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Dear Keith

Responses to Transport Committee bus reports

Thank you for your letter of 13 December to the Commissioner, Mike Brown MVO. I have been asked to respond on his behalf. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying.

In addition to our responses to your specific questions which I have set out below, I have also attached an update on the Bus Safety Programme which was requested under *Recommendation 11* in the Transport Committee's 'Driven to Distraction' report. This update covers the original components of the programme and also provides information on four new work streams.

I also understand you met with Claire Mann, my Director of Bus Operations, on 8 January to discuss bus safety, including some of the points you raise in your letter. I hope you found this to be a productive session. There were two new actions that came about as a result of that meeting. The first was to provide you with an update on progress towards provision of a toilet on every bus route; and I am sure you will have already seen that on 13 February, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced £6m to improve working conditions for London's bus drivers by ensuring that all have access to a toilet for all hours of their working day. This funding will deliver toilets along 40 routes which currently only have limited access or opening hours. I attach a press release with more details.

The second action was to investigate if we could commission engineering courses to address the shortage of bus engineers in London. We are currently looking into this and will provide a response as soon as we can.

Bus Safety

Recommendation 1 – safety incentives for operators

We work closely with operators to help build a culture of openness and learning around safety. In other industries, there is evidence that putting financial incentives into contracts can encourage under-reporting of incidents. For example, I have attached a report from the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) who carried out an independent review of the impact of quantitative safety targets, performance measures and league tables on reporting of incidents. They found that these incentives created both real and perceived disincentives for staff to report incidents. I have attached the report in Appendix A.

Instead, we are looking at alternative ways of introducing additional safety measures into our contract evaluation process. As we outlined in our initial response, we have developed two new safety measures: 1) A Bus Operator Safety Performance Index (SPI); and 2) A Safety Maturity Measure. We will use these in our performance management of bus operators from mid-2018.

We currently use a number of criteria to assess route tender bids, and although these criteria already include metrics that have a safety element such as Driver Quality Monitoring and Engineering Quality Monitoring, the creation of the SPI and Safety Maturity Measure provides us with an opportunity to include a safety specific metric within our tender evaluation process.

Recommendation 4 – driver working conditions

On 14 November we held our inaugural Bus Safety Summit for TfL and Bus Operators. As part of this, we invited experts from other industries, for example, air, rail and construction, to share their experiences of safety leadership, promoting a safety culture in their organisation and focusing on fatigue management. Douglas Mellor, from Fatigue Risk Management Science Limited, shared information on how they combat fatigue in the airline industry. Jerry Mawhood, from the Office of Rail and Road, shared best practice in fatigue management from a rail perspective. These speakers provided practical examples that could be adopted by bus operators to tackle fatigue. We have included copies of their presentations in Appendix B.

We recognise that fatigue management is a key issue which has led to us including a new workstream on this in the bus safety programme. To better understand the extent and impact of driver fatigue, we will be commissioning some independent research which will involve London's bus drivers. In addition, we are already working with two operators to trial fatigue detection systems and we will ensure that lessons learnt from the investigations into the Croydon tram tragedy are shared and applied across TfL.

Recommendation 6 – safety training

We are taking direct responsibility for defining, procuring and managing the bus driver safety course as we did with Hello London. Hello London was delivered to bus drivers by an independent training company on private premises and the new bus driver safety courses will be delivered by bus operator training staff on bus company premises. Our input into both courses is the same.

An independent provider will develop the safety training programme on behalf of TfL, engaging with ourselves, bus operators and industry experts. This company will deliver safety training to bus company driving instructors, a 'train the trainer' course for classroom trainers, and will audit the standard of bus company trainers in delivering the programme.

Embedding the process within the bus operators' own training systems will encourage operators to take ownership of the safety messages delivered through the course, and the impact on their drivers' behaviour.

Following the Mayor's recent meeting with Unite, we have committed to developing a proposal to provide security training for bus drivers. We will work closely with operators, the Met Police and with colleagues in London Underground in developing these proposals to ensure that best practice is shared and that training is tailored to the security risks and challenges that bus drivers might face.

