



London Metro Division London and South East branch Newsletter: August 2024

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WHAT DO ELECTION RESULTS MEAN FOR LONDON?

2024 has certainly been a year for elections, with the London Mayoral, London Assembly and the general election all occurring within a couple of months of each other.

As to London's elections, perhaps little has changed with Sadiq Khan winning the Mayoral race, and the London Assembly elections resulting in a very similar composition as before with no party in overall control. One notable change however is that the chairperson of the London Assembly Transport Committee is now the head of the Labour Group, Elly Baker.

The national election was a very different story, producing a change of Government. A large Conservative majority has now been replaced with an even larger Labour one.

What this all means for London remains unclear. We now have a Prime Minister and a Mayor from the same political party, which should at least mean a good working relationship between the national and local authorities.

However whereas the Mayor has made his aspirations for London's transport quite clear, it remains uncertain what the priorities are of the new Labour Government. It seems that Labour's election pledges come with the heavy caveat as to available financial resources, of which there appears to be little. Already the Labour Government has announced that various planned investments in both road and rail will be curtailed, although details are presently scant.

The Labour Party has however re-confirmed its pre-election pledge to re-nationalise national passenger services, meaning it will end the system of National Rail Contracts ('NRCs') which it seems will be allowed to expire one by one, folding into Great British Railways.

London's railways are a complex system. Its rail services are in part national and in part local, with Transport for London (Overground, Underground, Elizabeth Line, DLR and Croydon Trams) providing what might be termed local services, and former franchisee companies

operating national services as well as a considerable number of local services especially south of the Thames.

The new Government will now phase out the NRCs. Presumably it will leave in place the various other operations, such as those provided under the authority of TfL.

The core term expiry dates for NRCs that affect London are fast approaching, the dates being as follows:

Great Anglia:	Sept 2024
Chiltern:	March 2025
Govia Thameslink:	March 2025
South Western:	May 2025
GWR:	June 2025
c2c:	July 2025

There is going to be a potentially complex transitional process, as these operations are collapsed into Great British Railways, and the end result is not entirely clear at the present time.

What does this all mean for London's rail services, and our campaigning approach?

It is often said that ownership of the railway is less important than what it actually does, and although self-evidently true, the former inevitably impacts the latter.

As rail campaigners, Metro Division remains committed to a bigger better railway for London. In our view, as expressed in our recent London rail manifesto, London needs an integrated transport network regardless of operator, with the Mayor specifying service levels.

Leaving aside politics, we clearly need to remain vigilant as to the change of direction that is coming to our railway. We are in a time of uncertainty, but the fundamentals of our own campaigning has over time remained committed and constant.

Remaining Meetings for 2024

Our remaining meetings for 2024 are on Thursday 19 September and Thursday 21 November 2024 at Alan Baxter Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon.

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MEETING NEWS

Presentation Meeting from Transport for London

On 18 July we welcomed Alex Philips and David Warner from Transport for London, who gave a presentation on TfL's aspirations for rail services in London. All systems were covered, including the Underground, Overground, Elizabeth Line, DLR and Croydon Trams.

The presentation covered the lines in considerable depth, supported with a 66 PowerPoint slides. We could not possibly do justice to the presentation in this short newsletter however the slides are still available at on the website ([display](#) | [download](#)); a larger version of the Project Oval map is also available ([display](#) | [download](#)) – this also contains some useful links.

TfL spend considerable time and effort in analysing traffic volumes, demands and trends on all their lines, and the presentation gave us many examples of their work. To a large extent this is to support their bold aspirations, which include opening of the West London Orbital Route, extension of the Bakerloo line to Lewisham, and extension of the DLR to Thamesmead.

Other aspirations include enhancements to the Elizabeth Line, upgrades on the Piccadilly and Bakerloo lines, and completion of the Four Lines Modernisation to name just a few.

Devolution and Metroisation of National Rail was also discussed, the ultimate aim being the creation of more frequent, reliable & integrated rail services in south London, Surrey, Kent and parts of north London.

