

Chair of the Transport Committee

Dr Alison Moore AM

Londonwide London Assembly Member



City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1A 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Minicom: 020 7983 4458
Web: www.london.gov.uk

Heidi Alexander

Deputy Mayor for Transport

(Sent via email)

14 July 2020

Dear Heidi,

Impact COVID-19 on London's transport network

Thank you again for attending, with your TfL colleagues, the London Assembly Transport Committee meeting on 15 June 2020, to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on London's transport network. The Committee is aware of the scale and complexity of the COVID-19 crisis, and how this has affected how people live and move around the capital. We commend TfL's response to maintaining transport services during the first few months of the crisis, and the continued efforts to keep TfL staff and Londoners safe in their essential journeys.

The Committee is acutely aware that the COVID-19 crisis is rapidly evolving. Given the recent further relaxations from 4 July 2020, demand is anticipated to increase considerably on TfL services and at key interchanges with other transport operators.

Ensuring safety across London's transport network

We are aware that TfL has implemented a range of measures to ensure the safety of frontline workers, including new cleaning regimes, reducing bus capacity and, increasing communication on social distancing. Since 15 June 2020, face coverings became mandatory on all transport services, and compliance is being enforced by British Transport Police. At the June meeting, the Committee was informed that TfL has "clearly defined and risk-assessed procedures which have been shared with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) as well, and following ORR guidance" to manage areas where 2-metre social distance cannot be maintained.¹ The Committee is concerned about the safety risks posed to frontline workers to monitor compliance, especially without adequate training and if adequate PPE is not provided to them. **It would be helpful to receive**

¹ London Assembly Transport Committee (15 June 2020), *Item 9 – Impact of COVID-19 on London's Transport Network*, <https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/b19239/Draft%20Minutes%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20COVID-19%20and%20Londons%20Transport%20Network%20Monday%2015-Jun-2020%2014.00%20Tran.pdf?T=9>, pg. 29.

a copy of the guidance that has been shared with TfL staff, and for you to provide further information about how workers will be protected.

Compliance with the mandatory wearing of face masks on TfL services was initially gently enforced and compliance levels have been reasonably high. TfL received new enforcement powers on 2 July. TfL has been designated as a prosecuting authority, thereby allowing it to prosecute passengers who refuse to wear a face covering or refuse to pay a fine of up to £100 for non-compliance. Passengers can also be barred from travelling. **Please can you inform the Committee of the current level of compliance across the network and how that has changed since face masks were made mandatory on 15 June. How is TfL enforcing non-compliance of face mask wearing and what is the level of fines issued to date?**

We are conscious that BAME members of society are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The report from Public Health England released on 16 June 2020, *Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups*, highlighted the disproportionate mortality rate among black and Asian men. During the June meeting, you stated that nearly half of the Underground's frontline staff come from the BAME community and almost half of the networks bus drivers come from BAME backgrounds.² In your opening remarks, you also drew our attention to the fact that those frontline transport workers who have lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic were all men.³ In response to the report, the Mayor advised that employees of the Greater London Authority (GLA) family are to "have access to risk assessments as part of measures to help those disproportionately affected by Covid-19."⁴ To achieve this objective, Gareth Powell, Managing Director, Surface Transport, TfL informed the Committee that TfL is in the early stages of implementing these specific risk assessments for BAME staff and all staff who wish to undertake the process.⁵ Both Gareth Powell and Andy Lord, Managing Director, London Underground, TfL, stated the risk assessment is being communicated to staff through internal communications, line managers and via TfL trade unions or union partners. **Please can you inform the Committee how staff, particularly BAME colleagues, will be supported to provide accurate self-report risk assessments and how you will use this data you receive to update operational guidance and improve safety.**

Managing key transport interchanges

Despite the newly implemented practices across the network, we recognise that key interchange stations can pose difficulty with inconsistencies in messaging and safety measures between TfL and other railway operating companies. The TfL quick reference guide for *Interchange Best Practice* is 11 years old and therefore out of date.⁶ During the meeting, Andy Lord stated that TfL is "the first railway in the country" to reinforce social distancing requirements, with over 236,000 social distancing stickers and the use of an enhanced anti-viral cleaning regime across the network.⁷ Furthermore, the Committee was informed that he has been in frequent communication with the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Transport, as well as senior representatives at Network Rail and National Rail members of the Rail Delivery Group to discuss

² London Assembly Transport Committee (15 June 2020), *Item 9 – Impact of COVID-19 on London's Transport Network*, pg. 32.

³ *Ibid*, pg. 1.

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-introduces-risk-assessments-for-bame-staff>

⁵ *Ibid*, pg. 33.

⁶ TfL (2009), *Interchange Best Practice Guide*, <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/interchange-best-practice-guidance.pdf>.

⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee (15 June 2020), *Item 9 – Impact of COVID-19 on London's Transport Network*, pg.30.

TfL and the Department for Transport matters.⁸ **Considering the large number of key interchange stations across the capital, please can you report back to us regarding what plans have been put in place at interchange hubs to ensure continuity of messaging and safety measures remain high across all interchanges in the capital. Additionally, will the *Interchange Best Practice* reference guide be updated in line with the changes, and if so, what are the timelines for doing so? How is consideration given to those with disabilities and sensory impairments?**

As lockdown eases and schools and non-essential retail continue to reopen from 4 July 2020, demand on London's transport network is likely to increase. As a Committee, we are concerned that the network will be unable to manage this anticipated increase in demand whilst maintaining social distancing. The Government continues to advise that journeys only be made if they are essential or for work, where working from home is not possible. The Committee is concerned that increased opening of amenities will increase demand on the network and that journeys will be made that are non-essential. **Therefore, the Committee would like to receive information on how the potential increase will be monitored to ensure that journeys being made on the network are essential and how the wearing of face masks will be enforced with greater levels of demand. The Committee would also like to know what active work TfL are carrying out with the operators of all TfL services, Network Rail and the Rail Delivery Group to help manage demand and passenger flow.**

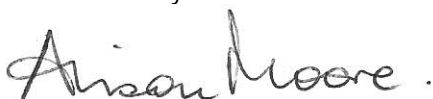
Planning for the future

We fully appreciate the financial pressures that TfL is experiencing as a result of reduced income from passenger fares. We acknowledge that 90 per cent of TfL's income has been lost, primarily due to decreased ridership. During the meeting you argued that the funding model is fundamentally broken and that income generated from passenger levels across the network may never return.⁹ We acknowledge that the Government funding package of £1.6bn provides a temporary stream of income. **The Committee would like to know what TfL's initial thoughts are with developing scenarios that offer a more sustainable long-term strategy and funding model.**

We would appreciate a response by Tuesday 28 July.

Again, we would like to extend our thanks to TfL and yourself during this time. Please contact Gino Brand (gino.brand@london.gov.uk), Senior Policy Adviser, if you have any questions about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Dr Alison Moore AM
Chair, Transport Committee

⁸ *Ibid*, pg.6.

⁹ *Ibid*, pg. 24.