

Transport Committee – 2 March 2017**Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Commissioner for Transport**

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Let us move, then, straight into our main item. It is fantastic to have Mike Brown MVO before us again at our annual catch-up with the Commissioner at Transport for London (TfL).

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Chair, if I may, I am not going to make a long opening statement but I wondered, given that this is the first time I have been in front of the Committee since the terrible accident in Croydon, if I might just acknowledge that. I do want to say that, following from the tragic derailment at Sandilands last November [2016], my thoughts – and I am sure the thoughts of all Members of the Committee – remain with those who, sadly, lost their lives, with their families of course and with those who were affected in any other way through injury or being connected with the incident in any way, shape or form.

I wanted, also, Chair, if I may, to take the opportunity of acknowledging the tremendous support I had from the Mayor and the Mayor's office at that very sad time. Also Assembly Member Steve O'Connell's support was unstinting during that time, as also was that from the Minister for London and local Member of Parliament (MP), Gavin Barwell, and the Leader of the Borough [of Croydon], Tony Newton. The support that they gave at that time – and continue to give – was really appreciated.

This was a terrible accident. We will continue to work with the Rail Accident Investigation Branch and will of course continue to take on board any recommendations as they emerge. We already have taken on recommendations from the interim reports and will continue to follow up as more reports emerge and as, indeed, we make our own assessment of what other measures might be appropriate.

I just thought, Chair, with apologies, that it was appropriate for me to say that and acknowledge that very tragic incident.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Absolutely. Thank you very much indeed for that. I want to go straight into the issue of taxi and private hire. Really just to open, what progress has TfL made on implementing changes to taxi and private hire services since the Committee's *Future Proof* report in December 2014?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Thank you very much for that. There are a number of areas that we are taking to follow up from the Mayor's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan.

The first one is an English language requirement for private hire drivers, which is subject to some legal proceedings and so I will be slightly circumspect with what I say here, but suffice it to say that there was very strong support for this proposal in the first consultation that was held in March 2015. Some 95% of private hire operators, 88% of drivers and 99% of respondents overall were in favour of some such requirement being applied. The second consultation, as you will be aware, Chair, was in September 2015 and again asked participants whether they supported drivers being able to demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge of

the English language at an intermediate level. Again, this received very strong support with some 80% in favour there.

I have been concerned that we have a proper impact assessment, which is around as much ensuring that people are able to fulfil the requirements for them, those who are private hire drivers, but also recognising the genuine issues around public perception and people's concern that a driver of any private hire vehicle that they might be in is able to understand them if they have a particular health issue or some issue emerges during the course of journey or is an imperative in the journey. That is one area that, as I say, is subject to a judicial review process at the moment and so is in the courts as we speak. We are expecting an outcome tomorrow.

Another area that we are following up on is the feasibility of looking at removing the exemption for private hire vehicles entering the Congestion Charge Zone. This is still under review. The reason that this is taking a bit of time, Chair, is because we want to make sure that we do not unwittingly place a huge burden on those very small private hire operators, perhaps on the outskirts of London, those who fulfil a very important community role because of the nature of the short journeys that some people need to make in parts of outer London in particular. We want to make sure that any change to the Congestion Charge exemption does not overly penalise those small operators and so we are still looking at that.

In other areas, we are quadrupling the number of compliance officers and recruitment continues there. We are on target for 250 new staff to be in post by the summer [2017] and 105 additional enforcement officers have commenced work so far, which is really important. I know that Keith [Prince AM] to your left was out recently on an exercise and had a chance to look at what they do. There is more opportunity going forward to engage with the taxi trade and to ensure that it has proper input into the deployment of these resources so that we can tackle what we need to tackle.

We have opened up more bus lanes, 15 out of the 20 that we have proposed to do, including the taxi trade's much-requested northbound London Bridge site. I continue to discuss with representatives of the trade what other opportunities might exist and what we might do in partnership with the boroughs to encourage more bus lanes to be opened up if appropriate. We continue to look at that.

We are ahead of our target to increase by at least 20% - that is 100 in total - the number of taxi ranks by 2020. So far, out of that 100, 74 have been delivered but of course, just to reassure you, we are not going to stop when we have reached that target. We will keep going to ensure that we identify any potential new locations.

Some stuff that seems pretty basic but is really important as well is finalising the trial of toilet access at Tube stations. That is about to happen very soon with a trial of that, which is really important.

Again, new private hire regulations came into force in June last year [2016] with more time permitted for existing licensees to meet the more significant changes. Over 30,000, I should say, Chair, drivers have had an insurance document spot-check since June 2016 with a very high level of 99.9% compliance in terms of insurance. Those drivers who did not have the correct insurance are having their licences reviewed and there has been a further number who have had warning letters for not having all of the relevant paperwork. Regardless of the status of their insurance, they need to have the paperwork with them at all times.

It is fair to say that there is a lot of work progressing. There is still more to do. There is a lot of ongoing activity still to do. Overall, we are trying to get some sensible and pragmatic steps to make sure that the industry is properly regulated and is also available to serve the public in London.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Can I just pick up a few things? Do you think that there will be fewer licensed private hire drivers as a result of your English language requirement?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): There may be. It is a bit too early to say what the impact would be but, going back to what I say, I would certainly hope that those drivers who are there would be of a standard that was able to properly communicate with those in their vehicles. That is a very important factor. It is a bit too early to say what the actual number impact would be.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): The deadline for drivers to have gone through this is what?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): September [2017] is what we are talking about and so we have given it a little bit longer timeline.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): I will not go into detail on that because I realise there is a court case. There are other things I probably would like to ask but I understand that you will not be able to answer because of the court case. On bus lanes, you talked about the ones that TfL is responsible for. What about the boroughs? How are you getting on with getting the boroughs to open up their bus lanes to taxis?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I said that there were 15 out of 20 that we have managed to reopen. There are some 40 bus lanes on the roads that boroughs control. We are in active discussions with the boroughs about consideration for access to taxis on those. The taxi trade has a priority scale, if you like, for how important those are and we are trying to work with them to ensure that we have an individual set of activities to try to get movement on those as a priority.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Are the boroughs being receptive or not?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. Everyone recognises that this is an opportunity and, as long as there is not an impedance of the bus network and we can keep traffic moving more generally, there are some ones that we can make quite quick progress on, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Could you just clarify the exact number of additional compliance officers? You mentioned the figures.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): There will be 250 in post by the summer [2017], which is a real step --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): There were only 60 or so before.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, absolutely. This is a really important change and as I said - and it is worth emphasising, Chair, and so forgive me for repeating myself - just having the taxi trade involved in helping with the strategic deployment of those compliance officers. Sometimes in the past - and it is not necessarily a criticism but it is a product of having a very small number previously - we had assumed that we knew where their deployment would be best carried out but, actually, I want to have a much greater interactive dialogue with the trade as to where they can be deployed.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): I would like to thank you and your team for keeping me out in the cold from 11.00pm until nearly 3.00am in the morning.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Sorry about that.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, I looked around for my friends and they had all disappeared. It was a bit like a pub fight, really! Anyway, it was very informative and brilliant work that they are doing and totally justifies the need for the extra officers.

However, one thing that was very clear was that there is a need for your officers to have more powers. At the moment, you are very reliant on the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). It is useful having the MPS present but, at the stop where I was at, there was a good half-a-dozen MPS police officers, which I am sure is not something they can do very often and nor can they do it in great numbers across the whole of London.

Being able to have one officer there at least would be a good thing, but you do not have the powers needed. Can I ask you how you are progressing with that and is there anything we can do help?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Thank you. I am very grateful and once again, to emphasise, I was really grateful that you did go out and have a look. It meant a lot to the team, actually, and so thank you for that.

This is interesting. Only yesterday I was compiling a list of items that would be on my first meeting agenda with the new Commissioner of the MPS [Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis]. This was, interestingly enough, one of the items that I would like to discuss with her. Perhaps, if you will forgive me, it is a bit too early to say how exactly we will make that happen, but I do take the point. In a sense, it is like street parking or anything else. For those charged with enforcement and compliance, it is enhanced hugely just by having a single police officer. Even a [Police] Community Support Officer sometimes just present gives that sense of authority that backs up what the compliance officers are trying to achieve.

It is a very well made point and there is more work to do there. I shall keep the Committee informed of progress there.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): The example was when one of the drivers was bang out of order and was getting a bit heated. Of course, he chose not to get too heated with a MPS officer there.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): With their body-worn cameras --

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, exactly. Can I just ask a cheeky question since you were talking about bus lanes? I do apologise. What about motorcyclists? There was a promise that you would try to get more bus lanes open to motorcyclists in the outer boroughs. Can I ask you about progress or can I ask you to take that away and come back to me in writing?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, I will come back to you, perhaps if I could write to you on progress. I know we have been looking at that. It is a complex issue, as you will understand, and there are lots of arguments for and against that. I am very conscious of the work that the Committee has been doing in this area. I hear you and I will certainly get back to you on that.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Great. We will, I have no doubt, do a long letter from this with some follow-ups. After the stuff you said on taxi and private hire, if we could have the timescales for some of these actions? It really does sound like you are making progress, but we would like to know some of the exact dates so that we can hold you to account.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely, yes.

Caroline Russell AM: Healthy Streets includes cycling, walking and enabling people to use public transport as well. It is a very positive and forward-looking way of working for London. What I am really interested in is how we are going to know that the Healthy Streets approach has been properly embedded in TfL's policies and at every level through the organisation and that people are actually thinking about delivering on Healthy Streets?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely. As you will be aware, a total of £2.5 billion is being invested to get more people cycling and walking and to improve public safety and air quality overall. This includes a record amount of £154 million a year to spend on cycling schemes and initiatives to improve cycling, as well as some £875 million on actions to improve air quality. Add to that the £400 million of funding to London's boroughs over the next five years through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) process to help them deliver Healthy Streets as well.

What is really important for me is that having the new Walking and Cycling Commissioner, Will Norman, now in place. I am genuinely delighted that Will has joined us.

