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Alison Moore AM
Chair, London Assembly Transport Committee
City Hall
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Dear Alison,

We have seen over the past month an easing of restrictions by the government as the UK begins its journey from lockdown. But challenges still remain, not least for those in the construction industry where social distancing measures are having an impact on delivery. Despite significant challenges our focus remains on doing everything we can to open the central section between Paddington and Abbey Wood as soon as possible.

Although there is wider uncertainty around the future repercussions of the virus, what is clear is that that London needs the Elizabeth line more than ever; and everyone at Crossrail is working towards the delivery of a safe and reliable railway.

As mentioned in the May update, Trial Running is one of the critical components needed to unlock the path to the opening of the Elizabeth line. Our focus, therefore, remains on making progress across the programme to enable this at the earliest opportunity. To this end we are re-sequencing the work and developing a plan to deliver the railway, recognising the challenges posed by COVID-19.

We have moved to the next phase of works, gradually increasing the number of staff on our sites to complete the outstanding construction and assurance activities for Trial Running. These efforts will be supported by a five week 'blockade' across our tunnels, track, shafts and portals that will allow for the clearing of access to the central tunnel section for exclusive 24/7 access for construction and testing workers. This work will begin in August and in the lead up to it we will be engaging with local communities and stakeholders.

During the blockade we will also undertake further integration testing of the routeway which must be completed for Trial Running – there are 25 different scenarios that must be fully tested and completed ranging from a reboot of the central section signalling system to simulating a High Voltage power outage. The Routeway Integration Testing for Trial Running is over 60 per cent complete.

MOVING LONDON FORWARD



To commence Trial Running, Crossrail needs to complete the remaining key steps:

- All central section stations certified as ready to support Trial Running
- Complete handover of the shafts and portals to Transport for London (TfL)
- Complete Dynamic Testing of the signalling and train systems
- Handover the completed Routeway to TfL
- Complete the safety and assurance process for the Elizabeth line and obtain regulatory approval from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to commence Trial Running

The project's continued focus on shafts and portals is having a positive impact. Limmo Shaft is the latest asset to be at an advanced stage in the handover process. Good progress is being made in addressing the challenges of the handover of shafts and portals with seven out of ten of these assets in the process of being handed over and completed by the end of August. The three remaining shafts and portals (Eleanor Street Shaft, Plumstead Portal and Stepney Green Shaft) will be handed over in the coming months.

The testing of the signalling and train systems, known as Dynamic Testing, is progressing well after it resumed on 30 May. Testing of PD+11 software will conclude prior to the blockade and will mean that Crossrail has a viable software product available for Trial Running. The next evolution of software, referred to as TR2, will be ready for Trial Running.

All central section stations, except Bond Street, are now certified as ready to support Trial Running. Bond Street is uniquely affected by the new COVID-19 world we find ourselves in due to the volume of work remaining and the number of people required on site to complete the station. This meant that the work remaining at Bond Street for Trial Running needed to be re-planned. Discussions have been underway with the contractor at Bond Street to agree a way forward. As a result, CRL and Costain Skanska Joint Venture mutually agreed to conclude the existing contract on 24 June. Crossrail Ltd will oversee completion of the remaining works at Bond Street and allow us to re-plan and complete the work for Trial Running.

Work continues on understanding the financial and delivery implications of COVID-19 on the programme. A detailed assessment of the projected impact will be discussed at Crossrail Board in July and we will update stakeholders accordingly.

Safety

We have had a positive run of target zero days and weeks as we continue with the process of remobilising the programme and supply chain. With a steadily increasing number of staff on our sites it is important that we remain extra vigilant and focussed as the railway is now in the process of handover and the additional interfaces present additional risks. We remain committed to keeping our workforce safe and I would like to recognise the efforts of everyone involved in making this happen.

We continue to focus on mental health and wellbeing across the programme, with fortnightly monitoring of our people's wellbeing and regular features throughout our internal communications. The pace and complexity of delivery of the railway combined with the persistent personal and professional turbulence resulting from the global pandemic heightens the importance of looking after everyone's physical and mental health.

Central Section Progress

The focus on Shafts and Portals has resulted in Limmo Shaft achieving its 'Staged Completion for Familiarisation' state. It means that the safety critical works have been completed with only minor works and assurance documentation left to complete. This will be managed with dedicated resource, undertaken on an 8-week timeline and allows Rail for London to start familiarising itself with the asset. Following this success, the remaining three Shafts and Portals are working towards this milestone.

I wrote last month that all Engineering Safety Justifications (ESJs) for the Routeway have now been submitted, and we have now had our first track (Routeway Chapter) achieve its 'Readiness for Handover' milestone. Full Handover for the Routeway occurs in parallel with the railway entering into the ROGS (The Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006) environment, but this is a crucial step in progressing towards Trial Running.

Dynamic Testing of the railway recommenced successfully on 30 May and we are progressing well towards having the baseline software configuration completed for Trial Running. The programme is taking the opportunity to also progress the TR2 software configuration that builds on this baseline and de-risks Trial Running through significantly removing the need to depend on additional software releases.

Focus and Challenges

Throughout June and July, we are assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the programme and working on a new iteration of our delivery schedule and overall delivery plan. A significant amount of effort has gone into the development of these and in July they will be presented to the Board for approval.

As the remaining effort becomes increasingly focused on the assurance documentation that makes the safety case for entering Trial Running, we are ensuring that associated risks are managed, monitored and if necessary escalated to the Trial Running Mobilisation Board (TRMB) who have already implemented a number of strategic interventions to support the programme and entry into Trial Running. Regular monitoring is also taking place to assess where spare resource exists and repurposing it to focus on processing and completing numerous streams of concurrent assurance documentation.

Operational Readiness

TfL Rail services continue to deliver very high performance with 96.2% of trains meeting the reliability target (PPM) in the last four weeks and service levels virtually back to those operated before lockdown.

The full-length trains (9 car units) have been operating on services out of Paddington and are approved for Heathrow services but the requirement for a critical software fix means they are currently replaced by 7 car units.

Training of control room staff has restarted using safe systems of work and training and familiarisation of maintainers is about to do so, although this remains more difficult as it involves multiple sites and contractors.

Network Rail

Station enhancement work has resumed on both the east and west of the line in accordance with the latest government guidance. Network Rail are currently undertaking a nationwide assessment to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their works including those on the Elizabeth line route.

We are in the final phases of delivering this hugely complex railway, but it does not come without challenges. The Crossrail leadership will continue to remain vigilant, flexible and innovative in our approach as we work towards delivering this railway for London.

Kind regards,



Mark Wild
CEO