

London Assembly Extraordinary Plenary Meeting: Thursday 2 May 2019

Transcript of Item 3 – Question and Answer Session on the Elizabeth Line

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I welcome: the Mayor of London; the Commissioner of Transport for London (TfL), Mike Brown MVO; the Chairman of Crossrail Ltd, Tony Meggs; and the Chief Executive of Crossrail Ltd, Mark Wild. Thank you for your presence here at this session. Over to you, Mr Mayor, for your opening statement.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you, Chair, for accepting my offer to appear before the Assembly today.

As you know, last Thursday the new leadership of Crossrail agreed and announced a revised schedule for when the Elizabeth line will open to passengers. As many risks and uncertainties remain in the development and testing of the train and signalling systems, Crossrail's plan identifies a six-month delivery window with a midpoint at the end of 2020. This would include all stations along the central section except for Bond Street, which would be delayed due to some particular design and construction challenges at that location. Crossrail has also advised that it expects to deliver the project within the funding envelope we agreed with the Government in December last year [2018]. This is a result of months of work to review the programme and work out exactly what is required to see the construction and testing completed and the line opened.

Not only has the new leadership team produced a robust and realistic plan to put the programme back on track, but they have approached it with an openness and transparency that has been hugely helpful. I have consistently emphasised the need for regular and transparent reporting and the new leadership has responded positively. As an example, it is a major step forward that the joint sponsors, TfL and the Department for Transport (DfT) are now invited to attend every meeting of the Crossrail Board.

We are all keen to see the Elizabeth line open as soon as possible, but I know that many people also would understand where things have gone wrong, no one more so than me. I am aware that the Transport Committee published its report into the delay last week. This builds on a number of other reports including the independent KPMG review commissioned by the sponsors. The Public Accounts Committee has also been conducting its investigation into the delay and the National Audit Office (NAO) is due to publish its report shortly. This work has provided helpful contributions around how the governance of the project can be improved and the new Chairman of Crossrail Ltd Tony Meggs and the new Chief Executive Mark Wild have also significantly improved the reporting processes on the project.

Chair, let me end by saying this. When complete, the Elizabeth line will transform travel across London and the southeast, with new state-of-the-art trains taking millions of people more quickly across London, supporting hundreds of thousands of new homes and jobs. The new Chairman and Chief Executive of Crossrail Ltd and their team have worked extremely hard to produce this new plan. It provides a robust and realistic way forward and I will be doing what I can to support them in delivering it and getting the Elizabeth line open. We look forward to answering the Assembly's questions.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you, Mr Mayor. My leadoff question relates to the [London Assembly] Transport Committee's recommendations in its latest report *Derailed: Getting Crossrail back on track*. Can you start off, Mr Mayor, by telling us how these recommendations will be taken forward?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, can I thank, through you, the Transport Committee for its report. It builds on some of the other work that has been undertaken so far like the independent KPMG review. I wrote to the NAO and arranged for the Commissioner, myself and others to meet with the NAO. It will be publishing its report shortly, as indeed will the Public Accounts Committee.

The three main areas of our focus from the Transport Committee's report are around governance, the independent reviewers and corporate culture, all of which were issues raised in the report and a number of recommendations made by the Committee. The new Chairman and Chief Executive began in their respective roles not too long ago, the new Chairman and his deputy in January this year [2019], and they have made a clear statement about the importance of good governance and openness and transparency. The Chairman and the Chief Executive come to every TfL Board meeting and give comprehensive updates in public, which is really important in relation to governance and confidence from the public and also the testing that needs to take place of the information they provide us.

In relation to the independent reviewers, Jacobs, the project representative (P-Rep), has had its role significantly enhanced. There has now been the appointment of a senior industry-recognised leader. There is an experienced project manager and additional roles providing greater capacity to the job Jacobs has to do. In addition, the sponsors, the DfT and TfL, have appointed an independent Sponsor Board member, who will challenge the quality of assurance and information provided by Crossrail Ltd and may also receive technical advice as a Sponsor Board as well.

The third part, Chair, that I referred to is the corporate culture. You will be aware of our concerns in relation to some of the things told to us by this independent Board. I am really pleased with the attitude of the new Chairman, his deputy and the Chief Executive in relation to openness. There has been the publication of previous Board minutes before the current regime took over. Also, the new Chief Executive now writes to the Chair of the Transport Committee every month. That is really important. The weekly dashboards they provide have a huge amount of information on the testing and on safety performance. There is also on average every fortnight a meeting between the Deputy Mayor [for Transport], my Chief of Staff and the Crossrail team. In addition members of the TfL Board who are on the Crossrail Board are invited to that meeting. The Commissioner and I meet regularly with the senior team as well.

We have seen a sea change in attitude from Crossrail to providing us and the other sponsor, the DfT, with the information that we have asked for and we receive.

Florence Eshalomi AM: It is good to hear that you are already seeking to implement some of the recommendations from that Transport Committee report. In the spirit of that and seeing that some of that has already been taken up, I am hoping we will get the response in transparency.

Around that, to Mark Wild in your new role, the press release last week stated a new opening date. What is the main reason for that and what are the challenges for that new March 2021 date that has now been announced?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Thank you, Florence. We have spent a lot of time over the past three or four months doing two things. Firstly, just to reassure everybody, we have really tried to do our very best and we have demonstrated increased production. We have not rested on our laurels for two or three months. We have made good progress on the project in the past three or four months physically.

We have also spent our time resequencing the project. The reality of Crossrail – and I do not really want to talk about who was to blame for it; other people will do that – is that the project had become completely out of sequence. If you go back to 2010, the sequence was very clear. The stations should have been completed in 2016, the train would take a whole year to test after that, and then you would get into a period of trial operations. The fact that the project had become so confused, I suppose you would call it, by the stations being beyond the actual train systems presented an enormous technical challenge. What we have done over the past three or four months is to re-sequence the whole project and get it back into the right sequence. The right sequence is to get the stations into a position where they can accept the train, get the train systems – Bombardier and Siemens – to a certain level of maturity, and then spend a lot of time in trial running where we run the train extensively and shake out all of the bugs, as people would understand with these complex software systems. When we open stage 3, it is very important that it is end-to-end and very safe and very reliable.

