and the media. This exercise succeeded in galvanising support from the GLA and many stakeholders and maintaining recognition of the urgent need for progress with the project.

In Autumn 2002 the Group followed closely new judicial reviews into London Underground's conduct at Bishopsgate Goods Yard. The ELLG chairman Archie Galloway commented: "We have an opportunity here for very sensible economic regeneration of the site and preservation of the remains of the Braithwaite Viaduct. I, like the secretary of state, thought the two could live together. I hope this is purely a diversion."<sup>14</sup>

Following the judge's ruling that the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney should reach a final decision on what action to take in view of London Underground's technical breach of planning rules, the Group supported London Underground and



other parties towards a solution which would allow construction to proceed while ensuring that planning laws were upheld. The final legal resolution on the Northern Extension was not until 7 July 2003, which allowed work to proceed on this part of the extension. **Demolition of the former Goods Yard area began on 14 July<sup>15</sup>.**

<sup>14</sup> Property Week, 13 September 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Appropriately, at the start of the year that ELL extensions opens through the Goods Yard site, a new planning guidance was agreed on 12 January 2010 for Bishopsgate Goods Yard, including up to 1.7

## Re-energising the project

Extensive evidence to the Draft London Plan's examination-in-public was submitted by the East London Line Group in spring 2003. Archie Galloway gave oral evidence. The core of the case was that orbital service improvements would relieve Central London pressure points, enable new high-density living and working patterns at radial/orbital interchanges and stimulate a better demography for the capital city while regenerating inner suburban areas.

The Group lobbied strongly for the full Northern and Southern Extensions' business case, first to be completed and sent to Ministers for approval, and then to be signed off. This entailed building a closer relationship with the SRA, the Mayor's office, the DfT and TfL. Representations were sent to Ministers and to the SRA.

The draft business case favoured an orbital extension from Peckham Rye to Clapham Junction rather than to Streatham and Wimbledon. This created great disappointment along the latter route. Transport engineers also thought that Wapping and Rotherhithe would be at risk of closure with more frequent services and greater station use, because of new station safety rules for evacuation. The Group worked closely with Southwark and Tower Hamlets Councils during 2002-04 to lobby for a compromise solution which would keep the stations open. An acceptable way forward was confirmed by the Mayor on 18 August 2004.

Working with the local media, the Group also stimulated a South London Press "*No More Delays*" campaign, calling for an early start to construction. The *Hackney Gazette* and other local papers took a closer supportive view on the project. London's main regional paper, the *Evening Standard*, took a closer interest in the ELL extensions as they moved up the scales of probable construction. Bishopsgate Goods Yard had been a stimulus for this.

So far as the overall funding position was concerned, a full business case had been submitted by March 2003 which the Mayor, TfL and SRA agreed with, and it was now up to the Government. The Department for Transport took the view that the Strategic Rail Authority had: "made budgetary provision to develop the project further and to undertake preliminary works, if and when the outstanding planning issues are resolved. It is intended that the main works should be built and financed through a Special Purpose Vehicle and the Authority is discussing with the Department how best to structure this<sup>16</sup>."

Transport Secretary, Alistair Darling MP, signed off the business case on 17 July 2003, in the wake of the positive court decision. The Group had co-ordinated significant representations in the run up to his decision. Final funding agreements were still needed and the Group continued its campaigning with wide support. There were

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hectares of open space created for the local community with a linear park on the preserved section of the Braithwaite Viaduct. Partners in the guidance are the Mayor of London, and Tower Hamlets and Hackney Councils.

<sup>16</sup> Answer from Transport Minister David Jamieson MP, to Martin Linton, MP for Battersea, 1 April 2003.

written, telephone and face-to-face briefings to MPs, future Mayoral and GLA candidates, business groups and the London Transport Users Committee.

### **The Olympic dimension**

The new factor addressed by the Group in 2003-04 was London's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games. The self-evident pressures on Central London transport and interchange capacity made a strong case for relief of Central London via the emerging orbital inner London network, spearheaded by the East London Line.

