

London Assembly Oversight Committee – Wednesday 1 November 2023

Transcript of Agenda Item 5 - HR and IT Shared Service Transfers – Panel 1

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Moving on to the main substantive item for today, we have the question and answer session with Greater London Authority (GLA) officers on the Human Resources and Information Technology Shared Services transfer. I would like to welcome Mary Harpley, the Chief Officer and the following GLA and Transport for London (TfL) officers who have joined us in the Chamber for this discussion. We are going to have our first panel for the HR Shared Service, and we have Shakira Keddo, Assistant Director for People, GLA; Beth Cushion, Head of Human Resources, GLA; Maureen Jackson, Director of Business Services, TfL and also Niran Mothada, Executive Director of Strategy and Communications, GLA.

I am just going to ask this first question which is open to all on the panel, but, Mary, you may want to first come in. Why was a move to the HR Shared Service agreed and what were the key drivers? Anybody on the panel might want to come in, but, Mary, if you want to start.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Why do I not start off, because I know we are going to go on to IT Shared Service as a subsequent panel. Although they are very different services, the drivers for moving the services into TfL are similar. I would say really there are three and the context of this is wanting to collaborate more across the GLA group to improve - and that is an important word - the services that we have traditionally run ourselves, but in three main ways.

The first thing we are trying to do with both the HR Shared Service and the IT Shared Service is build in much more resilience into those services. We traditionally had quite small teams serving only a small organisation, trying to get across a lot of different issues, whether those are HR issues or IT issues. We have struggled to recruit and retain the expertise that we need. Therefore, the first context here is around resilience.

The second is to bring both of the services, both HR and IT, into the modern world to make sure that they are both using best practice, modern approaches, digital approaches, and moving away from, particularly on the HR side, a largely paper-based service with little refresh or modernisation over many years. IT services starters are a little bit different, but we will talk about those in the next panel. Also, what we are trying to do - and we will probably get into this later - is to compensate for quite a lack of investment in these two services, both HR and IT, over past years, which has left us with a bigger leap to make than we might have wanted.

Therefore, the first reason is resilience, the second one is to get us to a set of best practice, modern, agile, digital services, and the third is to provide greater value for money across the GLA group for these back-office services. I would say that is the broad context. I do not know if anybody wants to add to that particularly for HR.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): That is a pretty good starter for ten. One of the main drivers then being cost saving essentially, how much has been saved?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): On the HR side, at the moment we are still in the mode of investing to get us through the transition and out the other side. Again, we will talk about some of that I am sure, but we have had issues in the switchover that have meant we have had to put more resource in. We have some issues with staffing levels in the TfL team that we are having to plug at least for the time being. We are also beginning to understand as well some of the resource we need around data and reporting. Therefore, my opening answer to that question, Chairman, is that at the moment it is too early to tell what savings we will drive from the Shared Service. We have always said we expect to, we have always said it will take some time, and at the moment we are in the business of making sure that we have the resource we need, some of it temporary, to get us through the transition and to a steady state.

We are clearly putting some real thought to that at the moment in terms of the budget for next year and when we come to [the London Assembly] Budget and Performance Committee in a couple of weeks' time we will be clearer there about what we think the budget for HR Shared Service needs to be for next year.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Would it be fair to sum up then on the main drivers for switching, we switched because we wanted more resilience, but yet we are plugging staff holes currently. We switched to be part of the modern world, yet we just had the most damning report come from Audit Committee [on 19 October 2023] that we are not paying our staff. Then also one of the drivers was to save money and we are paying more money. Is that a fair summary?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): It is not fair in the fact that we always said it would take five to six years to pay back the investment in this transition, therefore we never said we were going to start saving money straight away. We have had to put additional resource into the transition than we had expected, but that is what we have had to do and that is what we have done. We are already - I would say - at a more resilient service than we had before. What we need to do is get through the next few months, make sure we are at steady state, and then be really clear what is the resource that we need permanently. We will come back to something like the position that we said we would get to, but it is just going to take us a bit longer to get there.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): How much longer do you think then?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We said the payback on HR would be five or six years; but of course we have started it much later. At one point, when we did the original calculations, we said we were going to launch that service in April 2022. It has become October 2022. We have not rerun those calculations yet because we want to finish off the conversation about what is it we need in the budget for next year and then we will be able to run the payback model again. However, we always said it would be five or six years. It is just going to go to the right and a bit probably. I do not know if you have any more to say on that, Maureen [Jackson]?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I just wanted to add that if you were asking how long is it going to be to get to a steady state, which might have been part of that answer there, we are hoping in the next three to four months. There are still some annual issues that pop up that we have never seen before in TfL because there are differences in the way things are processed, but we are getting there and we have closed down a lot of historic cases. I wanted to just mention that --.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Therefore, we should be able to get the updated figure on when there will be cost savings around the budget next year.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): The draft budget will lay out what we expect to spend on HR, both the inhouse team, strategic team, and the HR Shared Service, through 2024/25 and the two years after that. Then from there we will be able to derive a new view on the payback period, yes.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): I was going to ask as well if you could demonstrate any measurable improvements since the transition. You did just say there has been greater resilience. Therefore, perhaps that is something you want to --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Maybe Shakira and Beth [Cushion] can talk to that.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Happy to make a start. As Mary acknowledged, there have been some teething issues and we are in the process of embedding the new service, but we are seeing some improvements. I will make a start, but, Maureen, you might want to jump in as well from your perspective. We can speak to recruitment. We are doing some, therefore just to step back for a little bit of context, it is helpful just to remember the position we were in before the Shared Service. In the last quarter of 2021, while we did not monitor overall time to hire previously, which is a benefit of moving to TfL, we did monitor the time it took to launch a recruitment campaign once the approvals had been received. We were looking at an average of 26 working days just to get a competition out. Maureen, you can probably speak to the latest, but we are in a far better position on that with TfL.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): The latest for period seven, which is last period, was from us receiving a notification, three days to advert to get it assigned to someone in the team, and we are looking at 13 and a half weeks to bring somebody in from advert, which is very good.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Therefore, when we look at the stated aims of Shared Services Mary has touched on, it was about improving self-service, modernising the function, moving away from manual, paper-based processing of key HR activities, and reducing that reliance on a small number of named officers. Again, I will not deny that there have been difficulties with the system and we might come on to that later, most of those big issues have been identified and resolved working collaboratively with TfL. Therefore, while it is not completely perfect, I do think we have better ability for managers and staff to self-serve, not relying on a small number of people who may or may not be in or out. Therefore, we are starting to see improvements there.

I can give some specific examples, but there are processes that are far more streamlined and consistent and are being worked through more quickly than they would have done pre-transfer. There are a few from my perspective.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): I will just add to that, particularly around the payroll piece, when I came into the organisation we realised the amount of legacy issues that were reliant on individuals and held on individuals. That has now been improved and we now have a bit more resilience around the payroll in terms of the processing and the queries that we have now, additional to what Beth has said.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. A lot of that just goes in direct contradiction to a lot of the personal testimony I have heard from staff members that I will not mention. However, I will carry on. To what extent have the expectations of performance levels before the transfer been met?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): As I mentioned before, one of the benefits of moving to the HR Shared Service is that we have introduced tracking of service level agreements (SLAs), which is something that we never had in the past. That is my starting point. We meet on a monthly basis with TfL, senior colleagues, and track performance against those key measures. I have some figures to hand here that I can speak to. What I would say is on the whole we are not quite meeting those targets just yet and that is largely because of the work that TfL and we have done this last year in unpicking and addressing some legacy cases. Therefore, we have made good progress, we are nearly there, but there is more work to do.