That is why we still have uncertainty. There is uncertainty about how long it will take us to finish the tunnel and the stations and get the software to a certain level of maturity. That is the task for the next nine months. However, the real reason for the uncertainty is that once we get there, we will go through a very extensive period of shaking down the system and running it to its full capability, and the truth is we do not really know what we will find in that process. What we do know is that it will always be safe and it will always be reliable. That is why we made a decision with the Chairman not to try to land this project on a pinhead of a date and to just be very honest and transparent that at the moment we have a window of uncertainty of about six months and we expect to open this railway at the end of 2020, but of course we will do our very best to get it onto the leading edge of that.

Hopefully, that is a good explanation about what we have done and why we still have uncertainty in the project.

Florence Eshalomi AM: That is good. You are saying that with all the project “confusion”, quote unquote, there should be a more detailed plan. In the press release last week, it said that there will be a detailed plan:

“... including what went wrong in the past, the new team has produced a robust and realistic plan to put Europe’s most ambitious and complex infrastructure project back on track.”

Bearing in mind that we have had Jacobs involved to do an independent review so that we do not go down the line of having any more project confusion, were they involved in this new ambitious realistic plan and did they sign it off?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Just to pick up and echo what the Mayor said, again in the spirit of looking forward, the P-Rep has a really very important role in assuring the sponsors that it is in the correct sequence, and certainly the P-Rep now is very influential. One of the first things I did as Chief Executive which was not common before was for the P-Rep to join every meeting that I have. The P-Rep joins every Board meeting that we have. The capability of the P-Rep is higher and they have presented a report on the plan. It is not a matter of signing it off but, to quote the P-Rep, they have said it is a balanced approach and appropriate for this current phase.

The programme at the moment has 400 or 500 lines. It is well sequenced and well structured. We have reviewed it ourselves internally and extensively. Tony [Meggs] will say that we have finally put a second line of defence into Crossrail which was not really there before on assurance. Over the next month that 400 or 500-line programme will turn into a 12,000-line detailed programme and so we cannot sit here and say that we

have all of the answers. We are working very hard and we do not expect the window to change but we will have much more granularity.

Yes, the P-rep is of much higher quality and is fully on board with this approach.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Mindful of any confidentiality, would the Transport Committee be able to have sight of that plan?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): That is a question for the sponsors, which I cannot answer because the P-Rep actually works for the sponsors. I would direct that to the sponsors.

Florence Eshalomi AM: That is fine. Thank you.

Gareth Bacon AM: Mr Mayor, on 7 January this year [2019], the Chief Finance Officer of TfL, Simon Kilonback, appeared in front of the Budget and Performance Committee and took questions on TfL's business plan. During that Q&A, he said he was pushed on when he expected Crossrail to open. He said that upon the modelling of various scenarios of delays to the remaining stages, he expected it to open within 18 months of its original due date. That would imply June 2020. The press release that came out last week has built on that and we now have the window of October 2020 to March 2021 and so 22 to 28 months later than the original plan.

In addition, the press release talked about the frequency of the midsection and the number of trains that will be running on it. That has been downgraded from 24 per hour in the peak time to 12 per hour in the peak time. What would be the financial impact on TfL's business plan of both the extended delay and the reduction in frequency?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The business plan that was created, the most recent business plan, had built into it the fares/revenues being lost for about three years and the breakdown was over the three years. If you remember, some of the transfer of passengers would come from other TfL lines and the real additional fares stream would be from stages four and five and people not currently using TfL services. That is the real boon for us. What was built in, Gareth, was in 2019/20 a revenue loss of £200 million, in 2020/21 £300 million and in 2021/22 £100 million. That is still in the plan and we will review the plan towards the end of this year.

I would be surprised if that revenue loss will change too much. I have seen media reports about different figures. The Commissioner is next to me. Unless I have something wrong, my understanding is that that is broadly speaking the calculation that was made. It was a - small c - conservative calculation made in relation to revenue lost.

Gareth Bacon AM: The credit agency Moody's has upgraded the potential loss from the £600 million that you just referred to, which is in the business plan, to about £1 billion. Is that a figure that you recognise?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): There is an explanation for that, which is to do with net and gross. I had a conversation with the Commissioner, as you will appreciate, when I saw the press release you talk about. My ears pricked up as well and I have discussed this with the Commissioner. That can be explained quite easily in relation to net and gross.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, the Mayor is absolutely right. The difference between the £600 million and the £1 billion, the £400 million delta that is referred to from the credit ratings reassessment, is based on no cognisance being given to the passengers who are not abstracted from the Central line and the Jubilee line or indeed the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) or buses. There is a full breakdown assessment that we have done on the number of passengers that would have moved from those lines, which is a part of the revenue projections you would have had for Crossrail in a gross number. Just for example, some £225 million for London Underground and £48 million for the DLR. I have all the detailed figures around that.

It also does not take any recognition in those figures from the proposal that you will be aware of for stage 5A, so-called, which is the opening of us taking over the existing Great Western services into the high-level Paddington Station later on this year, which is still on schedule. We are working closely with Network Rail and the DfT on that. It does not take account of that, either. That explains the delta between the £600 million and the £1 billion.

Gareth Bacon AM: To cut a long story short then, the £144 million surplus that the business plan envisages for 2022/23 you are confident will still be delivered despite the delayed opening of Crossrail?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I cannot give you the exact figure, but we intend to be in surplus in 2022/23, yes.

Gareth Bacon AM: The figure I have given you is in the business plan, £144 million.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes.

Gareth Bacon AM: A related question is around staff who have been hired for the Crossrail project on the assumption that it was going to open in December of last year [2018]. I understand from a broadcast interview that Mr Wild gave to *Leading Britain's Conversation (LBC)* yesterday or certainly in the last few days that there are 500 drivers and 200 maintenance technicians. The phrase that you used in that interview was that they are going to be "practicing". What does that mean?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Can I just, Gareth, answer on the 24 trains an hour and 12 trains an hour? That was actually a miscommunication. If I can clarify, the plan of Crossrail was always 15 trains an hour for stage 3 and then 24 trains an hour in stage 4 when the services from the east come. Our revised plan is 12 trains an hour in stage 3 and 24 in stage 4. That was a very conscious technical analysis done. Twelve trains an hour, which is five minutes between every train, provides the optimum reliability growth interval and so there is not actually a degradation. The 15 to 12 was done for technical reasons by --

Gareth Bacon AM: The quote that I gave you was from your press release.

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): I will check that. The miscommunication might be our fault but we will check it. It should say that 24 trains an hour is the outcome of stage 4, which is at least six months after stage 3.