One of the things that we had already set in place prior to Will's arrival picks up on your point, Caroline [Russell AM], about an internal recalibration of how we are going to deal with this. We are going to have a Healthy Streets Portfolio Board - that is now up and running - internally. That brings together all of the decision-makers within the organisation, as well as colleagues from City Hall. This Board, so-called, or this group will assess investment decisions against all of the Healthy Streets indicators using the Health Economic Assessment Tool for Walking and Cycling and a new Healthy Streets Check on every single scheme so that we get the right prioritisation and the right governance. That is probably an overused term but for this context it is the right term; I want to make sure that this is a totally different way of doing business. That is the internal bit.

Then, if we look at our TfL Board committee, the Programmes and Investment Committee, which again is a new committee that was set up with the creation of the new Board, will direct investment towards the Mayor's priorities, assess priorities against those Healthy Streets indicators that I described and also ensure that our day-to-day decision-making processes prioritise delivery against those indicators as a matter of course.

Inevitably, as the Healthy Streets portfolio is set up, to start with there will be a little bit of bedding-in as we bring together areas of activity that were perhaps run as different siloed activities but, frankly, I am really pleased with the progress we are already making in bringing this together. If you ally to that new targets and key performance indicators, which will ensure we assess our progress against the Healthy Streets approach. Those will be published in the spring [2016], very soon, and so you will have a clear line of sight as to what the impact is against the measurable set of objectives of the overall portfolio going forward.

Having looked at that and having had an initial discussion with Will [Norman] about that, it looks to me to be a good starting point. I am sure that it will evolve over time. I am sure that there will be things within that that we do not quite get right immediately, but it is probably the right way to start.

Caroline Russell AM: What are you doing to make sure? It sounds like you have the governance structure right. It sounds very positive to have a Healthy Streets Board. I really look forward to seeing how the indicators are going to be measured.

Are you saying that that is being published in the spring and so you cannot explain to us something like “pedestrians from all walks of life” or “places to stop and rest”? That one is quite easy to measure, places to stop and rest, but some of them are slightly more subjective. Are you going to be doing surveys? How are you going to measure this?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): There will be a combination of some quantitative measures, as you have described, which are quite easy just to measure with a yes or a no, percentages of delivery or whatever. There will be then some qualitative work that we have to look at as well. That will be part of the evolution of the series of metrics going forward.

It is also worth saying that the Healthy Streets Programmes and Investment Committee’s paper is already online for the forthcoming meeting and that does present the strategic case for the Healthy Streets programme. I know that Members of the Committee who have not had a look at it already will be keen to look at that because it does talk about the constituent projects as they currently are proposed, as well as the governance arrangements that I just went through. It is also going to be seeking from that Committee through the Board £439 million worth of delivery in 2017/18 and in subsequent years. This is really getting the financial approvals behind what is a pretty ambitious programme.

Caroline Russell AM: In terms of all of this massive investment, you are going to be working very closely with the boroughs. Are there going to need to be changes in the way that the LIP process works? You are bringing about a big culture change within TfL, but you also have all of the people working in the boroughs, who are hopefully going to deliver these liveable neighbourhoods and more people-friendly streets. What is going to have to change in terms of your relationship with the boroughs and the way that money gets given out?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): You are absolutely right. The Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme will replace the LIP Major Schemes Programme and will fund large-scale - a total cost of something in the order of £1 million to £5 million - area-based schemes to deliver Healthy Streets in and around town centres and residential areas, making them more attractive places in which to walk, cycle and spend time. There will be a reconfiguration of that.

Of course, I talk on a regular basis with the Transport and Environment Committee of London Councils, chaired by Cllr Julian Bell from Ealing, and there is a regular dialogue at all levels within the organisation with the boroughs as to how this is going to work. This is not about trying to be too overall controlling from the centre, but it is trying to create a framework within which the boroughs can help to deliver this agenda within their own local priorities.

Caroline Russell AM: Just being a little bit more specific here, there are some boroughs that will probably buy into the objectives of Healthy Streets, which is very clear about wanting fewer journeys made by private car and more journeys made on foot, by bike and by public transport. It is about how you will make sure that these liveable neighbourhoods and the Healthy Streets approach is delivered across all boroughs when you may have some boroughs that are less amenable to the idea.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): You are absolutely right to say that. It is inevitable that some boroughs move at a slightly different pace, for whatever reason, than some others. That is why we need a little bit of a framework within which the money that goes to them is spent, while recognising, as I said, they need some flexibility within that. There is a lot of power of persuasion for some places that will be required. Other boroughs will need no persuasion whatsoever and are desperate to get on and do this, which is great.

The other really exciting thing - and Will [Norman] will be assisting me and the rest of the team in doing this - is the joined-up nature of having walking and cycling. I guess we will come on to it, Chair, but Will is absolutely mindful of the challenges and opportunities for the bus service as well around London and how important that is for people getting around. Having this overall joined-up approach is something materially different from anything we have had before.

It is early days and you are right to ask me the question. I am confident and optimistic that we will get to the right place but I need to keep the pressure on those boroughs that perhaps we need to do a bit more work with.

Caroline Russell AM: Over this last couple of years with the delivery of the Mini-Holland programme, there has been a lot of people campaigning for them and a lot of people campaigning against them. People get very worried about change. Are there any specific things that you have learned from those consultation processes that will come forward into how this is going to be delivered moving forwards?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Again, it goes back to what we have just been saying. It is about engagement at an early stage. I know that Will is very keen to ensure that engagement happens at an early stage so that we can keep the delivery momentum of Mini-Hollands and also, where there are concerns from members of the public about Mini-Hollands - for example, some concerns in somewhere like Enfield - it is making sure that consultation is carried out correctly and that we are able to respond appropriately to that consultation, while recognising also that a joined-up cycling network across the city is what we are really trying to get to here.

I am mindful of walking as part of that and buses for that matter as well, but one of the early discussions that Will and I have been having - and I know that he is coming to see you at some point himself and so I do not want to steal his thunder - is about how we make sure people feel connected. If they are on the so-called Cycle Superhighways and are going on to the Quietways and then perhaps on to the Mini-Hollands, does it feel like a coherent journey from start to finish or do people feel that they just get to the end of a line of route and suddenly all signage stops and they are left abandoned on a conventional road? All of that is part of that.

Obviously, we have to continue to learn lessons about Mini-Hollands so far, but I am very confident that we have a good coherent plan going forward and, of course, at headline level for the next phase as well of the Cycle Superhighway route --

Caroline Russell AM: That is what I was just going to come on to. We are talking about a network for people on bikes and those networks go from borough to borough. They go right across the city. Can you give us a bit of an update on what you are expecting to be delivered and what you are next planning to consult on in terms of some of those more long-distance cycling routes?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, of course. We will complete phase two of the North-South Superhighway and deliver new Cycle Superhighways 4, 9 and 11, which is good, as well as

phase two of the East-West route, subject to consultation and approval. They will significantly improve the cyclist and indeed pedestrian experience overall and create great new public spaces, too.

For the Cycle Superhighway routes going forward, we have Cycle Superhighway 1 from Tottenham to the City, 2 from Stratford to Aldgate, 3 from Barking to Tower Gateway, 5 from Oval to Pimlico, 7 from Merton to the City and 8 from Wandsworth to Westminster. They are increasingly covering large swathes of London. As well, of course, our business plan includes at least 20 Quietway routes with the first seven delivered in 2016/17, the year that we are in, and another 11 will be delivered by March 2019; plus the development and delivery of new routes currently identified and being prioritised through the overall analysis that we are doing.

With the overall family of schemes, if you like, it is about ensuring we continue the momentum, being mindful of local issues as they emerge, making this a joined-up network and also - and this, I guess, is the fundamental difference from where we might have been in the past - being mindful of the impact on pedestrians, on public space and on the bus network to ensure that we are able to keep the city moving.

Caroline Russell AM: It sounds like a lot of balls to keep juggling, but --

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is, but it is very exciting. I really do feel hugely optimistic about this. If you had asked me previously this question several years ago, I would have said, "Look, we are making the first forays into this. Is it as joined-up as it might be? Probably not. Were some of the time imperatives that we delivered against the right ones? Probably not". Now I really do feel that this is going to turn into a very coherent and very credible plan.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you.

Joanne McCartney AM: I have been a big supporter of the Mini-Hollands scheme and I was very pleased that we got the money in Enfield, but of course you will be aware that there is a lot of opposition, particularly from traders. I have been getting some emails in from traders because the building works are starting outside their premises and seem to be taking a long time. They are seeing their trade dropping off.

I am just wondering. Have you looked at what can be done to speed up roadworks that are outside business premises in particular? Traders are telling me that they are losing thousands of pounds.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is a really good point and it is something that I continually ask on my own travels around the city and looking at various places myself. I continue to apply that question and that pressure to my own team as to what more we could do.

As ever, there is a balance - and you will understand this very well - with what work we can do in what might be described as 'less social' hours in terms of the night-time when often some of these trading premises have flats adjacent to them or domestic residences nearby. What we do not want to do, of course, is say that we will work all night to expedite the work and then find out that that is just making it a pretty unliveable situation, albeit over a shorter time, for the residents affected. These things are always a balance.

I will take away the specific point about the Enfield construction and just see if there is any more we can do --

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, particularly around Bush Hill and the parade around there.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I will certainly take that away and perhaps, if I can get back to you directly on that, Joanne, I will do so.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. A lot of the opposition from traders comes because they believe it will ultimately affect their bottom lines and their businesses. I know that TfL has said that if this place is made more liveable, it may attract people. I want to know. Is TfL doing any evaluation about the effect on businesses of these cycle schemes?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I am not aware that we are doing anything specific but, again, it is a very well made point.

The one observation I would give is that even on those routes within central London where we have had new cycle routes created - I was talking to somebody the other day as I walked along the Embankment outside Portcullis House and that whole riverbank environment is totally transformed for pedestrians as a result of there being that larger gap between pedestrians and the traffic flows because of the cycle lane in between - it does make a more liveable space, a more walkable space and a more pleasant space. That is as true for some of the Mini-Holland schemes or the Quietways as well. It is to a different extent, but it still does open up more opportunities for people to move around and hopefully, therefore, use local businesses.

