

Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel



Date: 6 December 2022

Item: Operation London Bridge

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

1.1 This paper updates the Panel on how TfL managed Operation London Bridge, the State Funeral arrangements following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

2 Recommendation

2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the paper.**

3 Operational Planning and Response

3.1 Operation London Bridge was the code-name for the State Funeral arrangements for Her Majesty The Queen. Overall responsibility for Operation London Bridge sat with the Royal Household led by the Earl Marshal, with TfL working with partners to deliver the funeral plan.

How we planned

3.2 Operation London Bridge had been developed over several years, working extensively with stakeholders from across the transport sector, Emergency Services (including Metropolitan Police Service, London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service, Government, Local Authorities and the Military to build awareness, develop a co-ordinated response and adapt to emerging risks. This was to ensure a cohesive strategic plan for the period of national mourning.

3.3 The complex nature of Operation London Bridge meant that plans were regularly rehearsed, with both internal and external exercises carried out to ensure all parties understood their roles and responsibilities and continually refined the planned responses.

How we responded

3.4 On 8 September 2022 at 18:30, it was publicly announced that Her Majesty The Queen had died at her Balmoral estate. Following the announcement, we immediately activated Operation London Bridge, through our Network Management Control Centre (NMCC), standing up our highest command structure (Level 4). This began with the mobilisation of our operational response across the road network, streets and our public transport modes. The operational

response was co-ordinated through our Palestra Event Liaison Facility (PELF). This single control hub enabled the co-location of over 25 organisations and agencies working seamlessly together to deliver the collective elements of Operation London Bridge. Organisations included the Greater London Assembly (GLA), Emergency Services, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Military and Network Rail.

- 3.5 Our command structure is based on a clear hierarchy, with nominated individuals across the organisation taking on the role of Duty Gold (strategic), Silver (tactical) and Bronze command. Their primary role is to act as a single point of contact, enabling a streamlined and effective mechanism to share information and escalate issues for resolution. The command group met regularly to oversee the implementation of the funeral plans, ensuring delivery was on schedule. This structure allowed us to make decisions quickly, escalate concerns to the right person and with assurance that all key information was being shared and understood – the co-ordinated decision making was a critical component to ensure the smooth operation and communication across the multi-agency approach.
- 3.6 In support of the operational command structure, we also set up a senior management oversight group, which met twice daily throughout the State Funeral period to provide strategic oversight to TfL's response and resolve any escalated issues. Our strategic Duty Gold was part of this group and retained overall command for the funeral plans, ensuring the strategic objectives were met and communication flowed unhindered.
- 3.7 Duty Silver was responsible for coordinating the tactical response across rail, Tube, the road network and on our streets, which included receiving huge amounts of information, which needed to be processed and then disseminated to various stakeholders, internally and externally. One way of co-ordinating this information was by chairing conference calls three times per day, to not only share situational awareness, but to act as the escalation point up the command structure.
- 3.8 Duty Gold and Silver also attended the wider multi-agency meetings led by the GLA to obtain and share situational awareness at the London and national levels. This was a critical step to ensure all key stakeholders were regularly updated again acting as a conduit back into TfL for sharing with all the agencies within PELF.
- 3.9 The volume of activities needed to support the funeral plans during the period of nation mourning was significant. Activities included supporting the numerous rehearsals, the return of Her Majesty The Queen to London from Scotland, the period of laying-in-state as well as the State Funeral. A few of the activities are listed below.
 - (a) We cancelled all planned, non-safety critical works across our Tube and rail networks and de-mobilised road works that were taking place on key routes throughout the period to minimise disruption to travellers.

- (b) We continued to operate all our Tube, Rail and River services - successfully managing the agreed station and pier closures around the funeral footprint, including Westminster Station and Pier.
- (c) We ran Tube services for an additional hour on the evening of the State Funeral. This required a significant amount of work to rewrite timetables as well as adjusting schedules for staff to make sure a regular and consistent service was provided without impacting the usual Rail and Tube services.
- (d) We continued to provide extensive bus services whilst managing the diversions and the curtailment of 120 bus routes around extensive road closures during the period of national mourning and on the day of the State Funeral. Bus Operators ran bus services at a Monday frequency, rather than a reduced or Sunday service on the day of the State Funeral which was declared a Bank Holiday.
- (e) We delivered a comprehensive communications, stakeholder and customer plan, including our own message of condolence and ongoing communications throughout the event.
- (f) We undertook extensive highway works to clean, repair and refresh 50 kilometres of highways used for the ceremonial procession and moves, including painting significant amounts of street furniture (lamp posts, fences etc), refreshing 5,000 metres of lane markings, as well as cleaning and waste removal before and after each rehearsal and on the day of the funeral. We also removed an array of asset infrastructure within the central funeral footprint to enable ceremonial activities to take place, and the numerous overnight rehearsals, with all assets being reinstated in time for return of service the following morning. This involved over 500 separate traffic signal pole removals and reinstatements over the event period.
- (g) We adjusted over 200 signalised junctions with bespoke timings to either manage pedestrian flows at key locations such as Green Park where the floral tribute was located, or support bus routes affected by road closures by increasing the amount of green time.
- (h) We reviewed over 240 permits to ensure non-essential road works were paused.
- (i) We successfully relocated coach service operations from Victoria Coach station to a temporary hub at Hillingdon station on the day of the State Funeral working with key internal and external stakeholders to ensure that people could still travel.
- (j) We deployed Compliance, Policing, Operations and Security officers to key locations where footfall was expected to be higher, supported road closures around the central footprint and provided assistance to travellers.
- (k) We also deployed over 2,500 volunteers (TfL Ambassadors) who supported the large crowds travelling to London, provided wayfinding and general assistance.

