

MAYOR OF LONDON

Alison Moore AM

Chair, London Assembly Transport Committee

City Hall

The Queen's Walk

London SE1 2AA

By email: alison.moore@london.gov.uk

Date: 9 March 2021

Dear Alison,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Transport Committee's report: *'Crossrail: Light at the end of the tunnel?'* I am responding on behalf of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL).

Andy Byford and I welcome the Committee's recognition of the importance of Crossrail and the constructive scrutiny it continues to provide to the project.

As the Committee notes, this project will deliver huge benefits to London and the rest of the UK and will play a key part in the capital's economic recovery from the pandemic. When complete, the Elizabeth line will cut journey times, create much-needed capacity, transform accessibility and provide a huge economic boost.

I would like to assure you and Committee members that everyone involved in the project is united in their determination to open this railway safely and as efficiently as possible. Mark Wild and the whole Crossrail team are working hard to manage costs and deliver maximum value for money.

As you know, there have been many challenges with delivering the railway, but I am confident lessons are being learned and applied in these complex final stages. The coronavirus pandemic has obviously had some impact on the project and ways of working, and Crossrail has responded to this by ensuring sites remain a safe place to work.

We will continue to carefully consider the findings of your report, and I set out responses to your recommendations below:

The Crossrail Chief Executive should share Crossrail's high-level project timeline, including any underpinning assumptions affecting the timeline, in the monthly Crossrail updates to the Transport Committee.

We will of course continue to ensure the Committee is fully updated on delivery of the Elizabeth line, which is vital for London and beyond.

As part of this, Crossrail would be happy to share a high-level timeline and any underpinning assumptions as part of its monthly project updates to the Committee from May (a project update will not be published in April due to the Pre-Election Period).

Good progress continues to be made with completing the remaining infrastructure works so that intensive operational testing, known as Trial Running, can begin at the earliest opportunity.

Work continues across the project at pace, with stations now being handed over to Transport for London (TfL). Crossrail remains on track to open the central section of the line in the first half of 2022.

The TfL Commissioner should review progress against filling project-critical vacancies at the weekly countdown meeting, with a clear action plan to fill the roles. In parallel, TfL should update its workforce strategy within the next three months to identify and manage the long-term resourcing requirements on the project.

In assuming overall control for the Crossrail project – and accountability for the earliest possible safe opening of the Elizabeth line – the Commissioner is leaving nothing to chance. He has brought in specialist expertise to focus on stations completion and to improve overall project controls.

The weekly meetings the Commissioner holds to track progress against key milestones provide a regular forum to discuss issues that could put pressure on the schedule, including progress against filling project-critical vacancies.

In summer 2020, Crossrail updated its Workforce Plan to provide a clear and transparent view of organisational requirements for the remainder of the programme. This identified immediate vacancies needed to deliver the programme. As part of the Workforce Plan, it was agreed that progress of specific assurance and technical or operational vacancies should be escalated to the Executive team on a weekly basis, at the Workforce Planning Group led by Crossrail's Chief People Officer, to ensure full visibility and to manage any resource shortfall.

A two-part strategy is in place to address resource gaps across the project. All vacant roles are firstly advertised to Crossrail and TfL employees as a priority, and subsequently any remaining vacant roles are then filled from either Crossrail's Programme Delivery Partners or from other sources as required. The second part of the strategy is to continue to identify opportunities to transition out consultancy-filled roles to TfL staff through advertising roles via the appropriate recruitment channels within TfL. It is expected that the vacancies identified to support the period of Trial Running will be filled by supply chain resources or by the contract extension of current resources identified in the Workforce Plan.

Crossrail is also actively managing the risk of key resources departing prematurely. It has agreed to secure the contract extensions of all staff necessary across the key milestones for the successful delivery of the programme. The project will integrate TfL's Talent Management Framework to encourage the retention of its existing workforce where possible.

Furthermore, building on the detailed update of the Workforce Plan last summer, Crossrail has recently concluded a subsequent review on resourcing to ensure that there is adequate provision in place to support the project through to the end of the programme. Detailed work has been conducted across Crossrail and Rail for London (Infrastructure) Limited to map resourcing requirements for the final organisation structure.

TfL should prioritise its support for staff in areas of the project where there are the most significant resource pressures. TfL must monitor the impacts of resourcing shortages on staff wellbeing and ensure mitigating actions are put in place to prevent burnout in the final phase of the project.

The wellbeing of the workforce is a key focus for Crossrail's Executive Team. It will continue to monitor staff health and wellbeing as well as resilience and engagement as the project progresses and proactively implement strategies that encourage good physical and mental health.

Crossrail is conscious that the drive and focus on getting this project over the finish line can have an impact on its workforce. It believes it is currently striking the right balance in supporting staff but it is not complacent and is always looking at ways it can improve morale and resilience across the organisation whilst ensuring the successful delivery of the Elizabeth line.

There has been a renewed focus on providing ongoing support for the mental health and wellbeing of everyone working in the programme. In addition, and in light of the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has placed on Crossrail's workforce, who are predominately working remotely or socially distanced, there has been a significant focus on maintaining workforce health, wellbeing and engagement. This includes training Mental Health First Aiders to support colleagues and providing tools and opportunities, both physical and mental, to support individuals coping with the challenges brought about from the programme and the pandemic.

Crossrail has successfully delivered a targeted communications campaign to engage staff across the programme, including the supply chain, to connect its people and cascade key messages effectively. There is an emphasis on working as one team towards the end goal and, as such, all key internal communications are cascaded through the recently launched 'Elizabeth Line Hub'.

