



Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

Mark Wild
Chief Executive
Crossrail

cc Andy Byford, Heidi Alexander, Seb Dance,

(Sent by email)

19 January 2022

Dear Mark,

Crossrail investigation

Thank you for attending the Transport Committee's investigation into Crossrail on 16 November 2021. As you know, the Transport Committee has a long-standing interest in Crossrail and its progress towards opening. It was therefore good to hear that significant progress appears to have been made on Crossrail since the last Committee investigation over a year ago, and that you are still confident of opening in the first half of 2022.

The Committee is, however, concerned about the impact of the Omicron variant on Crossrail trial operations. Can you please update the Committee on what impact you expect this to have on trial operations, *particularly planned mass evacuation exercises*, and whether *planned progress* is still viable with current levels of transmission and restrictions.

As well as welcoming the progress made, the Committee noted some further points around funding, governance and lessons learned on which we have some recommendations:

Governance review

Firstly, the Committee understands the reasons why TfL has not launched a review into Crossrail's new governance arrangements to date. However, we welcome the response that this may be something you would consider this year. The Committee recommends that you carry out this review once the Elizabeth Line central section has opened. Before the review is launched, the Committee would also like oversight of the draft terms of reference, with a chance to input and comment.

Publication of reports

The Committee would also like to express its concerns about the time taken for the publication of the Project Representative (PRep) reports. The Committee believes this is hampering public scrutiny, given the timeframes involved in producing the reports and having these checked by the Elizabeth Line Committee before publication. This means that by the time they are published, the reports are weeks, if not months, out of date. The Committee appreciates that you have attempted to tighten up these timeframes, however it also recommends that you review whether the current set of approvals before publication is appropriate, given the delay this causes to the publication of the reports.

Finances

On the subject of finances, the Committee notes that the Crossrail board were quite clear in August 2020 that the project may require an additional £1.1 billion to complete and this point was reiterated in the meeting by both Heidi Alexander and Andy Byford. Following negotiations between the Government and TfL an additional £825 million in borrowing was made available in December 2020. We acknowledge that a further discussion between TfL and the DfT would be required if TfL were not able to complete Crossrail within the current budget. The Committee would like to understand what plans are in place to secure further funding from the Government, if it is required, and what plans are in place if Government does not provide that required funding.

Learning lessons

The Committee was particularly interested in your responses to the questions about lessons learned, which included a reference to the potential for using more of a factory build with modular technology on future projects. This would have involved more offsite construction, and therefore the Committee would be interested to understand a bit more about this potential approach and whether it was considered as an approach earlier in the process, and where it was used successfully on the project.

The Committee also believes there is a need for a deeper learning exercise when it comes to community engagement with different groups, including local residents and businesses, as well as the wider communication carried out by the Crossrail project. Learning from the Crossrail Ombudsman and this review, will help inform engagement and communications with future major infrastructure projects.

We look forward to your response to these points. Please copy your correspondence to Luis Alvarado, Senior Policy Adviser for Transport at luis.alvarado@london.gov.uk by the end of 31 January 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Chair of the Transport Committee