

Concerns arising from Network Rail's approach to Safety at Euston Station

Image of Caroline Russell AM

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Dear Sadiq,

I am writing about Network Rail's response to concerns about safety at Euston Station. I'm particularly worried by [reports in the media that suggest senior staff appeared to focus on the reputation of their organisation](#) ahead of responding to safety concerns relating to overcrowding at Euston.

London TravelWatch has [called on Network Rail to take further action on safety at Euston](#), saying the station struggles with "high levels of overcrowding putting passengers in danger". Since then, the Secretary of State for Transport has [tasked Network Rail to "look again at how the station works on a day-to-day basis and to make immediate improvements wherever possible"](#).

Despite the instruction from the Secretary of State for Transport, the current Transport for London (TfL) Commissioner has [called this situation "not a great customer experience"](#), which seems an understatement of the conditions passengers regularly complain about.

As I would hope you have been made aware, after a series of Freedom of Information (FoI) and Subject Access requests it has been reported that the then Chair of Network Rail asked for the employment of both an employee of a contractor and the use of that contractor to be reviewed based on comments raising concerns about safety at Euston. The former Chair of Network Rail was then also Chair of London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) and indicated this role on their email signature in at least some of the messages concerned. Hence, I am

writing to you.

At the heart of this issue is a situation where senior leaders are giving an impression they prioritise defending the reputation of their organisation over addressing safety issues.

Safety is about addressing a range of evolving factors, both those that build up in particular situations, and those that are present all the time.

People are regularly raising concerns about safety at Euston when there is disruption and when trains are cancelled, or when people are given a platform with only moments before the train leaves, and it is only proper that these concerns about safety are addressed with urgency.

Allowing people in the transport industry to speak out freely on safety concerns is an important safety principle, that must always be defended. I would hope that you as Mayor and the wider GLA Group that you lead, including TfL, would be standing up for and respecting the importance of this freedom.

I am concerned about the threatening tone of phrases in the correspondence on Euston Station disclosed by Network Rail such as:

- "finding a potential supplier criticising a possible client reflects adversely on your likelihood of doing business with us or our supply chain",
- [asking for] "a request for disciplinary action as this is a serious and completely unproven allegation",
- and "how did we deal with him?".

This approach does not seem to be compatible with the [Nolan Principles of Public Life](#), or what the GLA Group would expect of people appointed to roles of leadership.

Can you write to me confirming your position on the serious issues this episode raises, and will you ensure a full review is undertaken in the GLA Group and at TfL to cover the conduct and behaviour of staff and appointees to establish any lessons learned for future guidance.

Can you also confirm the position that you and the TfL Commissioner currently take on the widely held concerns about safety at Euston, and tell me what representations your office, your Deputy Mayor and TfL have made to Network Rail about safety at Euston?

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Russell

Leader of the Green Group on the London Assembly

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