



Dame Meg Hillier DBE MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

2nd August 2022

Dear Chair,

Howard Smith
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Crossrail progress update: Spring 2022/23

Following the previous letter to the Public Accounts Committee from then Crossrail CEO Mark Wild, dated 25 March 2022, I am writing to offer an update on the Crossrail project.

The Elizabeth line's opening took place on 24 May 2022, within the committed window of the first half of the year. This included the opening of the central section between Paddington and Abbey Wood, and the rebrand of TfL Rail services in the east and west to the Elizabeth line.

Over one million passengers used the central section of the Elizabeth line in the first five days of operation. Currently, between 200,000 and 250,000 passengers are using the central section every day. This suggests that revenue generated from the line will be at or above expected levels, with initial data expected in the coming weeks.

As planned, the line is for now operating as three separate railways, in the east, west and through central London. Trains currently run Monday to Saturday, 6:30 to 22:00. Services from Reading, Heathrow and Shenfield are expected to connect with the central tunnels from autumn this year.

Nine of the ten new central section stations have been handed over to TfL and are now open to passengers. Bond Street station, the final station yet to be completed continues to make good progress. The team at Bond Street station are working hard on the final architectural finishes and systems integration in order to open the station to customers later this year.

On 26 July, the project's joint sponsors Transport for London and the Department for Transport together published the Elizabeth line benefits framework. This framework sets out how evidence will be gathered to establish whether the benefits and outcomes of the new railway are as expected. It will also help to ensure that the return on investment is being maximised – and establish lessons for future projects on how to deliver the best value for the local area. We look forward to sharing and discussing the findings with you further.

Safety

Operational safety performance across the Elizabeth line and overall project safety both remain good, with all the safety performance indicators currently better than target.

Operational Performance

Performance on the Elizabeth line, which now includes the Central Operating Section, has been good and this continues to be an important focus for the team. The average Elizabeth line Public Performance Measure (PPM) in Period 3 (29 May – 25 June 2022) across the three sections was 94.9 per cent, above a target of 94 per cent, with the overall Moving Annual Average trend reaching 94 per cent.

Performance on the east and west came in at 93.6 per cent and 93.7 per cent respectively during Period 3. PPM in the central section was 96.8 per cent, now well above the target at opening of 95 per cent.

During the first half of Period 4 (6 June onwards), PPM for the whole of the Elizabeth line was again better-than-target at 95 per cent – which amounted to an industry leading performance for the period.

Programme update

Bond Street station is the only new Elizabeth line station where major work is still continuing, and all efforts are focussed on opening the station to customers at the earliest possible time. The station continues to make good progress and is on track to be delivered in the autumn.

Work on the railway continues both in engineering hours and on Sundays to allow for testing and for a series of software updates to take place in preparation for more intensive services later this year. A small number of full-weekend closures are also planned to allow further preparations for through-running and higher frequency services in the autumn (Stage 5b minus).

Critical to improvements in reliability which enabled the opening of the central section was the major ELR200 signalling software upgrade, carried out during the Easter 2022 blockade. Since then, a subsequent update, ELR201, has also been commissioned, restoring some aspects of functionality that had regressed in ELR200. A further signalling software update ELR210 was implemented over the last weekend in July and this will be the final configuration in place for the commencement of 5b minus services.

This next phase will see the Elizabeth line's east and west sections join up with the central tunnels, connecting Heathrow and Reading in the west with Abbey Wood, and Shenfield in the east with Paddington. This will be of significant value to passengers on some services in and out of central London who will no longer need to change trains when travelling to or from stations in the central section.

At this point, passengers will also benefit from a peak of 22 trains per hour between Paddington and Whitechapel and 16 trains per hour off-peak, as well as the start of Sunday running.

Delivering full Elizabeth line services

The start date for full Elizabeth line services is linked to improved reliability growth, and successful commissioning of further upgrades to signalling and rolling stock software. Reliability across all three sections of the railway will be a key factor in achieving its final configuration.

Particular attention is currently being paid to the transitions, for example, reliability of the transition at Stratford between the central and surface sections of the line.

Work is underway with our signalling supplier to build reliability to the level required to deliver both through-running and a higher frequency of services later in 2022. A further timetable trial, featuring 20 trains per hour in the central section, was undertaken on 19 June 2022 supporting that reliability development.

Going forward, adjustments to Elizabeth line services must be aligned with National Rail timetable changes, and as a result must be preceded by fixed notice periods. A T-minus process is being established for delivering the railway in its final configuration that builds on the approach taken during the countdown to revenue service of the Elizabeth line.

The project remains on track to deliver the Elizabeth line in that final configuration by the end of May of 2023.

Surface stations

Network Rail continues station upgrades on the eastern section, predominantly at Ilford which continues to make solid progress. The lifts at Romford station are open to the public offering step-free access for passengers, with the new ticket hall expected to open during August.

Work to replace the defective concrete slab at Ilford is now largely completed. Network Rail anticipates the new station building and lifts, which will enable step-free access from pavement to platform, to be brought into use before the end of summer.

Cost

The current P50 Anticipated Final Crossrail Direct Cost (AFCDC) which represents the median value scenario is £15,963m. This is £174m above the additional funding of £825m which was made available to the programme in December 2020. The requirement for up to an additional £1.1bn in funding, as declared by the outgoing Crossrail Board in August 2020, remains consistent with current estimates at higher levels of probability.

As at 28 May 2022, Crossrail Ltd has drawn down £816m out of the additional £825m in funding, covering commitments over a number of future periods, including, in some instances, securing resources for the remainder of the programme.

Governance / Scrutiny

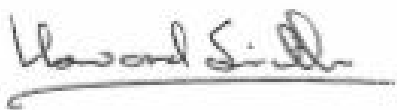
Following the successful launch of the railway, and as planned, Mark Wild stepped down as Chief Executive Officer at the end of May and the Crossrail organisation has slimmed down with a view to meeting the ongoing needs of the project. As Elizabeth line Director, I will continue to be accountable for the railway and Jim Crawford, Chief Programme Officer, will lead the completion of the remaining programme works, including those at Bond Street.

The Elizabeth line Delivery Group and the Elizabeth line Committee continue to meet on a regular basis in order to provide oversight of the project and ensure that decision-making between Crossrail Ltd and TfL is fully aligned during the final phases of the project.

Crossrail Ltd continues to provide regular project updates to the Mayor of London, Deputy Mayor for Transport and the Mayor's Chief of Staff as well as to the London Assembly and the DfT minister responsible for Crossrail.

Should you require any further information on the project please do not hesitate to contact me, or to reach out to Crossrail's External Affairs lead, Jamie Peters, on 07866 536600 or by email via jamespeters@tfl.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Howard Smith', with a horizontal line underneath.

Howard Smith

CC: Andy Byford, Commissioner at Transport for London
Bernadette Kelly CB, Permanent Secretary, Department for Transport
Gareth Davies, Permanent Secretary, Department for Transport Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), NAO