- (l) We removed or suspended 24 cycle hire docking stations within the event footprint and collected cycles and e-scooters that were within the secure event footprint.

4 We also provided Dial-A-Ride accessible transportation to the event.

Communicating with our customers

4.1 Our external communications response to support Operation London Bridge was developed over many years with operational colleagues, the Royal Household, Cabinet Office, the GLA and others, and delivered in two stages across the eleven-day event period:

- (a) Respectful communications: paying our condolences on activation with a message from the Commissioner, turning our webpage and other digital channels to black and white and pausing any advertising to ensure we were reflective of the mood of the nation; and
- (b) Customer communications: travel and transport impact and advice for those who wanted to pay their respects and those continuing to travel around London, as well as amplification of partner messaging around ceremonial events (such as Lying-in-State and processions). This included ensuring accessible options were promoted wherever possible, such as routes to the accessible Lying-in-State queue.

4.2 We developed key travel advice and impact messaging, which was disseminated through over 20 different channels, including:

- (a) twenty-three million emails sent to customers who are signed up to receive updates from TfL;
- (b) more than 350,000 visits to the dedicated travel advice webpage, with the peak (60,000 visits) on 18 September 2022, the day before the State Funeral;
- (c) eight different posters displayed across thousands of whiteboards across our entire Tube, rail, Bus and tram network, as well as PA announcements and Dot Matrix messages.
- (d) creating the overall wayfinding and signage strategy and equipment used by all partners and overseeing the installation of thousands of wayfinding signs across central London and Windsor within days of activation. This helped to ensure accessible, respectful and inclusive navigation between stations;
- (e) sixteen press interviews carried out across the network;
- (f) over half a million impressions on our social media posts via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram;
- (g) daily stakeholder updates to advise on the latest transport impact information across all modes;
- (h) daily Metro updates, including a walking map of the ceremonial event areas;

- (i) working closely with commercial media partners to remove any unofficial or inappropriate advertising from the across our advertising estate, including the TfL website. Removing all advertising from the funeral procession route with our commercial media partners to preserve the tone and gravitas of the occasion;
 - (j) collaborating with commercial media partners to pause and restart advertising as appropriate and to temporarily display condolence and commemorative messaging;
 - (k) working with Metro newspaper to ensure distribution levels reflected the volume of people using each station throughout the period of mourning and event days;
 - (l) information updates to station staff, ambassadors and event stewards, to pass directly to customers;
 - (m) reviews of our real-time channels to ensure accurate travel information for customers; and
 - (n) using TfL Go 'promoted places' content to help customers travel and provide interesting information about the Queen and TfL. This generated nearly 70,000 views over the six days it was displayed.
- 4.3 A huge internal communications campaign supported delivery of Operation London Bridge and recognised the efforts of staff involved once it concluded. This included setting up a dedicated SharePoint (which was updated regularly), leadership briefings, line manager guidance, Commissioner messaging for all colleagues, manager bulletins, photoblogs (that captured photo and video footage of delivery in action).
- 4.4 Having our communications team co-located within the PELF and with organisations such as Network Rail and the Rail Delivery Group, meant we were able to adapt any communications quickly and efficiently as and when required. Some examples included:
- (a) crowding issues at Green Park;
 - (b) amplifying DCMS messaging regarding the Lying-in-State queue; and
 - (c) reassuring stakeholders and providing guidance of demand management approach ahead of the State Funeral.

5 **Lesson Learned**

- 5.1 Following the delivery of Operation London Bridge, debriefs were held to record feedback and identify lessons learnt. Seven key themes emerged as the focal point of the debriefs:
- (a) Planning & Readiness;
 - (b) Activation & Stand-up;

- (c) Command, Control & Communication (C3);
 - (d) Communications and interfaces with key stakeholders;
 - (e) People, Wellbeing & Resilience;
 - (f) Supply Chain & Contractors; and
 - (g) Recovery of Services.
- 5.2 Numerous actions were identified through a debrief process. These actions have either been implemented or are currently in the process of being completed to embed the lessons learnt for future large-scale events.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This was an unprecedented event to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II, who was our longest reigning monarch, and we hope that in the delivery of our services and the implementation of the plan across our organisation, we played our part in showing, not just our respect, but the nation's gratitude for all that Her Majesty The Queen had done during her long reign.
- 6.2 We are immensely proud of our staff and suppliers who worked together around the clock to deliver for London.

List of appendices to this report:

None

List of Background Papers:

None

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