

LONDON ASSEMBLY 7 JULY REVIEW COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER 2006

TfL responses to follow up questions.

1. What is the timetable for installing safety notices on the Underground (Tim O'Toole gave some information at the 22 November meeting, but didn't indicate a completion date).

This is now complete.

2. Now that the Airwave contract has been signed, are there any changes to the timetable given at the 22 November meeting?

The situation remains as stated by Tim O'Toole in his evidence – it is planned that Connect will roll out to all lines by the end of 2007, and Airwave be delivered sometime in 2008.

The recent TfL Press Release about the Airwave contract gives more information – see <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/press-centre/press-releases/press-releases-content.asp?prID=1054>).

3. Tim O'Toole said that drivers on sub-surface lines had been issued with Airwave radios for use in the interim whilst Connect is being installed. Can you clarify how this will work? Presumably they can't be used until Airwave goes live?

The Airwave radios already in use are issued to LU train operators in open areas of the Underground as a communication back up when the existing train radio is unavailable. This was an additional contingency measure introduced after 7/7 to ensure that drivers could communicate with their controllers in the event of train radio failure.

This is quite separate to the Connect/Airwave project which will enable all emergency services to communicate in underground sections of the Tube by 2008, as recently announced following the signing of the contract to enable this.

4. TfL didn't respond to Recommendation 1, about communications between drivers and passengers. Is there anything you want to add, for inclusion in the follow-up report?

The recommendation was as follows:

We recommend that London Underground, Tubelines and Metronet, as part of the review of the Public Private Partnership to be completed in 2010, negotiate a more rapid rollout of facilities for passengers and train drivers to be able to communicate in the event of an emergency.

All trains have public address facilities for drivers to communicate to passengers. Due to the effect of the blast this was disabled on the trains concerned on 7 July.

Some tube trains - on the Northern, Jubilee, Piccadilly, Central and Waterloo & City lines - also have talk back facilities enabling passengers to talk to drivers. This will be introduced on all trains as they are upgraded, so by 2015 all trains except the Bakerloo line, which is programmed for upgrade by 2020, will have the talk back facility. We could not justify accelerating this programme purely to provide a talkback facility, and in any event it would be virtually impossible to do so due to the logistics involved in the provision of new or refurbished trains.

It must be noted that no train borne communication system can be guaranteed to work following an explosion such as those witnessed on 7/7.

5. TfL didn't respond in the Board Report to recommendation 19, about storing medical and rescue equipment at stations. Is there anything you want to add at this point?

The recommendation was as follows:

We recommend that the London Ambulance Service and London Underground review the potential for storing rescue and medical equipment at stations.

The NHS is conducting a trial with Network Rail which has involved the location of medical 'pods' at four NR stations. Further to this they are looking to roll out such equipment at 48 other NR stations across the country. In addition to this the NHS have reviewed their storage locations and other procedures. London Underground is in discussions with the NHS to determine suitability of locations on the LU network following the outcome of these trials. In addition we have supplied multi casualty first aid kits to 170 locations across the Underground system.

6. TfL did not respond to Recommendation 23, about enabling station staff to communicate with passengers (eg using loudhailers)- do you want to add anything at this point?

The recommendation was as follows:

We recommend that Transport for London review the communications system that are in place to enable station staff and/or the emergency services to communicate with passengers on trains that are trapped in tunnels.

All stations have hand held loudhailers as part of their emergency equipment.

7. In response to Recommendation 24, TfL said that torches could be useful - has any action been taken on this front, or is any planned? Also, RMT has recommended the installation of emergency lighting strips (such as those on passenger aircraft) on Underground trains. Can you let me know whether any work has been done to assess whether this would be feasible on (a) existing stock and / or (b) new stock?

The recommendation was as follows:

We recommend that Transport for London conduct a feasibility study on alternative forms of emergency lighting for new/refurbished rolling stock, and report back to us by May 2007. We recommend that Transport for London review the potential for providing torches in drivers' cabs for use in the event of loss of lighting and failure of emergency lights.

The tunnel lights and emergency car lights do work in the event of power loss. However, any emergency lighting is dependent on cables still being intact, and also on bulbs not being destroyed by blast damage or obscured by dust clouds. Tunnel lighting did switch on automatically when the traction current was discharged to assist evacuation. Although London Underground's power and lighting system is robust, it will never be completely immune to the effects of an explosion.

London Underground has conducted a review of emergency equipment. This review has found that the vast majority of existing equipment is fit for purpose, and has identified solutions for where gaps exist – for example the multi-casualty first aid kit.

All drivers are already supplied with a torch (the Bardic lamp) which they are required to carry with them at all times, and stations are equipped with torches and portable lights. As a result of the emergency equipment review, all stations, and emergency equipment pods in train cabs, will additionally be equipped with a hands free torch. This can be used as a head lamp, or clipped onto clothing, to assist staff to respond to an emergency. Roll out to stations has commenced - there is a delay with the roll out to trains but the supplier is sourcing more stock.

We have investigated the use of light sticks (or snap wands). We have yet to find one on the market which complies with our fire regulations and provides a suitable level of lighting. Even if one were found, there is no appropriate storage facility in train carriages which enable these sticks to be secured from theft, yet be accessible during an emergency. As an alternative we are supplying the hands free torches mentioned above.