Yes, for the staff being hired, clearly it is disappointing that the railway did not open. We were ready to accept this railway. The drivers were recruited and the maintenance staff. By 'practice' - maybe this was loose language from me - these people are highly skilled technicians, probably the highest skilled people in the United Kingdom (UK) railways. To keep their competence at the right level, we cannot have them sitting

doing nothing. The word 'practice' is very loose from me but it means they keep their competency and their training at the right level, which means they do have to practice their skills and so we do use them.

The drivers are fully utilised. Mass Transit Railway (MTR) has done a very good job. We drive trains in the east and west. We use the drivers to test our trains. There is dynamic testing we are doing with drivers. MTR has loaned out drivers to London Overground. The driver group is productive.

The maintenance technicians do have to maintain their skills and competence, which means that they do have to practice their skills. What they are doing is maintaining the equipment that we have installed. They are helping the tier-one contractor. There is not a utilisation problem. Clearly we would rather them be maintaining the real railway, but by 'practice' we mean keeping their skills within the correct boundaries. Every six months these maintenance technicians must practice certain activities, just like any technical person. That is what we mean by 'practice'.

Gareth Bacon AM: Are these people employed full-time for potentially the thick end of another two years, 22 months maybe, and are practicing?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Again, it is a bit unfair to say that. I have explained that 'practice' means keeping their skills at the appropriate level, just like a nurse, a doctor or a signalling testing engineer would do. It is very important that technical people practice their skill and they are practicing their skill in the maintenance of the equipment that we have installed --

Gareth Bacon AM: I do understand. I do not mean to interrupt you or appear rude. It is just that I am on time and you are repeating what you have already said to me.

How much is it costing to employ these people for this amount of time while they are practicing?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): I could get you the actual number outside of this meeting. We will provide that in a written response. What I was going to say is that they are actually doing productive work. They are helping our contractors and they are adding value. It is not as effective as it should be running the railway, but they are adding value. They are a very important group of people, they are keeping their motivation and skills at the right level, and they are doing productive work.

Gareth Bacon AM: In the interest of time, perhaps you could write to me afterwards and potentially give me the budgetary cost and also what they are actually doing.

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Sure. I will.

Gareth Bacon AM: That would be very useful indeed. Thank you very much.

Caroline Russell AM: Mr Mayor, I want to talk about step-free access, particularly at outer London Crossrail stations.

By December [2019] Crossrail services should be running into Paddington from the west and into Liverpool Street from the east. Here we are now in 2019 and we are still waiting to see the works completed to upgrade these outer London Crossrail stations with step-free access, which is frustrating because Crossrail works have taken place across a whole decade and making stations step-free could have been done much earlier in the programme. It is a small part of the Crossrail programme but it could be absolutely life-changing for disabled Londoners.

When are the outstanding step-free upgrades going to be delivered?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): This is one of the issues I raised when I met with the new leadership team at Network Rail. The Commissioner meets with him regularly and so maybe I can pass over to Mike to give you an answer.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes. This is an issue that - you are quite right - has not gone as fast as it might have done. I should just reassure though the Plenary session, Chair, through you, that the new leadership of Network Rail, as the Mayor implies, is absolutely all over this. The contracts are fully in place and the work is underway. I am confident that the programme is now rolling out.

It is not just step-free access, although that is of course a hugely important imperative, but to be able to operate the stage 5A services that I referred to in the earlier answer to Assembly Member Bacon, some of the platforms do need lengthening on the western section. There need to be cameras fitted so that safe operation from the drivers with the train interface can be operated. All that work is underway. I am scheduled to go out and visit and check those stations myself at first hand to ensure that that work is delivering the progress it needs to. The work is underway. The Chief Executive of Network Rail has assured me that it will be delivered at the earliest opportunity as close as possible to the opening of the 5A services.

Caroline Russell AM: Is that right for the stations in the east? Is it spring 2019 that you are still looking at?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Yes, the eastern position is more positive in terms of the work that has been done.

Caroline Russell AM: And in the west it is when the line opens in 2020?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): In the west, just to be clear, we are working to deliver this as closely as possible to us taking over the full operation of the train service at the end of this calendar year, 2019.

Caroline Russell AM: Do you think that you will have the step-free in west London as well by 2019?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Not in all stations but the plan is to get it as quickly as possible after we take over the train services. Mark, is that your view?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): That is exactly right. The east is a positive situation, apart from Ilford, but in the west it is highly dependent on Network Rail, which has the funding now and is about to finish placing the contracts for the rebuild of the packages of work, package 1 and package 2. It is anticipated to complete that during 2020.

It is disappointing and I would say that it is not a minor issue. It is of vital importance to customers and it is disappointing that we are where we are. The good news is that Network Rail does have the funding and the contracting strategy, but the programme will push into 2020 for the small number of stations that are outstanding.

Caroline Russell AM: For the small number of those western stations?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Yes, but they are very important, Ealing and the others.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes. Are you able to investigate whether there is any way you can bring that step-free functionality forward or have you pushed it as far as you can?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): Perhaps I can take that, Mark, if I may. It is very difficult to see how we can because they did run into a contracting challenge and indeed a funding challenge at some point. They are now in their new control period and, as I say, the new leadership of Network Rail has gripped this in a way that perhaps was not always obvious before.

David Kurten AM: Good afternoon. I would like to ask you, Mark, about something you said at the beginning about resequencing the stages of the project. You are going to spend nine more months from now on the stations.

Does that mean that you are not doing any track testing of the trains at the moment and will not be doing any for the next nine months?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Thank you, David. No, one of our difficult constraints is that we do have to continue the dynamic testing and so at the moment we test for four days a week full-time with the power energised and a 100-mile-an-hour train service running in the tunnel. We do that to get to the software maturity that is one of our critical paths, which only leaves three days for the tunnel fitout to be finished. The stations, though, work independently of the dynamic testing. The advantage of the platform screen door means that the station people can continue working even when we are doing the dynamic testing. The real constraint is in the completion of the tunnel fitout and that is not complete, but we do need to get there.

The three criteria for getting to Christmas [2019] or the early part of 2020 are getting the software to a consent-to-operate with Siemens and Bombardier, getting the tunnel completely finished, and getting the stations to a certain level of completion to allow the train to run. This is why we are very confident in our plan. We have thought very carefully about that sequence, but there is lots to do between now and the early part of 2020.

David Kurten AM: What problems do you still have in terms of integrating the three different signalling systems that you have to work with?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): It is a huge challenge. There is a joke that you would not start from here. We probably would not start from here, but it is the world's most complex signalling system.

