

Appendix 1

TfL Board Effectiveness Review 2024

Introduction

In line with good governance practice, we undertake regular reviews of the effectiveness of the Board and Board-level decision-making structure.

In 2023, an externally led review was conducted and its outcomes were considered by the Board, at its meeting on 18 October 2024. At that time, the Board agreed not to make any immediate structural changes to TfL's decision-making structure but that there would be more strategically focussed discussion at meetings and greater coordination between meetings to avoid duplication, and to have scheduled informal sessions to allow Members to discuss matters of strategic importance. Members also provided valuable input in relation to the skills, knowledge and experience required of the Board to best serve TfL in the future, in preparation for the recruitment of new Board Members in 2024, and suggestions on how to improve the induction of new Members.

This report covers how the outcomes of the 2023 review were addressed. It also covers the outcomes from a review conducted by the Deputy Chair in late 2024 and early 2025 and the proposed response to the issues raised. The 2024 review was light-touch as there were substantive changes to the Board and its decision-making structure in September 2024.

The 2024 review has been informed by a Board and Executive Committee discussion in February 2025 on the outcomes from one-to-one discussions between the Deputy Chair and individual Members and the responses to a short questionnaire circulated to all Members and the Executive Committee in late 2024.

To enable changes recommended by effectiveness reviews to be implemented and embedded, the Deputy Chair proposes that reviews are conducted every two years, with an externally led review taking place towards the end of 2025.

Theme 1: Board Composition

Appointments

As recommended by the 2023 review, the Board and Executive Committee worked with the Deputy Chair to develop a detailed skills matrix for future Board composition, aligned with TfL's key requirements and strategic priorities. The skills matrix built upon the requirements for Board membership set out in the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) and previous additions recommended for consideration by earlier Board effectiveness reviews. The skills matrix set out the requirements, what were met and highlighted potential skills gaps.

The 2024 skills matrix was used by the external recruitment consultant in April 2024 to source candidates and by the appointments panel when making recommendations to the Mayor. The outcome of the recruitment campaign saw the Board appointed

from 9 September 2024 consist of: the Mayor as Chair and the Deputy Mayor for Transport as Deputy Chair; seven new Members on full four-year terms; four existing Members, who had served one full term or less, on four-year terms; one existing Member, who had served more than one full-term, on a two-year term; and two existing Members, who had served two full-terms, on a one-year term to provide continuity. The skills matrix was also utilised by the Deputy Chair to make recommendations to the Board on the appointment of individual Members to Committees and Panels before exercising delegated authority to make the appointments.

The use of the 2024 skills matrix was considered effective. Evidence from previous externally led reviews has been that the Board and TfL benefits from having its composition based on skills and experience.

A recruitment campaign commenced in February 2025 to appoint up to two new Members with local or central government finance and funding expertise and with commercial property development expertise, to succeed the two Members that will be leaving given the importance of these areas to TfL. We also anticipate the appointment of the Trades Union Congress' nominee shortly, which will take the Board up to its maximum size of 17.

The 2023 review recommended that consideration be given to incorporating the voice of young people into some Board discussions. From February 2024, the TfL Youth Panel had a representative (and substitute) attend and speak at meetings of the former Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel and Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources Panel. A representative has continued to attend meetings of the Customer, Sustainability and Operations Panel since it stood up in September 2024 and its Chair is keen to engage with the Youth Panel's new representative to ensure their input is as effective as possible.

Actions:

Whenever substantive changes to the Board are proposed, a skills matrix will be developed to inform the recruitment campaign.

Future events would be held as appropriate in particular ahead of future substantial changes to the membership of the Board.

Induction

The induction programme for new Members in September 2024 was welcomed and considered effective. It included, as recommended by previous reviews, a buddy system pairing new Members with existing Members and an Executive Committee member. The induction provided and the buddy system were impacted by officer and Member availability due to the cyber incident that impacted TfL just before the new Board and decision-making structure stood up. The buddying system was useful, but continued work is required to ensure it is effective.

The Deputy Chair held the first round of regular one-to-one meetings with Members, to get their views on Board performance, induction for new Members and to provide feedback on their individual contribution to the Board. These helped inform this review.

Actions:

The Deputy Chair will hold one-to-one meetings with each Member at least annually.

Ongoing support will be provided to Members as a high-performance Board and to clarify the distinct roles of the Board and the Executive.

The induction programme for Members who joined during the Mayoral cycle would be reviewed.

Exit interviews will be held with Members before they leave the Board, and we will explore options for departing Members to meet new Members to provide guidance and context.

The use of the buddy system will be further developed and strengthened and used for all new appointments as part of the induction process and thereafter.

The Chair or Vice Chair of the Customer, Sustainability and Operations Panel will provide support and advice to its Youth Panel representative, who will also be supported by an appropriate officer, to help them effectively contribute to the work of the Panel.

Theme 2: Role of the Board

Decision-making structure

While the Board did not commit to any immediate structural changes arising from the 2023 review, it did undertake work to make the meetings under the then existing structure more effective. These actions included reordering the agendas of its Panels to put strategic items first, ahead of the regular quarterly updates, to have a TfL Youth Panel representative able to attend and contribute to discussions on customer service and sustainability matters and to rotate agenda themes for the Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources Panel.

While these changes had some positive impact, issues remained with the meetings of the Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources Panel having full agendas with people and sustainability issues often crowded out, duplication between meetings and no dedicated place for discussions on security issues. As set out in more detail in the paper on TfL Membership and Decision-making Structure, considered by the Board on 24 July 2024, following consideration of these issues by Members and the Executive Committee, the Sandilands sentencing outcome and a review of TfL's safety risk management approach, the Board agreed significant changes to its Committees and Panels.