It is a worthwhile point. I will take it away and just see if we can do any work on that. It may well be beyond our remit but we will certainly have a look and see what we can do.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): I would just say that Will [Norman] was nodding to both of those things, Joanne, and so I think he is on top of those already. We will go into some of this in detail next month on all of this because it is really important.

Caroline Russell AM: Someone has just tweeted me to ask:

“If two options score equally [in terms of the Healthy Streets indicators] and one is politically easier (say benches vs cycle tracks) how do we not get only benches?”

How are those priorities going to be managed between the different indicators of a healthy street?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): That is the advantage of having a group that looks at this in the round. That is exactly what we will do. In that situation, we would look in the round and we would see whether we could do both, whether there is some reconfiguration of the scheme that allows maximum benefit for cyclists, pedestrians and the space itself. If there is some ultimate conflict and we just cannot reconcile the two, then we will have to make an ultimate decision as to what is the right thing to do. I am not aware that we have had one that was actually so closely balanced on the edge, but we would look at those on their own merits if that did emerge.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: One pedestrian scheme - or I should say “so-called pedestrian scheme” because many of us around this project do not regard it as a transport project - is the Garden Bridge. I have a few questions for

you about that in relation to, as I am sure you are aware, the letter I wrote to you on 9 January [2017] about TfL's former Managing Director of Planning, Richard De Cani, lobbying the Department for Transport (DfT) over the awarding of funds for the Garden Bridge project despite the fact that he had already given notice to you that he was on his way to work at Arup, a major contractor for the Garden Bridge. I regard this as a very major conflict of interest.

First of all, I want you to confirm that irrespective of the signing of the construction contract for the bridge, the release of funding to the Garden Bridge Trust was subject to the Trust satisfying a number of conditions set out in the deed of grant?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. What I would say on the Garden Bridge, if I may, Chair - and I am not going to be evasive with you, Tom - is that I have, as have a number of colleagues both past and present, been talking to Dame Margaret Hodge, who has been carrying out the review into the whole procurement process and was commissioned by the Mayor to do that work. I have met with Margaret Hodge and we had a very long and very productive meeting of probably over an hour a few months ago. We await her report.

Just to reassure the Committee, I will, of course, be considering that report in its entirety and taking whatever necessary steps that there might be that emerge from the procurement process to tighten up on that going forward.

The Mayor has made his position very clear, as you know, on the Garden Bridge: he does not want to see any more public funds committed to it and I absolutely support that. No grant payments have been made since he took office and we have ceased all expenditure on the project from a TfL perspective.

I have talked to you before about individuals but, if I may, that is best covered by the recommendations that Margaret Hodge is doing on behalf of the Mayor and so I am not sure that I can add much value on top of what I have already said to her and others on that topic.

Tom Copley AM: There are just a couple of things that I want to get straight and I am not going to go on for very long. There are just a couple of things that I want to get facts on and I want to get straight in my mind in terms of this and I am sure other Members would appreciate this.

I want you to confirm that the release of funding to the Garden Bridge Trust was subject to the Trust satisfying a number of conditions set out in the deed of grant.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. That would be the process that we would follow, yes.

Tom Copley AM: That is the process. Good. There are things such as:

"The Trust has demonstrated to TfL's satisfaction that it has secured or is able to secure a sufficient level of funding, including the grant from TfL, to cover the costs of construction of the Garden Bridge."

There is a whole series of those conditions. This means, of course, that the release of funding was ultimately at TfL's discretion and not automatically triggered by the signing of the construction contract?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, but I would just refer you to the fact that this was not a project - and you know this because I have talked to you about it before - that was subject to the level of scrutiny that projects would have always been under by the TfL Board because it was subject, before my time in this job and indeed during my time in this job, to various Mayoral Directions that are on record from the previous Mayor's time in office. There is a reality of how that emerged over time.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you for answering yes to that question. Was Mr De Cani, when he was Managing Director of Planning, the only person involved in determining whether or not the Trust had satisfied the funding conditions?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I do not know for certain the answer to that question.

Tom Copley AM: Do you know exactly how TfL determined that the conditions had been satisfied.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is the same thing. I will have to get back to you on that.

Tom Copley AM: If you could get back to me on those two points --

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, I will, of course.

Tom Copley AM: -- I would be very grateful. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): They are important clarifications.

Tom Copley AM: Yes. Thank you. I will now go on to the next question, which is on congestion.

In the light of the Committee's recent report on congestion, what consideration have you given to reforming the Congestion Charge?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I welcome, first of all, I should say, the Committee's recent work in this area and we look forward to responding to the recommendations in the report in due course, of course.

As Committee Members will be aware, the causes of congestion are complex, but some of the key reasons for the increasing congestion over recent years are the huge increase we have seen in so-called white vans, small delivery vans and freight deliveries generally, the major schemes happening in London like the Thames Tideway Tunnel, evidenced by - even looking from outside the window here - the large number of cranes and construction sites that are in place across the city in general. Again, it is the volume of freight but without always the consolidation that can support the increasing freight. There is some road enhancement that we have been doing and there is the huge amount of road enhancement that boroughs have been doing as well. Of course, there is the continual scourge of unplanned or incorrect utility works and we continue to rigorously prosecute offenders.

The Mayor has said that he, with us, will reduce disruption caused by planned or unplanned incidents. We will improve journey time and reliability on that basis so that all road journeys have minimal delays in traffic conditions. We have to make sure that the infrastructure around the road network - traffic signals, road

surfaces - are reliable from our perspective and that faults are minimised and that, picking up the point that Joanne [McCartney AM] raised, any repairs that are required are carried out as quickly as possible.

You will have noticed, I am sure, that we have been trying to improve communication with road users so that, a bit like in advance of Tube journeys, users can make more informed decisions based on accurate and up-to-date information. Also, notwithstanding those offenders from the utility company perspective, we want to work more collaboratively with utility companies generally to co-ordinate maintenance and upgrading of the infrastructure.

We work with the freight industry, reducing the number of deliveries when we can at the busiest time. We are looking at how we can do more to address personal deliveries and are looking at how consolidated deliveries could improve the situation and also, although it is at the margin, how the river could be used more effectively to move freight around as well.

We need to look at how we deliver cycle schemes going forward to ensure that they are done in a way that is mindful of the challenge of construction on our road network while recognising the fantastic benefit at the end of those schemes being delivered. Also, we are investing some £200 million in bus priority schemes across the city to restore bus reliability to its previous levels.

Our Healthy Streets approach, as we were talking about before, is an integral part of this as well and how we can reduce traffic in London generally. We are going to keep the Congestion Charge under review. It has been successful from its original concept, but we will certainly keep it under review to ensure it continues to meet its objectives. One of the most immediate examples is adapting it to tackle some of the air quality challenge with the so-called T-Charge, the £10 additional charge on emissions there for the most polluting vehicles coming into the City. I do not think that anyone would have an issue with that. It is a very important health issue. We are bringing forward the introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) more quickly in 2019 instead of 2020. Indeed, we are looking at expanding it as well - this is all up for consultation, of course - to the North and South Circular Roads.

There are a number of things that we are considering as well. The forthcoming Mayor's Transport Strategy - and I do not want to reveal everything that is in it at the moment because it is still a work in progress, as you will be aware - will set out in more detail the Mayor's long-term strategy for tackling congestion and reducing traffic levels in London. There is a lot going on in this whole area, which we will continue to work on.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you for that answer. On the Congestion Charge, a lot of us here believe that the Congestion Charge is a good thing, but it is of course an old system now. The technology is 15 years old, I think.

How adaptable is it? For example, one of the issues we have found is that once you have paid it you have paid it and so there is no disincentive - in fact, there might be an incentive - to drive through central London more because you have paid your money. Is it possible to adapt it so that people have to pay another charge if they leave and then come back in, for example?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The existing system - you are quite right - is quite clunky because the technology that was in place at that time only allowed us to have a relatively clunky system. What is exciting is that going forward - and again, I do not want to pre-empt what might emerge in the Mayor's Transport Strategy for the medium and long-term views on what we might do with congestion management in London but it will be no surprise to Members of the Committee - the technology is such that it

can be much more in the moment or even on particular lines of route or times of day or whatever other requirement you might seek to apply. That would not be possible with the existing system and so it would require new technology to be applied. Depending on what emerges in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, anything is possible.

Tom Copley AM: What research have you done about the possible introduction of road pricing in London? Do you think that it would have a positive effect in terms of congestion?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Going back to what I said earlier on, anyone bringing a car into London has the wrong end of the stick in terms of how life should be lived in a great city such as this, in my view. This is a city where there has been a huge increase in public transport provision and in the reliability of public transport services. As soon as next year, we will add a further 10% to the transport capacity of the city with the introduction of the Elizabeth line through the central part of London. Really, for the future of this city and how it operates, car usage and moving around by car in the city is not where we want to get to. Having said that, we then have to ensure - and the T-Charge is one such lever that we can apply - that people are helped in their decision-making processes going forward as to what method they choose to travel in and around the city.

Forgive me. I am not trying to be evasive, but I do not want to pre-empt what is going to be in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. All I would say is that there is a full, all-encompassing debate that we have been having as we form the thinking around the Mayor's Transport Strategy and I am very excited. This will be a really revolutionary document.

Tom Copley AM: I am interested that you have talked about the ULEZ. I know that you keep saying you do not want to pre-empt the Mayor's Transport Strategy, but would the technology involved in putting in the ULEZ also be adaptable if the Mayor chose to introduce a road-pricing scheme?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Potentially, yes.

Tom Copley AM: Would you be looking to make sure that any system you chose was as adaptable as possible, I would have thought?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. Inevitably, it would be because the nature of the technology now is that you would almost automatically get that for a very small incremental cost. That would not be an issue.

Tom Copley AM: What do you think the prospects are of the Government devolving Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) to London?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Londoners pay about £500 million a year to the central Government through the VED. The way it is allocated and spent in the United Kingdom (UK) is changing. All VED in England goes into a road fund to pay for investment in the strategic road network managed by Highways England from 2020. Highways England does not manage the strategic road network in London.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): We do.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We do. Therefore, we would make an assertion that the proportion of that money that would be required for the road network in London should come to us.

