

London Assembly Transport Committee – 9 October 2019

Transcript of Item 6 – Accessible and Inclusive Transport

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Welcome, everybody, back to the second part of our Transport Committee meeting this morning. For this next session we are looking at accessible and inclusive transport across London. Welcome, our guests this morning. We have Staynton Brown, who is the Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent at Transport for London (TfL). We have Christina Calderato, who is the Head of Transport Strategy and Planning at TfL. We have Helen McAllister, Head of Strategic Planning at Network Rail, Kirsty Hoyle, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Transport for All, and Alan Benson, who is the Chair, Transport for All. Welcome to all of you this morning to our Committee.

When you look at London, there are a number of barriers which affect a number of people's daily travel, and it is estimated that 19% of Londoners have a disability recognised under the Equality Act. In the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) it states that the transport system needs to cater for journeys made by people with a range of visible and invisible disabilities. Just a general question from me to everyone on the panel: do you think that there has been enough progress to ensure that everyone in London can travel spontaneously and independently? Who wants to kick us off? I am looking at you, Staynton.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I will kick off. I think we have made reasonable progress so far, but, as always, there is so much more to do. We are, of course, in the most diverse city anywhere in the world, and we reflect that diversity in the design of everything we do across the transport network. We have made good progress – we will talk about this I think a little bit later – with regard to the building of step-free stations. That is incredibly important for people across London. We also need to go quite a bit further in making sure that we are addressing the needs of people who sometimes have more hidden disabilities.

We have done a number of things like the "Please offer me a seat" campaign that you will have seen more recently, which is changing public perception and public confidence in allowing people who typically would not get a seat on the Tube to be able to get a seat, as well as on buses. We are improving near- and real-time information also for passengers, where the lift might be out of order or people need to be redirected. We are also thinking very carefully about the design of our streetscape as well to ensure that people who have mobility impairments, those people perhaps who have a cognitive condition, like dementia, are adequately given consideration into the designs of the city. I think we have done a huge amount to date – we can go into some more detail as the session progresses – but there is a lot more to do.

One of the things which we are currently working on strategically is our new Action on Inclusion Strategy, and I would welcome bringing that back to the Committee once that Strategy has been fully signed off and completed, and also getting your views today will be very helpful in helping to inform that Strategy.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): The only thing I would add to that is that – talking about disabled groups particularly, but when you think about all protected characteristics – many people, probably most people in London, belong to one or more of those groups. We are actually talking about everybody. When you try to make the network more inclusive for disabled people or for any one of those protected characteristics, you make it better for everybody. That

is how we get to a really inclusive system, and that is what we are trying to do with the inclusive design and putting people at the heart of that.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): From a Network Rail perspective, I would echo the themes that you have just raised. I think we have come a very long way over the past ten to 15 years or so. There has been huge investment in the rail network via especially the Access for All programme, but we have also managed to introduce things like our Inclusive Design Strategy and how we can enable more people to access the railway more easily.

Having said that, there is still a lot more that we can do. We are now trying to move to look at people using the railway from an end-to-end perspective, from when they decide to travel, what are all the barriers they might face until they get to their end destination, which is not when they get to one of our managed stations and when they leave one of our managed stations, because that is not how I think when I want to make a journey. By doing that, I think we can then work even more collaboratively across industry and put more things in place that will help, again, more people. I really would echo the point that when you address barriers to those who have both visible and invisible disabilities, you are making the system easier for everyone to use, so you are raising the standards for equity of provision for all people.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Thank you. To pick up on two of Helen's points there, while we applaud and work with many partners across the sector to support many of these initiatives, one of the biggest issues facing deaf, disabled and older Londoners, whom we represent, is the inconsistency in approach. I think you are right about the collaboration and the end-to-end or the door-to-door. We need to think about people's journeys. However, at the moment, "turn up and go" might not work in one area, but it might in another. I might go to one bus company and understand that they have had a level of training that means they both understand and care for my needs, but then I go to another company and I do not. This reduces confidence, it increases social isolation, and it reduces the wellbeing of disabled passengers. It also reduces their ability to get access to joy, to employment opportunities. We are very pleased with some of the singular developments, but in our opinion there needs to be a broader systemic change in agreement that then filters down so that disabled people have more confidence when they travel.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I do not wish to start off on a negative note, but the short answer is no. A third of the Underground stations are accessible. That means two-thirds of them are not accessible to me. Particularly this week, for example, the Extinction Rebellion disruption. People can use the Underground, but if you cannot use the Underground in central London, getting around -- taxis, which are a frequent solution for disabled people, are quite impractical at the moment. There are still some serious barriers.

I would support everything that has been said about progress that has been made. There are an enormous number of steps forward over the past particularly five to seven years. Things like staff training have improved no end. Attitudes in staff as a result of that have changed no end. We have had improvements in the step-free network, but there are still things like the Waterloo and City line, which is now step-free but the lifts are closed for most of the day. We have infrastructure there that is physically accessible but I still cannot use it, so there are still some inconsistencies that we need to look at.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you for that, and I saw your Tweets on that where both lifts were closed.

I spoke to Southwark Pensioners Group last Friday, who outlined some of the issues that have been raised. One of the questions that they asked me was, “What do you mean by an inclusive and accessible public transport network?” I said, “Actually, we have a session on this next week and I will ask the panel”. What does that actually mean and what does that look like?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I think, historically, transport providers have looked at accessibility meaning mostly the built environment and the design in of things like ramps for people who are in wheelchairs. That has predominantly been the narrative in relation to accessibility. However, what we are wanting to do, as everyone on the panel has advocated for, is to move towards inclusive design. This is consistent with many metros around the world, and very simply it means making sure that we have the right evidence base and we look at the breadth of needs that different needs people have which stop them accessing the public transport network, and that we use that evidence base to then inform what we do. We design in the needs and requirements of people, rather than we make a decision and then look to retrofit it later down the line.

One of the things that we will be doing is really enhancing and improving that evidence base. What are the differences of experiences on the public transport network if you are a woman, for example? What are the variable experiences of being on the public transport network if you are an older person? It is pulling all of those things together to make sure that we are being wholly inclusive from the outset, informing all that we do.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): To Staynton’s point, underpinning that also is that we hope that an inclusive and accessible transport environment – because it is about streets, not just about physical infrastructure – that a particular provider can make change to should adhere to the social model of disability. As Staynton was saying, if things are built by, with and for the people that they are for, then they will. In terms of the social model of disability, we want a transport environment that gives parity to people’s ability to travel independently and as seamlessly as possible, and that is what we think really is inclusive.

In our city there are elements of that that will always be difficult, but we can look far more at attitudinal barriers as well as trying to improve infrastructure. We think it has to be a dual approach.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I think the key that we are talking about here is the end-to-end journey, the door-to-door experience. For any one of the Assembly Members here, the trip from your house to here is not something you really need to think about. It is just something that you do as part of your daily experience. The issue for many disabled people is those trips need thinking about. There are routing problems. What happens if staff are not there to assist blind or partially sighted people? What happens if ramps are not there? What happens if the environment is visually noisy or overwhelming? What equipment do I need to take with me? I carry with me a T-key, which is a piece of kit that unlocks ramps on stations. Lots of disabled people carry them because staff do not have them. I have to plan ahead to overcome the inadequacies of the system. An inclusive transport system would be that I do not need to do any of that; I make the same journey that you do.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you for that. From a Network Rail perspective, Helen?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): From my perspective, an accessible transport system is one that is physically capable of enabling people to use it. An inclusive transport system is one that offers the equality of opportunity for people to use that system in the same way. As you are saying, you need to plan your journeys and think about your journeys. If we were truly inclusive, then everybody would just be able to turn up and not think about it like that. There is a difference between having something that is accessible in a very practical sense and something that is truly inclusive for all people, whether they have a visible, invisible or temporary disability.

Historically, we have been improving at that practical accessibility side, and it is only in the past five years or so that we have really started thinking about the inclusivity side of it and the softer side to give people confidence that they can use the system, to change the attitudes that we have for customer service and the information that we provide, and considering the needs of all people when we are making transport decisions, not just thinking, "We need to make sure there is a lift at this station". Yes, that is necessary, but it is not the end of the story, and it is most definitely not the full answer.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): In terms of looking at how we get to an accessible and inclusive transport system, obviously in the MTS there is an accessibility improvement plan which sets a timescale for improving that accessibility across the network. We touched on some of the areas where we think there is a barrier. Where do you think those improvements are needed the most, if you look at the transport system across London now? Kirsty?

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): One of the issues here is that there is no transparency for disabled, older and deaf Londoners in terms of where the decisions are made. Rather than saying, "We want Bank to be step-free" or "We want Waterloo to have better level boarding", really what we want is to understand the planning, why it happens, and the criteria upon which those decisions are predicated. That is what I think, to be honest, Florence, is more important. A specific example is people being part of that process for two reasons, (a) so they can understand and influence it, but (b) so they can be part of development, rather than constantly feeling that they are arguing against something. We are often not involved.

Disabled people are starting - because of 20 years of history that Alan [Benson] and others have led - to realise that this is their right. It is not charity. Really, we need to be aiming to make everything as accessible as possible. The main issues are transparency, involving people, and being clear about the rationale to both disabled people and to all society that this is a right. It is not charity. I know that is not exactly answering your point directly, Florence, but I think it is an important part.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): No, no. It is definitely a valid point.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): We definitely try to work as far as possible with stakeholders on making some of those decisions, and I am sure there is more that we could do, but we have a Valuing People group. People have different learning disabilities. We have an Independent Disability Advisory Group (IDAG) that works with us on our schemes. Of course, we do public consultation and reach out to people that way. We are also thinking about how we can build on this and make that feel more meaningful. For example, with step-free access, it is the

physical accessibility, but I think it is a good example of how we are changing our approach to that decision-making. A lot of it has been that we have decided how we take forward step-free stations based on cost and deliverability to try to get as many in as we can, but for the tranche of that programme what we need to do is start talking to people who use lifts and finding out whether it is more valuable if we do one complex station or we do lots of stations, whether we do it where we are plugging a gap, or whether it is more important to have it as part of a hub. We are trying to push forward on that front to make sure that we are working with people and putting in exactly what they need, informed by what they are telling us.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I appreciate that, but I would like to make a point about that. IDAG is the Independent Disability Advisory Group that TfL uses as a sounding board for the majority of things that involve people with impairments. Is that correct?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Not wholly. IDAG have been recruited as experts. They are people who are leaders in their fields, who have a good understanding of transport, and also the lived experience of having a disability. It is an advisory group that we regularly refer to to help improve decision-making for all schemes which are developed across the organisation. We also have national stakeholders as well. We now – much more proactively, I would say, than we did in the past – engage with national and regional stakeholders. We have a national and regional stakeholder team that goes out and consults and engages to help inform some of what we do in the organisation. There are a number of touchpoints in our borough teams as well. Where there is a scheme or planned works within a borough, they will go out not just to local authorities but also to capture the views of local community groups. We engage and consult with lots of different groups, and perhaps there is a question as to how we make sure that is much more transparent and people are more aware of how those consultations and how those discussions have helped to inform what we do as an organisation.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Just on that group then, I mentioned I met with Southwark Pensioners forum last week, and every single one of them outlined a number of issues that they have had both on the train and the Tube. How would I feed that in? How would they know when there are relevant sessions taking place with IDAG? Which stakeholders do you meet with, just as an example?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I think that would be led by our Borough Engagement Team. They would be the right people to go to. I can pull together more detail for you once the session is complete.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): I think that would be helpful if we could just get some examples of the different stakeholders. Do you feel that IDAG works?

