

## London Assembly Transport Committee investigation into the state of the London Underground

This document provides detailed information on the Committee's investigation into the state of the London Underground. Further details about the Committee including its membership can be found on-line via: [Link to Transport Committee page on www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

### 1. Introduction

#### Purpose of the investigation

- 1.1 The aim of this investigation is to examine the recent performance of the Tube and progress with the programme to upgrade and maintain the Tube network with a view to identifying any actions that the Mayor and TfL should take to realise improvements. In recent months there has been variations in the performance of the Tube and further slippage with the upgrade programme.
- 1.2 The investigation follows on from the Committee's past work on the Tube. This includes various reports and meetings on the upgrade programme since it started in 2002/3. The investigation provides an opportunity for the Committee to reflect on the performance of the Tube eight years on from the start of this programme and roughly one year on from Transport for London (TfL) taking control of the entire programme. The Committee will explore what has been promised in relation to upgrading each London Underground line and what has been delivered to date.
- 1.3 This investigation is not revisiting in detail the Public Private Partnership (PPP) contracts which underpinned the upgrade programme until June 2010. Instead it is taking as a starting point what was due to be delivered under the PPP contracts and then considering in detail TfL's progress in delivering the upgrades and its plans for the future upgrade programme. This will include examining for each line: recent performance based on TfL information; progress with the upgrade; TfL's expenditure on this work; and the implications for passengers in terms of disruption and closures. The Committee is seeking to make recommendations to the Mayor and TfL for improvements on any or all these matters.

#### Terms of reference

- 1.4 The terms of reference for the investigation are:
  - To explore the recent performance of the Tube and TfL's progress with the upgrade programme including for each London Underground line; and, in light of the findings
  - To identify any actions that the Mayor and TfL should take to improve the performance of the Tube and the delivery of the upgrade programme.

#### Timing

- 1.5 This investigation is taking place over spring- summer 2011. The stages include:
  - Agreement of terms of reference and scope: 9 March 2011;
  - Desk-based research/gathering written views and information: March 2011 onwards;
  - Formal meetings to gather information: 17 May 2011 and 14 June 2011; and
  - Produce findings: July 2011.

#### Contributing your views

- 1.6 The Committee is seeking views and information from anyone with an interest in this topic. You can submit your views in response to the terms of reference by e-mailing Laura Warren at [laura.warren@london.gov.uk](mailto:laura.warren@london.gov.uk) or writing to Laura c/o Scrutiny Team, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA. The deadline for submissions is **30 June 2011**.

## 2. Background information

### Overview

- 2.1 TfL is responsible for the London Underground network which comprises 11 lines and 270 stations. This network is more than 140 years old. It is the oldest underground system in the world. TfL took over responsibility for the Tube network from the government in 2003.
- 2.2 Prior to TfL assuming control of the London Underground, the government adopted a PPP structure to secure investment in the Tube. Under the 30 year PPP contracts, three infrastructure companies (infracos) were responsible for the maintenance and renewal of London Underground's assets, ie its rolling stock, stations, tracks, tunnels and signals. Metronet was responsible for the infraco covering the Bakerloo, Central, Victoria and Waterloo & City lines and for the infraco covering the Circle, District, Hammersmith & City and Metropolitan (the 'sub-surface') lines. Tube Lines was the infraco covering the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines. The PPP contracts required the infracos to deliver a certain level of daily performance and upgrade the lines to increase capacity and improve capability in the long-term.
- 2.3 The PPP structure ceased at the end of June 2010. At this point, TfL took over Tube Lines following months of wrangling between the two organisations over the cost of works during the next seven year period of the PPP (2010-2017). It followed TfL's earlier assumption of responsibility for upgrading and maintaining all the other lines after Metronet collapsed in 2007.

### Recent performance of the London Underground

- 2.4 In recent months, demand for the Tube has been high. In the four-week period to 11 December 2010 a new record of 90.6 million Tube journeys was set.<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that the number of Tube passengers will pass 1.1 billion by the end of 2010/11, beating the previous record of 1.089 billion passengers in 2008/2009.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.5 At around the same time, some aspects of performance have declined. In December 2010, the overall percentage of total scheduled kilometres operated on the Tube was lower than target (95.6 per cent compared to 96.6 per cent) and the overall average excess journey time on the Tube was higher than target (6.6 minutes compared to 6.56 minutes).
- 2.6 Each London Underground line operated fewer scheduled kilometres than target in December 2010. This included the Metropolitan line where the percentage of kilometres operated was 91 per cent compared to a target of 97 per cent. This was the sixth month in a row where the Metropolitan line had performed below target. Most London Underground lines also recorded an average excess journey time higher than target in December 2010. For the Bakerloo, Central, Victoria, Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines the average excess journey time was higher than target for each month between September – December 2010.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.7 There may be various reasons for the recent changes in the performance of the Tube. These include industrial action, the upgrade programme and ongoing service related issues.

