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**Confidential briefing note**

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Agenda item: 4

LTW517

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Confidential briefing note on safety issues

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To provide the board with additional background to the safety paper being presented at the board meeting, along with information that is best discussed outside the public domain. Additionally, I have prepared some suggested questions for our speaker, Jill Collis of Transport for London.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1. That members read this briefing note in conjunction with the board papers.

**3 Additional information**

- 3.1. Incidents of suicide frequently affect the network, with 293 fatalities on national rail alone in 2014/15. There are several known hotspots for suicides, sometimes close to medical facilities that deal with mental health, and sometimes where communities have become aware that the railway is a plausible location to attempt to commit suicide.
- 3.2. How the railway reports suicides has long been the subject of discussion. On one hand there are passengers who generally want to be told how long delays will be and the truth behind the delay. On the other hand, there is the issue of alarming members of the public, especially children or vulnerable users, with a message about people being hit by a train or similar.
- 3.3. There has recently been further research carried out by the Samaritans, along with Transport Focus who have been sharing passenger views on the issue, into what wording best conveys both the severity of the issue in terms of delay, and minimises the risk of copycat attempts by promoting the association of suicide with the railway. There were also the objectives of not alarming passengers unnecessarily, and not blaming the industry when the problem is largely not of its own making. The research concluded that the message “Emergency services dealing with an incident” was the best balance of honest, informative and unlikely to promote copycats.
- 3.4. There is still a difference in how the national rail and London Underground networks report suicides, with most train operating companies traditionally saying “person hit by a train”. Some train operating companies have moved to the “emergency services dealing with an incident” and London Underground uses “person on the track” at the time of an incident, followed by “earlier customer incident” after the event. Even

within owning groups there are differences in the messaging, and automated announcements often differ from messages that staff give verbally.

#### **4 Suggested questions for Jill Collis**

- 4.1. Below are my suggested questions for Jill Collis, in addition to any that members will have. My rationale and some background for each question is included.
- 4.2. Jill is the Director for Health, Safety and the Environment for TfL, and is always approachable and happy to meet with us. Her role was originally just London Underground, but has expanded to include all rail modes (Tramlink, DLR, London Overground and London Underground).
- 4.3. The draft questions, with my thinking, would be:

##### **1 – Can Jill outline which of the trials regarding escalator safety have been most successful, and any future changes or further trials that are likely**

We haven't yet heard back from these trials, only that they are ongoing. Potential next trials include more standing only escalators or different colour contrasts. It would be good to get members involved in the discussion as well as an update.

##### **2 – With overcrowding issues increasing in frequency, what measures can be put in place to alleviate crowding safely, but without negatively affecting passengers.**

I would like to see measures such as "cattle pens" avoided, as well as frequent station closures. Platform edge doors where possible would be good for example, but the board are well placed to remind Jill that this needs to be a passenger first approach along with any suggestions they may wish to make.

##### **3 – With the increase in trap and drag incidents, including some on LU, what is LUs thinking on avoiding this risk in the future?**

LU are doing research into the correct length of time the "hustle alarm" sounds. They have gone quiet on the progress of this research, so a prompt is good. Again PEDs/New Tube for London may well help, but are in the medium term future rather than soon.

3b – We are also due to see Steve Murphy of Crossrail. A safety question for Steve could be: With platform edge doors in the core of the Crossrail route, but traditional stations at the majority of stations served by Crossrail, how will you manage the extra risk created by this unusual situation (passenger/staff awareness).

##### **4 – There are lots of different trials and research projects underway across the industry, such as the different trials mentioned in the RAIB reports into trap and drags. What liaison between LU and national rail takes place to share best practice?**

I think we all know the answer is "not as much as there should be", but getting this question recorded as a matter of public record would be good to show we are on the case. Every accident report says that each operator has done various trials, but never outlines the conclusion of these trials, or how/if they are shared across operators.

**5 – Is there anything LTW can help LU with, especially given our knowledge and research, when LU are conducting their research or trials.**

Our usual prompt to TfL that there is mutual benefit in involving us, rather than being told about things after the event.