Talking of the specifics, Maureen has already mentioned the recruitment performance metrics. If we look to performance of the employee payments team in TfL, which is basically the payroll function, Maureen, correct me if I am wrong. In period five, we had 56 percent of cases within the SLA agreement and the agreed SLA is 80 percent. That increased from 42 percent in the last period. As I mentioned, that is because of TfL closing down a number of historical payroll cases that Shakira has mentioned.

The employee services team that supports employee payments, Maureen, you can probably better explain succinctly what that team does.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): That is anybody with an issue who wants to phone our helpline and ask for what is something on their payslip or if something is missing or how many holidays they have left, anything like that. They are the first point of contact for any initial queries that anybody has. Their SLAs are slightly better.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, they are. The target SLA is 80 percent of cases being closed down and we are averaging, or TfL are averaging at 70 percent. There are a couple of specifics. Shakira, Maureen, Mary, anything else that you wanted to add?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Not that I can think of here, thanks.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Therefore, all the performance levels that we are measuring, have they all been measured from day one?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Not immediately from day one. Maureen, did you want to come in to explain why?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We did not, for the first three months, we just could not, my staff were flat out just trying to make sure that people got paid, that any issues were resolved, therefore we did not have the capacity to start to measure to begin with. It was quite full on just trying to make sure that we got any errors in pay rectified as quickly as possible and the money was in people's banks. Therefore, it was about three months before we started measuring.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): How was the planning for the transition undertaken and what risk assessment processes and testing regimes were in place?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We did do system tests, acceptance testing, but I am sure if any of you have ever done major projects before, there are always things that come as a surprise to you. Most of the issues that we encountered we did not envisage, they were

because of missing data and things that we had never encountered in TfL. There were differences in maternity pay, even you have two types of maternity pay in GLA, things like that we would never have been able to foresee unless we had more time. We had the pressing, London Fire Brigade (LFB) withdrawing the service for GLA.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Why would you not be able to foresee that? If we knew in the GLA we had two types of maternity pay and we knew that we were transferring, why would you not be able to foresee that would be an issue?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): That is down to what Beth mentioned earlier about a lot of things being done manually and behind the scenes and whether they were recorded. Most of the workshops for this, unfortunately they had to be performed during COVID, therefore where you would normally be in a room with people brainstorming, everybody was on Teams and a lot of the early workshops, the reception was not good, people were dipping in and out, it was a new way of working for everybody and I do think that has played some way into where we were.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): People were not engaged in the process essentially.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): They were engaged as much as they could be, but it was a trying time for everybody.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK. To what extent were the risks from the data transfer and the differences between GLA and TfL processes assessed prior to the transfer?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I do not know if you want to come in on this, Mary, but we did end up having weekly meetings, trying to make sure that the data was as robust as we possibly could. It was constant, every week we had people in trying to match the data. Therefore, we always knew that the data was going to be an issue, but we did not realise probably to what extent.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks, Maureen. Assembly Member Baker.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks, Chair. It is just a brief one picking up on some of the issues you raised right at the beginning, Mary, about the reasons for the transfer. Obviously, there were issues before, there were issues with recruitment and retention. There were issues as to the transfer you identified about systems, complicated systems, which is natural in HR, lots of different contracts, things like that. However, did you properly look at what was going wrong first before making a decision that the answer was going to a shared services model? Because it seems to me that some of these issues were solvable within the existing system and were exacerbated by transfer.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I agree, some of the issues could have been sorted out without transferring. There are two things going on. A lot of work went on back in 2019 and 2020 to map processes, to understand differences between the organisations, and to try to think about how we are going to improve the quality of our data because it was not good --

Elly Baker AM: But that was part of the transfer process, therefore the decision to transfer had already been made, but was there --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No, this is before. We had a study done on the feasibility of transferring, we had a study done on scoping –

Elly Baker AM: Sorry, yes, no, therefore that was done part of the -- therefore did you look at the problems of HR services within the GLA before and work out whether it could be solved and improved within the organisation or was the pressure of potential savings - whether they will ever appear or not we will see - was that the driving force? It sounds like lots of things could have been done better. If you are having a problem with recruitment or retention, there is clearly an issue with the job. Well, I do not know, I cannot assume what it was, but there was clearly a problem.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): There are more detailed drivers of this than I went into at the beginning. I was trying to give an overview. We had a problem with all of our systems were coming to an end, therefore the systems that we used at the GLA were expiring and support was expiring for them. We had to make a big decision about whether to reinvest in a brand new set of systems for the GLA. Meanwhile, we were already receiving finance transactional services from Maureen's team on TfL systems. Therefore, one of the big drivers of this was trying to bring together our HR data and our financial data in a way that people normally do in business, but the GLA had not done. There was a huge amount of rekeying and transfer of stuff across the systems. There was a big driver of systems.

There was another big piece around the quality of the data, the quality of casework, there were many in the Assembly unhappy with the quality of casework, that we were constantly butting up against. It was a very small team with very little career development, career opportunity, and the rest of it. Therefore, all of that was thought about. We believed that moving into a larger service with some of the economies of scale, the systems join up particularly, and the career development opportunities, was the right thing to do.

The thing that caught us out - and Shakira can talk to this because she was the one who discovered it and had to come and tell me about it - was the problems that were brewing in payroll, which we did not understand the level of those problems when we decided to make the move across. By the time they were being flagged it was too late to postpone the move. Therefore, I would say that is the bit that really blindsided us. You can talk to that, Shakira.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): Yes. I came into this situation coming in new and recognised the team that was already there, the majority of them were doing manual payroll and handling manual payroll individually, on an individual basis. Therefore, lots of the queries that were coming through to manage maternity, to manage overtime, to manage increments, were all done by individuals in the team. If one team member went off, that means those queries sat with one person. That is when I discovered the volumes and issues that came through to me when I realised that some of the team were beginning to drop out because they knew the change was coming over. Some were disengaged; some knew they were going; some knew they were TUPE-in (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006). Therefore, the disengagement levels in the team that I came into was quite vast. That is when we realised that some of these legacy payroll queries and the volumes were big.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks. We are going to focus more on problems with Assembly Member McCartney.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, can I just ask, on the staffing issues, was that an issue that you just had not anticipated the amount of staff you needed in the transition, or is it the case that just TfL had vacancies that were not filled?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We did not anticipate the volume of the issues that we were going to have to solve. We felt for a normal transition that would have went smoothly, we would have had enough staffing levels. With the issues that we incurred, it became quite clear that we needed more people to ensure that we could handle those. The people who TUPE'd over from GLA into recruitment, etc, their skills level was not as we expected either. We have had some issues there with attendance with people. All of that clubbed together has made us realise that we need to bolster and we have done already, we have had people into our Employee Services team for three months to clear backlog and go. Therefore, we are not permanently going to have a big team; we are having a team to address issued and then to size right again once things settle down.