Tom Copley AM: Yes.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is also interesting to note - and Members will be aware - that following the 2005 Spending Review our operational grant from the central Government will be removed from 2018/19. For this year it is £447 million, goes down to £227 million next year and is zero thereafter. That means that there is a net operating deficit that we have to make up, in effect, from cross-subsidising fares on the buses and Tube, which I have to say, by any macroeconomic analysis anywhere in the world, is insane but that is what we will risk happening in London unless we get some recognition that the VED should be allocated, in proportion and in the right way, to London. We continue to make that point to --

Tom Copley AM: It is an incredibly strong case, is it not? Are we essentially subsidising the rest of the country if we are not getting anything for our roads and TfL is having to pay for them and no operational grant from the Government?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We are certainly not getting our fair share. That would be my view. It is an incredibly logical case and I look forward to it being responded to in that way.

Tom Copley AM: Can I ask about - this is one of the issues that I have been quite interested in - the prospect of workplace parking? I do not think that TfL has done any modelling on this. Is there a particular reason why that has not taken place to see how much money, perhaps, a workplace parking levy would raise in London?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I know that some Members have been interested in that. We have not done a lot of work on that to date, but it is one of the issues that we could consider strategically as well. I understand that individual Members take care of that, although I would go back to what I said earlier. It would seem to be based on the premise that people bring a car to work. I would rather that for the new construction that we see here outside the window and we see elsewhere in the city there was not parking provision applied because the best way to get into the city is by Tube or by bus.

Tom Copley AM: Finally, in terms of reducing delivery van traffic, I wondered what your thoughts were on our recommendations there.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We continue to work with operators, boroughs and others across the freight industry to ensure that we can deliver goods and services as efficiently and as safely as possible with the least impact on the environment. We are encouraging operators to retime trips to outside peak hours and to work on consolidation.

I recognise that freight is very important for London's economy. Of course I do, but we are gathering evidence to inform what our future freight policy might be and that will be part of the London Plan and the Mayor's Transport Strategy going forward.

Again, how could we encourage more freight delivery and more freight activity by water on the river, by rail, by powered two-wheelers, potentially, or even by bicycles? When you look at what is in these small white vans,

very often it is one or two parcels, which do not require a vehicle that is potentially polluting and also taking up a huge amount of road space in the city? There is all of that.

Employers can do their bit as well. I have to say that I have now made it clear that within TfL I will not be permitting deliveries from online [shopping] --

Tom Copley AM: Excellent.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): That was one of our recommendations. Great.

Tom Copley AM: That was one of our recommendations, yes.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): -- for our offices or our locations going forward.

We have to be mindful that, in previous years, it was difficult because you often had to go to a fairly faraway delivery consolidation point, not necessarily near where you lived. Now, of course, there is more and more opportunity for local stores for consolidation to take place. All of that just changes the whole paradigm going forward. We are going to keep working on this. There is a lot more to do.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you very much.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Just on delivery and how we reduce delivery traffic across London, a group of us from the Transport Committee went to visit the Duddle store at Victoria last week. It is a really good initiative and there is a range of initiatives across London in terms of shops - I know of Co-op and other shops - and areas where you can pick up parcels.

One of the things that came out from that visit was access to TfL sites and the Underground. In terms of trying to cut this and change people's habits, if there was a really good system so that you could pick up your parcel really close to a station and hop back on the Tube or the bus, we would see a big drop in terms of some of the firms.

The question I am asking is in terms of how and what discussions TfL will be having with firms like Duddle - obviously, there are other firms on the market - to try to make that more real, especially when we are looking at station redevelopments and a new station being built, and making sure we are not missing a trick in terms of making an integrated system to make it easier for people to pick up parcels.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): As you said, other operators are available but, yes, I take the point. Just to be clear, I have asked my commercial development team to look at that very issue and ensure that we are maximising whatever opportunities we have, either because there is available space at stations already or - exactly as you said - because there is work going on to expand or enlarge particular stations as well. It is a very well-made point. I am absolutely onto it. You are right. There are opportunities there.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): I wanted to pick that up. It does not necessarily have to be at a station. They gave a very good example at Liverpool Street where they have a container, effectively, in the station or a pop-up, if you like, which you could have at a bus station or a key interchange. At Paddington Station in the run-up to Christmas, there were 3,000 parcels a day going through. That is the volume. There is

huge potential there to think about more than just where there is a space in a Tube station and to think creatively about the wider estate.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, I take that point. Yes, I would not confine our thinking to just the Tube stations. You are absolutely right. I am very aware of that point.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): We are very keen to push that. I just want to pick up one thing before I bring Keith [Prince AM] in. Tom [Copley AM] was asking you some questions. Can I ask if TfL has done any research looking at road pricing and reforming the Congestion Charge?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I am not aware if we have done any detailed research but, clearly, we will be guided by whatever the Mayor's Transport Strategy comes up with as to what policy decisions we might --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): The Mayor has told us that everything is on the table, as it were, and he is looking at everything.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Therefore, have you done perhaps some initial work looking at that, just to help to shape the Transport Strategy?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Just going back to what I said in my answer to Tom [Copley AM] in terms of, for example, recognising what technology exists out there, we have certainly been looking at that. There have been some discussions, I know, with other cities that face similar challenges. Manhattan, for example, in New York faces some very similar challenge with congestion and has - remarkably - considerably fewer levers than London has and the Mayor has in terms of what they might be able to do to rectify that.

Yes, we are thinking about it because, in a sense, we would need to think about it we craft the Transport Strategy. However, as I said, what we have not done is to go into the full detail of what any reform system would be like because that would be the next phase of work - if there were to be one - after the Transport Strategy is produced.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Just some initial bits have been done?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): That is fine. That was helpful.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): On road pricing, clearly, if you just adopt road pricing, it would potentially be quite an additional expense for drivers. Can you give drivers any commitment that it would be linked to VED at all?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): As I said, we have not quite got that far yet in the analysis, Keith. The gross income generated from the Congestion Charge, just to give you some figures, for 2015/16 was £258 million but, by the time we paid for the administration of the scheme and all of the

activities around it, the net income was £168 million. You can see, given what I said earlier on about the gap or shortfall or that we get from not having VED devolved is quite significant.

We have to look at all of this in the round. What does the balance sheet look like for the road network in London? How can ensure that we are able to maintain it, to renew it where we can, to keep traffic moving and to keep buses, cyclists and pedestrians supported on London's streets, while recognising that the Congestion Charge still exists as it currently does and in whatever consideration we give it going forward following the Mayor's Transport Strategy?

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you.

David Kurten AM: If I just stay on the issue of road pricing, you mentioned that it is a very wide-ranging debate and you are listening to opinions and arguments from all sides.

I have heard a lot of concern from motorists, particularly motorists in outer London, that you are considering new technology that might be able to monitor vehicles in real time. There is a lot of concern that that will impact on civil liberties and privacy. A lot of drivers who have written to me or spoken to me are horrified about the idea that a government agency will be monitoring and charging people based on some unit in their cars.

What do you have to say about that? What assurances can you give to London's motorists that that kind of system will not be put in place?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It absolutely will not be. There is no question because we would be breaching legal constraints if we did.

I would use the parallel, if I may, with registered Oyster cards on the public transport network. We could be potentially in the same situation. If somebody registers an Oyster card with us, in theory you could argue that we could track where people's journeys are and what they are doing all the time. We do not do that. There is a very clear wall in the process. It is a statutory wall that we have in place with our Oyster card system.

I would envisage exactly a parallel arrangement being in place for any such scheme with motorists going forward. There is no question. That is never our intention and we would make absolutely sure that it was not happening.

David Kurten AM: Thank you. That might not be the scheme that is put in place because we do not actually know the content of the future consultation anyway.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Quite, yes.

David Kurten AM: All right. Thank you. I will move on to the main thing I am going to ask you about now, which is the budget and the savings that TfL has to make. There is significant financial pressure on TfL and you have plans to make £4 billion of savings and efficiencies over the next five years. How are you going to make those savings?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Our business plan is affordable. It is ambitious. It sets out exactly how we will drive efficiencies through the biggest-ever overall of our organisation since we were created, delivering savings of £4 billion, as you said, over the plan.

Also, we will take fundamentally a different approach to raising other income with ambitious plan, for example, for the use of our land and retail estate. Members, I am sure, will have noticed that as recently as this morning we have announced a future development at Blackhorse Road of 350 houses by 2022, the fourth such scheme now that the Mayor has announced with us, and 50% of those homes will be affordable. It is yet another opportunity both for an income stream for TfL and also to deliver much-needed housing in and around London.

Our business also allows us to continue with our major investment programme: the Bakerloo line extension, the Northern line further upgrade, the Overground lines, continuing to work on Crossrail 2, as well as the east London river crossings, the Silvertown Tunnel and a pedestrian/cycle bridge, I hope, between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf. We are investing, as you know, in the transformation of areas such as Old Street, Vauxhall, Waterloo, Stratford and Oxford Street, very importantly, and the £2.5 billion to get more people cycling and walking and to improve public safety and air quality also.

In terms of reducing costs, I am pleased to say that we are already making good progress. If you look at our costs profile for this year, we have seen a quarter-on-quarter drop in actual costs against our budget. That is the first time that that has happened in the history of TfL. Under the new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Ian Nunn and me and with the direction that we have given the organisation and the Mayor's leadership, we are following that through with the root-and-branch review, which has identified £4 billion of savings already.

Just to give you a sense of where we have got to this year, by the end of quarter three of this financial year, we were over £138 million better against the budget, cumulatively, for the year than we might have been if we had met the budget. That is a really significant enhancement.

Just to give you a little bit more detail, David [Kurten AM], if I may, £2 billion came from putting in place a new operating model and a different way of running the place, reducing management layers and merging currently separate functions. Forty nine senior managers have already left, saving £40 million over the next five years. We have saved already £70 million on information technology (IT) projects with more savings to follow. We are saving about £2 million every week, having reduced our non-permanent labour by almost 1,000 since December 2015. We are negotiating and bringing together the management of commercial contacts more. That will give us another £2 billion. That is through savings of, for example, £80 million a year over the next five years by improving Tube maintenance and looking out how we carry out that activity, and more affordable processes, materials and technology, for example, with our escalators, handrails and steps costing less while ensuring we keep the reliability of the assets in place. We have had further value for money from old contracts with consolidation, for example, of our head office and facilities management contracts; reducing our head office accommodation portfolio more generally and the cost of basic but very important areas such as office cleaning and catering.

