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Howard Smith  
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Dear Sian,

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I am writing to update you on the Crossrail project following the opening of Bond Street station and the introduction of through running services on the Elizabeth line.

Through running services were introduced on the Elizabeth line on Sunday 6 November 2022, with Sunday services also commencing from this date. For the first time, the Central Operating Section (COS) was joined up with the mainline railway to the east and west. The Commissioner and I were honoured to be on the first train from Heathrow Terminal 5 to Abbey Wood and to then be joined, at Stratford, by The Mayor of London, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport Richard Holden, and the Mayor of Newham, to mark the occasion and ride through to Paddington.

Trains now enter the underground platforms from the west at Paddington, and from the east at Liverpool Street, and continue into the central tunnel. Meanwhile, passengers boarding at central section stations can make through journeys to the east and west of London without changing trains.

The changes from 6 November deliver a very significant uplift in service frequency, moving from the 12 trains per hour that have run in the COS since the service's introduction, to 22 trains per hour between Paddington and Whitechapel at peak times and 16 trains per hour off-peak.

Operating hours were also extended in the evening and the Elizabeth line is now operating passenger services seven days per week, from 05:30 to 23:30.

This is a major milestone and a hugely significant moment in the Crossrail programme overall – delivering for passengers many key benefits of the route for the first time, with fewer changes for many, and faster journey times.

With the new post-6 November schedule connecting the western section of the railway to the tunnel earlier than originally planned (and at the same time as the east), some passengers will experience minor temporary impacts on travel time. Currently, around a third of Elizabeth line services are required to pause outside Paddington for several minutes to fit with train paths in the central section (these extended pauses will be removed in May 2023, although some shorter waits will still be required to align with Network Rail timetables.) Additionally, service intervals at Abbey Wood will slightly increase until May. Both TfL and MTR have communications in place to keep passengers informed, particularly around wait times outside of Paddington.

Evidence from the early days of through running suggests a successful start, building on the back of exceptional performance the week before these changes were introduced. Initial teething problems with the transition into the central tunnels near Stratford have largely been overcome.

Train reliability remains around the minimum levels targeted for through running, however, it is expected to grow in the months ahead. Train manufacturer, Alstom, has several initiatives in place to increase the overall fleet reliability ahead of the delivery of the next train software release, scheduled for February 2023.

Despite being one of the most complex railways in the world, since opening, the Elizabeth line has consistently been one of the top performing railways nationally in terms of PPM (Public Performance Measure). There remain risks to this reliability with through running, notably the performance of infrastructure on the surface section in the west, where Network Rail colleagues are working hard to improve both the underlying reliability and the speed with which they respond to incidents.

### **Bond Street station**

The new Bond Street Elizabeth line station opened to passengers on Monday 24 October – in line with the commitment to deliver the station in the autumn. I hope you enjoyed the opportunity to visit the station shortly before its opening.

At 05:30 on opening day, I had the pleasure of being alongside the then Commissioner, Andy Byford, to open the doors to the station and welcome passengers for the first time. We were grateful to be joined by both the Mayor, and the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Katherine Fletcher MP, who I know were hugely impressed by the new facilities.

Bond Street station provides a direct link not only with areas to the east and west of London, but also with Heathrow Airport. The new station can accommodate up to 140,000 passengers a day, doubling capacity and supporting West End shops, restaurants, and theatres, in a further boost to London's recovery from the pandemic.

## **Safety**

Even with the ramping up of work to complete Bond Street station, the positive safety record on site has continued: Period 7 was a green period for the project with no Incidents or High Potential Near Misses (HPNMs) – an important statistic following Period 6 which saw three HPNMs investigated by the team. The Bond Street site has now reached 1.25 million work hours with no Lost Time Injuries (those resulting in someone needing to take time off) or RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable incidents.

This serves to demonstrate how the safety-first ethos is being emphasised through to the completion of all remaining works, and that same ethos is shared with colleagues on the operational side of the business.

## **Programme completion**

The project remains on track to deliver 24 trains per hour to passengers in the central section at peak times from May 2023, aligned with the National Rail timetable change.

The Crossrail Project will move into its Close Out phase from 16 January when Jim Crawford will step down as Chief Programme Officer for Crossrail, transferring responsibility to Kim Kapur as the Crossrail Close Out Director. At this point, the Crossrail Close Out Organisation will be a full part of the Elizabeth line team, reporting to me as the TfL Elizabeth line Director.

The move to Close Out is timed to follow the major signalling commissioning (ELR 300 software) over the Christmas period. A further signalling upgrade is due in Easter 2023 (ELR 400) at which time all station contracts are expected to be complete.

## **Ridership**

Since the railway opened in May 2022, more than 70 million journeys have been made altogether, with over 600,000 journeys a day mid-week following the start of through running, exceeding TfL's post-Covid-19 ridership estimates for the line.

Customer satisfaction is extremely high, with the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) score for the Elizabeth line at 83 in Q2, up from 77 in Q1 – the highest score over all TfL modes. Q2 is the first period where the Central Operating Section has been up and running throughout. The score for the central section was exceptional at 87, while the east and west saw CSS scores of 82 (up from 79) and 80 (up from 75) respectively. While these exceptional levels may be expected to reduce in future surveys, it demonstrates the enthusiasm with which Londoners have greeted the line since its opening in May.

## **Step-free access**

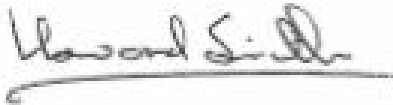
All stations along the Elizabeth line now have step-free access. Crossrail, National Rail, MTR and TfL continue to closely monitor the performance of step-free assets, with performance targets generally met across the network and ongoing work to improve reliability, particularly on the east and west. Performance was better than target at 99.0 per cent for Period 7 (18 September to 15 October).

**Focus and challenges**

Connecting the three separate railways and through-running is operationally challenging and still new to the teams and partner organisations involved. Our focus remains on maintaining and improving both the reliability and resilience of the railway and disseminating learning across TfL, our concessionaire MTREL and Network Rail. However, I am immensely proud of what the team has achieved and the response from customers and stakeholders.

Industrial action, and the potential disruption it can cause, remains a very real concern, and especially so for the newly integrated railway. We continue to work closely with all partners to minimise the impacts on the users of the Elizabeth line.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard Smith", is written over a horizontal line.

**Howard Smith**