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I do have a point on that, Florence. The reason I mentioned it is there are a couple of examples – I will not name them specifically – where I have approached TfL, and IDAG has been one of the only filters that is being used, and that is a closed group of ten individuals, as I understand it, who are paid. It is my opinion that that is too narrow a filter for the 1.8 million Londoners whose voices need to be heard. I am not making a comment on the individual.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Yes, it is just the group.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I have asked for two things from IDAG. I have asked for an open chair at each meeting that is rolling, that can be a different person, and I have also asked for all the minutes to be made public so that we are being able to see what is being said on our behalf.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Just on that, Christina and Staynton, are we able to get the membership of that IDAG Board and just a bit more information about how --

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes, we can provide that. Just to reassure though, we do not use IDAG as being entirely representative of all of London. We are not even necessarily using them to sound out on those particular issues. It is taking our everyday business through IDAG, just to make sure that we are not ever doing anything in isolation and only taking things like step-free access to IDAG, that we are actually taking, I do not know --

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Car-free days.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes, anything that we might be doing, just to make sure that we have a rounded sounding board internally. It is absolutely not intended to replace wider engagement, it is just one of the things that we have, but it is internal and we do use them so that we have that constant feedback.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): It is worth saying that whilst we have reservations about IDAG, they are people we respect and they do have a role. One of the issues is that it is not just TfL that we are talking about. We have all of the bus companies, we have all of the train companies, and they do not have any kind of similar professional advice. One thing that is very common is that disabled people are asked to give opinions, give their expertise, for no return and no reward. You would not ask an architect for their opinion, or a lawyer for their opinion, without offering some kind of *quid pro quo*, but that is done to disabled people all the time. If you want, frankly, professional-quality advice, you need to pay for it.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you. That is very valuable. Was there anything you wanted to add on that, in terms of where improvements may need to be made, Helen, from a Network Rail perspective?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): We are in the final stages now of writing up our Railway for Everyone study, which looked at the end-to-end journey of people, what the barriers are for transport and what could be done to address them. One of the things we did during that study was hold a series of workshops around the country, to which we invited a broad number of stakeholders, including people with direct lived experience of disability and their representative bodies, to come along, to ask them what the barriers are that they face that are broader than physical accessibility.

The three things that came out really strongly that we need to improve on as a rail industry but also as a transport sector are: consistency of service provision, whether it is consistency across the country or consistency between different modes of transport; communication of what that service provision is, what people can expect and what assistance is available both in terms of physical assistance but also cost assistance to use the railway; and then a cultural shift, the softer side, in that people they engage with on

the transport network need to understand where they are coming from, understand that they have additional needs and what they might be, not just when they are asked but as almost an instinctive thought.

Those things do not need a lot of money thrown at them in order to make improvements. We are doing things at the moment. All our station staff at our managed stations have training that is designed and, in part, delivered by people with lived experience of disability. We need to do more of that across our organisation, not just with the public-facing part of our organisation, so that the decisions that we make become truly instinctual. I think that will lead to some of the bigger benefits. Also, working across industry so that we get more consistency in service provision and understand where there are areas of best practice and they can be translated across train operators, across infrastructure sectors or across different stations, whether they are owned and managed by Network Rail or not.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Controversially, I want to challenge that. The training that TfL delivers – and I need to declare an interest because we are involved in the groups that deliver that – is delivered and designed by disabled people. With the training that the rail companies tend to provide, the consultancy may just be asking a couple of people what they think. I have seen cases where the train company's training for accessibility is delivered by the same people who deliver their health and safety training, which to us is just shocking. It needs to be delivered and designed by the people who are affected by the issues.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): I would absolutely agree with that. That is something that very much came out of the consultation work that we did, that in order to be truly effective, training has to be designed, input and ideally partly or fully delivered by people who have lived experience. I can come back about exactly how the Network Rail-managed stations' training works but I think there are some train operating companies (TOCs) that have good practice, and some that have practice that meets the standard that is out there. One of the areas for improvement is taking those areas of really good practice and trying to get that at a more consistent level across the system.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Yes. Just mindful of time. Really quickly, what is the timescale for Railway for Everyone?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): We are finalising it at the moment to come out for more consultation. It should be out for consultation for the end of the year.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): OK. Great. If you could let us know some of those dates, that would be helpful.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): Yes, absolutely.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): I want to pick up the minutes point. Kirsty [Hoyle], you said that you had been asking for minutes from the IDAG. Is that something TfL will be publishing?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I am happy to write to you after the session. I would happy to share the outcome of --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Why would you not want to?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): There is no reason why we would not. We are more than happy to share the outcome of those discussions. That is absolutely fine.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): That would be helpful. Before we move on to the second session, which is looking at London's streets, my apologies; I was supposed to introduce a short video which would have helped us in terms of setting the scene for this morning's discussion. We will just go to that very quickly, if everyone could turn to their monitors, just to show someone's journey.

"I have Asperger syndrome, which is a type of autism, and I also have scoliosis of the spine, so I have a curve up at the top of my back where there shouldn't be one. Both of those conditions have an impact on me travelling around London, trains and buses. It can be really difficult sometimes, being autistic, getting on a public transport mode in general because I'm so nervous about the fact there are going to be lots of people on there. I don't know if I'm going to be able to get a seat. I have a Blue Badge because I have scoliosis of the spine, so I need to sit when I'm travelling. If I stand on a moving vehicle like a bus it will give me spasms up my back which can leave me in pain for hours on end.

Probably the best example of a really bad day was a couple of weeks ago when the Northern line was shut. I got off my usual train at King's Cross, walked out to the buses at the front and instead of there being 20 or so people at my bus stop, there were hundreds of people. It was quite terrifying really because I didn't know when I'd be able to get a bus. I didn't know what was going on at first because there was no communication anywhere telling me the Northern line was shut, it was just suddenly there were lots more people trying to get on my bus. Seeing a huge crowd of people, it's like you've been punched in the stomach. There is suddenly this huge twist of anxiety. Everything goes tense, you go into flight or fright mode and it's just like, 'Oh my god, how am I going to cope with this?' and this is still right at the start of the day. I haven't even made it into work yet. I've still got to do eight hours of work.

My buses from King's Cross come from Euston so they're generally quite full when they arrive anyway, so if I'm not one of the first three people on the bus I don't get a seat at all. Even wearing the badge doesn't necessarily work because people don't look up and you need to ask them to give you a seat, but being autistic, asking a stranger to do something for you, it's a real no-no.

There's been a couple of times when I've had to stand. If I get myself backed into a corner, I can just about be OK. One of the reasons I wear a backpack is so I have some cushioning, but even then I'm feeling, as the legs are moving, as the bus is moving, those little shocks coming up my pelvis. They're wiggling the base of my spine and it's then shooting pains coming all the way up my spine. It's like tiny little strands of white-hot fire. It just stings everywhere.

The perfect transport system would be one that runs very, very regularly with lots and lots of units or buses happening so there's plenty of space for people to get on. Better communication would definitely be a thing. Not every bus stop in London has the sign telling you how many minutes until the next one, so sometimes you panic and you jump on the first one you see because it might be ten minutes you're standing there in the rain waiting for the next one."

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): That was all before she had even got to work.

We are moving on to our second session, looking at London's streets. Assembly Member Bailey.

Shaun Bailey AM: Good morning. Just before I ask this series of questions, you said that TfL does research and you use representative groups. Is there any arena to pass that information on to the bus companies so they can get some benefit from that?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Absolutely. We have a document called *Understanding Our Diverse Communities*, which is a compendium of all available research that looks at the demography of the city and differing experiences of needs. It is a big document, 170-odd pages of in-depth research that helps to inform our Equality Impact Assessments, and we share the headlines with our contracted services too. For example, for the bus companies, we are just about to go out to tender for refreshed disability equality training. At the depots there is regular training for bus drivers, and in 2016 you may already be aware that there was a big investment put into training all bus drivers to improve their customer experience and to ensure that disabled passengers were given a good-quality experience too. We have huge amounts of research that helps to inform what we do and the requirements that we place on bus companies as well as other contracted services.

Shaun Bailey AM: OK. Thank you.

This is for everybody. What are the biggest barriers to everybody being able to access the streets of London?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Shall I start?

Shaun Bailey AM: Why don't you? Thank you.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): The challenge on London streets is particularly difficult. There are obviously challenges in terms of parts of our Underground network that are very old, but the streets have so many different people using them and so many different purposes. We have a real mix of users with motorists, cyclists, freight and pedestrians, and then you have a mix of stakeholders. You have boroughs, businesses and people who want to use the streets, and they might have slightly different needs.

Through the MTS we are really trying to take that Healthy Streets approach so that we tackle the streets where people spend the majority of their time, and that is trying to make sure that streets are open and inclusive and work for all the people who need to use them, making sure that everybody has the confidence to be in those places and spaces and make the most healthy and accessible journeys. We know that there are community benefits for that as well where we can improve integration. That is how we have thriving businesses and communities and people feel like they are able to own and use their streets with confidence.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Shaun, there is something very interesting about where environmental developments and access needs intersect. While things such as car-free day, shared space and dockless bikes are part of one agenda, and disabled people support active living and active travel and want to be part of the climate crisis as much as anybody, quite often those very initiatives

are disabling. Something we are seeing is that we are often coming in at the back of those initiatives once they are up and running and have been agreed, and saying, "Listen, these are the reasons that these are discriminating against disabled people". There is something interesting about the streets at the moment that while we try to make the streets more accessible by reducing traffic, we really need to consider the needs of those for whom using other modes of transport is not a choice. That is quite important.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): It is also worth saying that part of the problem is the physical streets, the infrastructure and the obstructions, but part of the problem is people and the - I hesitate to use the word - conflicts, the different approaches that people have on the streets. I am sure Assembly Member [Caroline] Russell will remember when we went out and just had a look around the Oval and at the cycle lanes around there, where they intersect with the pedestrian environment. It is a bit of a free-for-all and can be excluding for disabled people who either cannot or do not like to use those environments.