Recommendation 9 - Confidential Incident Reporting and Analysis Service

It is stated in CIRAS' mission statement that "*we are...a back-up to complement [member organisations'] safety and health arrangements, but we are not a whistle blowing service.*" Drivers are therefore encouraged to report safety concerns directly to their employer to ensure quick resolution. CIRAS is always available as an alternative reporting route if needed. For example, if issues are raised by an employee with their operator but they feel that their concerns are not being adequately addressed, or if for some reason a driver is uncomfortable reporting a concern to their operator.

Our bus operators do also provide a confidential reporting system internally which includes the ability to report Health and Safety concerns.

Bus network

Conclusion 2 – Outer London

As set out in the Mayor's draft Transport Strategy, the bus network has a critical role to ensure that, by 2041, 80 per cent of journeys are made by walking, cycling or on public transport. In order to achieve this target, bus patronage will need to grow between 25 and 40 per cent, and much of this will be in outer London.

To contribute to these long-term targets, and to meet the immediate financial targets, we are modifying the bus network to reflect the changing ways that Londoners now travel. With the arrival of the Elizabeth line from the end of next year, schemes such as the proposed transformation of Oxford Street, and new cycling routes across London, we need to review the bus network to make sure the service is matching demand.

Where demand has fallen, for example in some parts of central London, some capacity will be reduced. This will reduce congestion, improve air quality and enable improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure.

TfL is developing its programme to reconfigure the bus network and will continue to do so over the next 12 months, including by engaging Londoners on potential changes. Consequently it is not possible to set targets or give an accurate breakdown of forecast mileage for different areas at this stage. More information about our plans will

be available as they are developed over the coming months. TfL will also provide a more detailed forecast of bus mileage in different parts of London at the time of its next Business Plan in late 2018. We will bear in mind the Assembly's wish to see outer London bus services promoted and extended, which is also a central objective of the Mayor's Transport Strategy. As part of this we will be planning targeted capacity increases including introducing connection to the Elizabeth Line, improving orbital services between town centres and providing new services in Opportunity Areas to encourage sustainable travel.

Conclusion 4 – tendering process

Having a single grouped contract would have adverse implications, such as giving a local monopoly and reducing contestability. The loss of a contract would also be more serious, such that competition for the contracts would be harmed and risk premiums would rise. Areas themselves would be difficult to define given the geographic overlap (as routes are generally 10-12 miles long), so it is not realistic to say that an area can somehow be looked at individually. If these restrictions were not in place, a change to area-based contracting could still reduce flexibility to make changes through placing undue strain on the scheduling and implementation resource of a single (area-based) operator, due to the need to align with the area review programme. Today this load is spread between operators over the course of a year, enabling area based changes to be planned, scheduled and implemented across a wide area with some frequency.

Furthermore, the fact that contracts are not up for renewal is no barrier to varying other relevant nearby routes/contracts where necessary. In practice, this is perfectly feasible and we do this frequently. An example is the Crossrail changes where we are changing some 40 routes along this 'corridor' simultaneously, in December 2018. Relatively few of these changes are associated with contract renewal.

Notwithstanding these issues we do keep our contracting method under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose to deliver the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Conclusion 5 – passenger experience

Countdown

In 2011, we completed the roll-out of 2,500 bus-shelter signs as part of the TfL Funded 'Countdown II' project. Since that time, there has been no further funding available within the TfL Business plan.

Therefore, we have 'productised' the Countdown signs and offered a service to all London boroughs where they can purchase these signs using whatever third-party funding is available. To date, 14 boroughs have purchased 86 signs using independent or S106 funds. This service has been widely publicised and remains available.

The pamphlet which has been supplied to all London boroughs can be found in Appendix C.

Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi on buses in London has been trialled several times, most recently in 2016 when fully funded by advertising campaigns promoted through our partner, Exterior. Take up is low (<14% of borders) and installation and operating costs are too high to be absorbed in the normal operating budget.

As stated, we are open to Wi-Fi being installed on London buses, but only if a third party were to fund it, or if there were a provider who was able to provide it to us on a cost neutral/revenue share basis. We continue to meet with potential partners to discuss these options but, to date, have not found a commercial partner to take the proposition further.

I hope you find my response helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Powell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gareth Powell
Managing Director – Surface Transport

cc. Valerie Shawcross CBE, Deputy Mayor for Transport