Joanne McCartney AM: The increased workload, apart from the reduced skills of people transitioning over, are they with regard to the issues that Shakira has talked about, about the payroll, and those individual queries that you are having to deal with?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Yes. That is --

Joanne McCartney AM: When do you anticipate getting to an even keel and having that smaller team?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): As I said earlier, in the next three to four months we should be hopefully clear.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK. You also said you were unable to foresee the issue I think with data that you would have. Mary has outlined a little bit about that. However, how much of that was due to poor planning? When you transition to new systems there are always issues and things will probably end up cropping up for quite a while yet. How could you have planned better?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I will give that to the GLA because it was the data coming over.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mary, you said that it was too late to postpone the move when it became apparent. Why was it too late?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We will talk to the problem and then why it was too late.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): I will talk to the problem, yes. I will be quite candid here and, Niran, you might want to jump in and contribute. As I think Shakira or Mary mentioned, this was a huge tech project, a complicated system. It is safe to say that we did not quite have the right expertise inside, the digital or user adoption change-management expertise that we would have needed. That is a lesson that we have learned for future projects.

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): I can come in on that point. Assembly Member McCartney, when you mentioned about capacity, for the GLA it was not so much about capacity, but capability. There was something about if were we a good client in the sense that did we have the capability within the organisation to make this change and make this change happen as well as it could. We have learned massive lessons from that. As you know, over the last 12 months, we have now created a Digital Team within the GLA and when we come to talk about IT Shared Services we will talk about some of the lessons that we have learned from this. You will see some of this also when we talk

about the budget, when we come to Budget and Performance Committee, about it is absolutely essential that we invest in that capability here in order to support TfL and make the transition around all our shared services as good as it possibly can be. Therefore, for us, in terms of our technical expertise within the organisation and also from a data perspective, understanding that - and understanding that much better - would have served us well.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I just go to Maureen then, Niran said that GLA were a bad client, is that your view as well that just the level of information that you were given was just inadequate?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I would say it was challenging. It definitely was challenging; we all agreed it. To start with, things were not being escalated quickly enough to Mary and I. However, we did start to put in measures to try to make sure, someone was perhaps saying at a lesser level, "I need this", and nobody was really doing anything about it. We quickly set up a weekly session where we were saying, "Exactly what do you need, who needs it, who has to give it, and when by?" But that was when we had the accelerator full on. I do not know if you want to add to that, Mary. [It was only when we were sort of four months away and we did have this burning platform where we knew we had to do the November [2022] payroll for GLA because the LFB was no longer going to do it.

Joanne McCartney AM: Is that part of the reason why it was too late to postpone?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, that is what I was going to explain.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We had to make the go/no go decision, as you can imagine, a few months before the actual first payroll and then after that --

Joanne McCartney AM: Then a lot of these issues arose?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Then you are in it with LFB, knowing that we could not rely on it as a payroll provider plus a lot of other things we wanted to achieve. It is not all about the payroll. We had to focus first and foremost on the payroll and that was at the cost of some of the better planning we should have done around some of the other things as well. As we know, payroll change is massive and you have to get there.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Those are my questions, Chair.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Bokhari, who is online?

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you, Chair. Some of the discussion has already covered this, but I want to get some clarity on the extent of the continuing issues in relation to the HR transfer. There are other things that have not been mentioned, for example, pensions and the self-service structure. Is there anything else that you could touch on in terms of the other issues that have to be resolved and when they will be resolved? Beth, you can answer that if you can.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, I am happy to pick this up. There were a larger number of issues that we dealt with than we anticipated. We have made really good

progress in closing those down, but you are right; there are some that remain. Please feel free to correct me if you feel differently, panel, but we have a good sense of those ongoing issues and are actively managing them.

Without getting into the specifics unless you want them, there are a couple of lingering payroll issues, led by systems configuration problems, namely in sick pay calculations and maternity leave. I do not understate how significant those things can be and fully appreciate that. They were caused by the way that calculations were built into the system that have surfaced and have now been resolved with system fixes due to go live today. I am not anticipating this to affect too many people on the grand scale of things, but that will become clearer in the coming days. In full transparency, there are two issues that we are aware of and working through.

There were a whole host of issues on pensions, not all of them errors, may I say; just about perhaps the need for better communication around changes. We can say that we have unblocked and resolved those now and I am happy to give more specific details. A big one - and, Maureen, you might want to add to this - is around our data and reporting provision that we are experiencing and I will be honest. It is because of wider issues outside of the scope of this project, impacted by the delay, for example, to implement IT shared services. We are working with TfL on a plan to mitigate those issues but, yes, there are a couple of the live issues that we are still grappling with and the plan is in place to address them.

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority):

Shall I come in? One of the other things I would say about this is that we now have internally our HR shared services Remediation Plan. The People Function and the Digital Experience Unit are working hand-in-hand to systematically go through these issues and I now chair a meeting where we come together. There are a number of working groups that are working through some of these very specific issues, all the way through from recruitment to how we communicate the changes and the support that we need to give to people, better process mapping and trying to look at some of those individual issues.

Some of these issues are not going to be completely resolved until we get to IT shared services and we will talk a little bit about that later. Where we have multiple logins, for instance, I know that is causing real problems for people, particularly when people forget their passwords and they have got several systems they need to log into. With the OneLondon devices that we are trialling at the moment, we know that some of those issues are mitigated. What I wanted to say is that between TfL and ourselves, we are working through this as a proper programme to ensure that we try to mitigate as many of these issues that are arising.

Hina Bokhari AM: Can I come in on that? How exactly are you capturing all of these issues? You have said you are. Can you exactly explain how you are doing that?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): Yes.

As I said, we are taking a programme approach to it. We have appointed somebody in the Digital Experience Unit and we essentially have a list that we work through and we go through. Yes, they are being pulled together in one place.

Hina Bokhari AM: The feedback that I have been getting back - and I am sure the other Assembly Members will agree - is that our own staff have been having issues and a lot of the inaccuracies are relating to pay. Are you reliant on staff members coming to you to flag problems from now on as well?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): For payroll issues and anything that is at a personal level with people contacting our help desk, all the calls are registered and we have a system that states the date of the call and what it was for. We provide a periodic list of how many we have had on payroll and how many we have had on different things, but a lot of the issues that people are

having in payroll now are because of personal reasons. They are not because of errors in the system because gradually we are clearing any errors in the system. We provide stats of what the issues are.

Hina Bokhari AM: OK.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): Can I quickly add to that, sorry?

Hina Bokhari AM: Yes.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): As these issues arose, we also added in some payroll drop-in sessions and they have been really, really helpful. It is a big culture change from having someone that you go to talk about your payroll query in-house to then having to call somebody or email somebody. What we did was put up sessions so that someone from TfL came along and there were some drop-in sessions. The numbers that we had originally were big, but then they dripped down. We ended up having nobody coming to those sessions because we felt that those issues were being resolved and they were being signposted in the right way to the right teams to be able to have those issues resolved. Whilst we understood the volumes initially when we did first make the switch, we made sure that we put in some basic things to remind people there is still a human to talk to, that you can get your issue resolved and for us to understand how big the issue is or how small the issue is. Sometimes, it is just about understanding how the pay calculates differently and small things for people to understand how the pay now works. That has made a big difference in terms of the queries that have come through.

