

THE MAYOR'S DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

by John Hawkins

A draft of the new Mayor's Transport Strategy was published for public consultation on 21 June 2017. To begin to resolve problems, the Mayor states in his foreword, London must become a city where walking, cycling and green public transport become the most appealing and practical choices for many more journeys. Current uncertainties do not seem to have altered growth projections.

Crossrail 2 remains essential to London's future, with an aim to open by 2033. The proposal is shown unchanged from the last public consultation, with optional routes unresolved. LURS members will be disappointed that, in 300 pages, proposals for LU merit only a double page spread. Details are light, and reveal no more than the 2010 iteration of this document. There is confirmation that TfL still intend to "optimise services in west London by running Piccadilly Line services to Ealing Broadway instead of the District Line. This will take place in the 2020s following their upgrades and will enable increased frequencies to the busier Richmond and Wimbledon branches of the District Line".

Figure 25: Tube Improvement Programme 2016-2041 reveals that the current four-line modernisation programme will "result in an increase to 30 trains per hour in central London by 2021", with no mention of plans for 32tph. A world-class capacity programme will enable increased service levels on the Jubilee, Northern and Victoria lines by 2023. A deep Tube upgrade programme, starting with the Piccadilly Line, promises a frequency increase to 33 trains per hour by the mid-2020s. Capacity will also be increased on the Waterloo & City, Central and Bakerloo lines by the mid-2030s.

However, the accompanying Figure 26: Tube Improvement Programme 2016-2026 charts only ten years of developments. Night Tube phase 2 is shown for 2021, presumably on the sub-surface lines, although all but the Circle Line upgrades complete in 2022. The Jubilee upgrade achieves 17% uplift in 2020, when the Battersea extension also opens, whilst the Northern upgrade achieves 20% uplift in 2023. The Piccadilly upgrade starts in 2017, with resignalling commencing in 2020 and the first new train in 2023. A 60% uplift is achieved in 2026. The other three deep tube line upgrades are all shown as commencing in 2020 with completion beyond 2026. The Elizabeth Line is also included in this chart as the newest Tube line.

The additional ten year projection since the last Strategy is not seen in the LU plans. There is no mention of the possibility of equipping the remaining tube lines with the new high-capacity trains after the mid-2030s, perhaps because an order for more traditional trains on two of these lines remains imminent.

Elsewhere, the delivery of step-free upgrades strategy only anticipates an additional one or two step-free stations each year at National Rail and London Overground stations over the life of the plan, but the LU plan is much more ambitious. 14 stations are currently being made step-free, with a further 25 planned by 2020, then another 15 by 2025 and 15 more by 2035, with further stations to 2040.

Overall the strategy is discouraging for LU commuters, with Figures 32 and 33 revealing widespread overcrowding remaining by 2041 with or without currently unfunded schemes such as Crossrail 2.