Shaun Bailey AM: What of the state of the pavements? Speaking to people, the state of the pavements seems to be a very big issue. Someone talk me through that.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I am very well-equipped. There are two issues. One is around the design of the pavement. You have, increasingly, obstructions that get in my way or that block the path of people who cannot see where they are going: things like the charging points, which are put on pavements rather than on roads, and pedestrian areas that are laid out with trees, benches and advertising signage. These sorts of things get in the way. They look very good, they look very pretty, but they are a problem. The other issue, of course, is maintenance. Particularly for me, the roots of trees under pavement cause the pavement to be almost impassable sometimes. There is a need there for maintenance and ongoing investment to keep them flat and level.

Shaun Bailey AM: I understand some local authorities are now tarmacking rather than using paving stones. Is this a good or a bad thing?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Cobbles are dreadful. Greenwich is a particularly dreadful place to move around if you are on wheels. What tends to happen, whether you are looking at tarmacking or flagstones, is that when they are laid initially, they are great, they are flat and they are level; it is then the maintenance. If you maintain these surfaces, then it is great. If you do not then it does not really matter what the surface is, it is uncomfortable.

Shaun Bailey AM: It is more about the maintenance than the actual thing used.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): It very much is. Also, things like inconsiderate pavement parking. Lorries and cars crack the pavements up. Again, there is an issue of people's behaviour contributing to the problem.

Shaun Bailey AM: OK. Just moving on slightly - I will come back to pavement parking - the City of London is working to develop a Street Accessibility Standard. Has TfL looked at this and considered working to deliver it across all the boroughs and other parts of London?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): We have our own streetscape guidance that deals with many of the issues that you have raised. We have recently updated that with a new section on electric vehicle (EV) charging points and we are going to have more comprehensive EV infrastructure and insulation guidance coming out at the end of this year. For example, in that streetscape guidance we have updated it to say that where possible, those points should be built in pavement build-outs rather than going onto the pavement, and that you need at least 2.5 metres, which basically gives you enough space for two wheelchairs to pass each other, while charging.

We do develop and keep updating our own guidance to try to make sure that the streetscape works for people. In some of the things you highlighted there, like you said, 'conflicts' is not a pleasant word but there are tensions between the needs of different users, for example with things like trees and benches. For people with mobility problems or older people, it is really important that they have somewhere they can stop and sit and rest on a journey. It is trying to find the balance on our limited streetscape where we can make that work.

Yes, within our own guidance we definitely try to make sure we leave enough width in the pavement that wheelchair users can use them alongside everybody else. We will be working with City as well to make sure that they are all aligned, but the important thing about the guidance is that at the moment boroughs are not mandated to adopt that. We are doing it but there could be instances on borough roads, for example, where some of that infrastructure is placed within the 2.5 metres. What we need is exactly the kind of collaborative approach we have with City in terms of boroughs making sure that we adopt those best-practice standards.

Shaun Bailey AM: You have seen their standard? I suppose the question is: is their standard good? Is it something that you would seek to help other boroughs to deliver, or is it just for them and your own guidelines are adequate?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): I have not seen City's accessibility guidance.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): It is not ready yet.

Shaun Bailey AM: It is not ready yet?

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): We are advising them on it. It is not ready yet. They are just doing the consultation part of it.

Shaun Bailey AM: OK. Let me just quickly move on. Should the rest of the country be looking at London's best practice around pavement parking or are there still big challenges to managing it in London? It has been suggested that London is very good with pavement parking and the rest of the country should copy London. Is that the case, or do we have a lot to learn as well in London?

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Anecdotally, from our members, I would say that in inner London, because of other restrictions rather than people appropriately parking their car, that is true; but I think that is because you are unable to, rather than because people make good choices, to be perfectly honest. In Greater London I do not think that is the case, but we do not have any statistics

on that. Anecdotally, particularly in areas that are near schools or near other conurbations, it is an issue for people. It is an issue not only in terms of individuals in society but also organisations and deliveries. There are many different people who use streets who park up very briefly but do not realise that that ten or 15 minutes discriminates and disables somebody from being able to go about their day. Anecdotally, in Greater London, no, it is still an issue.

Shaun Bailey AM: I see that. I used to live right in the middle and now I live on the edge, and I never saw people park on the pavement until I moved out.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): You can get away with it. That is kind of it, really. People do not make good choices. However, I would like to think a good deal of people, given the education of why that is not a good choice, might not do it. I have done it in the past and have not realised that I am disabling people or blocking people. I thought only of my needs. That is possibly something we could work on in terms of the public understanding of the impact of their actions, and that is true for a lot of access.

Shaun Bailey AM: Thank you, Chair.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Just picking up on the pavement parking thing, do the people from TfL have anything to say about the idea of doing some communications work around making it clear how antisocial and disabling it is to park on the pavement? That also goes for lorries parking in bike lanes as well.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): We need to enforce against illegal or civilly infringing use of street space where we see it. That is a really important part, to make sure that where we do have rules they are being observed. In terms of communications, that is certainly something that we could look at taking forward.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Absolutely.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I do not think you were saying “rules”, though, Caroline. It is also about going further than rules, is it not? “It might not be a rule but do not do it anyway because it is not fair or kind.” The DfT’s new Inclusive Transport campaign is along that line as well, so there is going to be something like this that we can potentially feed into.

Caroline Russell AM: Great. A question for TfL. What progress has the Mayor made on lobbying Government to make it easier for TfL and the boroughs to manage and remove street clutter?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): We have been lobbying Government, for example, to be able to remove telephone booths so that we can remove some of that slightly redundant street clutter. I do not think we have been successful thus far in that. What we are trying to do is deal with what we can control. As I say, through the streetscape guidance we are trying to be very clear about removing the clutter that we do not need, putting in the things that we do need on our pavements like shade, shelter and seating, and making sure that we put them in in a

sympathetic way that supports the MTS and our wider active travel agenda without disadvantaging people. We are doing that where we have control of it. On things like being able to remove old telephone booths, we have not had that from Government.

Caroline Russell AM: Is it possible to find out where that research has got to on the old telephone booths and let the Committee know?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes, absolutely. We will come back on that.

Caroline Russell AM: Every high street across London has dead telephone boxes that get used as urinals or places to store stuff. They are just --

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): I think we have removed one, to see how that goes.

Caroline Russell AM: What, you mean just remove it?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Let me find out the details.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, maybe you had better come back to us on that. The other thing, just while we are on pavement clutter, is that it is good to hear that you have updated the guidance on the EV charging points. Is that guidance or does it have any teeth, and is that for the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) or is it for the boroughs as well?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): It is guidance to be used London-wide. The streetscape guidance applies and then the EV infrastructure guidance, which we are developing now and that we will also publish, which came out of the EV Infrastructure Taskforce, will have more detail on that.

What boroughs have been saying to us is that they want this guidance and they want to understand how best to do it. We are trying to give a really consistent, detailed approach so that people know how to do it in the best way. They are not compelled to do that but we are adopting it on the TLRN, on our own roads, and encouraging boroughs and giving them the tools to be able to do it themselves. They are hungry for that information so hopefully by making sure that we get it out there, which was one of the big outputs from the taskforce in particular, we will start to see those changes coming through on our streets.

Caroline Russell AM: Just to be clear, did you say that is not yet published?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): The streetscape guidance has been updated with a new brief section on advice on where to place EV and particularly rapid chargers - what they look like, where they should go and the best way to deal with them - but we will have a more fulsome document particularly around EV infrastructure, that is slow chargers and rapid chargers, that will be more comprehensive. That is being drafted now and is not available yet but will be in the coming months.

Caroline Russell AM: Is that by Christmas?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): It will be by spring [2020] and it could be earlier than that. Again, I can update you on a date.

Caroline Russell AM: OK. If you could update us on a date when that will be expected, that would be really helpful.

There are a range of barriers to people using non-standard bicycles when they are wanting to access cycling infrastructure, people who use handcycles or bikes with mobility aids. Has TfL looked at this, and what are you doing to address it?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Yes, we have looked at it. One of the considerations that we have had to be very actively thinking about is the size of some of those cycles and the width of some of the older cycle lanes. We are actively working with a number of organisations just to understand the different types of mobility cycles but we are really committed to getting more people with a disability cycling on our roads.

Caroline Russell AM: There is the issue of literally the width of the lanes, but there is also the issue of barriers, chicane-type barriers that get put up very often when boroughs have a problem with mopeds tearing through little cut-through walking or cycling routes. They put up chicanes, which make it harder for people in mobility scooters and wheelchairs, people pushing buggies, but particularly people using adapted cycles and cargo bikes. Are you working on guidance in terms of those chicane-type barriers that get put up on pedestrian and cycling routes?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): We are. I think that is a perfect illustration of what our emerging Inclusive Design Framework needs to address in our cycling design standards. The world has moved on from, say, five or ten years ago, and we are adequately reflecting the diversity of people who perhaps now want to cycle with technological advances that are more present today. Those are the types of considerations that will be drawn into the Inclusive Design Framework that will then inform all of our design standards.

Caroline Russell AM: What is the timescale on this Inclusive Design Framework?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): It is in train right now. I would hope to have this ready by the spring, looking at April or May in 2020, but it could well come sooner. It will be actively engaged and consulted upon, though, with regional and national partners as well as Transport for All, IDAG and other interested parties.

Caroline Russell AM: Does anyone else want to comment on what we have just been talking about? Alan?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I was just going to extend it slightly. There is an impression that disabled people do not use cycles of any kind and, as you pointed out, that is wrong. They are a really useful mobility aid. One of the issues that we do have is getting to where you get to use the aid.

Getting these cycles on trains, on transport, can be particularly difficult. It would be good if the train companies would be flexible in carrying these aids.

Caroline Russell AM: Do you think it needs recognition that bicycles are being used as mobility aids?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Definitely.

Caroline Russell AM: Is that something that is currently recognised? Is there a need for a rules and regulations change? Helen, do you know anything about this at all?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): I do not, frankly. My first port of call would be to go to the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and ask them about what the different TOCs have in place, which I can do and then come back to you.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): If you could, that would be very helpful.