Hina Bokhari AM: Can I talk a little bit about the MyHR queries and the expected timelines to get them resolved? Is there a formal SLA and are service levels being met?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Beth gave some stats earlier. At the moment, the SLA is 80 percent this period; it was 70 percent. We are working through, but a lot of that is based on historic issues that are still on the log and keeping them open. We are getting there. This is anything that anybody would want to ask and it might not be the same person. We are getting in the region of about 1,000 calls a period, whether it is email or a call. That could be somebody just saying, "How many holidays have I got?", "Could you send me a copy of P60?", different things like that. It is not to say that they are all real huge issues and they are all being dealt with.

Hina Bokhari AM: All right, thank you. Mary, you did touch on the benefits and you talked about improving services, modernising and the cost benefits. What benefits were you expecting from the transfer and to what extent have they been delivered? Can you be more explicit about how you think we have benefitted from this?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We now have a new payroll provider, who is able to provide our payroll longer-term, which is a big plus. Staff get their payslips electronically. We have got a system that is much more resilient, not relying on individuals with queries going into their individual inboxes, all of that. We have a much, much more solid base for our payroll provision than we have before. That, I would say, is the first thing.

The second thing is that, as Beth alluded to, we have had to look hard at hundreds of processes. I do not know quite how many it was in the end, but 200 or so different processes related to all things People. Some of those start over in Shakira's team but end over in TfL. Some are quite complex handovers as well. As Beth has

said, the processes we had before were not all very robust and some of them were broken. We can now say we have got a much more secure set of HR processes that staff know how to follow on the HR side and the TfL side and we are doing our best to educate everybody else. I would say that as well. It took some time, but I also think we have got to a much better place on recruitment as well. It is about sustainability there of a team who now understands the GLA's setup and processes and the jobs that we try to recruit to. It is doing a very good job at getting off the blocks quickly and getting those jobs advertised and recruited.

The MyHR piece: people have very strong views about that. Some people find it very easy to access and some find it very difficult to access. The one missing piece there that is going to make things much better is when we move to the shared IT service. We will talk more about that later, but originally, they were going to happen in tandem; now they are not. Therefore, we have got this period where we are having to still use Citrix for access to all the HR material and finance material. Citrix is a complete and utter pain and these multi passwords and sign-ins for different systems drives people mad.

Once we switch over - and we will hear about that later from Vicky [Ridley-Pearson, Assistant Director for Digital Transformation] and Niran - a lot of that will go. We had planned for the two to happen in tandem. In hindsight, it is a very good thing it did not happen in tandem because we have learnt so many lessons that we are now going to apply. However, it has left us with this Citrix legacy with some people very frustrated around sign-on and passwords, but that improvement is coming. We can see that on the horizon now. That is what I would say, Assembly Member Bokhari.

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you. Is there anyone who wants to add to that before I move on? No? OK, great. I want to talk a little bit about the adoption of TfL policies as a result of the transfer. To what extent did the GLA have to adopt TfL policies?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Just to clarify, there is a difference between policies and processes. We did not - we have not - changed GLA policies as for all of our policies that we have consulted Assembly Members and staff on that is not in scope for change. We did, however, agree for all of the reasons that we have set out previously to adopt TfL's processes because it had invested quite significantly in introducing best in class processes, using industry standards. Our policies - the provisions that we give to staff in our family leave policies, all of that stuff - have not changed. For the processes for actioning transactional HR activity, we have followed TfL processes with slight exceptions where we have got particular quirks, for example, under the Head of Paid Service staffing protocol, where we need to retain our way of doing things, but they are few and far between. Maureen/Mary, is there anything you wanted to add to that?

Hina Bokhari AM: Do you want to add anything to that, Maureen? No, OK. There is an issue though that we have picked up on. There were issues that one of our staff members found; that they saw that there was a struggle between the alignment of TfL and GLA policies when they had to go on jury service. The GLA policy differs from TfL and the HR Team was really unsure of how to handle that. Is there any comeback on that for me? Why was there an issue there?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I do not know the detail of that one, I am sorry, but it would be one of the things that I mentioned earlier. When there are things that are coming and as they are coming up, we are having to assess and then work out the best way to deal with them. I do not know. Beth, do you know anything on that?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): I do not know the specifics on that issue, but as a principle we have colleagues in TfL on the helpdesk who are advising our staff on our policies so there should not be a conflict between the TfL and the GLA policy. They should be advising on the GLA policy. Without knowing the details, I am a bit reluctant to answer what went wrong there, but we have got new staff in TfL who are having to adopt new ways of working and familiarise themselves with the details of GLA policy. Perhaps that is where this inconsistency arose, but I am speculating there; I do not know.

Hina Bokhari AM: OK. We have also had concerns raised about the adoption of four-weekly pay. Should the GLA have been more responsive to the concerns there?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, and we know that moving from monthly to four-weekly pay has been a significant change. We know the reasons why we did it, we did listen and we gained a lot of rich insight and data from the consultation that we ran on the change. Whilst it was not a straightforward consultation process - and, Mary, you might want to speak to that in a minute - it is through that data-gathering activity that we introduced a number of changes to how we implemented four-weekly pay to help manage the transition for staff. That included introducing interest-free loans, commissioning and rolling out financial wellbeing sessions, pulling together a very comprehensive suite of guidance documents and signposting. As Shakira mentioned, although this was wider than just four-weekly pay, we worked jointly with TfL to deliver drop-in sessions. As Shakira mentioned, the numbers of people attending those drop-in sessions reduced in time. I do not have specific numbers, but we saw that for the majority of the people coming to those sessions there was not an issue with their pay. It was about them having that reassurance that it was OK. I acknowledge that a large part of it is because they are looking at a payslip that they are not used to because we are now in a four-weekly pay system. Those are some of the changes that we made to help manage the transition, but are there any other comments or thoughts? No.

Hina Bokhari AM: OK. You will be able to provide an assessment of all the impacts that have resulted from the transfer in terms of policies or procedures?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): There will be the right time for a review, Assembly Member Bokhari, of the policies and the processes and some of the other things. Particularly, as Maureen has said, we are going to have to look at the right resource level going forward as well once we come out of this next three or four months. Again, just to be clear, Beth has been clear that this was never going to change our policies. Those are negotiated with our trade union. We consult on them with this Committee and, in fact, the Mayor. In terms of some of the processes that have changed, some of the performance levels that we are seeking to see and are still not quite seeing and the way that we have managed to resolve issues or not, we do need to step back and look at all of that. We just need to get to a bit more of a steady state before we do. Also, it makes sense to do that once we have got the IT shared services up and running and we have managed to remove some of the difficulties that come from that delay. Once that is up and running and we are no longer on Citrix - we can have a party when we drop Citrix - then we can properly review where we are and what we need to do together looking forward. That makes sense, but we have to wait a few months yet for that.

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you. The last question is this and if you feel, Chair, that the panel has not really answered it then this is it. The recent internal audit of the GLA payroll system stated that,

“The control of the framework is not designed adequately and a number of key controls are absent or not operating effectively to mitigate key system risk.”

What is the latest position on addressing these issues raised in the report?

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK. There was one final question, but I am happy to --

Hina Bokhari AM:

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): You are referring to the audit report that we had on payroll which, as you say, lays out a number of issues that need to be delivered quickly. The team recognised that in response to the audit report and I think from memory - I looked at it again last night - most of those commitments are very short-term in terms of delivery. Beth or Shakira, do you just want to talk briefly to "By when?" but from memory the dates are pretty much immediate in terms of solving those issues.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, you have covered it there, Mary. They have identified a number of the issues that we have talked to you about today and, as I have hopefully given reassurance on today, we have got a plan of action in place to address each of those. I have November [2023] in my head, I would need to revisit the audit document to make sure that is right but, yes, it is a very short-term timeline for delivering those changes.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks. Is that all from you, Assembly Member Bokhari?