The really good news is that Siemens and Bombardier are now both in a situation where the software is stable and mature. The task now is integration, and the transitions and the integration of these signalling systems works. At our test track at Melton, we can demonstrate it working pretty effectively. The thing about railway signalling, just to reassure every customer, 200 million people will use this and it is tested to really very high safety and reliability standards. We are very confident in the technology.

You might ask why we are uncertain. We are uncertain because every glitch and every bug needs to be taken out of this system. We are very confident in Siemens and Bombardier and we are in a better place than we have ever been, but there is still a real task ahead of integration.

We have an integration facility at Chippenham in the West Country where Siemens and Bombardier have built a simulation of this railway and we are spending every minute of the day on this. We could not have better support from the leadership of Siemens and Bombardier. It is one of the world's most difficult tasks ahead of us, but we have the right team.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Mr Mayor, the independent reviewer, Jacobs, reported a significant risk to the December [2018] opening as early as January 2018. Can you set out how these monthly reports were shared with TfL Board members and particularly members of the [TfL] Finance Committee?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The Commissioner dealt with this last week to some extent. What we have done in relation to Jacobs is enhanced its role. The problem we had before was the reassurances given by the former leadership team of Crossrail, the Chairman and others, were that they could address some of the concerns raised by Jacobs. What happened would be up until July last year [2018] we had only one TfL non-executive director (NED) at the Crossrail Board meetings. In July we got an additional two who had the expertise to assist the one NED on the Crossrail Ltd Board. DfT got additional places. We now have more NEDs checking the information given by Jacobs. It is because of the concerns raised in July that there was the independent work done which reported back at the end of August that led to the changes made. The Sponsor Board also did not receive the same information it receives now and nor was the technical expertise and advice given to the Sponsor Board. That has changed. Also, what has changed which was not happening before was the invitations of the sponsors to the various Board meetings and so --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: All right, but these reports were every month and so at that point they went every month. I have looked through the TfL Board and Finance Committee papers throughout all of last year and there is no mention of these Jacobs monthly reports. I have also heard from a TfL Board member they were never briefed about these independent reports with all their warnings in them.

Why do you think TfL Board members were kept in the dark about these serious warnings about Crossrail's opening?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You will have to ask Sir Terry [Morgan CBE, former Chairman, Crossrail].

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You are Chair of TfL. Were you not aware of these Jacobs reports?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I knew about the concerns. Even when the former Chairman came to the Assembly in September [2018], he differentiated concerns from facts. He kept reassuring me - and I am sure the Commissioner will confirm this - that he was sticking to the December [2018] opening for the central section, notwithstanding the concerns raised by Jacobs and others. That is one of the reasons why of course he asked for the additional funding, firstly, to eat into the contingency of £600 million and then asked for the further extension of £300 million. He reassured us that actually, of the £300 million, only £211 million would be spent and would be used to address the concerns from Jacobs and others. The facts in relation to the opening of the central section were not established by him until the end of August. I am just grateful that we got the independent work done between July and August [2018] that led to some clarity in relation to that central development.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Fine. I am asking about these reports --

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I would make this point as well in relation to the opening of the central section --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, Mr Mayor, I am really very short of time. Just a couple more points.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You asked a question.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: On 24 July [2018], TfL as sponsor and owner of Crossrail Ltd made a significant announcement to the London Stock Exchange, yet none of the reports and warnings from Jacobs were made public at this stage. This is arguably what is known as material information. It is information that anyone lending to TfL should have known about as it could impact on their financial decisions.

Are you not concerned that those wishing to lend to TfL were also kept in the dark at this point?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): One of the reasons why I lost confidence in the former Chairman [of Crossrail Ltd] was that the adverse event notice was served only in August [2018]. If the Chairman of Crossrail was concerned about the central section not opening in December, I would have expected the adverse event notice to be served sooner. You will be aware - and I speak in the presence of the current Chairman of Crossrail - when you are the chair of an independent organisation and you go to the sponsors and ask for additional money and they are testing the information you are giving and you are reassuring them in relation to the additional money required and you also have not served the adverse event notice, you have to take as a sponsor the word of those you have tasked with doing this job. The previous Chairman did not serve the adverse event notice until the end of August [2018]. In fact, you will be aware --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The sponsors did have this information. That is what worries me. Could I ask you one final question?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You also would have seen the former Chairman of Crossrail coming here and speaking to the Plenary and explaining the difference between the concerns he had and the facts. The point he made was that the facts became established only towards the end of August [2018].

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Finally, as of today, the Crossrail Board minutes that are published that you talked about earlier only go up to 10 January this year [2019]. That is more than three and a half months that we have had no information of what is going on at the Crossrail Board.

Could you guarantee that they are published as soon as possible and routinely going forward?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I suspect your question was directed at the Chairman of Crossrail, but I understand why you would want to ask me the question.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Just because you had mentioned transparency earlier. Could you make sure? It is three and a half months that we have had no information.

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): That is unacceptable. I will make sure they get published more promptly.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: You have said in your April [2019] report to the London Assembly that there remain stations on the western line that are at different stages of their development. Some are commissioned and

some are waiting to be commissioned. When the central section opens up, will all those stations be functioning apart from Bond Street?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Yes. All of the stations on our current modelling will be functional and accepting customers. Bond Street has particular challenges that, if people are interested in them, I could give an answer on. Yes, all stations will open except Bond Street.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Sorry, just so that we are not at cross purposes, that is the central section stations? That is the 10 stations rather than the 40?

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Yes. I was particularly concerned about the stations in Ealing and Hillingdon, Ealing Broadway, West Ealing, Hayes & Harlington and West Drayton.

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Yes, even in the outer section all the stations will be open, but of course work will be going on in those stations and we will have to have hoardings and walkways for people. It is our intention to get every station open, of course, yes, and keep it open. We might have to close them for construction work, but that is really for Network Rail to answer when they get more detailed plans.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Fine. I just want to follow up on this. It is clear from all sides of the Crossrail project that there are experts who will be giving one opinion and there are experts who will give a different opinion. How are you testing one set of experts with the other set of experts? How is the scrutiny going on?

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): Can I comment here? One of the changes that we have tried to make it is that, first of all, we have a lot more expertise in the company itself, especially with respect to operating railways, systems integration and so on. Secondly, we have built a full three-line-of-defence assurance system. Thirdly, we are in the process of finalising an independent advisory board of experts.