In conclusion, it was noted that demand had stabilised post-pandemic and that incremental growth is returning driven by tourism, employment growth and service quality and quantity. However there has been a legacy of under-investment, and Government support for longer term capital investment is critical. Such investment will bring wider benefits including economic growth and job creation.

Alex and David closed by emphasising the need for further investment, and that TfL welcomes support

from organisations such as Railfuture in making the case for investment in London's rail system.

CLOSURE AND TRAFFIC NEWS

For up-to-date details, go to TfL website.

Our brief summary of main closure events

London Underground

Bakerloo Line: Sat 3 to Thurs 8 August: No service from Queen's Park to Harrow & Wealdstone.

District Line: Sat 7 and Sun 8 Sept: Turnham Green to Richmond closed.

Sat 14 and Sun 15 Sept: Earls Court to Ealing Broadway and Richmond closed.

Sat 28 and Sun 29 Sept: Turnham Green to Richmond closed.

Metropolitan Line:

Sat 21 and Sun 22 Sept: Harrow on Hill to Uxbridge closed.

Sat 28 and Sun 29 Sept: No service on entire line.

Northern Line:

Sat 7 and Sun 8 Sept: Golders Green to Edgware closed. Kentish Town station remains closed. Now unlikely to reopen until end of the year.

Colindale station will be closed between Friday 7 June and December 2024 for station improvements.

Piccadilly Line:

August and September:

Numerous weekend closures including Kings Cross/ St. Pancras to Cockfosters, Wood Green to Cockfosters, Kings Cross/ St. Pancras to Northfields and Rayners Lane, Acton Town to Uxbridge, and South Harrow to Uxbridge.

London Overground:

August:

Sat 3 to Thurs 8 Aug: Euston Watford Jct service not running.

Sat 10 and Sun 11 Aug: Highbury & Islington to New Cross, Crystal Palace, West Croydon and Clapham Jct not running.

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Sat 17 and Sun 18 August: Hackney Downs to Chingford closed.

Sun 18 August: Clapham Jct to Willesden Jct not running/ Sydenham to Crystal Palace not running.

Sat 24 to Mon 26 Aug: Sydenham to Crystal Palace not running.

September:

Sun 1 and 8 Sept: Hackney Downs to Chingford closed.

Sat 7 and Sun 8 Sept: Gospel Oak to Richmond and Shepherd's Bush not running. Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction not running.

Sat 28 and Sun 29 Sept: South Acton to Richmond not running.

Sun 29 Sept: Following not running: Barking to Barking Riverside, Sydenham to West Croydon, and Romford to Upminster.

Elizabeth Line:

Sun 8, 22 and 29 Sept: Trains not stopping at Acton Main Line, Hanwell and West Ealing.

Sun 8, 15, 22 and 29 Sept: Reduced services from West Drayton to Maidenhead and Heathrow T4

Sun 29 Sept: Liverpool Street and Whitechapel to Shenfield not running

Docklands Light Railway:

August:

Thurs 1 to Sun 4 August: Reduced service on entire network.

Sat 10 and Sun 11: Poplar to Beckton, and Stratford to Woolwich Arsenal closed.

Weds 21 to Sun 25 August: Reduced service on entire network.

September:

Sat 7 and Sun 8 Sept: Bank and Tower Gateway to Canning Town and Lewisham closed. Stratford to Canary Wharf closed.

Sat 14 and Sun 15 Sept: Poplar to Beckton, and Stratford to Woolwich Arsenal closed.

Sat 28 and Sun 29 Sept: Bank and Tower Gateway to Poplar and West India Quay closed.

OUT AND ABOUT

Bicycles on London Trains - An Experiment

This summer, Transport for London are promoting 'TfL Cycle Sundays', encouraging Londoners to get on their bikes on Sundays and explore London. On the TfL website homepage at the time of issue of this newsletter there is information on leisurely routes for a Sunday ride, training and tips to ride safely, links for finding cycling events around London, and discounts on bikes, accessories and other products.

As encouraging as this is, trains should be accessible to all Londoners each and every day. Indeed TfL has worked to improve accessibility more widely, and Railfuture campaigns tirelessly for the same result.