Hina Bokhari AM: Yes, we have covered the issues with the maternity pay and sick pay being lost; that was my main concern. If the panel does want to add anything more on that issue, I would be happy to hear from them but, Chair, it is up to you whether you think we have got enough time.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): I would just reiterate what I said earlier. Yes, there are very significant issues and I do not want to downplay that, but we have identified the problem and we have identified the fix that was needed in the system, which is going live today.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We are confident that for the next payroll there should not be any issues, fingers crossed.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK, thank you. I have got a couple of Assembly Members who want to come in and I have just got a couple of follow-ups on that quickly. The audit report states that an Incorrect Payments Working Group meets weekly that is putting in place a new process for dealing with incorrect payments under a new standard operating procedure and that would be in place by the end of October 2023. Is that in place today?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, it is.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK, great. The other question I have is: how much money has the GLA lost through overpayments?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): I have got some examples of the typical quantum of the under and overpayments. The only caveat I would add is that that does not necessarily mean it is the GLA. This might be because people have left the GLA and they have not been processed as leavers in time so they have been overpaid, but we would claw that money back from the individuals. I can give some figures, but we just need to be careful about saying that is at a cost to the GLA because it is not necessarily. If you would like me to, I can give some examples.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): For example, in the November 2022 payroll, which was the first pay run with TfL where we encountered the most issues, we are aware that there were 32 payments made with issues, with a total value of over £23,000. Again, that is not necessarily at a cost to GLA, but that is one example.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Do you think you would be able to get back to the Committee and say if we have managed to claw all the money back, perhaps now or at a later date?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, we can. We can do that. I am looking at my colleagues to confirm, but we can.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK, perfect. Finally on that audit report, is it currently being accurately recorded how many full-time posts and staff in post the GLA has?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, it should be. Without going into the details, there was an issue for a short period of time when we first transferred over where we could not capture, again because of an issue with the system build, post full-time equivalent (FTE). We always record numbers of individual people and post but also the actual FTE. There was an issue with that post FTE, but that has since been rectified so, yes, we are capturing it now.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK. Just to go back a bit, we have talked a lot on this Committee about leavers' surveys/leavers' interviews. Are those now being sent out correctly? Are they getting the most up to date survey when they leave?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): That is right. That is correct.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Is it?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): There was a period of a couple of --

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes. No, absolutely it is. There was a period of a few months where they were not. Without getting into the specifics, it was because the survey that we issued pre-transfer was on a SurveyMonkey form and because of its data protection policies TfL could not replicate that. We needed to rework it and reissue it so there was a period of a few months where they were not being issued. They are now.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK. Is that asking about relocation still?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Would it be possible to now add to that the four-weekly pay and the move to the new shared services agreement? A lot of complaints that we have heard from colleagues are that that is making their working conditions unbearable.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): I might defer to Mary on that one. I have no --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We can ask people, we can add that to the reasons and it will be up to Maureen's team to make those changes to the survey.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): If we have a request to add those on, we will add those on.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Just to clarify, that is around the four-weekly pay and on the shared services agreement. I have Assembly Member Baker.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks, Chair. I have got a couple of questions on the subjects that we have covered over the last 20 minutes or so and the first is on four-weekly pay. I have spent a decade on four-weekly pay and the rest of my time on monthly pay. I know some people can get used to it, but it is a massive change, particularly for those on lower pay because it makes your bills more difficult to calculate. TfL does have some people on a monthly pay. Is that correct?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I think about two per cent of our 27,000 employees are on monthly --

Elly Baker AM: You do run a monthly payroll?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We do.

Elly Baker AM: Would it have been possible to continue to run a monthly payroll for GLA? Why not? We got the impression that TfL had to do it four-weekly so that is why it was being done.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We prefer to do it four-weekly --

Elly Baker AM: No, I am sure --

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): -- but --

Elly Baker AM: -- but it was more a question on the GLA side because obviously --

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Yes, that is why I was just going to say I will pass over to Mary. There were other reasons, but Mary will pick that up.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): It is about the processes point. We were always clear that if we were going to benefit from some of the economies of scale of this move and some of the processes in place already, as opposed to inventing new ones, we were going to move to the four-weekly pay.

Elly Baker AM: That is something I did not understand. Therefore, it was cost-saving, despite the fact that it was not something that was popular with staff. It could have been done. It was definitely that it was a cost saving?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We never had any conversation with TfL about doing monthly payroll for us.

Elly Baker AM: No, but --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): There was never any discussion about that. There was --

Elly Baker AM: -- presumably, that is because you did not ask, not because --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Maureen needs to talk more about who is on monthly pay. It is some very particular groups of staff --

Elly Baker AM: I know.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): -- for historical reasons.

Elly Baker AM: Absolutely, but the point is --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): -- but new people are not coming in on the four-weekly pay.

Elly Baker AM: -- one is run and one will continue to be run for some time, presumably because you have got people on legacy arrangements. We could have been one of those legacy arrangements. We could have continued to be monthly pay, but there was --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): There was never any discussion about that being --

Elly Baker AM: What is the cost saving? Have you identified what the cost saving specifically would be by moving everyone on to four-weekly?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We identified the savings of moving away from the LFB payroll and those are laid out in the previous [GLA] Oversight [Committee] papers. That was costing us £135,000 a year or something.

Elly Baker AM: But is there a specific figure about not asking TfL to say, "We would like to go on to monthly pay"? Is there a specific --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We have never asked the question, so I do not have the figure.

Elly Baker AM: Simply, we are going to pass this difficulty on to our staff and that is that?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): It was part of a broader set of processes that we were moving to. We were clear in the consultation that that is what we were going to have to do --

Elly Baker AM: It is not really a consultation then, is it?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No, and I --

Elly Baker AM: You had never asked and you had never assessed it. You have made it clear that that was not up for consultation because you never explored the option whatsoever.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No, we did not.

Elly Baker AM: It is genuinely a real problem that you made a decision and it has changed people's terms and conditions. There was no genuine consultation on that matter. That is a genuine problem, Mary, and you should know that.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We did consult on it, as Beth has said --

Elly Baker AM: Yes, but if you had already made the decision and you were not going to change it --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No, we were --

Elly Baker AM: -- that is not consultation.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): -- we were clear in the consultation --

Elly Baker AM: That you were not going to be able to consult on it?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): -- that was not an option.

Elly Baker AM: That is not consultation, Mary. You know this.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Of course --

Elly Baker AM: I am quite surprised actually. I did not start asking the question to realise that you had already made the decision.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): You asked did we consider and, as a cost going on to a monthly payroll with TfL, we did not because that was never going to be part of the piece.

Elly Baker AM: OK.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We have said --

Elly Baker AM: You consulted on something or you --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Beth can talk about the detail of the consultation because Beth ran it.

Elly Baker AM: No, I do not want to hear on the detail of the consultation because I know what meaningful consultation is and that is something that you might be willing to change.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We have --

Elly Baker AM: I do not want to hear that process, I am sorry. Sorry, Beth, I do not want to hear any more on that at all.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Can I just say one thing?