The Group worked hard to make the case that the East London Line extensions should be an integral component of the transport dimension of the London Olympic bid. It was one of the few infrastructure enhancement projects which could be completed by 2012. A good working relationship was developed with the London 2012 campaign. The importance of the project was noted in the initial bid documentation, submitted to the International Olympics Committee in early 2004.

In addition, in September 2003, the Group launched a campaign at City Hall, entitled *Go East for Gold*. A brochure promoted awareness of the potential benefit which an eastern curve at Dalston might bring in providing an additional link from South London to Hackney Wick and Stratford.



The Group also continued to make the case for a station at Brixton on the orbital extension to Clapham Junction, and provided support and advice for Group members and MPs who sought the provision of additional stations, for example at Maiden Lane and North Battersea.

***Go East For Gold* launch: Meg Hillier, GLA Member, Archie Galloway, Chair ELLG, Jules Pipe, Mayor of Hackney.**

New ELLG members included Brent and Camden Councils, with the growing potential for an orbital network overseen by TfL. Merton agreed to remain within the Group, despite the decision by the ELL extensions project team to opt for Clapham Junction as a destination rather than Wimbledon.

The 2004 Mayoral and GLA elections returned Ken Livingstone as Mayor for a second term, this time as the Labour candidate. Local elections were delayed until June 10 because of the European elections. The Group maintained a high profile to London candidates and members, and to MPs, helping to keep them briefed on issues and

progress. Each of the main mayoral candidates mentioned the project favourably, either in their manifesto or their campaigning. As in previous years, MPs and GLA members also chose to table questions and make appropriate contributions to debates.

### **Real money**

The highlight of 2004 was the five-year spending permission for the Mayor of London as part of the 12 July Spending Review announcement, which allowed TfL to borrow £3 billion over the period <sup>17</sup>, including over £1 billion funding for Phase 1 of the ELL extensions. This was the revised cost for the Dalston - New Cross / Crystal Palace / West Croydon project. The Group had anticipated the event with briefing reports to decision makers and stakeholders.

The source of funds had finally been resolved, nearly 15 years after the question of affordability first arose. The extended railway would definitely now go ahead between Dalston, New Cross, Crystal Palace and West Croydon, as a regeneration railway, as an integrated transport project and as relief of Central London for the 2012 Olympic Games if these were awarded to London.

While it was certainly cause for celebration, perhaps unsurprisingly the Group didn't think life would suddenly be that kind to the project – that hadn't been the track record so far! The Group thought it important to mitigate any threats and opposition to this stage of the project. Also, Phase 2 hadn't been authorised (Dalston to Highbury, Surrey Quays to Peckham, and then completing the orbital service to Clapham Junction). The Group resolved to ensure that the project remained at the top of the GLA political agenda and that it continued to be viewed as a whole, embracing transport, regeneration, social and economic benefits.

The demise of the SRA was announced three days later on 15 July 2004 in a Government statement. It would be wound up over the following 12-18 months. The Department wanted to take direct control of railway franchising and financial planning. This was potentially a new road block to the extensions – however the Mayor assured us otherwise.

As an early move by the Mayor and DfT, the ELL extensions project was handed from the SRA to the Mayor of London and thus TfL, from 16 November 2004. This allowed the project to be initiated and funded directly from TfL's five-year investment programme, following the TfL Board's approval of the programme on 27 October.

London Rail made major progress during 2005 with the main Phase 1 project, with contracting under way and most preparatory ground clearing and acquisition works completed. Eventually, a large amount of Phase 1 funding was provided by the European Investment Bank in November 2005, which granted TfL a loan of £450m. The bank's involvement was justified by regeneration of the deprived areas of London through which the line would run.

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<sup>17</sup> Legally, Transport for London was a local authority and could undertake 'prudential borrowing'.

