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Dear Caroline,

We remain committed to being able to provide an opening window - the Earliest Opening Programme (our route to get the railway up and running as quickly and safely as possible) - in April. That programme includes delivery of all the remaining Stages of the project and delivery of the Elizabeth line.

It is likely to be a wide range that will progressively narrow as we refine down the information in the schedule, calibrate against productivity achieved, milestones achieved and progress of dynamic testing.

This process is taking longer than I had hoped but we are making progress. We hope to provide more detail to the Assembly, our London stakeholders and beyond, later in April. In line with the Mayor's letter to the Assembly Chairman, I would be pleased to attend a full meeting of the Assembly soon after that.

Please find below the rest of this month's update on the Crossrail project for the Transport Committee of the Assembly.

Safety

On health and safety, performance remains within targets. However, in March we had 2 reportable incidents (one individual who missed his footing and the other an individual manual handling a polystyrene block), one lost time case (a tripping incident) and six high potential near misses (three of which related to the high winds in March).

There are no identifiable unifying reasons for these occurrences, but every incident is one too many and should be avoidable – all are investigated. Overall there is continued focus on the change of risk profile of the project as we continue to work both in a construction environment and an energised operational environment during dynamic testing.

Programme

Our weekly cost spend has reduced, however, the Earliest Opening Programme will need to be examined for cost and commercial impact.

As you would expect the staff associated costs previously budgeted has increased significantly as the project is re-resourced and strengthened.

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Assurance of the programme has commenced with a “red team review” undertaken to look at the programme development so far including an assessment of the organisational capacity, programme interventions, schedule logic and dependencies and our technical and engineering strategies. We will then need to undertake a “black team review” which will assure the complete programme including cost, time and commercial risk.

Central Section Progress

We have achieved 16 of 22 Tier One Substantial Decommissioning (TOSD) milestones – and achievement at Whitechapel (London Overground and Underground areas) at the end of March under review. Our costs are directly linked to the time period that contractors are involved in the project. You will recall that is why we have been pursuing a policy of driving towards TOSD to reduce the numbers of workers on sites as rapidly as possible.

The completion of installation, including close-out of critical snags and provision of associated information at stations, shafts and portals remains an issue. This reflects a combination of the complexity of interfacing activities required to complete works, as well as constraints in the technical capabilities both within the supply chain and Crossrail. A major deployment of additional technical resource is currently underway to remedy this.

Main Dynamic Testing

29 out of 222 test cases have been passed. However, this is a lengthy process and not always straightforward. While testing progress appears positive there are some signalling tests that cannot be performed due to a combination of insufficient software maturity, train maturity and incomplete interfacing systems.

Due to a safety critical failure we did not start close-headway testing - that is to say testing the trains close together - on 18 March as planned. A team is currently investigating that failure. However, testing is continuing using multiple trains in the tunnels, but they are being kept with a station’s testing distance between them. Subject to the findings of the review and subsequent safety assurance, we are aiming to commence close-headway testing after Easter.

Operations progress

The plans to deliver Stage 5a – a TfL Rail service between Paddington (main line station) and Reading are progressing for commencement in December 2019. We are working with Network Rail to finalise their schedule to deliver the required works (platform extensions and platform/train cameras) in time. The delivery of the full-length units for MTR-C to drive for this service is progressing.

Network Rail

The contract award for the three remaining station enhancement works on the west (Ealing Broadway, West Ealing and Acton Mainline) is [REDACTED]. Mobilisation on the other three west stations (West Drayton, Hayes & Harlington, and Southall) has commenced. And progress towards final award of the contracts for Ilford and Romford stations - [REDACTED] - is progressing with enabling works being carried out.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Mark Wild
CEO