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## East London infill benefits

Two related infill electrification schemes in the London area feature in the core strategy. While electrification of the Gospel Oak to Woodgrange Park line would support Transport for London's four trains per hour Gospel Oak-Barking service, electrifying links to the East Coast main line and the Midland main line, plus the Thameside branch and the Ripple Lane sidings, would allow freight traffic from the proposed London Gateway port at the former Shell site at Thameshaven to be electrically hauled. It would also enhance operational flexibility.

Freight services from Tilbury, Barking, Ripple Lane, High Speed 1 and London Gateway would be the primary beneficiaries. Great Eastern performance would also gain from re-routing of electric services between North Thameside and the North London line, which currently cross the main line between Woodgrange Park and Stratford.

# Electrification – RUS looks to roll

ROGER FORD



## The schemes are as expected – but synergy is emerging

Overarching Network Rail's 17 individual Route Utilisation Strategies (RUS) and the Freight RUS will be the Network RUS. This will bring together universal issues such as rolling stock and electrification. And on 15 May, what is termed the Electrification RUS was issued for consultation.

For readers of this column there are few surprises. The core strategy proposes electrification of the Great Western main line,

to Oxford, Bristol and Swansea, and the Midland main line to Sheffield via Derby, plus Nottingham and the Kettering to Corby spur.

It also includes the strategic infill project with the best value for money. This is Gospel Oak to Woodgrange Park, plus the Thameside branch and Ripple Lane sidings. In Scotland, Edinburgh to Glasgow Queen Street via Falkirk High and Grahamston is the initial scheme proposed.

## Goblin – high level confusion

On 17 April, when still Transport Minister, Lord Adonis wrote to Mayor of London Boris Johnson asking Transport for London to take forward proposals to electrify the Gospel Oak to Barking (GOB) line. While earlier studies failed to make a business case, this was in large part because TfL could not take freight benefits into account.

However, with the scheme at the top of its freight related projects, the Electrification RUS has included GOB in its core strategy.

Lord Adonis wanted TfL to work up a business case, share the cost of the scheme and cover all risks. Oh yes, and the deal had to be agreed by 30 April. In return, Andrew Adonis was offering up to £25million towards the £52million project, a sum which includes 'lots of contingency' according to informed sources. With the £57million scheme to provide an additional freight track through Camden Road turning out significantly under budget, TfL would use the saving to pay its share of the electrification scheme.

Even better, Thameslink will electrify the section between Gospel Oak and Haringey Park Junction to provide access to Ferme Park carriage sidings. If this work included the electricity supply point, the saving for the GOB electrification would be around £12million. So with a 50:50 split with the DfT, TfL would be looking at raising £20million.

Mayor Boris wrote back supporting the idea but, steady-on old fruit, we need to sort out the numbers first. You can't commit public money without a properly defined project. Properly defined as in Stage 3 of Network Rail's Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) – Option Selection.

GRIP 3 would cost £400,000, which Boris offered to share with Andrew. But, more important, there was no way you could get to GRIP Stage 3 in under a fortnight.

Nor did TfL see how it could commit to a ball park figure, let alone bear the risks of cost overruns of a scheme which was of national, rather than local, importance, the benefits of which would largely accrue to the freight business.

On 2 June when Lord Adonis spoke at the Rail Freight Group annual conference I tried to be supportive by pointing out that GOB electrification was good news for freight. Only to be slapped down.

'It's not quite good news', was the unexpected reply. 'The mayor and I will try to find a way forward. I made an offer to the mayor for substantial funding, but he doesn't see it in quite the same way'.

What I didn't know when I asked my 'helpful' question was that Lord Adonis and the Mayor had met the previous week and, with the deadline approaching, DfT had declined to share the cost of paying for GRIP 3.

All very strange, and GOB is now back with officials within DfT Rail and TfL to try and sort something out. The key question is who had put the urbane lord up to acting like a double glazing salesman, and why?