## Early campaign on Phase 2

The Group spent the rest of 2004 and early 2005 gearing up for Phase 2 advocacy. Working relations between the Group and TfL, particularly the London Rail directorate, were strengthened with direct TfL control of the extensions. The Group organised two brainstorming meetings at City Hall to discuss the future of the Phase 2 campaign. These were well attended and provided a basis for future work. Other actions included:

- a response to TfL's Freight on Rail consultation in September, observing that joint investment in orbital routes for urban passengers and freight needs would be necessary
- briefing to over 100 Prospective Parliamentary Candidates for the 2005 General Election
- briefing linking an extended East London Line and a successful London 2012 bid
- liaison with London Rail about safeguarding 8-tracking proposals near Liverpool Street
- a detailed 'ELLEX: The Future' document to aid the Group in its discussions on campaigning.

The June 2005 General Election, where Labour was re-elected, was a further opportunity for Group briefing, to bring new candidates up to speed on the project and to focus on the outcomes with Phase 1 and the aspirations for Phase 2.

London won the bid for the 2012 Olympic Games on 6 July 2005. This meant that Phase 1 of the East London Line extensions was now written into an international contract of commitments. It WAS going to happen now, if anyone had doubted it in the preceding year!

Further campaigning and briefing work in 2005 included:

- extensive evidence to the Commons' Transport Committee's inquiry into the London's capacity to host the Olympic Games. It was shown that inner London demographic changes would cause greater demand for rail travel. Phase 2 could be delivered in time for the Games and would provide crucial additional capacity, and was therefore worth funding
- the Committee's report emphasised that East London must be a priority for transport development in the run up to the Games
- Group evidence to Network Rail's draft Cross London Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) which looked forward 10 years. The Group argued that omission of Phase 2 from the RUS was a fundamental shortcoming, and a number of Phase 2 options should be considered in a revised version
- major evidence to the Crossrail Bill Select Committee, including oral evidence by the chairman, about the design of the ELL/Crossrail interchange at Whitechapel. Retention of the existing station entrance with close-by access for local bus stops was requested, as this provided the fastest route from street to ELL platforms.

## 2006-2010 – Phase 1 opening, Phase 2 start

These have been the years of Phase 1's main construction leading to initial opening during 2010, and of Phase 2 campaigning with the wonderful news of its go-ahead on 12 February 2009. As usual, nothing is straightforward.

Phase 2 will operate an additional service over the core railway between Surrey Quays and Dalston, as well as a 'South Circular Railway' across South London to Clapham Junction. The Group was confident that these extra 4 trains per hour would be vital to the first part of the line due to the passenger demand.



The Group participated closely with a London Assembly review into the North London Line through the late 2005 - early 2006 period, until its publication in March 2006. As part of the evidence gathering process, the Group's chairman met Assembly Member Geoff Pope who was leading the review.

The report's recommendations were very encouraging. The report:

- emphasised the importance of achieving a genuinely orbital railway. "Such routes are vitally important as they enable passengers to move between districts outside central London without having to travel through the centre"
- strongly supported plans for Phase 2 in North London, and the consequent interchange with the North London Line at Highbury & Islington and Canonbury
- urged that signalling work on the North London line must not prejudice the Phase 2 connection with the East London Line
- requested funding for Phase 2 to Highbury "be put in place with the minimum of delay".

The East London Line Group and other stakeholders including the North Orbital Rail Partnership (who became ELLG members via Brent Council) helped to prepare for an Orbirail parliamentary reception on 6 July 2006.



Eventual authority to proceed with Phase 2 in the North from Dalston to Highbury (known as Phase 2A) was given by the Mayor of London on 5 September 2006, which moved this part of the project to Phase 1. Its later start means that it is not expected to open until early 2011.

### **Works proceeded fast on Phase 1 – the opening of the renewed Richmond Road Bridge in Hackney**

The underlying justification is the additional passengers caused by reaching this major North London interchange. Without the extensions, demand was forecast to rise to 11.6m passengers per year in 2011; with the original Phase 1 to Dalston Junction and Croydon, this increases to 35.4m, and with the original Phase 2 to Clapham Junction and Highbury (at one stage, to Caledonian Road), to 50m.

