

# **THE RAIL AND UNDERGROUND PLAN 2013-14**

**by John Hawkins**

This document is concerned with work required in the current financial year to meet long-term plans, most of which have already been reported in these pages. However, a variation has been slipped into the New Tube for London project. Since the 2010 spending review there has been a 2015 target for delivery of the prototype train. Last November it was clarified that this train need not be able to usefully run on LU. That milestone has now been reworked to require that an invitation to tender for the first phase of the train project should be issued by the end of 2015. This major delay and scope variation has yet to be agreed by the DfT. However, programme feasibility should be completed by October 2013, with the proof of concept study for saloon air-cooling completed by July 2013, and the first obstacle detection trial commencing by August 2013.

A World Class Capacity project aims to make the most of upgraded lines. Feasibility studies for 36tph peak operation on the Victoria and Jubilee lines should be completed by the end of 2013. There is also a pre-feasibility report due to identify strategic options for future Northern Line service patterns and rolling stock requirements due by October 2013. The current Northern Line upgrade is clearly labelled Upgrade 1, suggesting more to come. The TBTC signalling north of Highgate should be ready for operational proving by July 2013, with revenue service from November. The Camden Town area expects operational proving by November, and the Kennington area by March 2014, but revenue service dates are not shown for either. Also 57 Northern Line trains are to be refurbished in the 2013/14 year.

If sufficient additional trains are to be available for the Battersea extension and Jubilee Line service enhancements, then delivery will need to commence in 2019. If pre-production trains arrive two years earlier in 2017 as has been recent practice, then insufficient development time probably remains to incorporate more than the first phase enhancements of the new tube train design. These could possibly be 7-car conventional trains, leaving the more radical design innovations of open-ended articulated cars for further development and testing. This means that there will be one more build of a non-standard tube-train, which is a pity since the Northern Line will be in desperate need of the high-capacity enhancement promised by the articulated design.

Perhaps a solution might involve a limited build of the interim-design trains. Some 42 trains would be sufficient to also cover Upgrade 2 service enhancements and perhaps release sufficient trains to boost the Piccadilly Line service. When the articulated train design is finally developed and tested, in perhaps another five years, it could fully re-equip the Northern Line, allowing the balance of the 1995 Tube Stock to eliminate 1973 Tube Stock on the Piccadilly Line whilst the 2019 trains could replace the Bakerloo fleet of 1972 Tube Stock, by then approaching 50 years of service. If this was to happen it would only be repeating how the Bakerloo 1972 Tube Stock started its days! The second build of the standard tube-train could then go to the Central Line to eliminate troublesome 1992 Tube Stock.