My concern right now is that we have to let the guys get on with the work and so we are trying to be supportive in this, but one is looking for different opinions. Because of the complexity of the systems we are working with and because there is a lot of judgement involved, it is OK to have differences of opinion. Out of that, you can form a well-balanced view of what is realistic and what is not.

If everybody agreed with everything and everybody else all the time, that is when you really worry. Those differences of opinion are an important part of making sure that we have a robust and achievable programme.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Has the Crossrail Board established a committee for audit and risk management?

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): Yes. We have done several things. We have re-established the Risk and Audit Committee. We have also for the first time put together an Investment Committee. We are re-establishing our Remunerations and Nominations Committee. We have led the creation of an expert panel that will be providing advice both to the executives and independently to the Board.

We have refreshed. As of now, everybody on the Board, with one exception, has been there for less than a year. We have one longer serving member and so it is quite a refreshed and quite an expert Board. The level of challenge, I would say, is very high and the P-Rep comes along to make sure that we are providing the right levels of challenge.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Do those same risk papers, which are done by the Risk Committee, go to the Board or does an abridged version go to the Board?

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): The Board is getting advice. The Risk and Assurance Committee provides guidance to the Board on various aspects of the programme.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: My concern is of course that you have risk assessment papers, which go to the Risk Assessment Committee, and those papers go to the Board. I want to make sure. Are the papers going in their entirety to the Board or are they being somehow managed when they go to the Board? Is there a real question --

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): I sit on all of these committees and so --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: The challenge of course then is that the Board, which has independent NEDs on it, is getting the full flavour of all the risks. That is a concern.

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): I understand the concern, but I can assure you that the Board has full transparency of what is going on in each committee and what risks are reported. As I say, we have various pieces of advice coming from different areas.

Secondly, individual Board members are really quite engaged. It is not that they show up once a month and sit down for a few hours and sift through things. Our individual Board members are spending several days a week in some cases going into detail about individual components of the programme. We have a very open environment and a very inquisitive Board and nothing is being kept from the Board.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: This is a question for you, Mark. When were you last challenged by the Board?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): The Board is very expert now, very --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Give me one area that you have been challenged on by the Board.

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): I hesitate only because it is the most challenging but the most constructive board I have ever reported into. As you would imagine, because of all the scrutiny on this programme and the personalities involved, they are very focused.

A good example is this opening window. We have had a lot of detailed debate about the certainty of why it is the end of 2020 plus or minus three months and we have had to demonstrate. Genuinely, at the Board meeting last Thursday, we made our mind up through a very rigorous and open approach. I am just very supportive of working with Tony [Meggs]. In such an uncertain situation we are in, this difference of opinion is really very healthy.

I really encourage it. They are a great Board and they are very challenging. It is not exactly a comfortable experience but we are getting the fruits of it.

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): I would go on and add that the executive is also behaving in a receptive and open way. They are open to suggestions. They are open to advice. We have a very instructive dialogue.

Joanne McCartney AM: It is good to hear that this project - forgive the pun - is back on track and we have clarity and transparency, but your press release did say that all stations in the central section would open, apart from Bond Street, and your press release referred to design and delivery challenges.

Mark, what are those challenges and how far behind do you think Bond Street will be?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): There are three fundamental challenges ahead. The easy bit was getting the plan together and the exciting but complicated bit is the delivery of it, which we are fully committed to. There are three specific areas of concern.

The first one is the integration of the signalling and the train systems. It has never been done before in the UK and it is quite novel in the world and so we do not know what we do not know yet. All we know is that we have the right approach and the right rigorous approach. There is uncertainty there.

The other area is specifically Bond Street. We had a decision in this opening plan and the crucial decision was whether we wait for Bond Street or reorder Bond Street so that we get into trial running as soon as possible. At the moment we test this huge railway, all 44 kilometres of it, in the central section with only four trains. That is all. We do that for safety reasons and to promote a really rigorous testing approach. We need to step up to 35 trains to run the timetable and so the decision we made was to re-sequence Bond Street. The bottom three layers of all these stations support the train system. These stations in the ground are eight storeys deep. They are huge complexes. The very bottom three floors support the tunnel and the train. That is why we really had to take a different approach at Bond Street, which we are going to do.

The third interesting area is testing and commissioning of all these very complex stations. I have said before that the great London Underground is a great organisation to deliver one or two of these a year and now we have to deliver 10 of them in 12 months. We have a very interesting challenge ahead about how we sequence the thousands of activities, to hook up all of the closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, the air conditioning units, the fire alarms, the public address (PA) announcements. Those tasks - over 100,000 tasks - need to be sequenced carefully.

Therefore, there is software integration, the resolution at Bond Street, and then finally hooking up the stations and the tasks ahead.

On Bond Street specifically, we are very pleased to be working with Costain Skanska [Engineering Solutions Provider]. We are very collaborative in terms of the work we have ahead. We are going to work very closely with them. There is a new Chief Executive of Costain, Alex Vaughan, whom we have met already and Mike [Brown MVO] has met to get their commitment. We need to work very closely. Bond Street is quite uncertain but it would not be many months after the opening of stage 3. We just are not certain at the moment, but we will become certain. It is certainly not the fact that Bond Street will be gone for years. We will do it as soon as we can, but the top priority of Bond Street is to get the subterranean areas in a position that they can support the train rather than everybody waiting to get the train going because Bond Street is not quite ready. That is why an intervention is needed at Bond Street.

The reasons for the Bond Street delay are quite interesting and they are mostly that the tunnelling was a year late at Bond Street. Bond Street is a year behind every other station because of the tunnelling back in 2014. We need to work with Costain Skanska to reorder the work.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Bond Street was the one I visited last summer. I was assured that it was still going to open, but even as a layperson I could see that it did not seem as far along as the other stations at all. I am glad to see that it is matter of months, hopefully.

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): After the opening of the three others, yes.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you.

Keith Prince AM: Good afternoon, Mr Mayor. Just for clarity, can you confirm you have read the [Transport] Committee's report, *Derailed*?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes, I have.

Keith Prince AM: Brilliant. Thank you.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I cannot read it back to you word for word, but I did read it when it came out and the fruity press release as well.

Keith Prince AM: I am sure. Thank you. Very good. Will you also accept, Mr Mayor, that the Committee is made up of 10 London Assembly Members - four Labour, three Conservative, one each from the Green, Liberal Democrat and Brexit Alliance Groups - and that therefore it was very much a cross-party report and that the report was unanimous and there were no dissensions on the report at all, which sometimes happens with more controversial reports? Are you happy with that? Are you happy that it is a unanimous report?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes.

