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Dear Val

Transport Committee report on the accessibility of public transport

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2010 enclosing a copy of the Transport Committee's report on the accessibility of public transport, which I welcome.

As you mentioned in your letter, we are working within a climate of constraint on public finances which limits the funding available for major physical improvements TfL is able to deliver. Despite this, huge improvements continue to be made.

The Capital has the most accessible bus network in the UK, with all buses step-free and fitted with audio and visual next stop information in the form of i-Bus. The vast majority of London's bus stops can be used by most bus passengers, including wheelchair users, and we currently have around 50 per cent of stops which are fully accessible.

There are now 62 Underground stations with step-free access, and that number is growing. Other accessibility features are being introduced as we continue our huge investment in upgrading the Tube.

Works to improve accessibility is in progress at 18 London Overground stations, with all Overground stations to be improved by mid 2011.

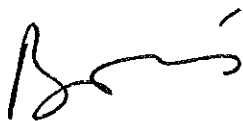
Crossrail will also bring significant new and improved step-free access.

I enclose a submission from TfL which addresses the recommendations in the Committee's report.

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TfL and I take the issue of accessibility extremely seriously and are working hard to improve it for our passengers while continuing to deliver value for the fare and taxpayer.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris', written in a cursive style.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

Enc.

Cc: Laura Warren, Scrutiny Manager, GLA



Transport for London response to Transport Committee's report "Accessibility of the transport network"

Transport for London (TfL) welcomes the Committee's report and addresses its recommendations below.

Recommendation 1

By June 2011, TfL should:

a) in conjunction with relevant organisations including Network Rail, the train operating companies and London Boroughs, use the Committee's information on the numbers of people with reduced mobility and their location to develop its physical accessibility strategy post 2018;

There is already an accessibility strategy within the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS), and TfL will be developing the Accessibility Implementation Plan from this existing strategy. Working with comments from people with reduced mobility as well as the relevant organisations including Network Rail, Train Operating Companies, and London Boroughs, TfL will develop this implementation plan for accessibility up to 2015 and then an indicative programme post-2015 (including National Rail priorities for the period 2014-19).

b) Publish its physical accessibility strategy for consultation with people with reduced mobility and relevant organisations. The strategy should set out the plans for improving accessibility until 2018 and the options for providing further step-free stations and fully accessible bus stops thereafter; and

As the document is a more detailed version of the existing Accessibility Implementation Plan, there are no plans to hold a public consultation and there would be limited stakeholder engagement or further stakeholder engagement. The strategy up to 2015 will be comprised of committed investment and operational improvements, including journey planning information, staff management, and training. This will ensure the strategy will cover the full range of improvements being made by TfL. A copy of the document could be presented to the London Assembly Transport Committee in June 2011.

c) Publish details of the organisations and individuals it will consult and how in relation to its physical accessibility strategy. This should include clarification on the future of its Independent Disability Advisory Committee.



Information and comments from last year's MTS consultation responses will be used to inform the development of the document, and to represent views of stakeholder groups. TfL will still seek views from its Independent Disability Advisory Group (IDAG).

Recommendation 2

By June 2011, TfL should enhance pre-journey information and support for people with reduced mobility by:

a) Including details on its online Journey Planner of the heights of steps and platforms at Tube and Overground rail stations, the accessibility of bus stops and possible national rail service options.

TfL is always looking to improve Journey Planner and is grateful for the Committee's suggestions. The gap between trains and the platform at Tube stations is already available in the TfL [Step Free](#) guide which was highlighted in TfL's previous submission to the Committee.

b) Streamlining, in consultation with relevant groups, the range of publications and maps about accessibility.

The current range of publications and maps was specifically produced in this way with full consultation with relevant groups. Of course, this is a continuous process.

c) Publishing all its data relating to the accessibility of transport services on the London Datastore.

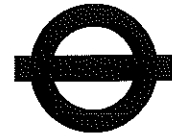
This work was completed in March 2010 and is available in the London Datastore.

d) Extending, in collaboration with relevant organisations including London Boroughs as appropriate, its travel assistance scheme so it supports more than 10,000 journeys p.a. by people with reduced mobility in 2011/12 and each year thereafter.

TfL is considering this recommendation and will respond to the Committee again in the near future.

Recommendation 3

By June 2011, TfL should enhance the accessibility of Tube and Overground rail for people with reduced mobility by:



a) Providing alternatives to step-free access including allowing people to use manual ramps wherever possible on the Tube and Overground rail networks. For example, at terminating stations;

Manual ramps can already be used at London Overground stations.