Elly Baker AM: Yes.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): What we have said is - and we did recognise this at the time - is that we need to be much clearer with staff through consultation processes about what the options are available to us. In fact, the consultation that we have done on the pay and grading changes, which have led to the Job Families piece, was our response to some of the criticisms of the consultation on the four-weekly pay, to make sure that it really felt to everybody much more of a proper consultation and was a proper consultation. In fact, as you know, we withdrew from some of those pay and reward changes or we put them back anyway as we went on with Job Families. We were clear that the move to the four-weekly pay was part of the transfer to TfL.

Elly Baker AM: OK, Maureen.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I was going to say that at the start of deciding the four-weekly, we had far less people on four-weekly. We inherited a lot of the monthly when we took on the Woolwich Ferry, which was after we had gone down this route. We had very few people and with the industrial relations issues and the Woolwich Ferry, it just was not negotiable. We had to probably --

Elly Baker AM: Therefore, you did it because you had to for the Woolwich Ferry, but you did not do it because you did not have to and you thought you could just go, "OK, well, we are just going to move the staff"?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Sorry.

Elly Baker AM: I do not think there is any benefit of going round and round and round on this one. Moving on to payroll, I was really concerned. You have talked a lot about payroll drop-ins and also there was a question earlier about whether staff had to actively raise when there was a concern. Certainly very early on - I think it was at the beginning of this year [2023] - there was a major payroll issue that meant many people were underpaid. Many people were underpaid and it was the same issue, but that was not communicated to staff. I cannot remember the specifics, I do apologise, but I am sure you are aware there were many of these. What I could not understand was why, when you found out there was an issue, you did not check everyone else's pay and you did not notify staff that they should check their pay actively because there was a major problem. Everyone had to find out themselves and then raise it individually themselves. That seems to me just completely negligent to be honest that you did not do the checking yourself and then you did not notify people actively. Why were those decisions made when you knew how fundamental some of these problems were, having people underpaid by hundreds of pounds including myself, weirdly. I got it sorted out very quickly because I am an Assembly Member and people shifted it pretty quickly. Lots and lots of other staff did not and that was really not OK, not OK at all.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): It is difficult to comment, without knowing the issues of the case --

Elly Baker AM: Let me ask a more general question then.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes.

Elly Baker AM: When a major issue came in that was found out by an individual, which you should have picked up on anyway, did you actively go and check whether this problem was happening to more staff and did you then actively tell the staff and the staff generally that there may be a problem? Or did you just stay quiet and ask every individual to find out when they went and chased their payroll?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Maureen, please come in if I am speaking out of turn. My understanding is when we identify these issues, the Payroll Team looks at the calculations and looks at the numbers of people affected and we do targeted communications. It is difficult to comment on why it did not happen in this particular instance, but with the issues that we are encountering now or that we have encountered - some of the His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) issues, for example - that quality assurance is happening at TfL.

Elly Baker AM: Could you set that out, what proactive checking you did and what proactive communications you did to make sure that people did not have to find out themselves? Is that something that we could ask for, Chair? I do not think that is true to be honest.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I will go back and I will check which emails went out. When we did identify where people had two staff numbers and issues were happening, there were definitely emails sent, but I will check and get you some figures and what we did.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): Sorry, can I just quickly come in?

Elly Baker AM: Yes.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): There are some key major areas that we knew that came into challenge when we started to work through the payroll when we transferred. We knew things around childcare vouchers, things around student loan calculations and things around pensions were bigger than just an individual one-off case and tax, as Beth has said. We did do some communications around that because we knew there was more than one issue when we picked that up from Maureen's team. There were some wider communications that came through around what the issue was, what you need to do and who you need to speak to and I know that the team did do that. There are some key [issues] definitely around those kind of areas, without knowing the specifics of your case. I know there were chunky areas that definitely came to us that we realised were more widespread than smaller individual one-off cases.

Elly Baker AM: I would really be interested to see the proof of that. I really, really would. We got some average figures from Beth a little while ago. What is the largest single error in terms of an amount that was made on an individual's payroll?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): We need to take that away and come back to you. I do not have individual cases in front of me.

Elly Baker AM: The averages do not really tell the story. The bald numbers of how much people were under and overpaid speaks to the impact on people. I have to say I did not like the phrase “claw back” because this was not the staff’s error; none of this is the staff’s error. I did not really like that, the way of defining that. When that is identified and when that is an arrangement, are those payback arrangements being agreed with the staff and not imposed on them in each case?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Yes, they are.

Elly Baker AM: Yes? OK. Finally, just going back to the recruitment timings, Maureen, you gave us a figure of 13 weeks, I think, from the application until the offer. We have some different figures. We have average time and the most recent one is 18.8 weeks. These are going up and down like a yo-yo, frankly, so what is the actual picture?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): That was period seven, which I do not think you would have yet on there.

Elly Baker AM: Right, OK.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): That is the latest --

Elly Baker AM: But period six was 18.8?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Yes.

Elly Baker AM: Then period five was 14.8. It seems very, very --

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): It is --

Elly Baker AM: -- unstable at the moment. I do not think you rely on that 13-week figure. What timescale are you trying to get to?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We would like to get to the SLA.

Elly Baker AM: Which is?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Which is, I believe, 12 weeks, is it? Twelve weeks.

Elly Baker AM: OK. That is still quite long, I have to say.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): It is not when you think about going out to advert. If you --

Elly Baker AM: I have done recruitment, Maureen. It is a long time.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Yes, it is when --

Elly Baker AM: Because you have then got offer and then, I will come on to something else.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): That includes a couple of weeks' advertising and people interviewing and that is where the lag happens. There is a lot of managers' time and them taking time to say, "I will block that fortnight off because I know".

Elly Baker AM: Yes, absolutely. If it is --

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): That is to offer --

Elly Baker AM: -- if it is a management issue and if it is delays in management putting aside time and stuff like that, then absolutely the 12 weeks should be the upper end and then if people are sharpish and get their time in, then that should be much lower, much, much lower. Would you agree with that?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I am being realistic and that is what happens in TfL. If the GLA wants to agree a lesser SLA and if it can get people to do their bit, then we would look at it.

Elly Baker AM: OK. Finally, is about people being able to do their job when they arrive. Whose responsibility is it to make sure they have all the kit and the access on day one?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): Can I come in?

Elly Baker AM: Yes.

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): What happens is a manager will fill in a starter's form, which then gets sent to the People Function. It gets sent to Technology Group (TG) to ensure that their kit and their staff number and all of those sorts of things are ordered and are ready for them. We know from a kit perspective that we have had some delays and we are working through those with TG. I have recruited some people recently and from a People Function and TfL perspective they are getting their information on time. Where we are seeing delays at the moment is in terms of people getting their kit when they arrive, but we are working through that.

Elly Baker AM: Is that something that you are monitoring?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): Yes, absolutely.

Elly Baker AM: Is that something we could hear about in the future as well?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): Yes, we could provide some information.

Elly Baker AM: It is a major problem if there is no point having somebody there and --

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): Absolutely.

Elly Baker AM: -- it does not give a good impression of the GLA at all.

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): No, and we absolutely see that. We are hoping that with IT shared services when we move to the OneLondon devices we will be able to iron some of this out.