The September announcement also embraced the future branding and passenger service standards for the London orbital services, which London Rail planned to begin with the transfer of the 'Silverlink Metro' franchise to TfL from 11 November 2007. Underground-standard services and station facilities would be created on this rebranded network. The North London Line, West London Line, Gospel Oak-Barking and Watford-Euston would be part of this new TfL franchise from the start, and the

extended ELL would join when it opened. A new franchisee would be appointed from a competitive process. This confirmed a 'Metro' standard of main line through running which the Group had sought from its early days.

Negotiations on the design of Crossrail Whitechapel station continued in 2006, following the Group's petition to the Select Committee. Tower Hamlets Council was kept in the loop on activity and progress. The Group's core request for the existing Whitechapel station entrance to be retained for direct access to the ELL was accepted by the Crossrail Bill Committee in 2006. Other assurances sought included the ability to extend the ELL platforms at a future date to accommodate trains longer than 4-cars. Passive provision was allowed for this.

The Group also supported Tower Hamlets with its request for funding to improve the interchange arrangements at Shadwell between the ELL and Docklands Light Railway. Shoreditch ELL station closed from 9 June 2006, to allow work to begin on the new line and ramp from the tunnel section to the high level at Bishopsgate Goods Yard. Group



members attended a farewell event organised by London Rail, which also marked the commitment to the new railway. The ELL itself closed on 22 December 2007, for line upgrading to Network Rail standards, a new depot and connections at New Cross Gate, station reconstruction to meet new safety regulations and to handle additional passenger flows.

**Formal Closure of Shoreditch LUL station 9 June 2006**

### **Campaigning during 2007-08**

For 2007, the Group's main tasks revolved around a sequence of: railway planning reports; business plans; a Government High Level Output Specification for the rail network; TfL's emerging business plan; the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07); a London Plan review; and the contracting process for the new London Metro concession. London Rail eventually adopted the name 'London Overground' for this concession.

To achieve any kind of favourable result for Phase 2 to Clapham Junction, also known as Phase 2B, there was a clear need for sustained, coherent and organised messaging to all appropriate audiences. ELLG made representations to DfT, the Treasury and TfL during the CSR07 negotiations to champion the case for completion of the orbital network as a value for money 'transport deliverable' for South London.

The external consultancy for the Group, latterly Citigate Public Affairs, was merged with another business, Grayling, during 2007. Advisory services were still sustained by Jonathan Roberts and his team.

A new brochure supporting the Surrey Quays-Clapham Junction orbital, “Connecting South London”, was prepared with input from South London boroughs and other ELLG members. It was launched at the Battersea Arts Centre on 2 July 2007. Politicians, stakeholders and media from across the capital attended the event.



**The Connecting South London Brochure Launch with representatives from Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth and Wandsworth, London Councils, South London Partnership the GLA and Parliament.**

TfL was awarded an exceptional £39 billion over 10 years in the October Spending Review. London as the capital city had made a very strong case that improvement and expansion of its transport capacity would repay dividends to UK plc. Crossrail was just one of the projects that were partially funded in TfL’s subsequent allocation of funding to London projects.

There was no specific coverage of Phase 2, and only a slim hope that DfT would advance any new money for this project in its own right. This result was very disappointing, though partly unsurprising as there were already emerging pressures within TfL. Problems were arising with the London Underground sub-surface PPP, where the ELL extensions had nearly been allocated. Relying on guidance that there were critical discussions under way within the project funders, the ELLG judged that it would be helpful to rein in its direct lobbying work at the end of 2007 for some months. Briefing ahead of the May 2008 Mayoral and GLA elections was of course maintained, and to local MPs (some were Cabinet Ministers) along the South London route.

