

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

BOARD

SUBJECT: LONDON UNDERGROUND PERFORMANCE DURING INDUSTRIAL ACTION

DATE: 8 DECEMBER 2010

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Board with an overview of London Underground's (LU) performance during the recent industrial action.
- 1.2 The Board is asked to note this paper.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Four 24-hour strikes have now taken place across LU as part of the dispute with the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) and Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) over changes to staffing in stations.
- 2.2 The changes, which were first proposed in March 2010, will result in an overall reduction of 800 posts, including 150 station management and administration posts and 650 frontline station staff posts.
- 2.3 The changes are intended to update LU's station staffing to ensure that it better reflects customer behaviour and specifically to take account of the sharp decline in the numbers of customers using ticket offices, with only one journey in 20 now starting with a trip to a staffed ticket office. In making the reductions, LU's aims are to:
 - (a) ensure that station staff are more effectively deployed away from ticket offices into areas where they can better assist customers (such as in ticket halls and on gatelines);
 - (b) ensure that LU is able to meet its commitment of having staff rostered at all times of the day and night when services are running; and
 - (c) continue to provide ticket office services for the minority of customers who still use them, while ensuring that opening times better reflect the significant declines in demand.
- 2.4 In making the proposals, LU made clear that there would be no compulsory redundancies and instead the reductions would be made through targeted voluntary severance, not filling vacant posts and natural attrition rates.
- 2.5 To date, 150 management and administration posts have been removed and there are now around 350 station staff vacancies which will not be filled. The number of employees actually likely to be affected by the changes when they take effect in February 2011 now therefore stands at around 300. Most of these employees will be placed in reserve positions until posts in 'rostered'

station positions become available. A small number (around 50) of ticket-sellers will take voluntary severance. It is anticipated that all members of staff will be in a rostered position within 12 months of the changes taking place due to natural attrition.

- 2.6 The RMT union balloted all of its members within LU (including Operations, Maintenance and Head Office), in August 2010, with the following outcome:

8,676 people were balloted:

- 2,810 voted in favour of strike action
- 893 voted against strike action
- 25 spoiled ballot papers

- 2.7 The TSSA union balloted only its station staff members, with the following outcome:

1,097 were balloted:

- 384 voted yes to strike action
- 145 voted no to strike action
- 12 spoiled ballot papers

- 2.8 Those voting yes to strike action represent around 33 per cent of those balloted and around 17 per cent of LU's overall workforce.

3 OPERATIONS DURING STRIKE ACTION

- 3.1 LU's aim has been to deliver as much service and carry as many passengers as possible during the periods of strike action. Resources have been carefully targeted to take account of non-striking members of staff (including members of the ASLEF union) and also volunteers.
- 3.2 The level of service provided has been over 40 per cent of the normal figure during each of the most recent two strikes and LU carried around 50 per cent of passenger levels.
- 3.3 Since the first strike in September 2010, there has been a small decline in the number of staff supporting the strikes; however, the figures for the latest strike are not yet available. Non-operational LU staff and staff from across TfL have volunteered to assist during the strikes, with the numbers increasing for the last two strikes to around 700.

3.4 A summary of key statistics is provided below.

Train service achieved

Average percentage achieved*			
6/7 September	3/4 October	2/3 November	28/29 November
36%	36%	42%	42%

* Average of hourly trains in service compared with those scheduled between 06:00 and 00:00

Customer journeys achieved

Estimated number of Oyster customer journeys*			
7 September	4 October	3 November	29 November
843,000	1,171,000	1,433,000	1,425,000

It is estimated that LU carried around of 2 million customers each day when non –Oyster journeys are included to the above figures for the third and fourth strikes.

Percentage of expected Oyster customers journeys*			
7 September	4 October	3 November	29 November
36%	40%	49%	47%

* For the most recent strike, 49 per cent of the expected customers numbers were carried during the AM peak, compared to expected customer journeys. The slight reduction on 29 November compared to 3 November may reflect the impact of the very cold weather on decisions not to travel.

TALKS WITH THE TRADES UNIONS

- 4.1 Although attempts at detailed discussion on the issues were met with trade union intransigence over a period of many months – demanding that proposals be withdrawn prior to any talks commencing – more recently, both unions engaged in more constructive and detailed discussion. During the two weeks before the last strike, there were many hours of talks involving both unions at ACAS. This culminated, on 25 November, in LU offering a further six week period of intensive discussion and reviews to address the detailed points raised, including on individual station rosters and any potential safety issues, during which time all implementation activity would be put on hold.
- 4.2 On Friday 26 November 2010, the unions announced in the media that the offer had been declined and that the strike would go ahead.
- 4.3 No further formal talks are now planned, but it remains LU’s position that it will talk at any time and on any issue regarding the proposals.

