

Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Environment Committee
City Hall

Date: 24th August 2017

By internal mail

Dear Leonie

Thank you for your letter of 28 July about Tube noise and for your valuable feedback and continued scrutiny of this important issue. I understand that you are all are still receiving correspondence from concerned constituents but hope we have been able to demonstrate how seriously we take these concerns.

I know that you met with Mark Wild on 10 August and were able to talk through these issues with him. I hope that was helpful.

We remain totally committed to being a responsible neighbour to local communities and ensuring that noise from TfL's services is reduced to the lowest level possible. Of course it is a continuing process to keep the tracks in good order, with them being in constant use and subject to continual wear and tear.

As I know you will be aware, there is not a single solution to resolving all track noise issues. I remain assured that there is a robust procedure in place so that TfL can respond quickly and sympathetically to all reports of noise disturbance, whatever the cause. TfL's dedicated team of specialists investigates and responds to every noise complaint and is able to identify hot-spots, and target interventions. I hope Mark has been able to explain the process TfL undertakes to prioritise areas where noise levels are highest and where most complaints have been received.

I was pleased to be able to listen in to the discussion at Mayors Questions on 10 August. As the Mayor outlined, TfL's priority is to tackle directly the source of the noise, such as the trains and the tracks they run on. A significant amount of work has been done to resolve or improve the situation at many of these locations.

TfL's day-to-day maintenance and track renewal budget is around £200m a year. In addition to this, TfL's noise and vibration experts have spent just over £2m on interventions that were not originally scheduled as part of the regular maintenance plan. Where new hot-spots are identified, or emerging technology presents new opportunities to resolve long-term complex noise issues, then TfL will make sure that these receive the

necessary funding. For example over 10,000 shock absorbent track fixings (a further 5,000 since the Committee met in March) have been fitted in certain hot spot areas, with positive impact including in the South Wimbledon area. TfL has also used rail grinding and other track work to make sure that rails are kept smooth and as quiet as possible across the network.

You also raised with the Mayor and I at the recent Mayors Question Time session the possibility of reducing train speeds. I have discussed this proposal with Mark Wild at London Underground, and Mark is now investigating if it would be possible to reduce train speeds on any of the Night Tube lines. I know Mark discussed this with you too, and I have asked that TfL keep you informed of progress.

Some of the issues that lead to noise are not simple to fix and it is these complex issues that remain. TfL has to develop the best bespoke solution to prevent or counteract the noise depending on the location and the type of track in use, taking into account engineering and access constraints, as well as costs. Throughout this process, all Tube lines must remain in use at all times and sometimes other maintenance needs to be prioritised. I understand that this can be frustrating for those residents disturbed by Tube noise but you have my continuing commitment that this will continue to be a priority for us. TfL will continue to do all it can to be a good neighbour, while delivering the world-class levels of service – day and night – that are needed to enable the growth of the city.

I have included a table, attached as Appendix 1, which sets out details of the complaints TfL has received in the format you have requested.

Yours sincerely,



Valerie Shawcross CBE
Deputy Mayor for Transport