We have a series of work-streams across the organisation and senior managers in my team are held accountable for the delivery of those work-streams. I am committed to ensuring that we deliver a credible savings programme that keeps the focus on delivering a reliable and safe service and keeps the focus on delivering a capital programme going forward. Ian Nunn and I have just carried out a major review into the draft budget for next year and I am very confident that the senior members of my team and their teams get the message loud and clear and have credible action plans to continue the deliver trajectory we are already seeing.

David Kurten AM: Thank you. It was a very full answer and you have clearly thought a lot about it as an organisation. Are there any risks to staff - frontline staff, perhaps - and services from the efficiency savings that you are making? Have you identified that?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is worth saying that some 80% of the spend of TfL is with external organisations. It is based on our major contracts for our major capital programmes in particular. We are talking about 20% of our cost base that is around how we staff the organisation. We can then take away from that the areas of savings we need to work on within the consolidation of central functions, for example, we have already committed to have engineering in one place across TfL and we have already committed to having capital programmes managed in one place within the organisation.

My aim is to ensure that the frontline delivery of core services is absolutely preserved. Indeed, you will have seen that we are enhancing and, based on the increased numbers of people using the Underground and the review that we have carried out on the staffing levels on the Tube, we have reviewed some of the numbers there. That is one example where preserving and indeed, where appropriate, enhancing frontline delivery is still a sustainable argument as part of this. There is a lot of work to do. I do not want to underplay the level of effort and energy that is required here. However, I am really encouraged - again, under the leadership of the Mayor and the new Board that we have a pretty rigorous set of plans in place to deliver what we need to.

David Kurten AM: You mentioned there that there has to be £800 million on average a year over the next few years in efficiency savings. TfL published a broad breakdown of the money to be saved in the next fiscal year, highlighting £227.6 million in the report and cited "commercial reasons" as to why you could not give any further details for the majority of that £800 million. Why were there commercial reasons to prevent disclosing further details of the plan?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We have some contracts that are in place already with big suppliers to deliver, for example, the modernisation of the District, Circle and Metropolitan lines, to buy new trains, to procure new signalling, to do some particular road schemes that are in place and to proceed with the powers moving forward on the Silvertown Crossing and other big schemes. It is very important that we are able to preserve our negotiation position by not upfront putting all of those numbers out in the public domain. If we did so, of course, perfectly logically - I am not saying that our contractors or partners are evil in any way - they would then look at that as a base number or ceiling number that they could seek to get to. Of course, I would like to save even more money in some of the areas and our relationships with our contractors and demonstrate even greater value for money.

It genuinely is not trying to hide anything. I have looked at this in quite a lot of detail because I am sure you will notice - and many Assembly Members who have been around for perhaps several years would, I hope, acknowledge - that the transparency of the organisation has been enhanced much more. We have a set of financial data that is now understandable by ordinary people, whereas, frankly, sometimes it was not in the past. All of that is about increased transparency.

On this subject, though, I am persuaded - and I have asked the question myself - that we have to be circumspect in what we do have out there.

David Kurten AM: It is about the negotiation position?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is, absolutely, yes.

David Kurten AM: That makes sense. You did mention 49 managers have been released and so you are making progress with the management restructure in TfL.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes.

David Kurten AM: When do you think that that process will be completed?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): This is subject to the appropriate level of consultation that we need to do with trade union representatives and others because that applies even at fairly senior levels within the organisation. I would not want to give a categorical date because that would assume that I am not going to be properly taking cognisance of consultation and I am absolutely determined that we do take genuine issues that are raised in the consultation process and respond properly to them. Depending on what issues might be raised, the nature of the interaction that we have with colleagues will determine the actual outcome.

I cannot give you a categorical date, but I am confident about the numbers being able to be delivered from looking at the evidence of what we have managed to do so far. You would quite rightly be saying to me, "Hang on. You have not even started yet", if we had not seen progress but, as I said, the number we have seen is a cumulative £138 million worth of savings below budget that we have delivered so far this year. We have never in the 17-year history of TfL ever reduced our costs on a quarter-by-quarter basis and we have done it every single quarter this financial year.

David Kurten AM: Thank you.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Clearly, the size of the saving, as you have said, is enormous. Firstly, is there a plan B if your projected savings do not come to fruition? More importantly, we have seen that some of those savings that were made under Boris [Johnson MP, former Mayor of London] by the Mayor caving in regarding ticket offices.

How likely is it going to be going forward, because of the size of these savings, that they can be achieved without Londoners having to suffer a series of strikes?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I am confident and I am confident for two reasons. One is that the Mayor has led a strategic dialogue with the general secretaries of the trade unions. Those meetings have been taking place. I have been in those meetings. The whole nature of the relationship strategically with the trade unions is moving to a different place from where it was.

I cannot claim that we will be without blips from time to time. That would be the wrong thing to say in front of you and you would not believe me if I said it. However, I do believe that having an effective, mature, coherent set of dialogues and relationships with the trade union leaders and the representatives across the organisation is the right way to proceed. That is what a decent, modern organisation such as ours does. I have a very strong embedded principle throughout my entire career of believing in good old-fashioned collective bargaining as a reasonable negotiating tool and a reasonable way to establish decent relationships at every level of the organisation. We also need the right management approach to ensure that managers are mature, equipped, trained and developed appropriately to deal with issues at source when they emerge, which they will from time to time in any large-scale organisation.

I am very confident that we are building a different set of relationships than perhaps we have had for many years with our trade union colleagues, but we are not there yet. You do not change this overnight - there is no question about that - but we are determined to do so.

On the staffing levels on the Underground, just to give you some idea of how we have to respond to increases in demand, every single month so far this financial year with the exception of August [2016], we have seen a record broken for the busiest month in history on the London Underground. Some of our stations in terms of the number of people going through them are growing hugely on a daily basis. It would be inconceivable if my leadership team and I did not respond to that by continually looking at adjusting the numbers of staff we have in place.

It also, by the way, would have been incredible, given the scale of change that we put in place in the station operating model, if we got it 100% right to start with. Indeed, I remember talking to this Committee at some point and saying that it would be totally arrogant of me to assume that I would get it all right first time. The changes that we are seeing with station staff are entirely the right thing to do from a safety, reliability and information flow perspective for those using our Tube stations to ensure their continued safe and effective operation. I do not think --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): We are going to come on to more detail shortly on that.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, sorry, but it was just because it was raised. Forgive me, Chair. Sorry, but I just thought that it was important to make the point. By the way, in the context of the overall financial numbers, the reality is that the savings we still have seen from stations are entirely within the budget assumption envelopes that we put forward in our business plan.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): I am getting the impression from what you are saying that the Mayor is now leading on negotiations when it comes to industrial action.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): No, absolutely not. The Mayor has made it very clear to me and to my team - and indeed to the trade union general secretaries - that he is not leading the negotiations. That would be entirely inappropriate and I do not think he has any aspiration or intention to do that.

What he saying is: let us ensure that there is proper strategic dialogue at every level across the Mayor's team and his family, including people like me, with the general secretaries of the trade unions and let us also ensure that when we have the proper negotiations and the proper discussions at local level, we are carrying that out in the spirit of trying to get to solutions and trying to get issues resolved properly at source, where they should be, rather than always finding ourselves in industrial strife. That does not help anybody. It does not help those who work on in the system and it does not help the leadership of the trade unions and it does not help me. That is all I am saying.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): What is his function, then?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The Mayor, as you know, is the Chair of TfL but TfL has never, in my experience, led negotiations with trade unions. That would not be a function that the Chair of the Board would do.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): I just do not understand. You were saying that he is having all of these meetings with the trade unions. What is his function?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): What I am saying is that these are strategic-level contact meetings that just give the opportunity for the general secretaries, the Mayor and I - and the Deputy Mayor [for Transport] is in the room as well - to have a strategic dialogue about what is happening. We talk about the strategic issues going forward. At the last meeting, for example, we talked about the Mayor's Transport Strategy. It is perfectly appropriate that we would want to do that with trade union colleagues.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Could you just confirm that it is true that your office did send a letter to the Mayor confirming that it would be possible to freeze all fares if he wanted to?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The Mayor has made it very clear from the outset in his manifesto and since then that he has been committed to freezing those fares that TfL is responsible for.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): No, that was not the question. I am sorry, Mike. On this one, all I need to know from you is if you can confirm that there was correspondence between your office and the Mayor's office in relation to the Mayor's ability, if he so chose, to freeze all fares including Travelcard fares?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Travelcard fares and other fares where there is a National Rail impact is a matter for much wider discussion with the National Rail network, the train operating companies (TOCs), the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and everybody else. That is not where we are.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): We are of the impression - and we believe that we have evidence - that your office sent emails to the Mayor's office saying that he could, if he wanted to, freeze Travelcard fares. My question to you is very simple. Do you have knowledge of that? Can you confirm that your office sent an email to the Mayor's office, not to the Mayor himself --

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I genuinely cannot recall sending such an email. Obviously, if you have it, I am happy for you to share it with me and I will have a look at it. I genuinely cannot recall it.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): All right. We are going to move on to the Tube. Keith is going to lead on the first bit, but I just wondered if you could just very briefly at the start, Mike, update us on what happened on the Northern line yesterday. That was a quite unusual problem.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, it was a very unusual problem. The Northern line is at the moment the most reliable line on the Underground by some considerable distance. Members may be aware of that. At 8.45am yesterday morning there was a power supply failure, which affected the signalling system at Kennington and did result in the line being suspended between Moorgate to Stockwell and Charing Cross to Stockwell from both branches and caused serious disruption elsewhere on the line.