Caroline Russell AM: That would be incredibly helpful. Apart from following Alan's tales of his journeys on Twitter, I often get messages from people on Twitter who are travelling with non-standard bicycles and find it very difficult to get them into the area on the train that they have booked a place on. It is difficult enough to get a bike on a train anyway because there is only space for two in a carriage, but if you have a non-standard bike and a disability it can be hard to lift your bike to fit where it is meant to go. It would be helpful to understand what the relevant operators think on that.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): It can be something as simple as being asked to dismount while you are crossing a station. It is that obvious.

Caroline Russell AM: Sorry, that people are asked to dismount?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): That people are asked to dismount from their cycles as they go across the station. If they are using them as a mobility aid, that is an issue.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes. That would be a staff training issue in terms of an understanding of bikes being used as mobility aids.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Yes.

Caroline Russell AM: Also, I think it was Kirsty [Hoyle] who mentioned earlier - or maybe it was Alan - that most of us do not have to think about our journey from home to work; we just get on and do it. Again, if you are using a bike as a mobility aid, that is part of the ease of you getting to the station in the first place to be able to get on that train.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I would add very quickly that this is also something that Will [Norman], the Cycling and Walking Commissioner, is very much on top of too. We have had a number of discussions over the last year as to how we can adapt and signal that we more formally recognise different types of cycles as mobility aids. That is something that is being looked at as part of the active travel piece that he is responsible for.

Caroline Russell AM: For the next question I am going to start with you, Helen, for Network Rail, but I would be interested in what other people have to say as well. This is about the accessibility of the area immediately surrounding a station. The Transport Committee has done visits with Transport for All to stations and has witnessed it. Even if the station itself has level access, accessing the station from the pavements, the streets, the local buses, there are all sorts of bits that seem to have fallen between the cracks. No one has thought about how that interface between the station and the world of the street actually works. Just to start with, how is Network Rail working with stakeholders to improve the accessibility of the areas surrounding stations?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): To begin with, we now have a greater focus on the whole journey and, therefore, people moving between modes of transport, the very thing that you are talking about, getting from the buses to the trains or from the roads into the station. There is now greater awareness of that as an area that needs to be addressed. We would always be interested in working with other parties around our stations to make that better.

It is difficult because there are not often the easy opportunities. The opportunities generally arise when there is already a big infrastructure project occurring, somewhere like King's Cross station or London Bridge, where there have been full remodels and we have been able to take the needs of disabled users into account right back at the design stages. We can then talk to TfL and other engaged parties about, "OK, so how do we make those interchanges better and how do we think about that interface?" On an *ad hoc* basis it is very difficult to do and to find the opportunity to do, although we are always willing to engage to look at doing that.

There are two areas that we can impact on most at the moment, I think. The first is when we are doing broader works at some of the managed stations, making sure we look at that interface and manage it as smoothly as possible, for example at London Bridge. At Euston Station at the moment, although there is step-free access into the station from the buses and out onto the street, it can be a little convoluted and we are looking to see if we can add an additional entrance to the station at the platform 1 end. I do not know how familiar people are with Euston but if you can get directly onto Eversholt Street from inside the station, that then cuts out a whole swathe of going around the houses to get in at the front.

Caroline Russell AM: Is that temporary access you are talking about or are you talking about that as a permanent fix?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): I am not certain. I can come back on that. It is definitely something that will improve things in the shorter term.

The other area where we can assist with that broader accessibility is looking at the overcrowding around some of the London train stations. We have a list of the most overcrowded stations at the moment and we are working with the DfT to identify what the interventions would need to be to make them less overcrowded. For example, at Denmark Hill we now have funding to develop a full business case to put a second entrance in to try to stop people spilling out onto the streets, which is an issue for people who face mobility barriers but will also improve the situation for everyone.

Caroline Russell AM: Does TfL have any kind of programme of assessing access around stations?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): In a similar way, it is that whole journey approach. It is not just about going, “Where is the boundary of the station?” but looking at how you access that station and making sure that in the same way that we have a Healthy Streets approach, we have a healthy stations approach. Having an accessible station is no good if you cannot get to it. Yes, we are absolutely building that into the inclusive design piece that we have been talking about.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Yes. From my personal experience, I went on a journey with Alan [Benson] about 18 or so months ago, and what was very clear was that when we do not adopt that kind of whole station approach, the additional amount of time disabled passengers in particular take to be able to make relatively straightforward journeys is not acceptable. We need to think much more holistically and look at the wider built environment around a station. It is moving beyond looking at things through each mode, looking at how we design our services around a real customer journey, which is the reframing that Christina and I have spoken about in terms of the Inclusion Strategy that we are currently developing.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): There are some really simple things that do not happen, and I think that is because staff do not think about it. If staff in a station understood that going outside and doing a really quick visual audit, knocking on a restaurant’s door and saying, “Could you just move that sign? It blocks the way for wheelchair users or for people using the street to come in”, it would make a huge difference. Those people will not necessarily have any experience in their personal lives to know that that is something that is needed, and that is why it is the responsibility of TfL, TOCs and so on to make sure that their staff are armed.

Most people, given that knowledge once - it is low-cost but it is so important - will then start to see that as part of customer service. They would not have a bag of rubbish on the side of a train track because they would know that is not something that should be there, but because the majority are non-disabled they view the journey through their own eyes, as we all do unless challenged not to. Staff training and allowing people to train other people through day-to-day interaction about an accessible streetscape is really important and extremely simple.

Also, onus. We were talking about people’s journeys earlier. One of our staff members - we are in Brixton - took three hours to get from Hillingdon because the staff at the stations did not know where the ramp key was and did not know how to use the ramp. They put it on the wrong train. Yes, I might be able to get there but really we have to think about these things. The staff members are absolutely integral, and our feedback is that the majority of them want to know, they just do not know, and if they knew they would do it. We do not hold those individuals accountable; we hold the system through which they are trained, managed and appraised accountable for that. That is our feedback, or my feedback, in terms of that. We can spill it out from the stations into the streets.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Great.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): A couple of quick points on that. One is that the larger the number of people involved in these conversations, the slower the decisions are, which is fairly obvious. Particularly looking at the western end of Crossrail, the developments around the stations there have

involved perhaps two operators, TfL, Network Rail and a council, and it is just painfully slow. Working out who to talk to to get decisions made is a nightmare. Everybody is standing around pointing at everybody else.

The other thing that I would say is that while works are going on – and I am sure the Members will have seen this at London Bridge – the routes change. Fairly obviously, if you cannot see where you are going then you have to know the route. The route changes are an issue. The woman we saw on the video earlier, she will plan her route based on quiet places, based on places that she knows. When that changes then it can really disrupt her journey. It is about signage, thoughtfulness and having staff.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes. I have seen some really good examples of good practice from TfL recently around, for instance, Highbury Corner, which is near where I live, where they really worked hard to make sure that they kept things safe for people on foot, in wheelchairs or mobility scooters, and on bikes throughout the roadworks while the whole road system was changing every passing week. They were physically making sure that it was safe, that it was convenient and that there was level access, and they even trialled new ramps and things on the project.

However, I am not sure that there was much in the way of information to people who might have been planning their journey. I wonder if that is something that TfL could take away, to build on that very good practice that you are getting around temporary roadworks and make sure that there is information on TfL's website so that people with mobility impairments or other disabilities are able to plan around those quite dynamic changes, which can change from week to week at particular locations. You are not going to do it everywhere in London where there are roadworks but somewhere like Highbury Corner, which is a massive interchange hub between bus and Tube and bus and the Overground and has a lot of people accessing it. Somewhere like that, that might be helpful.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I would be very happy to take that away. As I am sure you are aware, we regularly review customer feedback and we have something we talk about often, which is customer pain points. What are the things that are really causing distress to our customers? Access to near and real-time information is absolutely critical, and if you have any additional needs then that makes life even more difficult for you. I am very happy to take that away.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you, Chair. As Alan [Benson] has already alluded to in his earlier comments, only 33% of London's stations will be step-free by spring next year [2020]. The question is: has the pace of change for step-free access across London's transport network been too slow? Kirsty, you may want to start.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I am going to defer to Alan because Alan was much more closely aligned with the Inclusive Transport Strategy on this one.

Navin Shah AM: Sure.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Keeping my answer brief, yes, it has. I appreciate that we are subject to a Victorian infrastructure and that these changes are not cheap to make, but we need to make them faster.

Navin Shah AM: Is there any response from other panel members?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes. We can appreciate the frustration but it is just incredibly difficult. It is very old infrastructure. There are lots of logistical problems with it. We have now just delivered our 78th step-free station. We have invested £18 million and it will be one-third of the network, but it is not just the Underground network. We have more than 200 accessible stations. It is one-third of the Underground but there is a broader step-free network than that.

We have more coming onstream and, as I said, what we are going to try to do with our future investment is make sure that we are really getting the most bang for buck out of the stations that we are able to do, making sure that they are where people need them and that they are opening up the network as best they can. Given the challenges that we have, we are going as quickly as we can. We have funding constraints, as you know, which means that we are not able to do a lot of things, including accessibility, as fast as we might like to, but we are making significant progress.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): One thing I would add is that I went to speak to TfL and said that what I would really like to be able to see, and I think our members and the people we support would like to be able to see, is, again, the criteria on which those decisions are predicated. What is the cost-value benefit and where does access sit within that? I know there is a process in terms of your weighting and I think we would like to understand and see where disabled people's access sits within that weighting. I do not know if that is a process that can be made public but I think it would be important to understand the weighting accessibility is given in terms of decisions that are made and the way you spend your money.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): More widely than step-free.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Yes, more widely than step-free, but if you are choosing to develop one and not the other, or you are delaying one, why and what weighting do disabled people's needs have on that decision? Is it that the amount of people who come through that station is more important than the needs that people have? We do not know where the weighting of access sits in terms of your decision-making process.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes, and that is exactly what we are trying to address.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Yes, which is great to see because, again, we can then get behind decisions and understand delays rather than just feel that we are being left out.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Absolutely.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): For stations on the Network Rail network, we have delivered 354 stations with step-free access from the Access for All funding over the past three control periods of funding, so ten to 15 years. Is it enough and is it quick enough? Until we have complete access, the answer is always going to be no. We are doing the best that we can to make as many stations accessible as we can, given the funding constraints and the infrastructure difficulties that we face in the design and delivery of these stations. It is a process. We have done a lot. We aspire to do more. There is £300 million as part of the DfT Inclusive Transport Strategy for Access for All across the network in this control period and we will keep rolling out that Access for All programme to deliver more stations that are accessible.