Keith Prince AM: Very good. Thank you. The report, you may recall, includes a series of email exchanges regarding the TfL Commissioner's weekly update to you on 22 February, 5 March, 8 May, 15 May, 19 June and 6 August [2018]. Have you read those email exchanges in the report, Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I have it to hand. What is the page number?

Keith Prince AM: It does not say here, but it is the pink one, like that, Mr Mayor.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Pages 31 and 32.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you. Therefore, having read those and you have them in front of you now, are you entirely comfortable with the Commissioner's decisions on what information he chose to keep from you, Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am. I suspect there are thousands if not millions of drafts that go between staff before they reach me and people try to clarify things, correct errors and make sure the information I am provided is accurate, whether it is policing, whether it is the fire service, whether it is transport, whether it is a Crossrail. I do not get to see the duck's legs. I get to see the duck moving swiftly across the lake.

Keith Prince AM: Good. I am trying to picture that one. You are happy that there was important information there that the Commissioner removed or redacted from those reports? You are happy that he kept you in the dark?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am confident in the information that the Commissioner gave me. Also, the Commissioner and I tested the information we were provided by the former Chairman of Crossrail at a number of meetings we were jointly at where we were asking the Chairman questions and were being reassured by him. In fact, you were at a meeting in the House of Commons, as you reminded us, in late July [2018] --

Keith Prince AM: Indeed.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): -- where you were assured by the former Chairman about the opening of the central section in December [2018] and you were shocked --

Keith Prince AM: That was an earlier meeting of the --

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): At that stage you claimed to be shocked at what the Chairman was then saying.

Keith Prince AM: Are you referring to the meeting you had on 26 July [2018]?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am referring to the meeting you told us about in the House of Commons --

Keith Prince AM: No, I know that one. I am asking you about the meeting you are referring to that you were at where you had these alleged assurances.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): There were many meetings where we asked questions of the Chairman. I will give you one example, which Assembly Member McCartney has reminded me of, around Bond Street. On a number of occasions the Commissioner and I were concerned about Bond Street and the former Chairman told us that Bond Street would open. Maybe one or two of the entrances and exits would not be open, but the station would be open when the central section opened in December [2018]. Lo and behold, we are now told that that central section will not be open for another two years and that Bond Street will be months after the central section. That is just one example of the testing we were doing of the former Chairman and the reassurances he was giving us.

Keith Prince AM: I am going to move on from that. I might come back to that. Are you comfortable that in June [2018], for example, the Commissioner removed a paragraph that stated that there was an insufficient time to complete the testing required ahead of the joint trial running and trial operations from 1 October 2018? Do you think that that was helpful to you?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Sorry, what?

Keith Prince AM: That he removed a paragraph or a section that told you quite clearly that there would be insufficient time to complete the testing required ahead of the joint trial running.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): On testing, again, one of the issues that we raised with the former Chairman was the issue of testing time. You have heard the new Chief Executive expressing his views on testing. We raised the issue of testing as well because, as the new Chief Executive has explained, there was a sequential process that was supposed to take place and one of the questions we were asking the former Chairman was, "Do you have sufficient time to test?" He was reassuring us they he did.

Keith Prince AM: This is very interesting, Mr Mayor. You keep referring to what the former Chairman has told you, but you will find that the former Chairman had very few discussions with you and that it was other members of the senior staff of Crossrail who were directly speaking with you. The former Chairman's position is that it was not his position to inform you on these operational matters. It is very interesting that we are hearing all these things you are saying that the former Chairman informed you of, whereas you will find if you were to ask the former Chairman that he might deny he informed you of many of these things.

However, he certainly is aware and does confirm that he was present at that meeting on 26 June [2018] that you referred to a bit earlier, where you were clearly told not by him but by another senior member that it was very unlikely that Crossrail would be delivered in December and that you asked, "Can we throw money at it?" I wonder why you would ask if you could throw money at a project if you thought it was going to happen on time. This was around 26 July [2018].

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You are selectively quoting what the former Chairman has said. The former Chairman, when he came to the Transport Committee on 12 September [2018], made the point - and you were present at that meeting - and I quote:

"We have always had to separate facts from concerns. The fact is that we did not have a formal position to take until 29 August. We did brief informally about concerns that we had at the Board meetings and indeed in briefings with you but you did not have any information of that sort that we provided on 30 August [2018] any day earlier than that date."

It is easy for you to selectively choose for political reasons what the former Chairman said, but he said quite clearly on 12 September [2018] to this Plenary session, the same Members, his views on that.

Keith Prince AM: Were they the words that were shoved in front of him just before the meeting? Are you referring to that document?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I find it astonishing, Chair, that Assembly Member Prince is asserting that an experienced public servant of more than 30 years standing can be told what to do by either the Commissioner or me. He may be able to be told what to do by his leader but I can tell you this: I would not appoint a chair, either the current Chairman or the former Chairman, or have confidence in him if he would do as I had told him to do. They are not the sort of people I surround myself with. I am sorry if he is surrounding himself with those sorts of people.

Keith Prince AM: It is quite clear from the performance across your mayoralty that people do not do what you tell them to do, Mr Mayor. What I would like to move on to is that, Mr Mayor --

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, the Assembly Member was present at the House of Commons when, again, the former Chairman made that clear to the House of Commons that the central section was going to open in December 2018 --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, stop a moment, Mr Mayor. No, Mr Mayor, you are not going to talk across each other because we need clear questions and clear answers. It is over to you, Assembly Member Prince. Can I hear a question?

Keith Prince AM: Thank you. That is very kind of you, Chair. Thank you very much indeed. It appears from all this interchange that we have been having - which has been fun, I am sure - that you are quite comfortable that you were kept in the dark over many of the threats. You are claiming that in spite of having attended

meetings where issues were raised about the possibility of the line not being delivered on time that you knew nothing about it and you were absolutely shocked on 28 August [2018] because you had been kept in the dark. Do you like being compared to a mushroom, Mr Mayor? That is where --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, Assembly Member Prince. Can I stop you there?

Keith Prince AM: You can.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It is not appropriate for you to be referring to the Mayor --

Keith Prince AM: No, I did not --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, let me finish.

Keith Prince AM: Are you stopping the time while you are --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, I am. I am just saying that we can get on with questions and answers without going into name-calling. I would prefer that. Can I have your question to the Mayor? If you are putting an assertion to him, then please finish the question with the appropriate question mark.

Keith Prince AM: I will because I had not finished my question. I take on board what you say.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you.