It was a very unusual power failure. I am not a power engineer or technical engineer, but I would say that it appeared there was a power failure, which created a particular problem with an isolated fuse that would not be in the normal process that we would follow in our fault-finding processes. It has never happened before. We had never seen an issue like that emerge before with a power supply blip. There is a standard process that we go into in terms of fault-finding and diagnosis and that was followed. Unfortunately, the reason it took a bit longer than it normally would in these situations was because the line of route that we eventually went down to discover it was not in the normal processes. We are reviewing that as we speak. The team as recently as last night updated me with what progress they have already made in identifying what the challenge was and how there could be a quick workaround put in place that bypassed that particular fuse and a line-safe operation as a result of that.

You will be aware, Chair, that the Northern line is the busiest on the Tube network. Nearly 1 million people use it every day. I am very mindful of the disruption. Over the last 12 months it has run on schedule over 99% of the time. If I may say, without sounding at all complacent, there are not many railways in the country - although I am sure Members of the Committee would wish, like I, that there were - that run anywhere close to that level of reliability. We will get it back on track and it will be back at those levels very soon again, notwithstanding yesterday.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): We understand from the budget process that TfL is pushing back a number of the Tube capacity upgrade projects. Can you explain why these projects are being pushed back, please?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): They are not. It is a simple answer. That is simply not the case. We have on the Circle, District, Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City lines introduced new air-conditioned walkthrough trains. The last of the old District line trains are expected to be withdrawn next month. Already this has seen an increase in capacity of 10% on those routes and work is well underway on the signalling upgrade that will enable an increase in frequency to some 32 trains an hour, way above the current level of 26 or 27, in the central area. The total peak-time capacity across those lines, which account for some 45% of the network, will be 33%. It will be delivered as soon as we can but certainly at the very outset by 2022.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Mike, I appreciate this information but can I just be a little bit more specific? I am just a bit conscious of time. I do apologise; I really do. Previously we had some completion dates and I will just go through them.

The Piccadilly line: new generation trains and new signalling, a 60% increase in capacity at peak, 33 trains per hour. That was originally expected to be completed in 2025. The completion date has now been pushed back to 2026/27. The Central line capacity upgrade: 25% increase in capacity, 33 trains per hour. That was expected in 2030. It is now 2033/34. The Waterloo & City track remodelling: 50% increase, 30 trains per hour. That was 2032 and is to be confirmed and is under review. We do not have a new completion date for that one. The Northern line: bigger fleet, 30 trains per hour. That was 2022 and is now 2023/24. The Bakerloo line capacity upgrade was 2033. That one, thankfully, has come forward. Let us give credit where it is due. That is now due in 2028/29. The other four have all been pushed back two, three or possibly even four years. Could you just explain to us why that is the case?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): On the Piccadilly line the new trains will be bought through. They will be air-cooled, a first for deep-level Tube lines. That is really exciting. The new trains will be introduced from 2023 and a new signalling control system will be in place by 2026. You cannot

put a new control system in place with the old trains because the nature of signalling, as you will understand, requires fit-out of the trains. The signalling system is not any longer, on these modern lines, trackside. It is actually integral to the construction and development of the trains. The Piccadilly line will be fully operating at its new capacity, a 60% increase in capacity, by 2026.

If there have been some marginal changes on this line it is just about the practical capability of the supply chain and the market to deliver this. It is not a funding constraint. Indeed, I would not want Members of the Committee, Chair, to be confused by the cash out the door against these projects because what we are seeking to do - just going back to my answer to David [Kurten AM] earlier on - is part of our reconfiguration of how we work with our contractors. We are flowing money in a much more commercially appropriate way than we might have done before. Historically, we would have paid upfront for new trains. Now, we are paying for them on delivery of a reliable, working train. We would have paid upfront a huge amount for the development, installation and commissioning of the signalling system. Now, we are paying for most of it when it is proven to work and is delivering the requirements of the upgrade. The cost profile is very helpful here.

In terms of the slight difference in delivery schedule, that is simply to ensure the technical marrying-up of the signalling and the trains. The important thing is getting these lines upgraded and getting them delivered to the timeline that is needed to support the growth of London and support the reliability improvements that they will deliver. We will see the Victoria line this year, 22 May 2017, going up to 36 trains an hour in each direction. Railways around the world, even those in Asia-Pacific, who are seen as the best in the world, do not come close to those levels of frequency. It is needed and we will keep going.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Are you able to give us an update on the Waterloo & City line?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The reason it is yet to be announced is just that we are not clear whether we will do it at the front end of the Central line work or the back end of the work yet. We are still working that through. They are the same trains and fundamentally the same process as the Central line. We just have to work out the best and most effective way of doing that. The Bakerloo line has some other opportunities, of course, because with the proposed extension of the Bakerloo line you want to make sure it is coincident with the construction of the solid extension because for that you will need more trains anyway. You would not want to plug in some new trains in a half-baked way, plugging on a new signalling system to an existing one, because you would not get the full benefit of that line upgrade.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you. Is the Metropolitan line extension expected to go ahead and, if so, do we know how it is going to be paid for?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Since we inherited the Metropolitan line extension project under a Mayoral Direction from the previous Mayor, we have been getting a grip of the true cost and we continue to work on what that true cost would be. There are some challenges. This is a project that could be funded from the growth fund, which totals in the business plan, as you know, some £550 million, of which £200 million is unallocated as we speak. This is something that we will continue to work on and will continue to look at going forward and we will keep the Committee informed.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Is the Bakerloo extension fund coming out of that £200 million as well?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): No, the Bakerloo line extension is different. We are looking at funding models, including the potential for land value capture, and what we might do to

ensure a different model for funding for the big schemes, including the Bakerloo line extension - and Crossrail too, indeed - to ensure that in hopefully a more devolved fiscal environment we are able to fund schemes in that way.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): If I heard you right, you are saying the Metropolitan line extension is £50 million. That is coming out of the £200 million?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): What I said was that £200 million of the growth fund money is at the moment unallocated. Clearly there are other projects and I know the gentleman to your left might mention the Sutton extension on the trams network. I would be very disappointed if he did not, indeed. There are other schemes that potentially play on the same pot of money. One of the things we have to do is look and see what the right priority is for spend of that across the city.

Steve O'Connell AM: That is quite timely because this £200 million growth fund is an interesting subject. To misquote, it is trying to get a quart out of a pint pot. In my questions to the Mayor and to the Deputy Mayor for Transport about the removal of the £100 million for the Sutton tram, I was cheerfully responded to by saying, "We can look at the growth fund of £200 million". You appear to have spent most of that on Underground upgrades. Can you explain this rather interesting illusion of this £200 million growth fund?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): All I was saying was that it is a pot that is available to be accessed for a number of schemes. You are right that we cannot access them all from that scheme.

What I would say on Sutton and on the tram potential extension is that I had a very positive meeting alongside the Deputy Mayor for Transport with Sutton Council, the Leader and her officials. We agreed a reinvigorated piece of work to look at options around the existing commitment that the Borough has made, to identify whether the £46 million that it has already in track could be increased and how it might be increased, and to look at some changes to the route and revisiting the development assumptions about the number of homes that could be enabled by the scheme. That would deliver a higher contribution to the funding.

Again, looking at alternative funding scheme such as land value capture mechanisms, which I have looked at before, the report you will have seen from the London Finance Commission was very favourable on all of that. Also, identifying costs that would be avoided if the tram extension was delivered; for example, reduced traffic congestion that may postpone or remove the need for some highway or junction improvement. What we - the Deputy Mayor [for Transport], the Leader of the Council and I - have done is we have agreed to have another very fresh look at this. That collaborative work, which is the right spirit of trying to get to a solution, not trying to look at problems, will conclude in April 2017, at which time there will be a clearer view as to what funding model might exist for such an extension going forward.

As well as meeting with the Borough when I was down there, Steve, I had a very useful tour around. I saw the site. I saw the hospital development area. I saw all the potential on the Brighton Road and what can be offered there. It is a very exciting prospect. We just need to work out the mechanics of how we might do it.

Steve O'Connell AM: I hope it can excite your finances. Tonight we are in Sutton, many of us, and this will be exercised.

My last point: we talked about earlier trying to get people out of cars, which is a virtuous aim. If you can get people out of cars in south-west London, rather than drive around to Wimbledon and Sutton, surely that must match the Mayor's aspirations. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Yes. We know more people get out of a car and get onto a tram than they will onto a bus. There is evidence for that.

Steve O'Connell AM: Indeed so.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you. This is about the Barking Gospel Oak London Overground. I know some of the answers to the questions but it is good to put it in the public domain. Could you explain why there has been the delay in the electrification?

Secondly, what I would also like to ask is that my understanding is that that has not been fully completed, although the line is now reopened, thankfully. Can we have your guarantee that there will be the least level of disruption while Network Rail does what it should have done?

Finally, there is an indication through this that there may have been a bit of a failing in your team's management to allow the project to overrun so badly.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): First of all, let me take up this last question. This is not our project. This is Network Rail's track, this is Network Rail's project, it is its railway and it is its job to electrify it. There is no question that when we had regular updates from Network Rail throughout all the time of the project right up until the end of January 2017, we were given assurances that this project was fully on track and on target.

It is absolutely inconceivable that I would apply my own project team to manage somebody else's railway upgrade project. To do so would add huge cost to my business. It would do all the things that you would quite rightly as a Committee be challenging me on in terms of duplication and over-scrutiny of someone else's work. It would be totally inappropriate and absolutely unprecedented for any railway to do that to another railway in this situation. This is a Network Rail project. This is its failing. It did not deliver. That is the fact.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Just on that then, Mike, are you going to get some compensation or something?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely. I have had a commitment from the Chair and from the Chief Executive. We will absolutely get the right compensation and passengers will also get whatever compensation is due to ensure they are not out of pocket or inconvenienced financially.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Even if they are pay-as-you-go passengers?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We will work out the detailed mechanics of that. Keith, to be clear, I have been all over this with both the Chair of Network Rail and his Chief Executive to ensure we get the right level of compensation. They have held their hands up. I have a letter in my pack in front of me from the Infrastructure Projects Managing Director overall at Network Rail, who has also reiterated that point.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): We can tell the people of London, certainly from my manor, that they will be compensated?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): Fantastic. That is great news.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): In terms of inconvenience going forward, what we are doing at the moment is holding Network Rail's feet to the fire in terms of what additional work is required now to complete this project and how we can do that with as little disruption as possible going forward. The railway did reopen last week, but there is still some outstanding work to be done. With the failures they have, design and procurement problems or further closures that will be needed, you can rest assured that we will be pushing them to ensure that is to the minimum. Again - a parallel point to the one Joanne [McCartney AM] made earlier on about street works - we will be poring all over them to see the detail of their plan in terms of how effectively they are using any closure weekend and not having closure weekends or closure days applied to us without the proper level of scrutiny to ensure that every single minute they have that railway closed they are absolutely working flat out to deliver it.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): When you know that, can you let us know so that I can let my constituents know?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I will. As I say, the only reason I cannot let you know is because, literally as I speak, the work is being worked through with the team.

Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman): That is helpful.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Just to be clear though, Network Rail was doing this work for TfL so that you could operate electric trains.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, of course, that was one of the benefits of this work, but let me be clear that this railway is not just used by our trains. This is also used by freight trains. Potentially they could be electric in the future. This is a Network Rail piece of infrastructure. I would far rather have an integrated railway I had full control over, as I do with the Underground or the Docklands Light Railway (DLR). I do not. As soon as I do, I will have a project team to manage it appropriately.

Tom Copley AM: I just wanted a bit of clarity on the Northern line upgrade because of this issue about the deferral of it. According to our briefing, the TfL Board was advised in February 2016 that the Northern line upgrade should not be deferred. If the project could not be completed to time, it should be cancelled because the value in going ahead would be less the later it is completed. Despite the advice, TfL has decided to defer the Northern line upgrade. Why is it going against that advice?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Let me just be clear what we are talking about here. The Northern line, of course, has already had an upgrade. This is the second phase of upgrades. You can do some additional work with the --

Tom Copley AM: The signalling has been upgraded already.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. You can do some additional work with the Battersea extension, of course, because that allows a separation at Kennington. It still retains a crossover route, but predominantly the line of route is intended to be from Battersea Power Station through Nine Elms and Kennington up the Charing Cross branch. The major capacity benefit you get ultimately from the Northern line is with the work at Camden. We have put in the planning application, as you know. It is totally unfit for purpose, as you know, certainly for level access interchange between the two branches there.

What I would say is that we will still see some more incremental capacity improvements going forward. Committee Members will be aware, I am sure, that rather than a big bang we will see continued work happening with Northern line because unlike the rest of the Northern line fleets, there is still a different arrangement in place for the ownership and management of the Northern line trains.

Tom Copley AM: Is that going back to the public private partnership?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Actually, before that. It predates that. In the mid-1990s, it was the first private finance initiative we had to purchase the original Northern line trains. We are in ongoing dialogue with Alstom, which provides the trains, as to what additional, enhanced availability of those trains it can deliver. The signalling system is already capable of delivering more service. It is just how we can get more trains available most quickly. That is what we are working on.

The reason for the slight differences in dates and the discussion around that is simply to ensure that both for the Northern line and indeed the Jubilee line we push as much as we can to get the availability of the existing fleet up while recognising that we are probably going to need some more trains as well, ultimately.

Tom Copley AM: There is going to be an increased cost, though, overall, for the --

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. If you have to buy more trains, you have to pay for them. The advantage is that in terms of the production run with any supplier, the Northern line and the Jubilee line trains are remarkably similar. There are some technical differences but the signalling system is the same and therefore the design of the train would be pretty similar.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM: Mike, I have figures here up until 12 January 2017 that show that all together there were 119 complaints about noise and vibrations. This includes surface-level and Tube stations. We have figures for the Northern and Central lines but there is absolutely nothing about the Jubilee line, which serves my constituency. If you have figures now, please let us have them. If not, can you let us have them later on, please?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. I am not sure if I have the breakdown in that way, Navin.

Navin Shah AM: Yes. I will be pleasantly surprised if there are no complaints from the Jubilee line.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I would certainly say to you that I am very mindful of this as being a very important issue. We prioritise mitigation based on the level of noise recorded in people's homes as well as our own information about track condition. We have installed some 5,000 shock-absorbent track fastenings and therefore seen quite a lot of reduction in noise in homes as far-reaching as in

Pimlico, Notting Hill, Baker Street, Wanstead, Bethnal Green, Warren Street and Vauxhall. Further installations are in progress and more is planned going forward. There is also some work we are doing on reducing airborne noise. That is more challenging and fewer practical mitigations exist but we are looking at new technologies, for example, something called 'rail damping' on the Central line. Without getting too technical, Navin, although I am sure you would understand it possibly better than me, it is about putting a porous membrane fitted to the base of the rail that absorbs noise before it goes into the atmosphere. We are exploring all of these, but I will certainly ensure that the Committee and you, Navin, get the detail on the lines you raise.

Navin Shah AM: Do the measures include stuff like triple-glazing or anything directly to the complainants' properties where there are major issues?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): That is not in our plan at the moment but we continue to respond to both you and indeed, Chair, you. I know you have written to us with particular complaints in Barbican, South Wimbledon, Chiswick Park and other places that we have been talking to. We have met with Keith [Prince AM] previously on complaints in the Woodford area in August and September [2016]. Of the 159 complaints we have had overall on Night Tube noise, we continue to work on every single complaint. We have a dedicated team to do this. It is not our intention at the moment to do any work with individual homes because I am convinced that we can do the right level of mitigation on the railway itself.

Navin Shah AM: There is a sense of urgency that you will appreciate to get these things sorted.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely.

Navin Shah AM: Do you have any particular timescales for completing the planned noise and vibration--

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It is a very detailed plan. On the basis of time, Chair, I could go into every specific action that is there and there are a huge number of actions but again, we are more than happy to share that. Mike Wild [Managing Director, London Underground] or one of his team could take the Committee through that in detail, either as a smaller group or individually, if that was appropriate.

Navin Shah AM: How are you engaging with local residents when they lodge these complaints?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Every complaint that is lodged we follow up with the individuals concerned. As I say, this is a different level of response we put in place specifically for the Night Tube. We have a phone number - 0343 222 1234 - and our website, which will guarantee a swift and personal response.

That is our intention. If that is not happening in any cases, I would be happy to take up the cases personally. We are working very hard to ensure that any individual or general complaints that are raised we tackle absolutely vigorously with an appropriate plan.

Navin Shah AM: How quickly are they replied to when you get complaints? Also, if I can ask you at the same time, has the rate of complaints dropped over the period?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It varies, on the second point. Some have risen slightly. Some have dropped more. For some, we understood why they have risen and we have put in the appropriate actions to reduce them down again.

In terms of the speed of response, we aim to get back to people very quickly. That is why we have this dedicated team. This is resourced in a totally different way from what we have done before. Indeed, one of my colleagues in the Underground team who runs it is sitting in the audience here now and I am sure will be taking away the actions to you on the detail, Navin. I can assure you I am very mindful of the disturbance that people feel the Night Tube operation is having on their sleeping patterns and everything else and I take that extremely seriously, which is why we did set up a dedicated team and why Mark Wild in London Underground and his engineers are all over it.

Navin Shah AM: Are there any financial constraints in implementing the necessary remedial works?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): No. The only constraints are occasionally some of the technical challenges. There are parts of the railway where you have to go down and physically hand-grind - which literally is grinding rails by hand - because some of the gauging on the Underground is too complex for big grinding machinery to get in there. That is the only constraint but it is not a financial one.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you very much.

Joanne McCartney AM: I wanted to come in about following up complaints. I am talking particularly about the Seven Sisters area with the Victoria line. At the end of November [2016], I arranged a public meeting for a number of residents and your officers came. I understand that they were very good at the meeting and so thank you for that.

There were a couple of things that became apparent. One was that the level of complaints your officers said you had were about four or five. I had more people in the room, who all said they had complained to TfL. There is an issue about how you are collecting those figures and whether they get lost in the system somewhere. Secondly, we were told that we would get track grinding in the area in March. I drew up a list of actions that were agreed upon following that meeting. We had one email from TfL following about a week later, but since then nothing at all. I did pass on all the email addresses for the people who were there to TfL. I have had from complaints from residents very recently saying, "We still do not know what is going on. Are we getting the track grinding in March?"

It just seems that if you get complaints on an area basis, you should be sophisticated enough not to wait for individual complaints to come back in but to regularly email out to those people if there is some work going on in area so they do not have to keep writing back to you on an individual basis.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I agree and we will get back to you and the residents immediately as to what is happening, given we are now in March. I absolutely agree. I also will take the point about the number of complaints in reality and whether any are slipping through. We will have another review of that. I will personally make sure I have a look at that.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM: Chair, if you will allow me to indulge while the questions are about noise and while we have this opportunity with the Commissioner, can I ask about staffing issues? Do you have any particular staffing issues with the current service and what is in the pipeline, including any overtime issues?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): On the Underground?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): Do you mean the Night Tube?

Navin Shah AM: Sorry, related to the night service.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): No. We have the right number of staff in place to operate the night service. It has been operating well. The numbers keep growing. We are confident we have the right process in place. There are some local discussions going on at the moment about the deployment of some night drivers and those who have an aspiration to work fulltime but we are working that through in the normal course of our discussions with our trade union colleagues.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you.

Joanne McCartney AM: We have already touched on the fact that there was an independent review into levels of staffing at stations and you have put more staff back in place. Under the previous Mayor, 800 members of staff were reduced.

Could you just briefly go through exactly how many of those staff are being put back? We are not quite sure whether it is related to normal turnover or whether it is additional staff and also whether they are fulltime or part-time.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We do think, as we said earlier on, more staff were needed in stations because of the volume of people using our services. We are recruiting at least 650 new staff this year and 325 of those will be additional roles over and above where we are. We have already started recruiting the first 200 of those. They are already in place. The remainder of those new staff will comprise a mix of supervisory roles and customer service assistant frontline roles and are expected to be a mix of full and part-time.

The reason I cannot give you all of the detailed numbers, Joanne, is because the review that we are having station-by-station, looking at where the requirements are most needed, is part of that. I do not want to pre-empt the outcome of that other than to say we are ensuring we apply a consistent model across the network and that we end up with the right answer, which I am confident we will. The really important thing is that we have those recruitment processes underway and we are on track.