The Access for All criteria, to be included on that, we advise DfT. Applications are made by local delivery groups that include ourselves, TOCs, devolved Governments, regional transport bodies and so on. The criteria are around footfall, if there is a particularly high incidence of disability in the area, local circumstances, for example if there is a hospital nearby, and filling in gaps if there is a particularly large gap between stations that are accessible. There also needs to be a good geographic spread so that we are not focusing all the investment in one area.

We like to be able to leverage other funding as well if there are other schemes going on, to try to get the best improvement we can for the amount of money that there is to spend. Then that business case work is done, including those criteria, and held by DfT. We advise them and then we have the list to deliver. I would say that we have done a lot; there is still a lot more to do.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): To be fair to TfL and the operators, they are subject to financial constraints and the Access for All funding for the last two control periods was cut. It can feel, as disabled people, that we are being short-changed. One of our issues is frustration at not understanding why these decisions get made. If we can know that then we will have much more appreciation and be much more willing to work with the various bodies to deliver what they are trying to deliver.

Navin Shah AM: There is concrete evidence and indeed appreciation that the progress is very slow in terms of developing step-free facilities. The question is: how can this be strategically expedited? Obviously, the Mayor's £200 million step-free programme has come to an end, pretty much. There are initiatives and programmes that involve third party funding, which again is a good thing, but I believe TfL and the Mayor need to do more. Can we do more to prioritise and expedite, for example, working with boroughs more strategically? You have other funding potential like the Community Infrastructure Levy, section 106 and so on. Is there an informed move strategically from TfL to do this to speed up the programme, which is indeed very slow and causing enormous problems?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): The Mayor is committed to the programme that we have in place. We will have another 15 stations by spring of next year [2020], but we are also always, when we are working with developers, looking at leveraging that third-party funding to make additional gains where we can. That is absolutely part of what we do day-to-day. In terms of the programme, we have the 15 by spring 2020 and then a further six coming on by 2023/24. We do have that programme, we are committed to it and we are working as hard as we can to make sure that that happens, but also always working with third parties to try to leverage extra funding and make those additional improvements where we can.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you. Moving on, I have questions specific to both TfL and Network Rail. How do TfL and Network Rail strategically decide where to make accessibility improvements in order to maximise impact? Also, moving on from that, does TfL look at how step-free interventions will improve the average step-free journey time, something that is in the MTS, I think proposal 55? If I can have comments, please.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Sure. As I have said, we are trying to take this new, different approach - sorry, I keep repeating myself - to step-free access, but working much more closely with lift users to try to understand where they would find the most value. Is it that we should try to plug gaps? Is that the best thing we should do, or is it actually more useful to have more accessible hubs? Are there key stations that we should be doing, even if they are more complex and more expensive, to have fewer of the more complex ones done to unlock parts of the network, or is it better to try to do more and get a geographic spread? Rather than us coming up with our own list of criteria, what we want to do is speak to lift users about what would actually make the biggest difference to them and the journeys that they make.

That is how we are going to be strategic about what the future programme should look like, and hopefully that will feed through into the comparative journey times of a step-free journey. What is also really important and what we are trying to recognise is that the journey time differential is not necessarily the most important measure. We are trying to make sure that when we are measuring the ease of making a journey, we are using the right measure. That journey time differential is part of it but may not be the whole story, so we are also trying to work with people to understand what are the measures for success - is it just the differential or does it go more widely than that - and identify what they should be.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Alan [Benson] gave you an example earlier, having to bring your own equipment and also be grateful all the time in a way that I am not. I jump on the Tube, I do not have to talk to anyone, I do not have to put a smile on my face if I do not want to and I do not have to feel that my demeanour will have an impact on whether or not I can get on a train. That is one of the biggest issues, I think, that we face in terms of - you are right - not necessarily journey time but in the actions that I have to take in order to get access and parity to the same system that everybody else does.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I cannot remember the last time I took a journey where I did not end up saying thank you to a staff member for whatever reason. The other thing I would say in connection to these step-free works is that it is all very well putting the works in, but they then have to be usable. I mentioned the Waterloo and City line earlier but it is very regular that lifts are out of order because there are no staff available, both on the TfL network and the National Rail network. There is nothing so frustrating as having a step-free station that you cannot use.

Navin Shah AM: Helen, do you want to comment?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): In terms of, strategically, how we make decisions on where to invest, we have the Access for All programme. I just ran through the criteria against which applications are assessed, and then DfT specify the stations for which we are going to do the works. It is about footfall, high incidence of disability, local circumstances, geographic spread and so on.

There is an additional fund available that is having applications to DfT at the moment of up to £1 million per project for broader accessibility works at stations, not the Access for All but where there can be partnerships with other funding to deliver, more broadly, things within stations that will make journeys easier. The application process for that closes in November [2019].

Aside from that, we have our Diversity Impact Assessments that we carry out at the early stages of projects and programmes but also during the production of policies. That is one way in which we are able to demonstrate that we are meeting our public sector equality duty so that the needs of all users are thought about at those very early stages.

We do also have our Inclusive Design Strategy, which is all about looking at the projects that we are doing through the eyes of the people who are going to use them and what the needs are of all the people who are going to use them. One area that we need to improve on and that we are going to improve on is embedding that into people's thinking and making that more a compulsory part of the project development process as we go through the stages of project development. We are looking at the moment to embed within our project and programme development process that it is mandatory to go to the Built Environment Accessibility Panel to have it review any works we are doing at stations to essentially mark our homework, to check that we are putting in place the right things to enable people to use the railway more successfully.

Navin Shah AM: One other issue that I just want to comment on, Chair, and I am done after that, an issue which also I believe needs to be looked at, talking about step-free access or access generally when you have wheelchair-users at platforms, is manual ramps. I know that in the earlier period after the London Olympics there were horrendous problems with compliance of those manual ramps to provide access from the platform to the trains. I believe that situation has improved but there are still serious problems I certainly have come across through casework or people either not getting access to the staff to have those facilities available, or just not being able to find the ramps when they find the staff themselves. It is something that is part and parcel of the access in terms of a proper journey.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): You raise a really important issue. We have invested significantly in the training, in particular of Underground customer service staff, to understand the differing needs of people who have a disability. We have had, so far, upwards of 1,000 people who have attended that training. One of the things that has come out when we audit - we can be trained once but that information needs to stick and you need to be able to access it when you need to - is that people have not been able to locate a ramp, say, in the station, or there are rosters and routes where people are working in different stations.

What we have done in response to that is to make sure there are accessibility leads to be able to give people coming on to the shift the basic frequently asked questions (FAQ) as to where ramps are and other things that are particular to that station. It is something we take incredibly seriously, hence the reason we have invested in the training and taken the approach that we have. However, you make a very good point.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Do you mind if I just briefly comment? Ramps are really useful. On the whole, the turn-up-and-go service the TfL operate is really well appreciated. On the Network Rail and the National Rail Network, ramps are an issue. People are very regularly left on trains or

cannot get on trains. People are expected to turn up half an hour before a train in order to get on it. That can really lengthen your journey if it is just a 30-minute journey. The other thing I would say is the Underground network has the level access. To be able to get on and off a train without needing assistance is a revelation to all sorts of people. Greater Anglia has just introduced low-floor trains. By doing so, 40% of its network now does not need ramps. One thing that I would like to encourage the train operators, but also TfL, to do is to investigate low-floor trains to get rid of that need.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Yes. We are going to come on to that very point.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Sorry.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you. No, that is fine. Assembly Member Pidgeon.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. I want to pick up a couple of issues. I would just say, when you are planning, Christina [Calderato], a constituent who has messaged us and has been here was saying that Waltham Forest Borough has no step-free stations at all. In terms of planning, that might be quite complex. I do not know. If there is a huge hole in the network, that might be the sort of thing you need to be looking at.

What I wanted to pick up is, in our Crossrail report - Alan [Benson] already mentioned earlier the issue of the stations, particularly out to the west - we recommended that when you look at future infrastructure projects. Looking at work such as step-free access, could you bring them forward in the process? Could they be installed potentially even at the start, so that all those people using the station can benefit from that as early as possible in the process, rather than just having to suffer so much when the works are going on, and then suddenly it is unveiled at the end, or there is not enough money for them and they risk slipping or even being cancelled? Is that something that TfL is going to be doing in Network Rail to make sure we can get that infrastructure in as early as possible?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): I can start on Crossrail specifically. In the delivery of the Network Rail elements of the Elizabeth line, we programmed the work in order to deliver the core infrastructure to enable the train service to run as soon and as effectively as we could. That meant that the accessibility of the stations was put into that second package to come along and do afterwards. Fourteen of the stations are now accessible six are partially accessible, and the final ten should be by the end of 2020. However, that decision was made in order to expedite the delivery of the bits of infrastructure that were required to run the train service. I am in danger of repeating myself again, but moving forwards things like the Inclusive Design principles, where we look at the very beginning at the very specification of a project, about, "What does the infrastructure need to have? What do we need to do to the infrastructure to make sure that it is accessible for all people?" and really building and specifying it in at the beginning, with the advice and guidance of the Built Environment Accessibility Panel.