Keith Prince AM: I will withdraw that comment. That was probably a little unfair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We are adults here.

Keith Prince AM: Indeed. Can I ask you, Mr Mayor? I do not understand why you feel comfortable that you were kept in the dark over this entire time by redactions that your Commissioner made and that you are very pleased with your Commissioner's performance because he kept you in the dark.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, I am not happy that I was kept in the dark by the former Chairman of Crossrail, which is why I lost confidence in him and he was asked to resign. If he has suddenly found new cheerleaders in the Assembly, that is for him and the Assembly, but the Assembly has Members on it who were also kept in the dark by the former Chairman, those who visited stations, those who went to the House of Commons meeting and were briefed by him. The former Chairman and the Chief Executive could have been clearer when they came to the Plenary in September [2018] and said that they had concerns and expressed those to us. We asked questions of the Chairman and he reassured us that the central section was still to open in December. Both the former Chairman and the former Chief Executive said to the Assembly in September, but they did not know until --

Keith Prince AM: All right. Mr Mayor, I do not have much time. No, Mr Mayor, I get that. Thank you.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You say you get that, but then you ask nonsense questions.

Keith Prince AM: I just want to ask you another question, then. Hopefully you will not consider this to be a nonsense question.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It depends what it is. What has been written for you?

Keith Prince AM: Mr Mayor, from this point onwards, we have got what has happened and that is behind us. Will you give a commitment to the people of London now, Mr Mayor, that you will take ownership of delivery of this project within the timespans that have now been given to you by your new refreshed Board?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, I am not sure if the Chief Executive of Crossrail or the Chairman could have been clearer. They last week at a Crossrail Board meeting --

Keith Prince AM: The question, Mr Mayor, is: will you take ownership of this project now?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, I could not have been clearer. The Chairman of Crossrail and the Chief Executive last week had a meeting of the Crossrail Board where they provided information in relation to when they thought the central section would open up and gave a six-month window. I wrote to the former Chairman --

Keith Prince AM: Mr Mayor, yes or no. Will you give Londoners the assurance that you will take ownership of this project from now on? Yes or no.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is a straightforward question, Mr Mayor.

Keith Prince AM: It is called a closed question.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): He is wanting a yes or no answer. Please work with us here.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): With respect, Chair, I am trying to help you and the Assembly.

Keith Prince AM: Yes or no, Mr Mayor. It is a very simple question.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): What I did to the former Chairman, Chair, was to write and say that I expected Crossrail to provide information by the end of April [2019] and that as soon as I had the information I would come to --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, I am going to stop you there because the Conservatives are out of time.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): He has not answered the question.

Keith Prince AM: Yes or no?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, the Member set forward the framework and wanted yes or no. It was clear that the Mayor was not going to give a yes or a no --

Tony Devenish AM: Or any answers at all.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): -- and you are out of time.

Keith Prince AM: That is great. That will be reported back to the people of London. He does not accept responsibility. Again.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I want now to go straight to Assembly Member Berry.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you, Chair. Mr Mayor, there are lessons here in terms of being Mayor and managing the city, especially in relation to recommendation 8 from the [Transport] Committee.

Did the previous Mayor pass on any advice or concerns about the governance of this project or the need to stay on top of the details? Will you be passing on any advice to future Mayors on these matters?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I cannot recall the previous Mayor giving me advice in relation to Crossrail and certainly I do not remember him ever using the words either publicly or privately “stay on top of the details”. He is known for many things but details is not one of them.

In relation to lessons that we have learned, the way Crossrail was set up as an autonomous body gave us very little locus in relation to getting involved in the day-to-day running. It is a credit to the new regime that they have been extremely open and transparent, allowing us to get involved in decisions that we technically should not be getting involved in.

Sian Berry AM: That is more or less voluntary, is it not?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It is. That, essentially, will be the setup. One of the lessons we can learn and one of the important things about the Transport Committee’s report, which draws on the KPMG stuff and we hope the NAO and Public Accounts Committee stuff, is about how future infrastructure projects are set up in relation to constitution and checks and balances. It is important that there is accountability. We want the experts to do a good job and we give them autonomy, but they have to be held to account.

Tom Copley AM: The previous executive team seems to have been so committed to the December 2018 deadline that it thought the unachievable was achievable despite the existence of clear red flags, particularly in the Jacobs report, which we were hearing about earlier.

What have you done to ensure that you and your executive team do not fall into the same trap?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Thanks, Tom. The very first thing is that we have a credible plan going forward. We have really gripped this project and we can demonstrate that grip in terms of improving production rates and the achievement of milestones. More importantly, we have a plan going forward that is in a conventional sequence that people who are railway experts and operators would understand, which has lengthy times in trial running and building up reliability rather than this extreme compression. The first point is that people should be very comforted by the plan itself.

Secondly - and the Chairman and I have really thought about this carefully - we have a window of uncertainty and we create that window of uncertainty but can still drive very hard on the forward edge of it. One of the big breakthroughs we have is, first of all, we now have an expert team working for me and in the organisation in system integration and railway integration. We also have the supply chain much tighter and closer to the programme. There is more work to do to make sure the supply chain is fully integrated into this, but previously the executive of Crossrail could not draw a line of sight between what was called the Master Operating Handover Schedule (MOSH) - the plan - and what the contractors said. Generally, our dates are slightly beyond what the contractors would say, which should give you a lot of comfort that we should be able to pull the supply chain and Crossrail much tighter together.

Tom Copley AM: Previously they would say, "A contractor has said we will finish it on this date. That is the date", rather than saying, "We need to build in some contingency".

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Yes. It is a matter of record that previously Crossrail would have very advanced early dates, "It will be done in April", and the supply chain would be saying, "No, it will be done in September". This was a real challenge. I am sure it will be in the lessons learned. There was quite a wide difference between what the supply chain said and what Crossrail Ltd said. This is always a balance because you do want to have tension and pressure in the system, but you do not want such a wide gap that it becomes fantastical.

Now the difference is really quite small and generally our dates are beyond the supply chain. In other words, we could drive hard. We have a logical sequence plan. We do have an expert team now working in Crossrail with the appropriate assurance around it, but fundamentally the supply chain - Siemens, Bombardier, Costain, Balfour Beatty, Laing O'Rourke - are bound into the plan logically. That is a great foundation to stand on.

The challenge of course is that it is hard and will be hard to deliver. There is a huge challenge ahead of us but there should be a lot of confidence in it, actually.