Elly Baker AM: OK. Back to you, Chair.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. We went through quite a bit there, but we would like to see on this Committee then the proof of what was sent around the communications and who that was sent to and also the maximum underpayment and overpayment that was made. I also was quite startled, like Assembly Member Baker, that we did not even ask if we could do monthly pay. I fully appreciate the answer may have come back and said, "The cost". That would have been the answer I would have expected; that it simply was not possible with the cost. Surely as part of the consultation to not ask when that is one of the main reasons for consultation was confusing. If that is --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No, it was always understood that we would go on to the four-weekly pay.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): I do not know --

Elly Baker AM: That is not a consultation.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): -- I do not know that is the -- sorry, I do not think --

Elly Baker AM: Sorry, Chair.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): -- that is the same thing --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Because hundreds --

Emma Best AM (Chairman): I think, Mary, with the --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Because thousands and thousands of other TfL employees are on four-weekly pay, that is the payroll standard.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): If we are taking over our policies/our procedures, a lot of our staff would have wanted to keep monthly pay. Like I am saying, I fully understand that that may not have been possible, but I would have expected the response to staff to be, "That is not possible because of X, Y and Z", not "It was understood so we never asked". That is what I am trying to get the difference of. I fully appreciate it may not have been possible, but to not have even explored it is startling.

I just want to say we are three minutes away from when this is scheduled to end and I have four Members that need to come in still. Assembly Member Cooper? If Members could be slightly aware of time.

Léonie Cooper AM: When I understood the Chair had got this as an agenda item, I made the comment, "Why are we looking at something that was completely imaginary?" because I do not really sense that there is any kind of service being provided from the stories that I hear from staff. You have admitted it, I think, by saying

how difficult it is in terms of the number of logon codes that people need to remember and the difficulties of using Citrix. This is yet another example of a big service transfer that has been -- I do not want to call it a disaster, but I do want to call it a disaster. The first disaster that was perpetrated on the Assembly was the destruction of the scrutiny function, which we are literally only just getting over and which was perpetrated by a member of staff who has now left. Then we had the mess of the move here where we had to exit one building in November 2021 and did not actually have offices that we could move into until the following March 2022. This Committee looked in March 2023 and there was still a litany of outstanding various items.

Now we are talking about a service that is allegedly a shared service, up and running and with the kind of areas that Assembly Member Best has just been going into. First of all, it was always understood that everyone had to go to four-weekly pay. A lot of people would have appreciated staying on monthly pay. I am just really unhappy at listening to staff who use the systems very frequently, which I am thankful I do not, and the problems that they are having with the systems that you have perpetrated on them by this move. You are now telling me they are going to be fixed when we move to a shared IT service and a lot of these problems are now going to be fixed by another big transfer of services. Well, forgive me if I find myself finding that very difficult to imagine; that this is going to be an improvement.

I am going to give you one concrete example of a member of our staff, who handed in their notice in May [2023], and we then tried to get a recruitment consultant or adviser appointed to manage this process. We received an email saying, "Unfortunately, we are all rather busy at the moment. We have nobody to help you". The person left in June and we eventually managed to get something out and got some interviews done. Eventually, the new person came in as a result of a recruitment campaign that had come from somebody else who had left so we were able to recruit two members of staff, sweeping up this post as well. They did not come in until three months after the other person had left and when they arrived struggled with difficulties, which we have also just touched on.

This service means that there is a gap of about six months between somebody handing in their notice and somebody new starting and being able to be fully up and running. I do not recognise your 13 weeks. I do not recognise that there is any kind of service. Our staff are being forced to waste a huge amount of time on processes that are still completely dysfunctional and I think you have admitted that. This is just appalling that we are in this situation, yet again, of a big, dysfunctional change. Sorry, Chair. Thank you. I would like Mary to answer those points.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I do not think the situation is as bad as you paint, Assembly Member Cooper; I am afraid I just have to say that. I do understand the frustrations and I do recognise some of those problems. We have tried to be very open and honest on the panel today about some of the experiences that we have put people through, through this, if we talk frankly about that, and also about what we have been trying extremely hard all the way through to sort out as soon as we can. Many of the services that you have talked about there are in a better shape. Somebody has had the experience that you have laid out and I am not arguing against that. It is not perfect yet; we know that. We are doing our absolute best to get there. The IT Shared Services will be another change on top of this and we will talk about that shortly. We already know from the 50 or so staff who have got new TfL kit that some of the things that we struggle with at the moment, particularly the multiple sign-ons and the multiple passwords, goes. It goes with the new kit and the new shared service and there is an awful, awful lot of work going on now to make sure that all happens as smoothly as possible, learning a lot of the lessons that we have been talking about all morning.

Léonie Cooper AM: I hear what you say, but I just want to make one other point about the impact on staff of the delays in recruitment. We have had a couple of people in our office alone - and I know it has impacted

on other teams as well - who have been doing three people's jobs because of the delays in recruitment. The stress that that puts on staff is intolerable. Thank you, Chair.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Sahota.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thanks, and my question is about the MyHR system. How are accessibility requirements for accessing the MyHR through Citrix taken into account as part of the transfer?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Can I clarify to make sure I have understood correctly? Are you talking about accessibility in terms of specialist software or --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I understand this is software called MyHR, which your managers and staff are able to access. That is what I want to talk about and I want to drill down into that, how that access is worked out and how it is going.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): OK. Niran, do you want to pick this up?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): In terms of people's ability to get passwords and that kind of thing, at the moment it is probably more complex than it needs to be, essentially because of this whole issue of multiple passwords, etc. At the moment, you have to contact TG, TG then contacts TfL and TfL then provides the new password. That is just not a process that is sustainable and it takes a while. To be fair, they got back to me within 24 hours the other day because I had keyed in my password incorrectly and they did get back to me quite quickly. The service is getting better, but it is not where we want to be. When we have the OneLondon device, this will no longer be an issue. You will not have multiple passwords. I know that people have really struggled and I hear it from my teams all the time, their ability to be able to access MyHR. We are working through those, one case at a time both through TG and TfL.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: This system is meant to enable people to do some of the HR functions themselves and is also intended to make the pathways for the managers to manage HR more easily. How is that going down? Do the staff and the managers know what they can do with the system?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): There has been a great deal of communications to managers and I would say that when we first introduced MyHR, there were a number of sessions with staff and with managers as to how to use the system. There is always going to be a culture change where you go from being able to go and see somebody or call an individual within what was HR then to be able to get things done. That is not perfect either because we have just talked about how only one or two people will have that information or hold that information and that is not sustainable, to moving to a self-service system. It has taken a while. Some of the feedback that I hear from staff now is that their ability to be able to call the MyHR helpline when they need to and the information that they get back is quite quick and helps them greatly. What I would say is that that will continue to be a culture change, but I do not know if others want to come in.