### Industrial action

- 2.8 The RMT and TSSA unions held four 24-hour strikes in the latter part of 2010. TfL has reported

<sup>1</sup> TfL Rail and Underground Panel, Managing Director's report – London Underground, 8 February 2011

<sup>2</sup> 'Half world's population' is crammed on Tube.', The Evening Standard, 15 February 2011

<sup>3</sup> TfL Rail and Underground Panel, Managing Director's report – London Underground, 8 February 2011

that up until December 2010 this industrial action caused a loss of service amounting to some 0.6 million train kilometres or 1.2 per cent of the year to date schedule.<sup>4</sup>

### The upgrade programme

- 2.9 In December 2010, TfL reported that the two per cent decline in the overall number of kilometres operated on the Tube in 2009/10 compared to 2008/09 was primarily the result of upgrade work.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, TfL was criticised for not revealing the entire extent to which line closures for upgrade works were affecting services. The BBC's Politics Show London found that, whilst TfL claimed 95 per cent of scheduled Jubilee Line services ran in 2009/10, in fact only 78 per cent of trains ran in that period if weekend shutdowns were included in the figures.<sup>6</sup>

### Ongoing service issues

- 2.10 In recent months, there have been train, track and signal related failures across London Underground lines. On some lines the frequency of such operating failures appeared to be increasing in 2010. For example, on the Jubilee line the monthly number of signal and point related delays in excess of two minutes rose from just over ten in April 2010 to around 25 in December 2010. In September 2010, there were almost 50 such delays on this line.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.11 Many such incidents have raised concerns about safety. The serious safety incident involving a 'runaway' engineering train on the Northern line on 13 August 2010 has since been followed by other incidents raising issues about safety. For example, in early October 2010, the District line was part suspended after 23 trains were taken out of service because inspections revealed small cracks on their undersides.
- 2.12 This investigation provides an opportunity to explore the recent performance of the entire Tube network and each line in more detail. The Committee will examine the causes of the recent changes in performance and the steps being taken to address these issues. It will explore the extent to which performance has been affected by industrial action, the upgrade programme and/or operating failures. It will examine this performance in the context of the longer-term performance of the Tube over recent years.

### Progress with upgrading and maintaining the London Underground

- 2.13 The timetable for upgrading the London Underground has slipped, especially for the three lines formerly under Tube Lines' control. The Jubilee line upgrade was due to be completed by December 2009; it is now expected to be completed by Spring 2011. The Northern line upgrade was due to be completed by January 2012; it is now expected to be completed by the end of 2014. The Piccadilly line upgrade was due to be completed by 2014 but, as yet, it not clear when this might be delivered.
- 2.14 These delays have pushed back the realisation of increased capacity on the Tube. Originally many of these line upgrades were due to be completed by 2014 resulting in an increase in overall capacity of around 15 per cent.<sup>8</sup> By 2020, the entire upgrade programme is due to deliver a 30 per cent increase in overall capacity.

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<sup>4</sup> TfL Rail and Underground Panel, Managing Director's report – London Underground, 8 February 2011

<sup>5</sup> TfL's Travel in London Report 3, December 2010, p13

<sup>6</sup> BBC website, London Tube delays will decline as lines upgrades, 20 February 2011

<sup>7</sup> TfL Rail and Underground Panel, Managing Director's report – London Underground, 8 February 2011