When you have it in there at the start, it is then intrinsically woven through that project. It cannot just be dropped and dragged out, or moved to a later stage of delivery. Also, it is more efficient and cost-effective to deliver as you are developing the programme as well if it is an integral part. That is very much where we want to move to, and what we did with London Bridge. That is an example of where that worked very successfully. I understand there were construction difficulties in moving around the station whilst it was being built, but in terms of the finished product there are a lot of very good things about that

station now, and that is because it was thought about at the very start when it was being designed. If we can introduce that into more of our programmes of work we would then start giving a better service to people who face barriers to transport.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): However, it is also when you are thinking about these projects going forward where you look to see whether the step-free element could be delivered earlier in the project and opened earlier.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): I think we would consider that as part of the overall delivery staging of the work, to do it in the least disruptive, most cost-effective manner. We need to consider any project individually, and the trade-offs between the cost, the deliverability, and constructability issues. Yes, we would look to see whether the accessibility elements could be delivered earlier. Does that make sense? Is it doable, or would that cause an unacceptable level of disruption?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Is that something you will actively consider now, whether those sorts of elements could be brought forward or opened earlier?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): Yes. The staging of projects, absolutely. The delivery of projects and accessibility as part of that, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. TfL?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Just to add to that, I will not want to get into trouble with our engineering colleagues, because the complexity of infrastructure builds and the phasing, and the phasing of projects and what that then impacts upon when we look at what we are building across the entire network, is something that is hugely complex. If I may, I will come back to you with a response.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): That is fine.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Just on that, obviously everyone did mention, going back to the beginning, an inclusive and accessible transport system is an improvement that will benefit everybody.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Some of the lifts have opened already. In some of the stations we have lifts that are already operating to platforms, even though the trains are not there. Crossrail has been a long and complex project, but I think we have all learned a lot from this. For example, thinking about Crossrail 2 and how we would design this kind of accessibility, but also the phasing of how quickly you could make some of those improvements, will definitely inform future schemes.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): To benefit everybody.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Also, I think we need to add in this human level. Where we are talking about phasing projects, you need to question yourselves as to who you are

willing to leave out. I mean that, because your organisations are made up of individuals, as we are. Really that should be at the heart of what you do: who are you willing to leave out? I do not think in good conscience anything should be built or considered in 2019 that is not as fully accessible as is possible, given the physical constraints that may be. That is our ask, and our challenge. Who are you willing to leave out?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you. You touched on the accessible rolling stock. The Government has set out that by 2020 all passenger trains have to meet modern accessibility standards, and it has set out what those are. We had already heard about Greater Anglia introducing rolling stock with lower-level floors and a retractable step at each door helping to bridge the gap. Could innovations like that retractable step be introduced more widely across the Rail Network, and are there plans? I realise we do not have RDG here, who might be able to answer some of that. However, TfL, do you have plans for this sort of innovation?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I will write to you after the meeting. I think we, as part of the Action on Inclusion Strategy and the development of the Inclusive Design Framework need to make sure that we have the right rolling stock that meets the changing needs of Londoners. It would be actively considered, of course, but we will need to conduct a wider review to determine what is already in train, and then what we will do when budgets allow for the purchase of new rolling stock.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): However, for the Elizabeth line, that is like a new generation of trains. They are classed three, four, and fives, and this is straying into an area of technical expertise that I do not necessarily have, but where we have procured new trains, they are designed to be accessible. They have the latest technology to make sure that they will serve as wide a range of customers as is possible. Then obviously in terms of renewal of ongoing rolling stock that is a more complex question. Again, as you said, as we move forward there is no reason why we would not always be looking to those most innovative and accessible procurement decisions where we can.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): Rolling stock specification is not within Network Rail's purview. I would just recognise that ideally there would be step-free access from trains to platforms. It is incredibly difficult with the age of the infrastructure that we have, some of the bends that some of our stations, especially outside London, are designed around, and the variety of rolling stock that is on the network. What would be step-free for one train would not necessarily be step-free on another train. It is very much up to the franchise specifier and the bidders to address that.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Maybe that is something we will pick up with RDG.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. I think there are examples around the world. I am told Spain is very good. It has some really good innovations on its trains. If we have this one already in Greater Anglia, we should be looking at that, as Alan [Benson] and others were saying earlier. I met a campaigner the other week who was saying how liberating it was getting on to the Thameslink because they literally, in the core, went straight on, straight on, and they did not have to have any help. I witnessed that myself last night, and I thought, "Actually, this is changing, but clearly our infrastructure is

not all going to be level floor, so what can we do?" If this sort of retractable step is a possibility, then maybe it is something that TfL and the train companies need to be looking at.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I think for us it is a matter of aspiration. This rolling stock lasts 40 years, so the decisions that we make now are going to have long-term impacts. I think it was Holland that said that in ten years they will make their infrastructure step-free. We do not have any kind of aspiration like that, and if we are buying the new Underground trains, now is the time.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): No, definitely. Thank you.

David Kurten AM: Thank you. Good morning, everyone. I would like to ask all of you what you think about buses and bus accessibility. What progress has been made so far on improving bus accessibility? Do you think anything more needs to be done? Would anyone like to start off with that?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I will start off. We think we have the largest accessible bus network anywhere in the world. 95% of London's bus stops are accessible. We have a fleet of almost 10,000 buses that are all low-floor and can kneel and provide spaces for both buggies as well as wheelchairs. You will of course hear on the buses as well announcements, and you will see visual displays for people who may have a sensory impairment, or even if you are just a visitor coming to London and want to know whether to get off at the next stop. Over the last ten years we have made quite significant improvements in bus accessibility and the design of buses.

As I touched on earlier, we have trained our bus drivers as well in terms of how best to support customers. We train bus drivers to be able to manage some of the tensions on who should use that space that is currently allocated for - and the priority should be - wheelchair users, but sometimes people who have a pram are wanting to occupy that space. Bus drivers have learnt to broker and make decisions almost on behalf of customers so that wheelchair users are always given priority. We have made good progress when it comes to improving the accessibility of the bus network.

I should also add, as I am sure the Committee will know, most trips by people who have an ability impairment are made by buses. We are less limited by the old infrastructure that we have on the Underground, and so I think we have done what we can on the buses, because we have updated the rolling stock in our vehicles.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): We understand and accept that, but I think the anecdotal evidence from a vast majority of people who use buses and are members across London is that in reality the application of things that are in the Big Red Book, both for those who work in TfL's service and the other licences that are given by the TfL, is that drivers quite often do not know the rules. They do not understand that they must stop if there is someone at the bus stop. If a visually impaired person is there, they do not necessarily know the bus is coming. Buses do not always stop for them, which is one of the things they are supposed to do. They do not really understand how to make the bus kneel, or where they have to kneel in terms of being on the side of the road. They will often leave a disabled person to languish and to, themselves, express their own needs to 20 people squashed into the wheelchair space.

When our members are asking for support there is quite often a challenge with the bus driver. We are not going to make a comment as to why that is, but sometimes it is just people not doing a very good job, as in any part of the country. We do not believe that there is enough of an impetus on bus drivers to do a good job in terms of disabled people. It is an add on. It is an addition. That is the way that most of our members feel. Again, my concern is that there is a high level of gratitude from disabled people when something good happens, a good experience. I am not grateful when I have a good experience; it is my expectation. That is where we need to get to. Our members feel that they are not being catered for in the way they should be, and when they are it is rarer than it should be.

David Kurten AM: Yes. TfL, do you want to respond to that?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I think that variability is concerning and is unacceptable where people have a poor experience on buses. Of course, some people from time to time will not respond in the way they ought to to make sure that someone's journey is a good one on the bus network. We have really invested in the training of bus drivers to improve the customer experience. Also, we know that when it comes to looking at slips, trips and falls on buses, you are more likely to have a slip, trip or fall if you are a more vulnerable bus user or an older bus user as well. We have worked with all of our contracted bus providers. There are regular accessibility focus sessions at the bus depots, and it is something that we constantly try to improve month on month, and we have a lead in the bus team who is responsible for this.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I am going to pick up that point, sorry, because we run a lot of those sessions in the bus garages. A lot of our members do individually. Again, as we alluded to at the beginning, yes, it is great that we are having that one-to-one lived experience conversation, but we are not paid for it, and it quite often happens when there has been a problem and everyone panics, "Oh, quick, come in and talk to us then". It is not something that is part of a procedure in the way that you would teach somebody about health and safety or you teach them how to turn the bus on. I do not believe - and I can evidence this through looking at the process of the training and the management of bus drivers - that access is seen as an integral part of what you do. It is not yet. It is starting to be, but our experience is that that process is still often reactive to a problem happening. That is my feedback.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): We still have examples of bus garages where the idea of accessibility training is to put somebody in a wheelchair, to put a bus driver in a wheel chair, and pretend that that is the lived experience, or to put on a blindfold and pretend that that is lived experience. It is less common that it was, but the fact that it still happens at all is just shocking. The other thing I would say is that a bus is 65 seats, or whatever it is, but it is one seat for me. If there is a wheelchair, or a walker, or a buggy, that is it; I do not get on. That is particularly bad during periods of disruption or during rush hour. This is not, "I can squeeze on to a bus". It is, "I do not travel".

David Kurten AM: Yes. There seems to be a disconnect between what you are saying [Kirsty Hoyle] and what you are saying [Staynton Brown]. How are you going to take those comments onboard?

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I do not think there is a disconnect. No, I think what you are saying is happening, and is correct. I do not think what you are saying is wrong, Staynton. It is happening, but it is not happening in a way that is absolutely integral. It is often reactive

to an issue; it is asking disabled people to come in and do the jobs of the organisation for free – that is my opinion – and it is not done in a way whereby, if the bus drivers then do not enact the things they have been told, there are consequences. I know there are issues with TfL, and we do work with your team, and actually sometimes there are consequences, but you cannot tell us, and then we cannot tell our members, which is slightly frustrating. No, I do not think we are speaking from different places, I just think the reality is slightly different than it might look as a project.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): On the ground.

David Kurten AM: Yes. OK.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): There are commendations to say when people do identify the bus drivers who are particularly good, particularly proactive, and who diffuse situations. You do have some stunning bus drivers, but at the other end of the scale we also have some dreadful ones.

David Kurten AM: Right. There is very good practice, but not everyone is up to the best standards.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Absolutely.

David Kurten AM: I am sure they will be trying to make sure everyone gets to those good standards.

Moving on a little bit, that is bus accessibility, but what about bus stops? You mentioned earlier real-time information is very important, and we saw that on the video that we had. Are there any other small changes that could be made to infrastructure at bus stops, and also stations, which could improve people's experiences of using them? What does anyone think about that, or any other things we have not mentioned already?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): There are a couple of points that I would make. One is about the accessibility standard. It is all very well having a standard, but sometimes you get streetlights, rubbish bins, or advertising poles positioned badly so that it is very hard for the driver to stop in a place where both the front and the back doors are accessible. I am not sure that those standards are being thought about. One thing to think about is there are still across London pockets of hail-and-ride, where there are no bus stops and there is no timetable. The bus cannot get to the kerb. How do I get on and off? We need to eliminate those existing routes.