Other work undertaken in 2007 maintained the importance of the project to external audiences, and in formal evidence within railway industry consultation:

- the Group briefed bidders for the new TfL rail concession about the ELL project and stakeholder expectations
- the ELLG submitted a robust consultation response to Network Rail's South London RUS, following discussions with Network Rail. Network Rail strongly supported the case for Phase 2, which was seen by them as the means to offer an important mitigation of service changes planned in South London – principally the removal of the South London Line service from London Bridge because of Thameslink project works from 2012
- this was followed by a Group submission to the Office of Rail Regulation which called for the South London RUS to be established, and referenced the need for the ELL Clapham extension within that formal process
- Group representatives attended the launch of the new 'London Overground' concession at Willesden Junction on Monday 12 November 2007 – the rebranding was effective and the promised improvements even more so – a joint team of Chiltern Railways and MTR would run the railway.

The 2008 elections brought a new Mayor to the helm, Boris Johnson, from the Conservative Party. He and the outgoing Mayor, Ken Livingstone, had both promised to fight for Phase 2 in their term of office. Broadly, a decision needed to be made by autumn 2008, for this extension to be delivered before 2012.

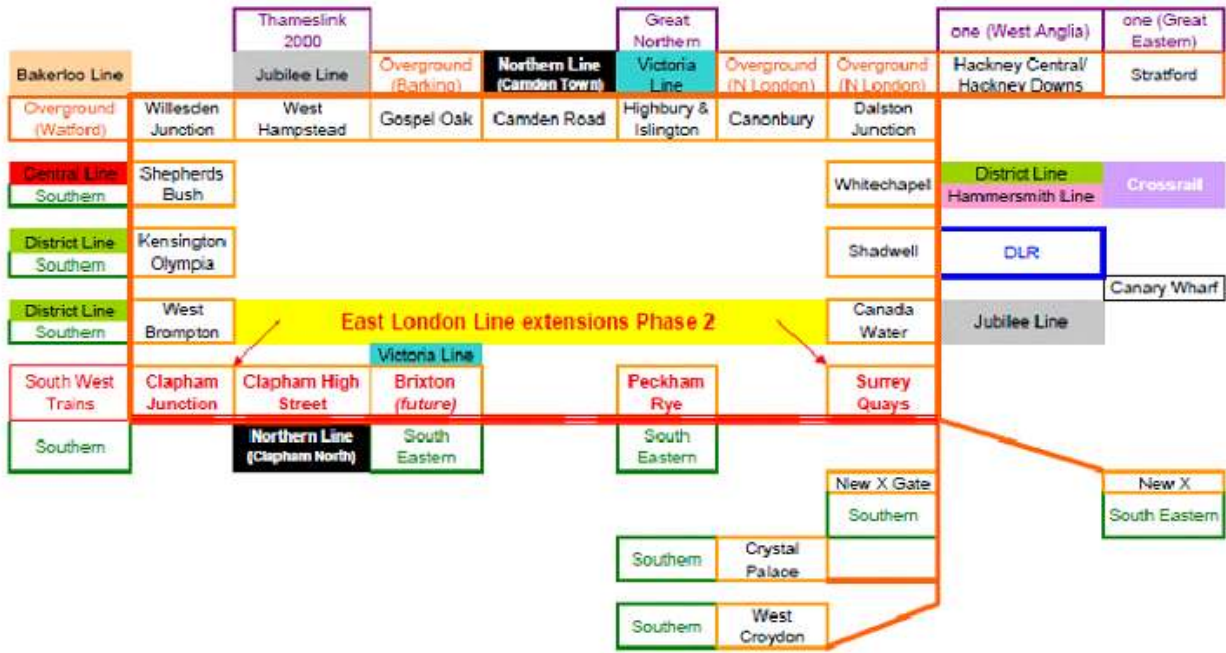
The Group undertook local and stakeholder discussions. It met with representatives from King's College Hospital in April 2008 in order to show how the orbital extensions benefited access to King's College and Maudsley Hospitals. London TravelWatch also gave high level support to Phase 2. Meetings were held with members of the GLA Transport Committee, following the May elections, to brief members about the critical timescale for Phase 2 decisions if these were to be successful and achieve a railway ahead of the 2012 Olympic Games.