<sup>8</sup> TfL, Business Plan 2009/10 – 2017/18, November 2008, p. 20

- 2.15 The slippage has adversely affected passengers who have endured many months of line closures. For example, stations on the Jubilee Line have been shut on more than 100 weekends in the last four years for the upgrades to signalling.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.16 When TfL took over Tube Lines, it reported that the end of the PPP would mean less disruption for Londoners as it would reduce the line closures required to complete the upgrades. In particular, TfL would significantly alter the proposed closure programme for the Northern line. Previously under Tube Lines, this upgrade was expected to include 65 weekend closures. TfL is due to release details of the revised closure programme for the Northern line shortly, once discussions with the signalling system supplier are concluded.<sup>10</sup>
- 2.17 When TfL took over Tube Lines, it also reported that it was confident of generating substantial financial savings in the delivery of future upgrades.<sup>11</sup> Peter Hendy stated the buy-out would leave TfL cash positive within four years and save hundreds of millions of pounds by 2018.<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, in October 2010, the Government provided a funding settlement for TfL until 2014/15 which allowed for the upgrades to proceed but left TfL with an overall shortfall of £2.2 billion in its transport grant. TfL has announced it will seek savings from London Underground including £300 million by delivering the upgrades more efficiently, “together with further paring back of cosmetic works at stations and the deferral of non-essential civil works.”<sup>13</sup>
- 2.18 This investigation provides an opportunity to explore in detail the progress to date in delivering the upgrade for each line. The Committee will examine how much extra capacity on the Tube has been realised since the start of the upgrade programme in 2002/03 and by when the further capacity is likely to be delivered. It will explore, in detail, how the future upgrade work will be delivered, the likely impact on passengers in terms of line closures and the steps being taken to mitigate any adverse impact. It will also examine TfL’s expenditure on the upgrade programme in the last year and what it is planning to spend in future including how it will realise savings.

### Past Committee work on the London Underground

- 2.19 The Committee will draw on its extensive past work on the London Underground to inform this investigation. Further details of all this work can be found online at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/investigations/tube-upgrades>
- 2.20 The past work includes reports such as *Too Close for Comfort: Passengers’ experiences of the London Underground* (December 2009). This report included various recommendations to help alleviate overcrowding for Tube passengers and minimise disruption through line closures. This included that block closures (closures of lines for a continuous period of days rather than over many weekends) could, in some cases and with the right complementary measures, be beneficial.<sup>14</sup> Recently TfL has indicated that it is now looking at the potential for block closures and has started to use them for some line upgrades.<sup>15</sup> This investigation provides an opportunity for the Committee to follow-up this and other relevant recommendations.
- 2.21 The Committee held three meetings on the Tube in 2010/11 which would also inform this

<sup>9</sup> BBC website, London Tube delays will decline as lines upgrades, 20 February 2011

<sup>10</sup> Mike Brown letter to Transport Committee, January 2011

<sup>11</sup> TfL press release, Transport for London to acquire the shares of Tube Lines, 7 May 2010

<sup>12</sup> Interview with BBC, 10 May 2010

<sup>13</sup> Mayor’s consultation budget 2011/12, December 2010, p29

<sup>14</sup> ‘Too close for comfort: ..’, Transport Committee report, December 2009, page 29 and 36

<sup>15</sup> Transcript of Transport Committee meeting on 2 February 2011, page 37

investigation.

1. On 26 May 2010, the Committee heard from and questioned Mike Brown, Managing Director, London Underground and London Rail, TfL, about the end of the PPP.
2. On 9 September 2010, the Committee heard from and discussed with TfL the incident involving a 'runaway' engineering train on the Northern line.
3. On 2 February 2011, the Committee heard from and questioned Mike Brown about TfL's progress with upgrading and maintaining the Tube. At this meeting, it also heard from and questioned David James, Chair of the Independent Investment Programme Advisory Group (IIPAG), about IIPAG's role in providing independent scrutiny of TfL's expenditure and performance in upgrading the Tube. IIPAG provides advice to the Mayor about the upgrade programme and produces reports for the Mayor on this issue.

### **3. Areas for the Transport Committee's investigation**

- 3.1 The Committee would welcome receiving any written views and information relevant to the terms of reference for its investigation. In particular, it would welcome any submissions covering the following specific matters.
- The recent performance of the Tube including the performance of individual lines. This may include views and information relating to delays, disruptions, service reliability and levels of overcrowding.
  - The progress with the upgrade and maintenance programme including for individual lines. The programme is due to deliver a faster, more frequent and reliable Tube service with an overall increase in capacity of 30 per cent by 2020. Some work has happened but the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly line upgrades have slipped.
  - The actions that have, or could, be taken to improve the performance of the Tube and the delivery of the upgrades. This may include views and suggestions relating to how TfL operates the Tube network and carries out the upgrade work, possibly drawing on examples from other metro systems. You may also wish to offer comments on: the use of early evening, weekend and/or week long (or 'block') closures to deliver the upgrades; the alternative travel arrangements put in place during closures; and the information that TfL is publishing to keep people informed about the upgrades.