5 COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 Communication with customers, stakeholders, employees and the media has been essential in managing the response to the strike action. This has been handled in an integrated way across TfL. A special ‘strike’ information page has been established on the TfL website, linked to Journey Planner, to provide a focal point for information relating to LU services running and also alternative TfL services. During the last three strikes, the page has also included an advance warning of services that LU expected to run and the stations expected to be kept open. This has been downloaded by 300,000 customers prior to each strike.
- 5.2 Website traffic shows a very high level of usage – a total of 1.2 million visits and nearly 10 million pages of information were seen during the strike on 25 November – peaking during the most recent strike at around seven times its usual traffic rate and with live travel news peaking at around 40 times its usual traffic rate during 7am and 8am.
- 5.3 Over 11,500 calls for travel information were serviced by the Travel Information Centres.
- 5.4 Regular press notices were issued both before and during the strikes to provide early warning of service impacts and updates on the services being run. Press notices and briefings to media also included key lines about the reasons for the changes and our commitments to continued station staffing; continued ticket office services; and no compulsory redundancies. A large number of interviews were given on local TV and radio. An example of the press notices issued is provided in Appendix 1.
- 5.5 Key stakeholders (including business groups, local authority officers, Councillors, Members of Parliament and Assembly Members) were also kept regularly informed of the services through email alerts.
- 5.6 During the most recent strike action, of the 1,330 calls received by LU’s Customer Service Centre, only 35 (2.6 per cent) were complaints.
- 5.7 Internally, LU has been providing regular updates to staff on the progress of talks with the unions through internal bulletins and also regular management conference calls to ensure a cascade of face-to-face communication of the key messages. In addition, the Managing Director has a blog, “Mike Brown’s blog”, which receives many thousands of hits each month, has also been utilised as a vehicle for communicating LU’s position to staff. Other communications have included calls for volunteers. A sample blog is included in Appendix 2.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Board is asked to note LU’s operational performance during the recent industrial action.

7 CONTACT

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Transport for London



PN-376e
29 November 2010

Tube carries half usual number of passengers despite strike – 17:30 update

- **Trains running on all but Circle line**
- **More than three quarters of stations open, and up to 40 per cent of trains running during evening peak**
- **Passengers should check before travelling at www.tfl.gov.uk**
- **Fourth pointless strike “has achieved nothing whatsoever”**

London Underground (LU) is operating train services on ten out of 11 lines this evening as Tube and other transport services combine to ensure that Londoners can continue to get around the Capital despite today’s futile strike action called by the RMT and TSSA leaderships.

Analysis of Oyster data shows that the Tube has carried half the usual number of passengers despite the strike. LU has operated half of its usual number of trains for large parts of the day, and intends to maintain up to 40 per cent of services during this evening. More than three-quarters of stations are currently open... The Waterloo & City, Northern, Victoria and Metropolitan lines are all now running services from end to end, and the majority of the Jubilee and District lines are also being served.

Services are currently operating as follows. Some stations may be currently closed.

- Northern line – operating across the full line
- The Waterloo & City line is operating across the full line
- The Metropolitan line is operating to all destinations
- Victoria line – operating across the full line
- Jubilee line - operating a service between Stratford and Wembley Park

- The Bakerloo line is operating between Queen's Park and Elephant & Castle, with London Overground services operating between Queens Park and Harrow & Wealdstone
- The District line is operating between Upminster and Ealing Broadway / Wimbledon
- The Piccadilly line is operating Cockfosters to Arnos Grove, and Heathrow Terminal 5 to Acton Town.
- Central line – is running between White City and Ealing Broadway/West Ruislip, and between Liverpool Street and Epping/Hainault
- The Hammersmith & City line is operating between Hammersmith and Aldgate

As announced last week, LU does not intend to operate the Circle line, as most of its stations are served by other lines.

Services may vary throughout the day depending on resources available. There will be disruption throughout the rest of the day, so passengers are urged to check before they travel to see how Tube services are operating and which alternative services are available via www.tfl.gov.uk.

Good services are operating on the bus network, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), and London Overground. Extra bus services have been provided, along with extra capacity for an additional 10,000 journeys on river services, and marshalled taxi ranks. Volunteers are on hand at bus, Tube, and rail stations to help passengers and distribute walking maps and other useful information.

LU was able to operate more than 40 per cent of its normal services during the last strike and carried 50 per cent of its normal passenger levels. Almost 95 per cent of all usual Oyster journeys were also undertaken across London's transport network.