A related opportunity arose in 2008 with consultation for the new South Central franchise. The successful operator would run the Southern services from Victoria and London Bridge, and set new 'Metro' standards similar to London Overground. The Group responded to the consultation.

In the lead-in to the June 2008 Steering Meeting, Group officers agreed that the funding situation was critical for Phase 2, and that special consideration was necessary about the scope for other funding options for the orbital extension, including the potential for members' own contributions. There was a substantive discussion at the meeting which stimulated further consideration by London Rail about priorities.

### **Completing the Orbital**

The solution to Phase 2 funding was eventually determined by an agreement between TfL and the DfT, in February 2009, which capitalised the value of various expenditures avoided on train services and other net savings. The combined funding was worth £75m. Go-ahead was announced on 12 February 2009. Transport Secretary, Geoff Hoon, and Boris Johnson said the extension would be the final link in giving the city a complete, orbital rail network.



Most of the remaining work of the East London Line Group since that date has been to help resolve the impact of the new service structure on the current South London Line service, when it is withdrawn from London Bridge.

The introduction of the ELL extension was proposed partly as mitigation for that loss of service, but affordability pressures meant that a substitute Victoria-Bellingham service was a casualty of the funding arrangements for ELL Phase 2. The East London Line Group has already supported a replacement Victoria service, which was proposed in its 2007 evidence to the South London RUS. The Group has supported London Rail and London TravelWatch in their combined work to devise alternative mitigation services.



Phase 1 Opens

The final contributions of the ELLG during 2009 were its forward-looking evidence to the Mayor's Outer London Commission, the Future of London Plan consultation, and most recently to the May 2010 London Assembly Transport Committee review of the delivery of London Overground. The Group has assembled a substantial evidence base for the use of future transport-related regeneration and spatial development proposals in the London region. It commends its hard-won knowledge and experience to future generations.

The first part of the ELL Northern Extension opened on 27 April 2010, along with the re-opened historic core of the railway. Trains ran between Dalston Junction and New Cross / New Cross Gate.



**First public passenger train at Dalston Junction**

Through running on the first part of the Southern Extensions, to Crystal Palace and West Croydon, began on 23 May. Next opening dates are currently planned as: Dalston Junction-Highbury & Islington, in early 2011; Surrey Quays-Peckham-Clapham Junction by the end of 2012.

## Looking forwards to future orbital schemes

The ELLG made the following recommendations in its May 2010 evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee. The key question is what and where next with orbital developments (not exclusively within the ELL catchment). Prioritisation within available budgets will be necessary, and identification of new sources of funding including third party funds. An indicative list follows.

First there is some unfinished business, with Surrey Canal Road not authorised on the Phase 2 extension to Clapham Junction (DfT has been unhelpful recently). We are also aware that other investments mainly in North London are not being progressed, at any rate this side of the 2012 Olympic Games, which has a knock-on effect on Overground train services. Not all stations served by London Overground are in their custodianship,

which risks a lower quality of station environment, staffing and passenger facilities. Peckham Rye is an example of a missed opportunity.

Second the new Overground network is essentially a collation of what could be afforded, not what is desired in full, or possible – it is not a perfectly planned network but a gathering together of historic railways with historic gaps. It creates a basic orbital network which may be very good value to grow in capability and capacity, to support spatial and regeneration objectives as well as improve transport connectivity and achieve further relief of services within Central London. The 'Better Routes and Places' topic is the most applicable part of the newly-defined agenda for the new Local Implementation Plan processes. Opportunities are shown below.