London Overground's 'Making Rail Accessible' booklet provides a comprehensive list of individual station accessibility. All London Overground station staff receive training on how to help customers with accessibility issues and are specifically trained on how to use portable ramps to help people on and off trains. Portable ramps (used to access the platform from a train where there is a difference in height) are located on all London Overground trains and can be used at any time at most stations.

The booking for the ramp is made through the station staff or through London Overground's assisted travel service.

Where London Overground stations are not accessible, including occasions when a station becomes temporarily inaccessible, TfL will provide alternative transport free of charge.

Use of such manual ramps on the Tube is much less straightforward and there are important safety and operational factors to consider, but London Underground is reviewing the potential for use of manual ramps at terminus stations on the Tube.

London Underground is also conducting feasibility studies into the provision of temporary level access solutions during the Olympic and Paralympic Games which may include manual boarding devices deployed by staff and temporary platform humps, as per the Committee's recommendation.

b) Introducing a minimum set of criteria for the accessibility features at a Tube station and an Overground rail station.

This already exists in terms of the core features that would be put in place as part of a station refurbishment or modernisation. However, as previously explained to the Committee, it would not be helpful to describe these as 'minimum criteria for accessibility' since accessibility is specific to an individual.

The current refurbishment of London Overground stations will improve the infrastructure at all London Overground managed stations providing (as a minimum):

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- Improved information for Customer Information Screens and PA announcements
- 'Corduroy tactile' finishes at the top and bottom of stairs, tactile at platform edges
- High visibility nosing of stairs, high grip surfaces on stairs
- Dual, not cold to touch, handrails
- Portable train boarding ramps

Works to improve accessibility is in progress at 18 London Overground stations, with all Overground stations to be improved by mid 2011.

Staff are also available at all London Overground managed stations during train operating hours to provide the following services:

- Assistance with boarding and alighting, including luggage assistance
- Assistance with transferring between trains or other modes of onward transport calling at our stations
- Wheelchair assistance including wheelchair ramps at all accessible stations

The table below shows the Overground and National Rail stations that are due to receive accessibility enhancements through the DfT's Access for All Programme in the next five years. This list is sourced from the DfT website:

2006 - 2009	2009 - 2011	2012 - 2015
Balham	Earlsfield	Brockley
Clapham junction	Finsbury Park	Bromley South
Denmark Hill	Forest Hill	Camden Road
Herne Hill	Grove Park	Gospel Oak
Kew Gardens	Hackney Central	Honor Oak Park
Kingston	Highbury and Islington	Ilford
Lewisham	New Cross	Limehouse
Orpington	New Cross Gate	New Eltham
Purley	Streatham Common	New Malden
Putney	Thornton Heath	Tottenham Hale
Streatham Hill	Twickenham	Walthamstow Central
	Vauxhall	West Hampstead Thameslink
	Wembley Central	Worcester Park



c) Working in partnership with disability groups to put in place a programme of accessibility audits for all stations. These should assess how far stations meet the minimum set of criteria and where they do not identify any low cost solutions. TfL should publish the findings from these audits.

As part of London Overground's Mystery Shopping Surveys, the ease of access to the platforms is measured so any issues can be highlighted and addressed.

Furthermore, the Department for Transport approved the London Overground's 'Making Rail Accessible' booklet, and as part of the approval process worked closely with other organisations such as the Disabled Persons Advisory Committee (DPTAC), and LondonTravel Watch and Passenger Focus. DPTAC provided comments directly on the 1st draft of the document via DFT.

Such audits have already been completed for London Underground. The results are published in the London Datastore.

d) Publishing its assessment of the impact on people with reduced mobility of proposals to reduce staff at Tube stations and the measures it intends to put in place to mitigate the impact; and

London Underground's Equality Impact Assessment has already been published. The changes have been specifically designed to ensure more effective and visible staff at Tube stations, with no diminution of the ability of people with reduced mobility to receive support without having to notify the station in advance.

e) Appointing an existing member of staff to act as an "accessibility champion" at each interchange station to ensure a co-ordinated approach to accessibility across different transport modes and operators. These "accessibility champions" should organise training for all staff at each station which ensures they are familiar with the accessibility of all modes and can assist people with reduced mobility in relation to any service.

TfL is considering this recommendation and will respond to the Committee again in the near future.

