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Navin Shah AM  
Chair, London Assembly Transport Committee  
City Hall  
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7 May 2020

Dear Navin,

Our energy continues to be focussed on meeting the challenge posed by COVID-19. I am proud of the Crossrail team for their tireless commitment and energy to keep the programme moving forward.

Physical works on all our sites remain temporarily paused following the decision we took on 24 March. This decision was taken in accordance with the guidance at the time from the Government and Public Health England; to ensure that our sites complied with the guidance on social distancing to keep our workforce safe and recognising the need to reduce the number of people using public transport.

Essential and business critical work continues across the programme supported by those across Crossrail Ltd and our supply chain working virtually. The focus for everyone on Crossrail is progressing programme activity that supports our entry into intensive operational testing, known as Trial Running, at the earliest opportunity.

Many of those who are working virtually are progressing the vital assurance and safety certification that must be completed before the Elizabeth line can open – a huge number of documents must be completed as part of the assurance process. These tasks are being assisted by small teams of engineers who are conducting assurance verification and validation work at the central station sites. This work, which is not construction activity, involves photographing and inspecting physical assets and allows Crossrail to maintain momentum without compromising the safety of the workforce or the public. All sites where this activity is taking place is fully compliant with Government guidance. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 the project has still been able to achieve notable milestones over the past month including the handover of the first central section station, Custom House, to Transport for London which is a significant achievement. A number of our central section stations have now been certified as ready for Trial Running.

Crossrail Ltd and its contractors are regularly looking at the way we work and are adapting for the benefit of the project, building our capabilities and taking opportunities as the constraints are eased. These ongoing assessments are informed by the latest guidance from the Government and Public Health England and will prioritise the safety of both our staff and the wider community.

Where possible we are continuing to support our Tier 1 contractors during this challenging time and are working with our Tier 2 suppliers to ensure niche and critical works can continue safely.

## MOVING LONDON FORWARD

COVID-19 will have an impact on the programme but it is too early to tell exactly how the impact will be felt. Work is underway to understand the impacts, as far as possible and we will be able to update the London Assembly and our stakeholders over the coming months. For now we are focussing on getting as much done as we can, while ensuring that our people are safe.

## **Safety**

Safety and health are, and always have been, the priority in delivering this railway. This is felt even stronger in the context of the current pandemic. I am proud that those delivering Crossrail – our suppliers, our project teams, and my leadership team – successfully planned and implemented a safe stop at all of our sites without anybody getting hurt. It is excellent news that we have maintained this green status in the weeks since we implemented the safe stop and is testament to the dedication of all of our people to Target Zero.

As well as a focus on physical health we believe that the mental health and wellbeing of staff is equally important. The recently launched Crossrail Resource Hub is able to assess the overall health and wellbeing of the organisation. It is also being used to signpost employees to the existing wellbeing support and services provided.

In May, we will also be hosting our next ‘Stepping Up’ week which will have a mental health and wellbeing focus.

## **Central Section Progress**

The month has been a demonstration of what is capable in a remote working environment. We have handed over Custom House station, the first of our central section stations, and Royal Oak Portal to Transport for London - both are significant milestones for the programme on our journey to Trial Running.

We have also achieved endorsement from Crossrail’s Rail Assurance Board (RAB-C) for the Staged Completion 1 (SC1) status at a further three stations – Liverpool Street, Whitechapel and Woolwich. This certification is an essential requirement for entering Trial Running.

All Engineering Safety Justifications (ESJs) for the Routeway have now been submitted. These ESJs are a crucial milestone that, once approved, will allow subsequent assurance required to enter Trial Running to be started.

Having undertaken a series of independent reviews into the status of the shafts and portals, we now have agreed handover dates between the delivery, technical and operator organisations and we have an action plan underway to address the challenges identified.

We took the decision to pause the testing of the technical railway systems (Dynamic Testing) following the safe stop of physical works on the central section. We are currently working with our supply chain to finalise the restart strategy for testing of the railway.

## **Focus and Challenges**

We all face significant personal and professional challenges in the coming months. While I am proud of how we have responded to the uncertainty to date, we will undoubtedly need to remain as resolute for the foreseeable future to protect our people and protect the programme.

A priority for the programme now is the pivot to completing the activities capable of being undertaken in a remote working environment – primarily assurance activities and a small selection of pre-approved works on site that unlock further assurance opportunities. We have developed a resource hub to support this, capable of identifying extra capacity around the programme able to support the effort.

While we continue with the assurance challenge, we are also working on an overall strategy for the restart of physical works on site, headed by our COVID-19 response structure and in coordination with our Sponsors. A key part of this is the protection and health of our supply chain who are vital to delivering the Elizabeth line.

### **Operational Readiness**

TfL Rail services continue to operate to a special timetable reflecting current restrictions but with very high reliability. All services to and from Reading are now being operated with full length Class 345 trains (9 carriages), replacing the shorter length trains (7 carriages) that have now been transferred to the Shenfield line and have allowed the 30-year-old Class 315 trains to be withdrawn. There was an overall increase in the number of technical incidents per mile in March, however, Bombardier has identified the reasons for this and they are being addressed.

We await approval of the application to the Office of Road and Rail to operate the full-length Class 345 stock for Stage 2B (Heathrow to Paddington). This authorisation is expected shortly.

Work continues in readiness for Trial Running, although in the short-term training has been paused due to the current restrictions. Ways are being sought to resume training including building the operations control capability through virtual Incident Command exercises.

### **Network Rail**

In line with Crossrail's safe stop and the general industry response to COVID-19, Network Rail temporarily paused station enhancement work on the east and west of the route. They have since been identifying opportunities that can be progressed to support delivery and will be resuming enhancement work in May whilst adhering to latest Government and Public Health England guidance.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]  
**Mark Wild**  
**CEO**