Crossrail participated in a TfL-wide survey (Viewpoint), open to contractors and Crossrail staff, to better understand what it is doing well as an organisation and what needs improving. 67 per cent responded to the survey, which gave the Crossrail Executive detailed insight and has provided the foundation for a programme-wide action plan to make this project an even better place to work.

The project has also continued to hold all staff conferences and supplier engagement forums remotely for staff and suppliers to come together and better understand what is left to complete on the project and their role in delivering the railway. These provide valuable opportunities for staff to raise any questions and concerns directly with the leadership team.

TfL should undertake a comprehensive lessons-learned exercise, incorporating the Committee's 2019 'Derailed: Getting Crossrail back on track' Report and Crossrail's Sponsor Review, to inform its new governance structure. The exercise should take place no later than March 2021 so that the structure can be flexed whilst it is still bedding down.

At the final meeting of the Crossrail Sponsor Board, both Sponsors agreed to carry out a lessons-learned exercise on the governance arrangements over the life of the Crossrail project to inform the initiation and evolution of governance on current and future major projects.

Their approach is to build on and update the Crossrail Learning Legacy paper published in 2016, "Lessons learned from structuring and governance arrangements: perspectives at the construction stage of Crossrail." The paper can be viewed [here](#).

TfL and the Department for Transport (DfT) are in the process of developing the terms of reference and once agreed will identify the best approach to commission the review. The aim is to carry this out over the summer. The terms of reference will clarify the lines of enquiry for the review and the proposed list of interviewees.

TfL should commission an independent review of its new governance structure within six months and include the findings in the Crossrail Chief Executive's updates to the Transport Committee. The review will enable TfL to adapt its structure as the project continues to evolve and transition to a fully operational line.

The handover of Crossrail's governance arrangements to TfL in October 2020 was always part of the planned process to complete the railway.

The new arrangements are ensuring that decision-making is seamless and fully aligned during the critical final phases of the programme as operational testing is undertaken, and the remaining parts of the railway are completed and transferred to operational teams.

In January 2020, the Crossrail Limited Board commissioned a review of its own effectiveness. The findings of that review have helped inform the design of the revised Governance arrangements, in particular the operation of the Elizabeth Line Delivery Group (ELDG).

TfL notes the Committee's recommendation of a further independent review of its new governance structure and will keep this under consideration but there is a risk that such a review within the next six months would be a distraction during a critical period in bringing the project into safe passenger service as quickly as possible.

TfL should revisit its approach to the involvement of the Project Representative (P-Rep) in the final phase of the project to ensure that its independent scrutiny role is materially stronger under the new structure. Specifically, TfL should share with the Committee more confidential information contained in the P-Rep's advice that is otherwise redacted from the public.

Since it was first announced that the central section of Crossrail would not open to passenger service in December 2018, significant and positive work has taken place to improve the project's transparency and to increase the oversight of the project.

The P-Rep continues to provide valuable independent oversight on behalf of the Elizabeth Line Committee (ELC) and is invited to present its views to both the ELC and ELDG.

P-Rep reports and the management response from Crossrail continue to be published by TfL. These are now published every two months to align with meetings of the ELC; a more regular publication cycle than when reports were submitted to TfL's Programme and Investment Committee.

I appreciate that the Committee would like to be provided with more confidential information than is otherwise made available to the public, but it remains necessary to make some redactions to the reports to protect commercially sensitive material. Such redactions are kept to an absolute minimum.

Following the Committee's request at its meeting on 1 December 2020, we agreed that the P-Rep would be available to answer questions from members in both Part 1 and Part 2 of meetings of the

ELC. This arrangement had been due to start at the January ELC meeting but will now commence at the March meeting due to the last-minute unavailability of the P-Rep in January.

Independent oversight of Crossrail is also being strengthened by the establishment of the Independent Investment Programme Advisory Group Crossrail Sub-Group. This will provide independent assurance and expert advice to the ELC, the ELDG, the TfL Audit and Assurance Committee, and the Crossrail Executive. The Terms of Reference for the Sub-Group are published [here](#) (Appendix 4 of Agenda Item 12).

TfL should enhance the role of Network Rail in the new governance structure so that its voice is heard in key decision-making forums. Specifically, TfL should invite Network Rail to the Elizabeth Line Delivery Group (ELDG).

A protocol agreement between Network Rail and Crossrail Ltd sets out Network Rail's responsibilities in relation to the project.

The agreement is explicit that Network Rail should report on schedule and cost to Crossrail on a 4-weekly basis via the Programme Development Board (PDB), which consists of representatives from Crossrail, Network Rail's Crossrail programme and the Office of Rail and Road. It confirms that Crossrail can request further information if required.

TfL agrees, however, that it would be helpful to enhance the role of Network Rail in the new governance structure. Tim Ball, Network Rail Director of the Elizabeth line, has been nominated to attend the ELDG. He attended its most recent meeting on 4 March and will have a regular slot on the agenda at future meetings to update on Network Rail progress.

As you would expect, TfL and Network Rail are also working closely together outside of the formal governance arrangements. Andy Byford and Network Rail Chief Executive, Andrew Haines, have regular meetings and recently received a detailed 'deep-dive' update on both organisations' operational readiness for the Elizabeth line.

Thank you again for the considerable effort that has gone into preparing the report and for the Committee's continued constructive challenge and scrutiny.

Yours sincerely,



Heidi Alexander
Deputy Mayor for Transport