

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, Chair of the Transport Committee

London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

14 November 2018

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

CC:

Heidi Alexander, Deputy Mayor for Transport
Mike Brown MVO, Commissioner, Transport for London
David Hughes, Director of Strategy and Network Development, London Underground
Sir Terry Morgan, Chairman, Crossrail Ltd
Simon Wright, Chief Executive, Crossrail Ltd

Dear Sadiq,

Delay in Crossrail opening

Thank you for your letter of 6 November regarding the delay to the opening of Elizabeth line services.

Firstly, you have failed to provide the following information we requested:

- Further detailed information from TfL on the revenue impact of the Crossrail delay, including fare revenue and commercial revenue (specifically advertising and station concessions) in years after 2018/19. This should include an update on the status of TfL's agreement with six launch partners with sector-exclusive advertising rights.¹
- Details of any penalty clauses in agreements with organisations that have provided funding to Crossrail.
- Details of revised opening dates for the eastern and western sections of the Elizabeth line.

Furthermore, at the time of writing none of Crossrail's board minutes have been published. This has been promised by both you and the Deputy Mayor but there has been no indication of when it will happen.

We have also been made aware of another independent review of the project that took place in March-June 2018 and informed the increase in Crossrail's budget announced in July. Although it

¹ <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2017/december/tfl-seeks-six-exclusive-commercial-partners-for-the-launch-year-of-the-elizabeth-li>

is a shame that we have had to learn about this from other sources, we would be grateful if you could provide us with the final report from this review, as well as its the terms of reference.

Finally, almost two months ago Crossrail has committed to provide the Committee with a monthly update on the project's progress. No update has been sent.

Could you kindly provide all of the missing information including the Crossrail board minutes and report from the March-June review by Wednesday 21 November. We are also still awaiting Crossrail's first monthly update to the Committee and request your assurance that this update will be provided immediately and will not be late again.

I will now address the points you have made in your letter about how you oversaw this project and when you learned of the delay.

We are disappointed that you have still failed to provide the Committee with a full account of what happened. This approach will only serve to make Londoners more sceptical that the GLA can oversee this type of project responsibly and undermine their trust in their elected representatives.

As we set out in our previous letter, we are aware that you were personally briefed by the Crossrail Chair, Sir Terry Morgan, on 26 July. We would like you to spell out in specific terms what information you received from Sir Terry about the likelihood of meeting the December opening date, and provide in full the briefing note you received from Sir Terry. We would also like you to spell out in specific terms what advice you received from Transport for London at this time about the likelihood of Crossrail meeting the December opening date, including any written briefing.

Further to this, we heard your statement at the TfL Board meeting on 24 October that Crossrail provided information to TfL in "June and July" about the additional time and cost required for the project. This contradicts your previous statements and requires explanation.

We kindly request a reply to the Committee by Wednesday 21 November with a full account of the advice and information you received from Crossrail and TfL in July, including Crossrail and TfL's full written briefings to you, and an explanation of your statement at the TfL Board.

We are deeply concerned by your insistence that scheduling pressures have been discussed in public at TfL Board meetings. The public discussions at TfL Board have been limited and unspecific throughout the project. As Chair of the Board you could and should have insisted on greater transparency. Your fellow TfL Board members have themselves said at recent meetings that they did not feel adequately informed about Crossrail's scheduling pressures.

Taking at face value your position that the scheduling pressures were discussed at Board meetings in March and May, we are perplexed to see your written responses to two Assembly Members after the 21 June Mayor's Question Time meeting, in which you explicitly stated, "*The Elizabeth Line remains on course to open as planned in December 2018.*"² We are equally

² Answer to Florence Eshalomi AM: http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question_299449.
Answer to Keith Prince AM: http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question_299194

perplexed by the decision to release a statement to the London Stock Exchange in July about additional funding that did not refer to a possible delay.

If you were aware of scheduling pressures as you maintain, you surely cannot have felt it appropriate to make these statements at these times. The only plausible explanation is that you did not properly interrogate the information you were hearing from Crossrail, and effectively took your eye off the ball. This has led to misleading statements being made to the Assembly, Parliament and the market, which is very concerning.

As the only person elected by Londoners who is privy to confidential information about the project, it has been your responsibility to ensure transparency and you appear to have done no more than meet minimum statutory requirements based on legal advice from TfL.

Crossrail should have been subject to much stronger scrutiny, both from independent sources and from TfL itself. We agree it was Crossrail's responsibility to be much more forthcoming with information than it has been. However, it was also TfL's responsibility to ensure Crossrail provided reliable information and that they were held to account for their performance. This should have happened through Crossrail's governance structures and informally in routine discussions with TfL officers. We are aware this project was jointly co-sponsored with the Department for Transport; this does not excuse the lack of oversight. TfL officers could have worked in tandem with DfT to undertake this vital role.

We note that Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, has asked the National Audit Office to investigate these issues. This demonstrates the level of concern about the oversight of this project. I look forward to receiving the information you have promised to provide us, and the explanations and context for your decisions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Chair, Transport Committee