### Marketing more interchanges

Even if initially these are just walking at street level between stations:

- a good example which might lead to a direct passageway in due course is between Camden Town (Northern Line) and Camden Road (Overground), where the Northern Line's suburbs can be plugged into



the orbital network. For an eventual physical link, the northern end of the Northern Line's Barnet branch platforms reach most of the way to Camden Road station, and a direct passage may eventually be worthwhile

in Hackney, 150,000 passengers a year already transfer between Hackney Central and Hackney Downs station, and a direct interchange is feasible and being investigated by LB Hackney and other parties as part of the Olympics MAA and Greater Anglia re-franchising.

**Better interchange is feasible between orbital and radial at Hackney Central / Hackney Downs**

### New interchanges to increase connectivity

A prime example is Brixton Town Centre which would assist area regeneration and travel capabilities with a bus/tube/rail interchange on the ELL/SLL across South London (cost is the issue here); a lower-cost example with street-level interchange might be Tufnell Park on the Northern Line to a new station on the Gospel Oak-Barking line. Ultimately a High Speed 2 railway could have orbital interchange at an Old Oak Common Crossrail station.

### Better service frequency

The apparent continuing escalation in demand is pointing to more and longer Overground trains but in North London line capacity is constrained by freight paths, and in South London may be constrained by operability issues. The ELLG has long taken the view that the cross-river services should be aimed towards 20 trains per hour each

way as a minimum rather than the current plan for 16 tph after Phase 2 opens – and it could be 24 tph if operational performance was acceptable. This might open up other routes to ELL trains in South London.

### **New service patterns if line capacity permits**

This responds to the Outer London Commission interest in ‘chordal’ services linking radial and orbital routes. An example is Barking - Gospel Oak – Ealing - Greenford. Alternatively there could be a further round of investment in interchanges.

### **Better interchanges between radial bus services and the orbital rail network**

An example is the current long walk between the main Uxbridge Road corridor (207/607 – one of the busiest in suburban London) and Acton Central station – could a second station entrance be provided on the Uxbridge Road or, initially, better sign posting and stop location be arranged?

### **Additional local stations**

These can support a ‘Metro’ frequency of stops in the inner urban area - ie, broadly every mile or less to maximise catchment access on routes which are all about accessibility and distribution around inner London. (The new ELL northern extension has stations every  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$  mile between Whitechapel and Dalston.) There are historic gaps in this accessibility, with an example being Kings Cross Lands Redevelopment (Kings Cross Central) between Camden Road and Caledonian Road.

### **Identifying value for money of different projects**

Some projects might be substitutes for others, not additional. In general, usage of orbital lines is two-way all day, for short distances, so that passenger utilisation of trains is very high. 4 or 5 passengers may use the same space on the train on each end-to-end journey, compared to the conventional radial commuter route where a train starts empty and gains maximum usage only close to central London, with light loadings in the opposite direction and in the offpeak. The high usage of orbital trains will increase the value for money of further investment in the orbital network and its ‘green’ efficiency.

### **London planning priorities**

These can also support better use of its public transport network through high density developments at radial / orbital hub interchanges, where there is then less need to use or own a car because of the high level of accessibility achieved by public transport.