TfL's aim, however, is to ensure that all staff regard accessibility as their concern, so any proposal would need to avoid the risk of implying that one person has responsibility for accessibility.

Staff training seeks to ensure all operational staff are aware of the needs of people with reduced mobility and how to support them to travel.



Recommendation 4

By June 2011, TfL should enhance the accessibility of buses for people with reduced mobility by:

a) Redeveloping the disability awareness training provided to bus drivers, and to trainers providing this training, so it is more practical than theory based. It should involve people with reduced mobility sharing their experiences directly or through videos.

The TfL driver training was developed with SCOPE. It currently consists of three practical exercises for drivers to engage with in order that they can reflect on their attitudes towards people from a range of groups, including older and disabled people. Classroom training forms one input around the theory and this is used in conjunction with more practical based development, such as the use of mentors. The training covers all disabled people, not just those with reduced mobility. TfL considers that it is crucial that all training is delivered to a high standard by professionally trained staff. Therefore it is working with bus operators to ensure that by spring 2011, all classroom trainers are qualified to a minimum standard (PTLLS – Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector).

TfL is keen to ensure the experiences of older and disabled bus users are an integral part of the training. It believes the most practical way to achieve this is for older and disabled people to have regular and ongoing dialogue with professional classroom trainers. TfL already has plans in place to facilitate this from 2011, involving a range of groups representing these passengers.

In addition, TfL helped Transport for All and Inclusion London set-up the Pan London Mobility Forum to advise on this. London TravelWatch organises the Surface Transport Design Forum that TfL supports and recently provided useful comments on the NBfL. Borough mobility forums are being encouraged to participate in the mystery shopper programme.

b) Improving guidance for bus drivers including the information in the Big Red Book about the service standards for people with reduced mobility including which specific scooters are permitted.

Bus drivers are made aware of service standards for all passenger groups as part of Unit 1 of the BTEC qualification, which they must achieve within their first year of service. TfL believes it is right that bus drivers be responsible for considering whether, during the course of a journey, scooters or powered wheelchairs can be



safely accommodated on a bus. TfL is however reviewing its guidance to bus drivers around exactly which wheelchairs and mobility scooters can be safely carried on buses.

c) Introducing specific performance targets for bus drivers on the service to be provided to people with reduced mobility.

TfL's Big Red Book already makes clear to drivers the specific actions and behaviours TfL expects, including the standards expected when carrying disabled customers. Further targets would therefore be unnecessary. TfL extensively monitors the performance of drivers against the expected standards through our Mystery Traveller surveys (of which there is also a specific Disabled Mystery Traveller survey). The results of this monitoring are provided to bus operators and issues discussed and resolved.

d) Displaying individual bus drivers' ID so it is easier for people with reduced mobility to report any issues.

TfL has taken a number of steps to improve passengers' access to its Customer Services channels, through which complaints or suggestions can be raised. These include introducing a local rate telephone number for passengers to give feedback (0845 300 7000) and posting notices on board buses near the driver's cab, which display the bus registration number and contact details for TfL Customer Services. The registration number can be used to enable a bus operator to trace a particular bus and driver. These notices are more suitable since they can be much larger, more accessible and display more information than a driver's ID badge could.

e) Introducing more publicity on buses about who is entitled to use the accessibility bay and the bus service standards. This should include the services relating to the i-Bus system and bus drivers allowing people to settle in their seats.

TfL's Big Red Book makes clear that the only safe place wheelchair users can travel on the bus is within the dedicated wheelchair space. If someone in a wheelchair wishes to board, and the wheelchair space is occupied, drivers are trained to request that standing passengers make room or that buggies should be folded. This is reinforced by notices posted within the bay. The driver can also make use of the bus PA system. TfL is exploring other ways in which passengers can be encouraged to be more considerate to each other.

f) Exploring the scope to include in the new bus for London and future buses more flip-up seats or other provision for more people with reduced mobility.

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The specification for the New Bus for London does not currently feature flip-up seats, in common with other new buses in the fleet. Previous experience with flip-up seats in the shared wheelchair bay showed that there was reluctance among some passengers to give them up when a wheelchair user or buggy came on board and there were incidents in which more frail passengers fell from them. Also many of the older designs had a number of problems. For example, the spring loaded mechanism is sensitive and, if broken or damaged, the seats did not 'flip up' when vacated. However, TfL will review the overall provision for all passengers on the New Bus for London once the current consultation period has finished.

[Ends]