Access to public transport must be for all, and rail plays an essential part in its achievement. One of the obvious difficulties with bus transport, for example, is the difficulty for those on wheels, whether on bicycles, wheelchairs or otherwise, to use buses.

Trains have considerably more space than buses and therefore are much more accessible to those on wheels. That is, of course, so long as there are no restrictions on their use.

So how accessible is London's rail network if you're taking along your bicycle? If it's a fold-up bike, then generally it is not a problem taking your bike on the entire network at any time. Other bikes are more complicated are there are indeed restrictions.

Generally speaking, ordinary bikes can only be taken on weekday trains outside the morning and evening peak hours, and so long as there is space. The Underground is a separate matter. The sub-surface lines do permit bikes on trains outside peak hours, but the deep lines do not, save at their extremities.

There is a useful map on the TfL website which shows exactly which TfL lines are and are not accessible to bicycle users (use link below):

<https://content.tfl.gov.uk/cycles-on-the-tfl-network-november-2022.pdf>

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On paper, this suggests much of London is bike accessible by train, especially as national Thameslink services facilitate cross Thames (North/ South) traffic, and circling around Zone One by way of the Underground is technically possible.

We decided to check this assumption with an experiment to establish how accessible London's rail system really is by bicycle. We chose a Thursday, it not being the busiest nor the quietest day of the week. A cross London route was randomly chosen, south east to north west, from Orpington to Rickmansworth.



Leaving Orpington station by Southeastern on the 9.38am to Charing Cross posed no issues, although there being no dedicated places for bikes on the train, our bike did have to rest alongside the doors which may have created

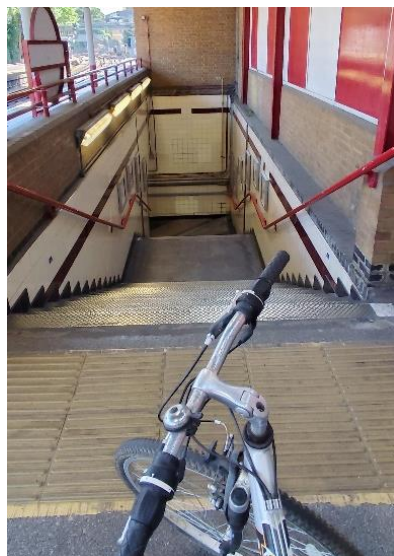
difficulties had the train been fuller. The lifts at London Bridge enabled an easy transfer from platform 9 to platform 5, where a Peterborough bound Thameslink train then took us to Farringdon with little difficulty. Things here were a bit more tricky, the quick route off platform by steps being unavailable to us, however lifts were eventually found which got us to the main concourse, the adjacent road was crossed, and the Metropolitan lines then accessed, again by lift.

We then waited for a Metropolitan train to Rickmansworth. This part of the trip had been the most worrying, because although the Metropolitan stock is roomier than many on the Underground, it is of course more compact than national rail service trains. We

needn't have worried, as our train was thankfully quiet, and although we had to hold the bike across some priority seats all the way, they were unoccupied and were available to us and gave sufficient space. The Met and the Jubilee line runs side by side at this point, and as we overtook a Jubilee line train we were happy not to be on it (as we could have been on this part of the Jubilee) as the Jubilee '1996 stock' looked very small indeed!

We were feeling rather proud of ourselves as we approached Rickmansworth, until we notice the rail map above the door of our train and realised there was no lift access at Rickmansworth

station, nor at the two preceding stations. This surprised us as it is a sizeable suburb served by both Chiltern and Metropolitan services. On arrival, daunting steps awaited us. We did manage to get down and back up the other side. A wheel chair user however would not have been able to exit.



In conclusion. London's railway does indeed enable wheel users to access much of the city, and realistically rail is the only way to access much of it if travelling by public transport. That is not to say it is perfect, in particular there are still too many stations in the capital that are not step-free street to train. Railfuture continues to campaign to resolve this issue.

It is clear that the railway is absolutely crucial when considering accessibility issues. If public transport for all is to be taken seriously, if it is in fact to become a reality, then rail will be the primary solution.