There were three substantive changes to the decision-making structure, with effect from 9 September 2024. People issues were brought together under a single People and Remuneration Committee, in line with good practice elsewhere. A Safety and Security Panel was established to reflect the importance of safety to TfL and to provide greater prominence to security issues at Board level. Those changes resulted in the former Safety, Sustainability and Human Resources Panel being stood down. The sustainability element of that former Panel was incorporated into a refocussed Customer, Sustainability and Operations Panel, which replaced the Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel. Both new Panels focus on strategic issues and be forward looking. Other changes included committing to further mainstream sustainability issues in the work of the Audit and Assurance Committee, Finance Committee, Land and Property Committee and Programmes and Investment Committee.

TfL retains a distinction between Committees and Panels: “Committee” denotes a decision-making body, be that to approve authority delegated by the Board in relation to unbudgeted Financial Authority, Procurement Authority, Land Authority or Programme and Project Authority, or in the case of the People and Remuneration Committee, decisions on remuneration for the most senior officers; while “Panel” denotes an advisory body as the duty holder responsible and accountable for day-to-day decisions on safety and security, and customer and operational issues, is the relevant Chief Officer and Commissioner, as set out under various regulations. Officers consider there is no difference in the importance that they attach to the oversight, assurance and strategic guidance or advice that they receive from the different bodies.

The new structure is bedding in well but will be kept under continuous review. Its effectiveness will be considered as part of the next externally led review, which will be after at least a year of operation.

Actions:

The effectiveness of the decision-making structure, stood up on 9 September 2024, will be considered as part of the next externally led Board Effectiveness Review.

To further strengthen the assurance and oversight role of the Panels, the relevant regulators will be invited to attend at least one meeting a year, so Members have direct contact. This will include the Office of Rail and Road and the Rail Accident Investigation Branch.

TfL’s Contribution to the Mayor’s and Wider Government Objectives

Members recognised the wider role that TfL played in support of the Mayor’s priorities, as reflected in the Mayor’s Transport Strategy and wider strategies and the strategic plans of government. These went beyond the immediate benefits of supporting world-class public transport, active transport, and safer less congested roads in London. TfL’s work supports housing, health, sustainability, diversity, equity and inclusion, economic growth and many other priorities.

The Board was keen that TfL did more to celebrate TfL’s achievements and contributions.

TfL also benefitted from being a part of the wider Greater London Authority Group, which extended its influence and led to better decisions for TfL and across the Group.

Meeting papers

Meeting agendas are often full and papers can be long. It is generally accepted by Members and officers that the size of agendas and length of papers should be reviewed to see where they can be simplified. This is balanced against the need to provide enough information for informed decision-making, particularly those that may be subject to challenge, and to provide enough background information for newer Members and the public, as Board-level meetings are held in public.

Action:

The length and content of papers will be kept under review with a view to making them shorter.

Briefings and other informal engagement

In response to the 2023 review, further opportunities were provided to enable Members, Chief Officers and other Senior Leaders to develop relationships and connect more in an advisory capacity. This included sharing information on forthcoming briefings to all Members, an opportunity for the Members who joined in September 2024 to meet the Members who were leaving the Board, along with existing Members, the Commissioner, Chief Officers, Directors and other key officers. As part of the 2024 review, Members confirmed that they find briefings and other direct contact to feed into proposals useful and would like to see these opportunities increased.

Members welcome the briefings and would like these to be more interactive and on key issues held prior to options being selected or decisions taken, so they can share their skills, knowledge and experience to input at a strategic level.

Site visits are also popular and offer an opportunity for Members to meet officers at different levels of the organisation.

Members welcome the links to training provided on disability awareness and support further training throughout their tenure.

Actions:

Specific time will be set aside for site visits and for briefings on strategic issues, including how TfL is addressing Mayoral priorities such as Vision Zero, and for informal engagement. Briefings will be scheduled for an hour after each Board-level meeting in the calendar. The topic for the briefing will be notified to all Members in advance or, if none proposed, Members can use the time for informal networking.

Dedicated time will be allocated during each year for engagement on the Business Plan, Budget and Scorecard. As appropriate, this would include engagement by the Mayor's office and other Deputy Mayors.

Briefings and site visits will also be used to provide Members with access to officers below Chief Officer level.

Members will be proactive in suggesting places they may like to visit and will be informed of the regular schedule of officer level visits, which they will be welcome to attend (noting that these may be at short notice and the need to manage numbers).

A more structured training programme will be developed for Members throughout their tenure, including the completion of mandatory courses on Freedom of Information, bribery and fraud awareness.

Theme 3: Other issues

Land and Property Committee

We will keep under review the operation of the Land and Property Committee as Places for London moves into delivery. Consideration will be given to the role of the Committee in regard to other aspects of TfL's estate (operational property), beyond those within the remit of Places for London. Any proposed changes will be submitted to a future meeting of the Board for approval.

Action:

Further discussion with Board Members will take place on the role and importance of Places for London and how best the Board can provide oversight and stewardship, while enabling it to operate effectively.

Broader awareness of TfL activity and engagement with the media

Members welcome the content provided by the in-house staff magazines and would like to receive more information on what is coming up so they can support the messaging and promote TfL.

Actions:

The Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs would review the information on TfL activities provided internally and share appropriate messaging with Members.

Refreshed guidance will be provided to Members on social media use, and when it is appropriate to engage with the Press Office before making comment on matters that may impact TfL.

Thanks

Members thanked the Executive Committee and other officers that they engaged with for their support and time and thanked the members of the Secretariat.