Mike Brown, Managing Director of London Underground and London Rail said:

“After consulting with the union leaderships on our staffing proposals for more than six months, trying to establish what specific safety concerns they may have, we offered a further six weeks to discuss our plans. For them to reject this and threaten more strike action next year is staggering, and will be seen by Londoners for what it is – an attempt to

hold our city to ransom. It will not work. Among union members support for this strike diminishes all the time, and Londoners simply won't let this futile action stop them getting around their city.

“Moreover, despite their ludicrous claims, the RMT and TSSA leaderships have offered absolutely no evidence that the information we are providing to help passengers get around London is anything other than accurate. They have not because they cannot. Services are operating on virtually all lines today. If the union leaders had been out and about on the network, as I have, they'd have seen busy trains and stations and customers going about their normal business. In fact the Tube carried half of its usual number of passengers today despite the pointless strike.

“We want an end to this dispute, and have given the unions every assurance that stations will remain staffed, every station that currently has a ticket office will retain one, and that there will be no compulsory redundancies or loss of earnings. We believe that a resolution will only be achieved through talks, not through further threats to disrupt London.”

Customers are advised to check www.tfl.gov.uk for the latest information on which services will be running and for a range of travel tools to help plan an alternative route or method of transport.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Some LU ticket offices now regularly sell fewer than 10 tickets an hour. The quietest ticket offices include North Ealing, which sells less than six tickets per hour, and Latimer Road and Moor Park, which sell only around seven tickets per hour.
- Overall, sales from ticket offices are down 28 per cent over the last four years as more and more people switch to Oyster and just one in 20 Tube journeys now starts with a visit to a ticket office.
- Under LU's proposals staff will be more effectively deployed to areas of stations where they can better assist customers, removing duplication of roles whilst delivering the best possible value for fare and taxpayers.
- The proposed changes would mean a reduction in the total number of posts across LU, but will involve no compulsory redundancies, and will have no impact on the Tube's high safety standards.
- The changes would not affect Tube drivers, and the majority of the roughly 800 posts identified for reduction are ticket office staff. More than half of the reductions have already been achieved. 150 administrative and management staff have already taken voluntary severance and 300 posts are currently vacant and will not be filled.

Mike Brown's Blog – 26 November 2010

Facing strike action

The latter part of this week has been dominated, yet again, by the threat of industrial action. I want to give you my view on what has happened this week.

For many months the unions refused to engage in meaningful discussion on the proposals for station staffing. Their starting point was that we must withdraw all proposals. Clearly that was not an option.

The proposals put forward in March were our response to changing circumstances and specifically changes to customer behaviour. As with any organisation it is absolutely right that we review our staffing models and bring them up to date if necessary.

Right from the start we made it absolutely clear that there would be no compulsory redundancies as part of these changes. One of our main objectives is to reduce the impact on our people.

We have also made it clear that our fundamental staffing model – people rostered at stations at all times – is not to be touched. But the fact is the changes we are making have the protection of our customer service at their heart. This is why we are also keeping ticket offices open at the stations which currently have them – demand at some is extremely low (and declining) but we know that some of our customers still prefer to buy their tickets this way and they will continue to be able to do so.

Recently, we felt that we had had something of a breakthrough with the unions. Some weeks ago now the team working on the ticket office changes started detailed discussions with representatives from both the TSSA and RMT. These discussions culminated this week in the unions calling for us to put the proposals on hold for 12 weeks while we reviewed the safety case and other concerns. We felt strongly that this would have a significant impact on the roll-out of the plans and instead proposed a six week pause in the implementation plan to review any safety or other concerns.

We believed this proposal had genuine support from the unions. At ACAS their representatives had worked very hard in developing much of it and it went a long way towards addressing the points that they said were of most importance to them and their members. But today we learned through the media (at the time of writing we still have not had official notice) that the offer has not been accepted and that strike action will go ahead.

This looks extremely cynical to me – the unions say they are concerned about safety; well, let's take six weeks and sit down and look at each of these concerns. Instead, the union leaderships would rather have their members out on strike – a strike that they know is pointless.

We have already seen 150 members of staff leave the organisation on voluntary severance. We have more than 300 vacancies that are not being filled and a further 50 members of station staff (those in areas where we are making reductions) have now said that they would be interested in voluntary severance. For the remaining post reductions, people will be placed on the reserve until the natural leave rate means that they can join the roster on their original group. The management and administration changes have already been made. We are well advanced in preparing for the changes in February. These changes will happen. It is grossly unfair to expect people to lose pay for nothing and at the same time to cause such a high level of disruption for London.

The trades unions have always had an important contribution to make to our organisation. I have always believed that. But the behaviour this week and during this current dispute brings in to question the motivation of some of those who claim their role is to protect their members.

I hope you will think again about losing another days pay and will consider coming to work on Sunday and Monday to help run a service. We will do everything we can to keep London moving.