### **Other matters**

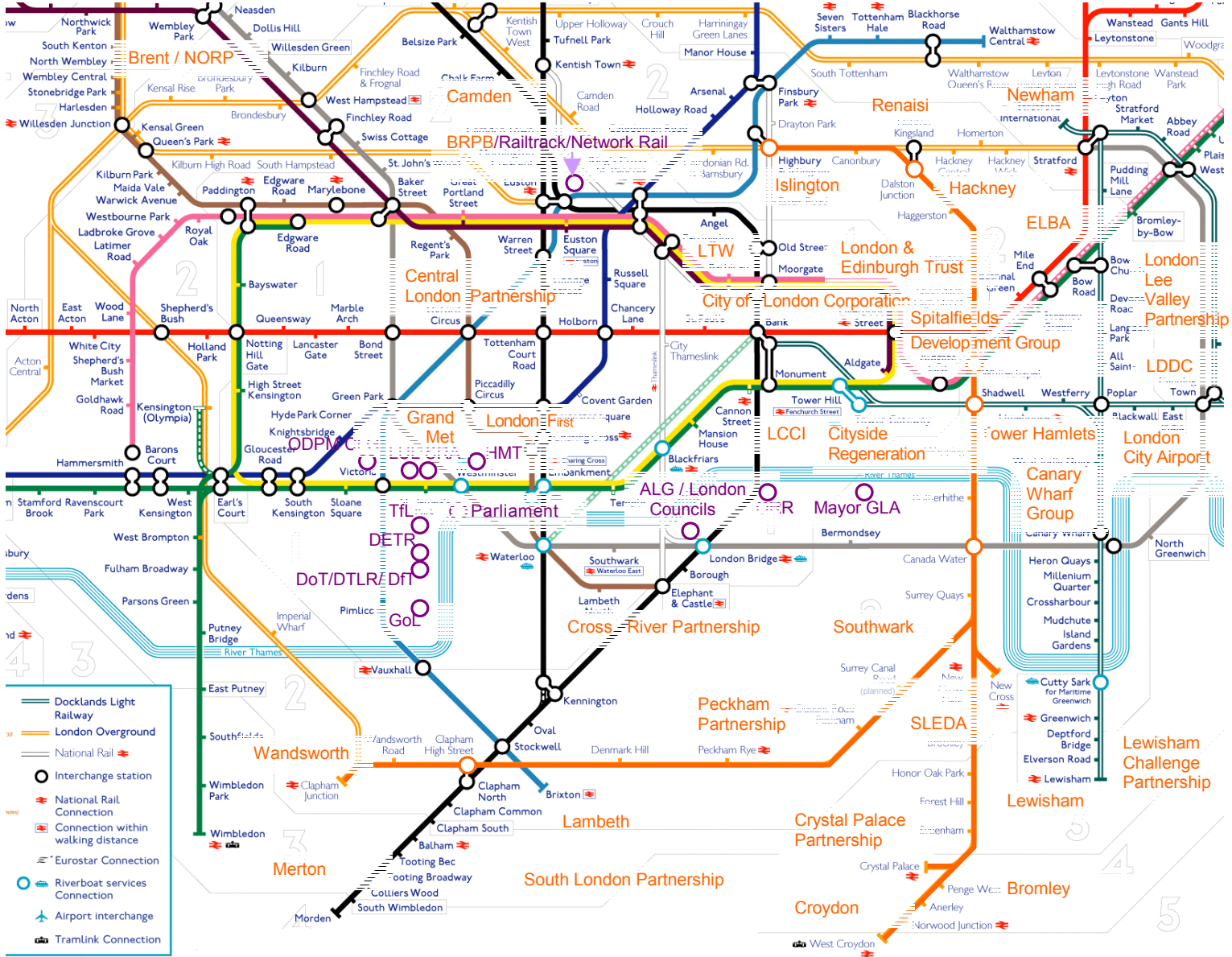
The organisational context is important. Since the original Overground schemes were funded, Department for Transport has agreed new terms of engagement for rail franchises in the London area, with TfL having a greater specification rôle and the ability to increment or decrement the specification, at its cost or financial saving. This allows a more consistent approach to rail planning for inner suburban services, and for London network connectivity. Further papers were prepared by the ELLG in 2009, with indications of the relative merit of different projects, as part of its forward looking strategy and as a contribution to the work of the Outer London Commission.



# Members and partners of East London Line Group during 1990-2010

shown against a 2012 Underground and Overground diagram

2012



Early members included: Bethnal Green City Challenge; Central & Inner London North, London East and South Thames Training & Enterprise Councils; East London Partnership; Dalston City Challenge, and Hackney, Deptford and North Peckham Task Forces.

This document was commissioned in 2010 by the East London Line Group as a legacy record of the work of the ELLG. It was prepared by Jonathan Roberts from available records of the Group. A document and electronic archive is being lodged with London Metropolitan Archives.