David Kurten AM: Thanks. What might be the impediments to bringing in those changes? Maybe TfL can answer that. They seem to be quite simple changes to make. Are they things that you are thinking about, or are there things that are preventing those changes from being made?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): It goes back to the previous point in many ways. We have 95% of accessible bus stops that have a fully accessible bus service. In a way, on paper, we have done it; we are there, really. However, that does not mean that that is the lived experience. What is really important for us is to keep that dialogue with stakeholders, so we can understand where it is going wrong and try to pick up those problems where we find them. The network-wide approach is there, but that does not mean that those pockets do not exist, or examples of bad experience do not exist that we can deal with as we come across them. That is a big part of our

ongoing engagement with people, to understand the lived experience of what it is like on the network. Signage, communication, and real-time information, again, are really key to those small interactions that mean that you know what you are up against before you get there. That is an ongoing journey for us, to make sure that things work as smoothly as we want them to.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): We have to be quite relentless. We do not take our foot off the pedal. Being a bus driver is an incredibly challenging role. It is an incredibly dynamic environment, and at times it is incredibly stressful too. We bring back customer insights, customer feedback, speak to the operators, and provide different types of training. We are about to go out to tender to provide very focused disability training for our bus drivers, because we have pockets of good practice, which is great, but there are upwards of almost 20,000 bus drivers who work across the network, so we have to be pretty relentless. I would say that we are, just to complement the buses that are fully accessible. We take it very seriously.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): One final point, if I may. I am a fairly savvy transport user. Our members are fairly savvy. They know that they can come to us and they can go to TfL. The issue that you have is the people who are not savvy. How do they know how to report their experience? How do you identify the person that does not use the bus because they are scared or unknowledgeable? I do not know how you reach out to them, but there is a definite need to identify those people and get them using your networks.

David Kurten AM: Thanks.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): Just very quickly, one of the things we identified through the consultation that we did through the Railway for Everyone study is that one of the key barriers to people using the railway – so not buses in this instance – is a lack of awareness of what the processes are and what the assistance is that is available. One of the key things that we do need to improve on across the transport sector is making people aware of what the assistance is: how do they book assistance, what do they do when things go wrong, who do they talk to, and what is available?

In terms of communication of information and what information could we provide on buses, communication of information is one of the key things and one of the key barriers that people we talk to saw for using the railway and using transport. One aspiration of the things that would be really good for us to start looking at is: how do you provide information on one form of transport about the next mode of transport? If you are on a bus, do you know where your train is going from and if it is going to be on time? If you are getting off a train at a London terminal, do you know if the Underground is running smoothly, or if there are significant roadworks or disruption outside the station? That is why we should not stop trying to get to existing standards and level of information provision. We also need to keep on looking at what the next step is as well.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Just to build on that, not to think that we have all the answers ourselves within our organisation. The work that has been done to open source data, to get third-party developers to make better use of the information, to then be able to provide wayfinding and near-time updates is incredibly important, in our view, in the accessibility space, because there are lots of innovations, both in the UK and also in other parts of the world, that might significantly help to improve people being able to make a planned journey. We will

continue to pull out the information and update our website and the TfL Go app, but we also need to through our innovation team work very closely to spark off those innovation challenges, to have third-party developers come and help us make our customer's experiences a lot better.

David Kurten AM: Thanks. I will finally move on to talk about and ask you about taxis. Of course, all taxis in London are wheelchair accessible. What about taxi ranks? What progress is being made on improving the accessibility of taxi ranks? Maybe TfL can answer that again.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): There are no national criteria for what constitutes an accessible taxi rank, which is part of what is difficult. The value of taxis and being fully accessible is that they offer the kerb-to-kerb service, which obviously means that you do not know necessarily where they are going to stop. What is really important is the vehicles are accessible, they have a ramp, and the drivers are fully trained. We should be able to offer that accessible service to anyone who is using them, but that does not necessarily constitute an accessible rank, if you like.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Taxis are not 100% accessible.

David Kurten AM: I am talking about the black taxis.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Yes, they are not accessible to all wheelchairs.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I cannot use a black taxi. I am too tall. A lot of the people that I know are also too tall. Whilst they are the most accessible form of taxi, they are not 100% accessible.

Shaun Bailey AM: Does that include the new taxi?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): It does, yes.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): The new black ones. That is interesting.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): The new ones are better than the old ones, but they are still not perfect.

David Kurten AM: OK. That is for you specifically because you are too tall?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): Because of my height, but I know a lot of people -- as a population, we are growing in stature, so that problem is increasing, not decreasing. One thing I would say about stopping black taxis on the streets, one of the consequences of cycle lanes is wheelchairs getting from the pavement across the cycle lane to the taxi, or indeed, if it is a single-lane road, the taxi stops to load the wheelchair user and it blocks the road. There are unintended consequences that we need to consider.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Something being physically accessible does not make it accessible necessarily. There may be attitudinal barriers; they might not want to pick up a wheelchair user because it takes ages, in their opinion. It does not, by the way, including on buses. There is some research on that, that it increases waiting times. You might not know how to clip somebody in. Although something has been built to be accessible, if you do not know how to use it, they are not going to use it. Again, the lived experience is that they are not. Some people literally cannot fit in them, and other people are not given access to them because the person inside that vehicle does not necessarily want to let them in.

David Kurten AM: I think most of the time taxi drivers do a very, very good job and are very aware of these things.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): Yes, and our experience is the same. We work with private hire vehicle companies, and we have been in contact with the black cabs. That is true. However, the point I make, David, is that that type line, "100% accessible", is not true, and it is more complex than it appears to be, and it is something that we have to challenge every day.

David Kurten AM: OK.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): They are wheelchair accessible, but they do not take all types of wheelchair. They take most, but not all. We acknowledge that.

David Kurten AM: Yes. Every cab can take a wheelchair, but not every kind of wheelchair.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes. All drivers are trained, so they should all know how to do that, but again, I acknowledge that there will be times when that is not perfect. We would urge you to contact us and let us know when that happens so that we can look into it.

David Kurten AM: One of the things that taxi drivers are concerned about is not being able to have access to all the roads in London as changes come in. You have mentioned Cycle Superhighways, and there is the situation in Tottenham Court Road where the road is being narrowed and they are not going to have 24/7 access as they had before. That is a big problem. Are you planning to change that in any way so that taxis can continue to have the maximum access to all roads in London? That is really necessary for wheelchair users that use taxis.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes. To implement the MTS and to achieve our objectives there will be changes to the road layout in London. That is going to happen. What is really important, and what we do, is engage with stakeholders when we are doing it, particularly with disability groups, to understand what those access needs are. Then through engagement and identifying through Equality Impact Assessments what the impacts are, we can identify mitigations. Then through consultation, for example, on Tooley Street, you do listen and adjust as that needs to happen.

David Kurten AM: I do understand Tooley Street. That is something I asked the Mayor about a lot, and he has continued to allow taxis to use Tooley Street, which is great. However, that did not happen with Tottenham Court Road, for example. The opposite has happened there, so that is a problem. It does not always happen in that way.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): That was a decision with the borough as well. Tottenham Court Road was Camden.

David Kurten AM: Yes, it was. However, that is also supported by the MTS. This is just something that needs to be thought about, I think. Anyway, thank you.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I would like to just add a little extra. Black taxis are vital for disabled people. It costs around £500 a month more to live as a disabled person. If you are using black taxis and the taxi cannot take you directly on an A to B route, they have to move around some Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) or some no-go area, that puts up the cost to the disabled person. It may come out of the Taxicard allowance, so it cuts down on the journeys they can take. It has a serious impact.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Specifically on taxis, they are not included in the ULEZ or the Congestion Charge. They would not have to route around those to avoid a charge.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I was thinking particularly of the closures in the city that they have to route around.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Yes. Road closures, definitely, but just in terms of those schemes.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I would just like to add really quickly, and people are not always sighted on this, but certainly in relation to private taxis, less so black cabs, where individuals do not pick somebody up who is in a wheelchair, and they refuse to pick somebody up who is in a wheelchair when they are able to, we will prosecute people, because we take it incredibly seriously if people are trying to get around and they are being refused a service that they should be able to access. This is something that we do often in response to concerns raised by disabled people who want to use a taxi. We do not always talk about those prosecutions, but just to give you a sense and a flavour of how seriously we take disabled customers' needs.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Pigeon.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Just to put in writing to me, because you will not have time now, we have not talked about the design of buses, and I hear a lot of concerns about the lack of wheelchair spaces, and also why do we not have fold-down seats in London? We do elsewhere in the country. I met some campaigners the other week who talked about Reading buses being good. Brighton buses, I hear the design is good. Also in Barcelona. There is also an issue around the button that you press. You do not have any acknowledgement whether the driver has got that you want to get off at the next stop. Is that something TfL is actively considering, redesigning buses, and could you put something in writing with this plan?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Yes, I will put something to you in writing.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. Thank you.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): We are actually considering that, but I will put more detail in writing.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Moving on from buses, obviously one of the other things is that a number of buses are fitted with cameras, and I am hoping that on newer buses as well that camera technology is a lot more improved. We will be working with the relevant operators to monitor some of that practice and training that is not followed through with.

A key one for a number of elderly passengers is the fact that bus drivers are not waiting for them to sit down. All of that can be captured by the CCTV monitoring. The other thing is around giving the drivers the confidence to maybe address some of those issues. I had to challenge a woman with her buggy because she point-blank refused to move to let a wheelchair user come on. You could see that the bus driver felt very uncomfortable challenging her. Everyone started to film me. I think it is about how we work with the different operators so that the bus drivers feel confident to challenge that. Thank you.

Moving on swiftly, we have two more sections, so if Members are again just mindful of time. We are looking at assisted transport services. Assembly Member Bailey.

Shaun Bailey AM: Thank you. I will start with Kirsty here. What are the main challenges to accessing assisted transport services in London?

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): The disparity in opportunity. For example, turn-up-and-go works extremely well for some people in certain areas, but that is not something that works across the network. In fact, somebody Tweeted me this morning and said, "Please make sure you remember today that I have to choose where I live, work, and socialise based on how good the turn-up-and-go system is, because otherwise I will be late for work, or I will not be able to meet friends". Where it is good because of people - not because of the organisation, if I am honest, and the systems - it is good, and where it is not it is not. There is no real parity of opportunity across the network.

Also, in my opinion one of the biggest issues is that when it fails there does not really seem to be any issue with that. If a staff member swore at a member of the public there would be problems. It does not seem to happen where there is an access fail; it is just something that seems to be accepted. That is one of the biggest things we would like to change around that. Alan [Benson], there are probably other things you want to add around that.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): We are pressed for time.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): On the assisted one, we are looking at maybe the door-to-door service, Dial-a-Ride, Taxicards, things like that, where you feel there maybe need to be improvements.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): They are ever changeable, these systems. At the moment, as Alan [Benson] alluded to, one of our worries is if there are going to be changes around how public hire vehicles and black cabs are allowed to move across the city and the charges, how will that impact on Dial-a-Ride? I do not have any particular issues around that one.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I was at a meeting two weeks ago with somebody that had booked a Dial-a-Ride, and it took three different vehicles to arrive to find one that he could get into. It is predictability. It is reliability. It meant that he was sitting there for an hour waiting to leave the meeting, whereas anybody else would have been home or on to their next meeting. It is that predictability and that reliability. Also being able to specify your needs. Obviously different people have different preferences, and those are not listened to often enough.

