

Elly Baker AM

Londonwide Assembly Member



The Rt Hon Grant Shapps
The Secretary of State for Transport
Department of Transport
Zone 1/18
Great Minister House
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15 June 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing regarding the Service level Review that was set out in the Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement for Transport for London (TfL) for the period to 11 December 2021.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced that "Step 4 will be delayed by up to four weeks and the vaccination programme accelerated to respond to the rapid spread of the Delta variant".ⁱ

We know that "by Step 4 the government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact".ⁱⁱ

We also know that the social distancing reviewⁱⁱⁱ, referenced in the Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement, will be completed before step 4 and will be published "as soon as possible".^{iv}

I would be grateful if you could provide some further details on how this 4-week delay will affect the service level review timetable set out in the agreement.

Are you still expecting HMG and TfL to agree three future demand scenarios at the Oversight Group by **5 July 2021**?

TfL are required to present the first review for buses by **19 July 2021** and to present review for London Underground and TfL Rail to DfT; as well as the second review for buses by **17 September 2021**. Finally, on **12 Nov 2021** actual demand over at least two rail periods is compared with the agreed scenarios; with HMG and TfL to agree if any updates to the scenarios are required. Can you confirm whether any of those dates will be pushed back by 4 weeks to mirror the new start date for stage 4?

The review is designed to "inform future service level requirements and potential changes from 2022/23 onwards" and "must consider VfM, implementation timescales, economic impact, equalities impact and relevant powers". I am concerned that the review is not required to consider the views of those Londoners using public transport.

For instance, Transport Focus/London TravelWatch produce a Covid-19 Travel Survey which provides a lot of interesting insights into passenger behaviour.^v The 11 June 2021 update shows that;

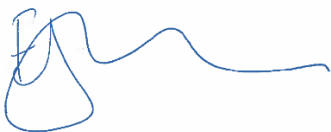
- Around one in five haven't used public transport because they don't feel safe to do so.
- One in five think that not enough is being done to ensure coronavirus safety on public transport.
- A third say that they will never again feel completely comfortable on public transport
- More than half say that they won't use public transport unless social distancing is in place
- Three in five say that they won't use public transport unless passengers are required to wear face coverings

The survey results show that feelings of being safe are a major factor when decided whether to use public transport. People may feel less safe while they have not been fully vaccinated, or if social distancing, and the requirement to wear a mask, is removed.

Therefore, review based on behaviour 1 or 3 months after Step 4, could produce markedly different future service levels to reviews taken later on when more people are vaccinated, levels of Covid-19 infections in the country have dropped and people feel much safer about travelling than they do at the moment.

Will you agree to ensure that Transport Focus/London TravelWatch can take part in the planned reviews and that the views of passengers will be considered when planning service levels for 2022/23 onwards?

Yours sincerely,



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Appendix: Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement for Transport for London (TfL) for the period to 11 December 2021.

8. To support our shared objective of TfL reaching financial sustainability (free of extraordinary Government support) as soon as possible with a target date of April 2023 we have agreed the following actions and workstreams with TfL to be delivered during the 2021 Funding Period

8e. Implemented in 2021 Funding Period for savings/ revenue in future years: A joint review of demand (in September 2021) to inform future service level requirements and potential changes from 2022/23 onwards as described in paragraphs 15 to 17 below, with the requirement to report back to HMG in accordance with the timelines set out in Annex A.

15. A review for London Underground and Rail will take place by the end of September that will allow HMG and TfL to reconsider required service levels in light of both outputs from the ongoing review set out in paragraph 8(e) above and observed demand across the network. **A review for buses should take place in July and September subject to the result of the Government's social distancing review.**

16. Subject to change at future reviews, and to reflect changing travel patterns as a result of COVID, TfL will be expected to take steps now to ensure they are not locking in future costs and are in a position to reduce service levels efficiently if and when required.

17. An agreed workstream (as outlined in 8(e) above) will consider future service level scenarios that reflect extant demand, economic benefits and costs of running different service levels across TfL's network with the aim to generate a range of service options. TfL will be expected to take any and all further necessary steps to efficiently manage services and associated costs to support the achievement of financial sustainability by our target date of April 2023.

Annex A – 2021 Funding Period Work Programmes

D	Service Level Review	<p>TfL to review future service levels in line with agreed demand scenarios. The Service Level Review should encompass all TfL transport modes, including LU and Surface transport. The review must consider VfM, implementation timescales, economic impact, equalities impact and relevant powers.</p> <p>A review for buses should take place in July and September subject to the result of the Government social distancing review.</p> <p>TfL will also be required to demonstrate how they have taken into account the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review, except where HMG has previously stated its position (such as in relation to VED devolution).</p>	(i)	HMG and TfL agree three future demand scenarios at the Oversight Group by delivery date.	5 July 2021	Workstream Leads: fortnightly; Oversight Group: monthly
			(ii)	TfL to present the first review for buses by the delivery date.	19 July 2021	Workstream Leads: fortnightly; Oversight Group: monthly
			(iii)	TfL to present review for London Underground and TfL Rail to DfT by the delivery date. TfL also to present the second review for buses.	17 September 2021	Workstream Leads: fortnightly; Oversight Group: monthly
			(iv)	Actual demand over at least two rail periods is compared with the agreed scenarios. HMG and TfL agree if any updates to the scenarios are required, by the delivery date.	12 Nov 2021	
			(v)	TfL to present monthly updates on demand and service levels to the Oversight Group.		Periodically at Oversight Group

i

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vaccination-programme-accelerated-as-step-4-is-paused>

ii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae#step-4---not-before-21-june>

iii

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970532/Terms_of_Reference-Social_Distancing_Review.pdf

iv <https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-boris-johnsons-review-of-social-distancing-rules-set-to-be-delayed-by-indian-variant-12315874>

v

<https://transportfocusdatahub.org.uk/manager/Storyboard/RHViewStoryboard.aspx?RIId=%c2%b2&RLId=%c2%b2&PIId=%c2%b2%b8%b2%bb%b9%bc&UIId=%c2%b6%b6%b2%b5%b4&RpId=2>