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): Can I just add to that? I have HR Business Partners in my team that are assigned to each Directorate. They support managers in terms of signposting and helping them through on what to do with the system so that they land safely on the other side and Maureen's team to be able to then continue on that process. We are still in the space of embedding

that culture, which had not happened before. We did do loads of sessions before around what the system did, but until the system lands it is difficult to navigate and to understand “What is it I have to do in order to make a transaction or do something?” My team is still there and it still goes through that with managers or the employees in terms of “What do I need next? How do I log all these things?” My team is still there to be able to do that so that we can eventually get that embedded and then move on. We are still in that transition piece.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Have you done any baseline surveys of what the understanding of the staff is about the MyHR system? Has there been any baseline done? How do you know you are making progress?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We have not done that yet, partly because, as I think you are getting a sense of, everyone has been down in the detail, trying to sort some of these things out. We have spoken about doing it, Assembly Member Sahota, and again, as we come through and get into something more of a steady state, we absolutely should.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Yes, because --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We all want people to feel that they have a better understanding about to use the system and all of those things and we can only track that if we survey people.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Great, thank you. I am looking at this audit survey report which is attached to our papers. There were issues raised by the Risk and Assurance Review. Were those risks specific just to the GLA or were they generalised to TfL, those risks which are raised in the report here?

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): Audit is just us so they were specific to the GLA.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: OK. Did TfL have similar issues when it first implemented the HR system? Did you have a similar set of problems which we are identifying ourselves for GLA?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): We have not had an audit yet. When we get our audit, which is annual, then we will be able to see if we have got the same issues. The GLA is receiving the reporting, etc, on that so that would not come up in our audit. There would be things that would not come up and there may be some similarities, but we will share them when we get them.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: OK. I think you have already answered the question, Mary, that the planned savings-wise have not been achieved yet. Have I understood that right?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Yes. They were never going to be achieved quickly. They have not been achieved yet. We do need to recalculate what they are going to be and when and we will do that, as I said, once we have reached agreement on what we are proposing for next year's budget and the two Plan years after that. That is coming to the Budget and Performance Committee shortly.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I know that in the exchanges with Assembly Member Baker there has been oscillation between the time of deciding to make an appointment to actually giving offer letters. It is oscillating between 13.8 to 18.8 weeks and then you add on the time of people handing their notices in in this coming year. There is a figure of 27.8 weeks in our notes here. That is almost six months, well, more than six months from the

date of putting the advert in. How does this compare with industry averages? Is it as bad as this in every organisation or just us?

Shakira Keddo (Assistant Director for People, Greater London Authority): No. If I look at across the piece in the industry, those figures are comparable, I have to say, when you take on the type of recruitment that you are doing, how you are going to recruit or where you are going to put your advert to. Then you take on board notice periods from hire to seat and it can take some time. In some cases, particularly senior roles, if you have a three-month notice period, for example, in some people, it does take up to six months for someone from going out to advert to having someone actually land in a seat. I think there is something around what we can do within the GLA when we talk about our work-forcing which is another thing that my team is looking to do. It is how we manage that more internally. If we know that someone is going or we know a secondment is coming to an end or we know that a fixed term contract is coming to an end, how much sooner can we frontload that to be able to understand where we are going to look for talent? Where are we going to look for people that we can interchange quickly to be able to drive down those times, but be more specific in what we are looking for? How are going to advert and how we are going to land those people in? That is some work that we need to do as part of the People Function, to look at some of those things. Outside of just the manual process of a recruitment process, there are other things we can do.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: As you are hearing, this is a big challenge and coping with members of staff not being in position is a big challenge for all of us. It would be useful work to do. We may be doing well compared with industry averages, but we want to be leaders. How can we lead the path? There is some other useful work to do. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. We have still got a couple of Assembly Members that also want to ask some supplementaries relating to things we have covered, but just to say that we are ten minutes over time so if you could take no more than a few minutes, that would be good. Assembly Member Prince?

Keith Prince AM: Yes, sorry. I will keep it very brief. It is going back to the four-week pay. Like my colleagues, I am shocked that, Mary, you never asked the question and I will not go into that.

Could I ask Maureen? You say that we have people on monthly pay or you have people on monthly pay. Can you tell me? How much extra or what disadvantages are there by putting someone on monthly pay rather than four-weekly pay, please?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): The main one is it does not align with our financial reporting. We report in 13 periods, so there is a manual adjustment you have to make when you are putting it into the accounts because some of it straddles different periods, which is a main one for us. It manages the same as the other payrolls, but also the way we pay HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), we pay them periodically, so we have to calculate the monthly period, so there is more back work for the team in doing it.

Keith Prince AM: Does that involve a lot more work if you are doing it for, say, 50 people or 1,000 people?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): It does, especially if they are working across different areas, because then you have to have to make the adjustment into the accounts in each of the areas, so it does impact by volume as well. For us, a main driver is it aligns to your accounts and aligns to our payments to HMRC, etc.

Keith Prince AM: Can I ask you, though, is it a significant cost, or would it be a significant cost if, when we transferred, you did monthly rather than four-weekly?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): I would have to calculate that and come back to you with that.

Keith Prince AM: Would you?

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Yes, I could do that.

Keith Prince AM: That would be very helpful, thank you.

Maureen Jackson (Director of Business Services, Transport for London): Yes, I could calculate that. Thanks.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, so a manager now has nine different logins just to do their basic GLA duties, so there is a Surface [Pro] login, MyHR, ePay for payslips, SAP Ariba for making payments, Corporate Travel Management for booking travel, TfL Taleo for recruitment, E-Zone for compulsory e-learning, XMS for getting temporary staff through Reed, and the GLA information service. That is nine different logins just to do your basic, everyday work. So, have I understood it correctly that once we move to the new TfL kit, that everyone will have one login to achieve all of that?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): It may not address all nine, some of the ones that you walked about, for instance with Reed, etc, it may not address all of those. It will consolidate some of those, and once we get into the IT, assess conversation that we have, we can give a better idea of what those will be.

Caroline Russell AM: Are you concerned that when you talk about the difficulty of staff getting used to the culture change that, actually, that sounds quite patronising given the nine different logins that people are coping with and that the new system is not going to eliminate all of that?

Niran Mothada (Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Greater London Authority): Yes, apologies, and I did not mean it to sound patronising. What I was talking about was a change from self-service from a HR perspective to what we had previously, which was staff embedded in the organisation. It was not very many staff that were servicing lots of people, and we did not have things like service-level agreements in place and those sorts of things. As staff, we would have absolutely got used to a particular type of service, which is we had individuals that would respond, not always quickly, but respond to issues and things that we raised, the way in which data was being collected, etc. I apologise, I did not mean for it to sound patronising, what I meant was a change from the way things were done to where we are moving to, which is a much more self-service model.

Caroline Russell AM: Then my final question, just very quickly, is our team have said, "We never get a staff-wide email to say, 'We are aware this problem exists, we are doing this to fix it, and we estimate it will be sorted by this date'", and when issues arise, letting people know that you know that the issue exists so that other people do not have to go through the pain of discovering it for themselves, they are aware it may exist and then it if affects them, they know what to do.

Beth Cushion (Head of Human Resources, Greater London Authority): That is very fair feedback. We do, through our Core Brief, try and communicate where we know there are wide issues affecting a number of people. In the early days when we were all working really hard to feel our way through this process, we perhaps could have been more efficient at doing that, but it is a very valid point and we will continue to think about how we do that through our established communications channels.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. To conclude this panel, our next GLA investigation will be in consultations that the GLA runs, so this may feed in. We will be looking as well at that internal audit report as we reach our conclusions in these investigations. I know I certainly have more questions, if any other members have questions or information, especially where we are looking at confidential cases that you want to feed in, let us know. Can I thank the panel, and we will adjourn until 11.45am for our second panel. Thank you.

[The Chairman adjourned the meeting and resumed the meeting at 11.45am]