Shaun Bailey AM: To TfL, I suppose the question is: are you looking at this very uneven service? What would be your take on addressing this? It seems to be the major challenge.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Yes. We have a very robust service improvement plan. We have received the greatest number of complaints with regard to the taxi service and CityFleet, and that is the company that manages Dial-a-Ride. We have a very robust improvement plan. That has begun to garner, I would say, improvements in the service. We are very clear as to the window that turn-up-and-go should be attending to people's homes. I think people have sometimes missed appointments as a result of the buses not turning up at the time that was scheduled and planned, and these have been addressed through those discussions with the contracted service, CityFleet. It is something we are on top of, because the concerns raised by customers have shown that the service perhaps has not been of the standard that we would expect.

Shaun Bailey AM: I want to move on, because we are pressed for time, and talk about Assisted Transport Service personal budgets, which is a recommendation that came from a report by this Committee. I understand a pilot was started. What is the condition of that pilot? I do have a note here that tells me. Are there any plans to look at another pilot?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I do not have that recorded here, so I will have to say that I will respond to you.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): If you could come back to the Committee, thank you.

Shaun Bailey AM: How many people accessed TfL's travel mentoring service last year?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): We do not have the absolute figures. We do not have the number, so again, I will have to write back to you with the precise number.

Shaun Bailey AM: As a Committee, I am sure we would like to see those numbers. The obvious question is: is it a lot of people, and if not, how could you promote it? Are people aware of this? Let me speak to Kirsty [Hoyle] and Alan. Are your members very active on this service and are they aware of it? Do you think it needs more visibility?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I do not think our members are users of the service because they are already users of transport networks. However, the service itself is very highly respected.

Shaun Bailey AM: That is interesting.

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): An excellent service with some excellent staff that does some really good work. I would encourage TfL to promote it as widely as possible.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): A lot of our members have used it as a jumping-off point, even if they have not continued to. I have examples of people who have used it, and now they do not need it, which is exactly what it is for. Well, not always, but sometimes.

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): It is well used, but we can come back on the precise numbers.

Shaun Bailey AM: Some figures would be very interesting, because if it is such a good service, let us hope it is not a secret.

Just one thing. It is about control and flexibility. Alan [Benson] made a comment about people not being able to express their needs when they are using Dial-a-Ride, etc. Do you support the concept that people should have more control, and if so, how are you building it into your future changes to the system?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Absolutely. People should have as great a degree of agency and control as possible. One aspect that we are focusing on currently, but also will be brought into our Action on Inclusion Strategy, is how we give people more information to be able to make decisions in their best interests, rather than decisions being made by other people. Access to information is hugely critical, whilst also making sure we are listening to people, and not just listening, but also responding and telling people how we have responded to some of the concerns that they have raised. This will be reflected in the Inclusive Design Framework that we have talked about already.

Shaun Bailey AM: Some of Alan's [Benson] comments suggest that users need to be able to give you more information so you can respond quickly and appropriately. Is that part of you thinking as well?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): Yes.

Shaun Bailey AM: OK. At what point is a personal travel budget? Is that in your thinking? Some people are very up on that concept, because again it gives them control and they can plan. How is that in TfL's thinking about personal travel budgets?

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): We will have to write to you more formally once the Committee has finished, because in terms of the pilot you referenced earlier, I am not currently aware of progress made in terms of personal travel budgets. I will write to you more formally.

Shaun Bailey AM: OK. We would really appreciate that detail, I am sure. Chair, I am finished, thank you.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Just maybe in this long letter you are going to be writing to us, could you just clarify? You said CityFleet manages Dial-a-Ride. It does not. It manages Taxicard. You run Dial-a-Ride directly. I think you may have been muddling the service, unless I have missed that.

Staynton Brown (Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Talent, Transport for London): I might have muddled the --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Perhaps we could just get some clarity on that, because I think we sort of muddled two very distinct services, and we have argued in the past maybe we need more common eligibility criteria and systems to use them better. Perhaps we can get some clarity on that.

I am just going to ask you, looking at information for passengers, how easy is it to currently plan an accessible transport journey, and what can be done and what are you doing to improve that? That is not just whether the lift is operating at the station, but also which sides the doors open when you get to a certain station so you can position yourself so you are not having to have hundreds of passengers moving off to allow you to exit. TfL, what are you doing?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): Again, we try to make as much of our information available as we can. There are things that we are doing. For example, for people with claustrophobia we have maps of stations that are aboveground. We try to make the information available so that people can use what they need. Also, with the open data is where we are really calling on other people to help us make that available. What we would like to do is start moving to more personalised information. For example, if you can do escalators but you cannot do stairs, or if you can do two steps but you cannot do ten steps, how we can try to build that information into journey planning so that people can get personalised travel advice according to their needs? We are trying to take that forward, but we are also making that data available so that others can also help provide those services. We recognise that really that kind of personalised information is what is going to make a really big difference, because otherwise there are so many layers of it. There is the claustrophobia map. It does not help you if you cannot marshal that information, if we just keep pumping out more and more without some way of people being able to filter it for their needs.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): How are you encouraging the sector to innovate in this way to come up with the latest app or the latest information that could help people in this way? That sounds like a great idea, but what are you doing to facilitate that and encourage it?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): We are doing some of that ourselves internally in terms of what we can do with Journey Planner and other future iterations of TfL information. Also, as Staynton [Brown] said, we do a lot of work in terms of innovation hubs and trying to spark competitions and encourage other people to apply themselves to the problems that we are facing.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): You have a competition around this, have you?

Christina Calderato (Head of Transport Strategy and Planning, Transport for London): I do not know if there is a competition specifically on this, but there certainly have been in the past. I will come back with more specific detail. This is the kind of thing that we will be looking at in the new strategy, the Action on Inclusion Strategy, and how we can push that information. We have done good things so far, but we need to build on that now. As people increasingly use maps to plan their travel, we want to make sure that we are able to give them the information that they are looking for. It is something that we will continue to take forward and will be working on with industry. I can check on the specifics of which competitions have been run on which things.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Network Rail, what do you do?

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): In terms of communication there are a number of strands to this. There is making sure that communication about the assistance is available, which parts of the network are accessible, and when facilities that are important to people with disabilities are broken and then when they are fixed. Keeping that live, up to date and robust so that it can be relied on is something that across industry we are working very hard on with the RDG.

In terms of our managed stations specifically, there is a page on our website for each of our managed stations that says what the facilities are there and what is available and when it is broken and what the alternatives are. That is one strand.

There is much more of an awareness now that we need to cater for people with hidden disabilities, and so making information available in more formats and more accessible formats. Communication of information on the Rail Network in general to passengers, regardless of whether they are disabled or have barriers, is an area that we need to improve on. Andrew Haines [Chief Executive, Network Rail] is very focused on that as part of the Putting Passengers First programme and restructure we have in Network Services as part of our organisation now. The executive director of that will shortly be appointing somebody to lead on passenger communications and really drive that forward, because it is an area that we recognise we need to improve to get more timely information, especially during times of disruption. It is at times of disruption that people who face barriers to transport are more affected than anybody else. If I do not know what is going on on the rail network, I have a confidence that I am probably going to be OK, whereas if information is poorly communicated to somebody who was already nervous about that journey, it could put somebody off from using that form of transport again for a very long time. We know we need to get better there.

The other area of communication and information is passenger assist. The system by which people need to book to come and use the trains, TfL have their turn-up-and-go policy, and we are not at that yet as Network Rail at our managed stations. Although it is going to be challenging for us due to the age of the legacy systems that we use, we are absolutely committed to hitting the accessible travel policy Operational Readiness Review (ORR) guidelines of getting down to two hours' notice by 2022. I think they are the areas for us for communications.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): OK. Will that work, your talking about communications, also include people who are digitally excluded? That is an area as well.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): I do not have the detail, and I do not know if the detail on that is formed yet, but it absolutely needs to be. It cannot just rely on technology, because there is a broad demographic is not able or very unwilling to use that.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): And cognitive ability as well.

Helen McAllister (Head of Strategic Planning, Network Rail): Yes.

Kirsty Hoyle (Chief Executive Officer, Transport for All): I think it is very important. You were describing the page-to-page. It is a maelstrom, really. I think the cognitive abilities of people to access it are really important. We are doing it ourselves. Our members are doing it themselves. The step-free map often does not show that you cannot cross a platform. It might show step-free, but that does not mean that actually you can travel around on it.

Members of ours are building their own, if I am honest, and they talk to one another, and they share. The way that they actually plan their journeys is through talking to each other, using social media, and using our platforms. We are starting to do our own because we are getting a bit frustrated about the lack of support from providers. The idea of something competitive would be great, but I do not think it is has happened, and again, we are doing it ourselves.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. Alan, have you got anything to add about planning and the accessible transport journey, the communication?

Alan Benson (Chair, Transport for All): I think you have hit the nail on the head. Information is key, both in planning and during disruption. Kirsty [Hoyle] has mentioned the step-free Tube map, which is mostly accurate. Helen [McAllister] mentioned the Network Rail website. Again, the station information is out of date. It is worse to have incorrect information than no information. As Kirsty said, a lot of our members are working on it themselves, but yesterday there was a meeting at Parliament where the Extinction Rebellion had protests that were going on. People did not get information about disruption from TfL or from Network Rail, they got it from each other. There were conversations going on yesterday morning sharing routing information, because that is the most accurate. It is a really hard problem. I have a lot of sympathy, but it is one that needs solving.

It is all very well saying, "We are going to make data available and let people work on solutions", but commercial people want that easy 90%, the commercial 90%. As disabled people we are in that 10% that does not get catered for. That has to be led by TfL, Network Rail and the TOCs. The thing is that the information is inconsistent between companies. You would think that the rail companies all have the same policies about turn-up-and-go, about assistance, about how you get assistance. Do you go to the platform? Do you go to the ticket office? Is it the guard that gets you off the train or platform staff? It is entirely inconsistent, and that is a problem.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Deputy Chair): That is a problem as well. Brilliant. Thank you very much indeed.

Florence Eshalomi AM (Chair): Thank you. Just to thank our guests. Obviously, this is a big issue, and as we go deeper we can uncover many things that are working well, but a lot of areas where we need more

joined-up thinking, and a lot more funding, and a lot more thinking about the end users and the people who are using the services. I thank everybody.