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): If I might just add, the level of sort of independent review of the of this new programme is far greater than anything that we saw in the past. It is one of the things that we have really focused on.

Tom Copley AM: The issue is not the level of the independent review but the extent to which the independent review was being taken on board by the management team because it seems like the risks were there and were flagged but they were not absorbed or acted upon.

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): Yes, but we are making sure as a Board that the that all of the independent advice is taken into account and taken into consideration.

I should say, by the way, that there is still risk around this programme. That is why there is uncertainty. Secondly, that is why we plan to keep you and other stakeholders fully informed on a regular basis of how the programme is progressing, whether or not we are meeting the milestones we are laying out and whether or not we are encountering any major issues. We are taking quite a different approach here in terms of openness and transparency.

Tom Copley AM: I am pleased to hear that because many of us here feel that we were not told the whole story, especially when the previous Chairman told us they had booked the Queen.

Finally and very quickly, on the reports from Jacobs, Mark, you said that they were going to Crossrail. Are they going to TfL and to the Mayor's office as well?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): Mike [Brown MVO] could speak about what goes to the Mayor's office rather than me, but the sponsors do receive the P-Rep report. They are joint sponsors at a very senior level - Simon Kilonback, David Hughes, Polly [Payne, Director General for Rail, DfT], Matt [Lodge, Director for Major Rail Projects, DfT] and Ruth [Hannant, Director General for Rail, DfT] - and so I would anticipate that they are well socialised within the organisation.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The Sponsor Board has been enhanced as well, Chair, it is worth saying. There is Alison Munro, who chairs the Independent Investment Programme Advisory Group. TfL is now on the Sponsor Board with the technical advisor as well and so the Sponsor Board itself has some independence oversight as well.

Navin Shah AM: My questions are about transparency of communications to the Mayor. Mr Wild, we have been concerned about the differences in the issues raised and the words used between the original drafts from Crossrail and the final weekly updates sent to the Mayor. The Mayor has already alluded today to regular and transparent reporting. Are you confident that your views and accurate and pertinent updates are now getting to the Mayor?

Mark Wild (Chief Executive Officer, Crossrail Ltd): After this meeting, I will brief the Deputy Mayor [for Transport]. We have a fortnightly meeting. The Mayor sees Tony and me every six weeks. That is the plan. I review what we put to TfL and what goes forward. I can only say what I know looking forward and my commitment is to be totally transparent. I have never had any experience of my message not getting through to people. I cannot speak for the past but, looking forward, we are committed to full transparency. We have nothing to hide. In fact, we have everything to gain by people helping us and giving us advice. Navin, I have to speak as I find. All of our data gets through and nobody is interfering with us. That is how we are.

Tony Meggs (Chairman, Crossrail Ltd): I - with Mark and with the Mayor - have established a six-weekly basis. Of course, if anything came up that was urgent and important in the intervening period, I would not hesitate at all to meet regularly with the Mayor, but we have a very open relationship.

Navin Shah AM: That is good to hear. The Mayor has also mentioned a robust, realistic and improved reporting process. Can both Mr Wild and Mr Brown confirm that your briefing reports are still put together in the way they were done before but whether there is a change in the way the reports are prepared and put to the Mayor?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The report that now goes to the Mayor - if I can pick that up first, Mark - is a piece of management data that the Crossrail team uses to track progress in quite a technical way in terms of programme plans and achievement against those interim milestones and how it is all going. It is a piece of existing information that is used, in my understanding, by Mark and the executive team. It is absolutely there in an open and transparent way as reporting to the Mayor has always been. It has always been absolutely certain that the Mayor gets all the information that we have access to and that will continue. However, this is a different format now under the new leadership of the team.

Navin Shah AM: Something we have heard at Transport Committee meetings is that the process was that there would be emails to and fro between Crossrail and TfL before they went to you, Mike, and then you would report it to the Mayor in a different manner. Has that changed to make sure it is accurate and transparent?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): The difference in the past was, as you have heard, with all the meetings that the former Chairman went to - five Board meetings, three Programme Investment Committees, two Finance Committees, three regular TfL-Mayor meetings, all up to the end of July last year [2018] - at every one of those meetings the Chairman and the Crossrail leadership team were saying that this thing was on track to open in December [2018], no ifs, no buts. There were certainly risks identified. I do not want to wipe that from the slate, but there was definitely a categorical assurance that the date of 9 December was being held.

The difference now is that I talk to the new Chairman every single week. I talk to Mark [Wild] usually multiple times a week. I talk to the Mayor at least every two weeks for a formal meeting but I see the Mayor on a much more regular basis nearly always. There is absolute access to the full information that the Crossrail team is producing both for me and for the Mayor and it is the same report.

Navin Shah AM: Mr Brown, I have a query here. Weekly briefing notes provided to the Mayor outlining progress ahead of the launch of the Elizabeth line have been placed on the TfL website and on 19 December 2018. Have the briefs been stopped? Why are these briefs not any longer made public?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I have the briefest of answers, please?

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): I will find out the answer to that question. These are open and transparent pieces of information. I am sure that between Tony [Meggs], Mark [Wild] and I, we can make that happen. That probably is around the reformatting of the way that we report now given the new leadership of Crossrail, but we can work that out.

Navin Shah AM: There is no change in the frequency of reporting.

Mike Brown MVO (Commissioner of Transport for London): No, the reports still come on a regular basis and we will continue to produce them on that basis.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): You are out of time. Can I thank the Mayor and can I thank our guests?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, can I say one thing before we finish the meeting, with your permission?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I am just thanking you for attending here. There was a promise of a response in writing to a question from Assembly Member Bacon and we would be happy to receive that through the officers sitting by my left.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, could I just say a few things? Firstly, I will make sure that Assembly Member Bacon is written to.

Secondly, Assembly Member Pidgeon raised the issue of minutes. I will follow that up with the Chair of Crossrail.

Chair, as you will be aware, in addition to the Chief Executive writing to you as well as the Chair of the Transport Committee every month and in addition to this being discussed at the TfL Board meeting in public and the publication of those minutes, can I through you, Chair, offer to the Assembly to come back with the team in six months' time to give an update in addition to all the other pieces of information we are providing to the Assembly? You kicking the tyres is quite a good way of making sure we provide the appropriate information. Also, the good thing about this team is that they do not mind having these further checks and balances and they do not mind this sort of challenge. Of course if there is anything untoward we will come back before then as a team, but through you, Chair, I am happy to offer in six months' time to come back before the Plenary.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you for that offer