Joanne McCartney AM: It may be that we would need you to write to us with some further details because I am not sure we can get to the exact detail here, but you have said that the 325 new roles are from where we are now. If you have a high vacancy rate, it means something very different from two or three months ago or two or three months ahead. Some further detail --

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. There is a difference between the 325 new roles and the 650 new staff in total because the new staff total includes the new ones but also those who are filling vacancies and the natural turnover we get.

Joanne McCartney AM: I am assuming you have a target headcount that you want.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes.

Joanne McCartney AM: That might be a useful way to describe it to us.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, we have an assumption but there is the appropriate flexibility because, as I said earlier on in the discussion with Keith, I want to make sure that we are staffed appropriately for what is required on every station: ensuring stations are open, ensuring stations are properly staffed for the availability - very importantly - of accessibility lifts, for example, and also ensuring that the turn-up-and-go philosophy that we apply and that we are very proud of is able to be executed appropriately on every single station on our network.

Joanne McCartney AM: The issue of staffing was the reason for some of the recent industrial action. Can I ask what sort of guarantee you have from the unions that if you put this in place, it will solve that issue? Is there a review process built in?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I am very confident that we have this resolved and that we have had the right level of dialogue with the unions to get this resolved. They are working very closely with us and the fact that they have not only suspended all industrial action but also called off the overtime constraints that they have had in place references that. I am very confident.

Joanne McCartney AM: When these new roles are in place, do you intend to review that periodically as well to check?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely. It goes back to what I said earlier on. It would be inconceivable that we do not have almost a continual review of staffing levels. I was talking about Blackhorse Road earlier on. That may be a relatively small development but if you get 350 new homes and maybe 500 or 600 people potentially living there or maybe more who are using the Tube on a daily basis, you want to ensure that you have the right level of support for that station to ensure its continued safe and reliable operation.

Joanne McCartney AM: Of course, the review from TravelWatch also had other recommendations about staff being available, changes to uniform, a focal point for the station and so forth. Perhaps you cannot tell me now but perhaps you could write and let us know how you are doing with all of those particular issues.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Certainly. Just on the focal point trials, we already have 13 different stations where we are trialling that across the network. I can let you know the detail of those in terms of focal points but also staff availability and visibility, things like red high-visibility gilets, as they are called, for staff in the ticket hall area, better signage around information zones, more visible information zones, increased staff presence at those information zones, looking at what we can do for customer usage of help points and how we can ensure there is a quick and rapid response to that, and also making sure we make effective use of our people as they have iPads around the station to the best benefit of the passengers. There is a lot going on.

We have local action plans in place at the 21 least well-performing stations as a priority to get them improved further. A lot is going on, as well as, as I have said, a review of the turn-up-and-go service looking at how we can provide a better service there. Again, I am more than happy to write to you with the detail of our programme. We have a detailed plan on all the TravelWatch recommendations.

Florence Eshalomi AM: We have touched on traffic congestion and also TfL budgets and buses play a key role in this. Some of our buses are not moving and we have seen a decrease in some of that revenue. There is a really ambitious target of increasing that forecast of 11% in bus passengers and a 20% increase in revenue

from buses. This is dependent on if we have a good, functioning bus network across London. I know that there is a plan at the moment and a big review of the bus network. What changes do you expect to see on the back of that review?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): First of all, I know that the Committee is looking in detail at the bus service in London and I do look forward to seeing your report in due course. That will be very helpful in helping frame some of our thinking. Thank you for the work you are doing there.

As you imply, Florence, getting the bus network right is an imperative. We had seen huge growth since 2000 of some 60%, but it is true that since 2015 we have seen a decline in demand. There are some interesting factors around that. One is, of course, I have no doubt, bus speeds related to the discussion on congestion earlier on, but there is some evidence emerging that the detailed granularity of the information available is driving some behaviours as well.

Historically, people would arrive at a bus stop and they might not get any more information than, "There is a bus every three to five minutes". You or I might just hang around, thinking, "The most I am going to have to wait is five minutes. It could be three or it could be one or whatever. I am not very sure". Now, of course, we all have the apps, we all know exactly what is happening and people are making more informed choices - and there is some evidence - about what they do. That is good because some of those choices involve walking, for example. That is a positive to some extent; although, as ever, I have multiple hats on in this. It is positive from that perspective but not always good for getting volume of people on the buses.

We do aim to recover the network performance through this greater journey time reliability, as we call it. It includes a bus priority programme, £200 million for bus priority measures to improve this focusing on the central London grid, if you like, so focusing on those with the highest patronage of travellers and those that deliver some of the greatest opportunities for improving journey times. We are also looking at radial corridors where some of the highest concentrations of usage are and multiple overlapping routes, as well as 11 of the 12 Low Emission Bus Zones as well. Outer London reliability schemes generally, where again there is the greatest potential for shifting people away from their car onto buses, are very important, of course, and again, going back to my point earlier on, growth schemes that are there to facilitate new housing and economic development areas.

There is a lot of work going on. As I have said before to this Committee and I have no doubt my bus team would have said as well, the service frequency of some of the routes that cross through central London is a direct result of the frequency required in suburban areas rather than necessarily the frequency required in those core central London areas, where many bus routes come together. Of course the great thing about the bus Hopper that the Mayor has put in place with our support - some 30 million Hopper journeys have now been made - is that this gives people the opportunity to more seamlessly change between routes to pick up some of the realities that we see in terms of what is required in central London areas.

There is a lot going on. The Low Emission Bus Zones are very important. Putney High Street in the next few weeks is the first one, Brixton to Stretton in October and then we have - 12 in total - ten more to follow after that. These will make real differences to local neighbourhoods, local communities, and it is all part of what we are doing as well. There are real challenges ahead and I do not want to underplay that, but some genuine opportunities to improve the service, to modernise the service and equally to ensure we properly support local communities and commuters across the city.

Florence Eshalomi AM: On that point of local communities, one piece of feedback we received from some of the boroughs was in terms of some of the planning. They felt that TfL was not engaging with them enough in terms of redesigning some of those routes. We know that the consultation on some of the routes going through Oxford Circus is live at the moment.

We also know that there is not going to be an increase in the bus kilometres. Val [Valerie Shawcross CBE, Deputy Mayor for Transport] has confirmed that and Leon Daniels [Managing Director, Surface Transport, TfL] also confirmed that with us in terms of that service volume. That was one of the things that the bus operators mentioned to us when we met with them two weeks ago. Just to make sure that you know, when we are looking at this whole-scale review of that we are touching base and discussing with all those different stakeholders to make sure we get this right.

The reality is there are still a number of bus hotspots across London. Elephant and Castle sticks out for me. I have described it as a bus garage without a bus garage. It is making sure we get some of those routes right to help increase the reliability and to get that crucial income for TfL.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Absolutely. In terms of the engagement, we will try harder. We have to continue to try harder and we will. You have my absolute commitment. We will take that away and make sure we do better at that where we can.

The other thing is that you did mention bus operators and I should just say I have had some high-level discussions with some of the owning groups of the bus operators in recent weeks. We increasingly want to mobilise their input and their advice. They are the eyes and ears of the network out there on the streets every day. Historically, they have almost been - I do not mean this in any way insulting; it is the way the contractual mechanism works - a little bit of a dumb deliverer of the service that we ask them to deliver. I value their input as to what more things we might look at from their perspective. We have potentially not used their skills and their brainpower to help craft this before and, after all, many of them do run buses across the whole country. It would be good to make sure that we are properly tapping into their skills and their talents.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: What further discussions has TfL had with the DfT or Heathrow Airport about the surface transport schemes that will be required for an expanded airport?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): We are invited, Tom, to respond to the Airports National Policy Statement as a consultee and we are currently drafting our response, which we will share with the TfL Board going forward. We do not sit on the working group. I guess that is while there is a possibility of a judicial review process emerging. We do meet with the DfT on this but it is disappointing, frankly, for us not to be part of this group because we have a pretty strong view of what is required from a public transport perspective, as you know, for Heathrow as it is and certainly for an expanded Heathrow.

Tom Copley AM: Absolutely. Do you think that after the judicial review, you might go onto the transport working group? Is this entirely at the discretion of the DfT?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): It seems to be. I would hope we would. We can contribute significantly to the discussion and so I would hope we would.

Tom Copley AM: Good. Do you consider southern rail access to be required from the day the third runway opens is essential?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, I do, but it has to be a credible version of Southern Rail. Some of the schemes that we have seen before would create chaos, not least for the bus network and indeed the cycling network in parts of south and west London, which we want to avoid. I want a credible version of that with new capacity and new connectivity, and if we can achieve the aspirations we want, of course, for no new road trips to be in place. The Airports Commission indeed made clear that southern rail access was required for an expanded Heathrow.

As I said, at the moment I am slightly disappointed that there seems to be a little bit of a rowing back by the Government on this specific issue. We are certainly of the view that it is required, as indeed is probably western access, although that is beyond London.

Tom Copley AM: You mentioned no increase in traffic. One of the most striking things that came out of our investigation recently on this was that although they are saying there will be no new cars on the road, there will be a projected 80% increase in freight traffic. How can this be mitigated?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): That would have a massive impact on the already congested road network, with consequences for journey times for airport and non-airport journeys and most importantly for air quality. It is also a particular concern for local roads, which are totally ill-suited for increased proliferation of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic. Again, I would just say that it is worrying - unless there is something going on that I do not know about - that the Government and the airport do not seem to be taking urgent steps to have a firm look at this.

Tom Copley AM: No, they are not. It seems like this is something they want to brush under the carpet or kick into the long grass rather than actually dealing with it. They do not seem to have any answers as to where that traffic is going to go.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): No. There are so many questions still to be answered on this proposed expansion. They have a long way to go.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair): There was a debate in Parliament this week where this was raised by a number of local MPs on freight. Sarah Olney [MP for Richmond Park] kept pushing and they really did not answer. They said they will put something in writing. I assume that correspondence will be in public. We will need to follow that up.

That comes to the end, Mike, of our questions this morning. Thank you very much indeed for your time. For two hours you have been answering questions nonstop. Thank you very much indeed.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Thank you very much.