

# East London line's opening puts Hackney on rail map

**Pippa Crerar**  
City Hall Editor

MILLIONS of Londoners will be able to cross the river by rail from Hackney to New Cross when the revamped East London line reopens today.

The railway will operate a limited service of eight trains per hour from 7am to 8pm on weekdays from Dalston Junction to New Cross. A full service to West Croydon will open on May 23.

Campaigners welcomed the £1 billion extension of the old East London line but warned that it should be in addition to existing rail services in south London, which are facing cutbacks.

Commuters in south-east London, which is not on the Tube, are particularly poorly served by the public transport network.

The South London line, which runs in a U-shape between Victoria and

London Bridge, is under threat from the second phase of the East London line, which will extend to Clapham Junction by 2012.

Jo deBank, from London Travelwatch, said: "The East London line is great news and will go into areas which are transport poor."

"But there's still more to be done in south London. We need to make sure that there's still enough transport for people. South London still suffers from not having as much transport as other parts of the capital."

Lib-Dem transport spokesman Caroline Pidgeon said: "Phase two is wonderful but ultimately the problem is people were promised it in addition to the South London line, not instead."

"It will give great connections out to Clapham Junction but people want that as well as routes into Victoria and London Bridge." The new East London line

**'The line is great news and will go into areas with poor transport. But there's still more to be done'**

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London Travelwatch

will operate a fleet of 20 walk-through air-conditioned trains from Dalston Junction in the north via the City and Docklands to New Cross, Crystal Palace and West Croydon in the south.

Four new stations opened today at Dalston Junction, Haggerston, Hoxton and Shoreditch High Street, putting Hackney on the Tube map for the first time. A further 14 stations have been refurbished.

The line, which is expected to carry 100,000 a day, will be connected to the wider London Overground network – in the north by next spring and in the south by mid-2012 – making an orbital route around the capital.

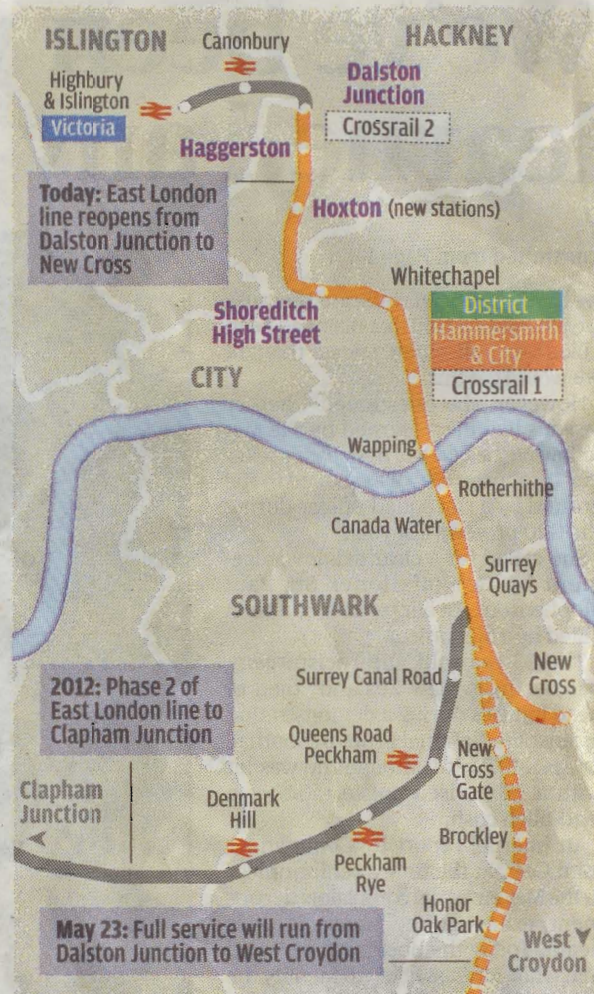
The old East London line ran from Shoreditch to New Cross. Shoreditch station closed in 2006 and the rest of the line in December 2007.

The rail-link was due to open two weeks ago but the event was called off at the last minute with Transport for London citing technical difficulties. Experts have cast doubt on the reason for the delay.

Opponents have criticised Boris Johnson for going ahead with the opening during the election campaign and trying to take the credit for a Labour-initiated project.

The Mayor said: "This new railway will bring jobs and opportunities to communities up and down the line, massively improving access for hundreds of thousands of people."

"In this £1 billion upgrade, the old has been fused with the best of the new –



the Victorian genius of Brunel's tunnel now comprises part of a network of almost space-age stations.

"This type of investment is essential if London, throwing off the shackles of recession, is to grow and prosper."

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