



## **ASLEF Response to Sadiq 2020 Manifesto Consultation January 2020**

### **Introduction**

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train drivers' union representing over 20,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. The union represents around 3,650 members working on London Underground, Croydon Tramlink, Arriva Rail London (London Overground) and MTR Elizabeth Line along with drivers on mainline routes across London, and rail freight operators.
3. ASLEF is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the process of drafting the manifesto for the London Mayoral Election. This written response reflects, and expands on, the conversations the union has had with representatives from the campaign policy team in autumn 2019 and January 2020.

### **Equalities**

4. The union acknowledges the Mayor's commitment to single fare freezes throughout the last Mayoral term but is aware that due to the lack of grant funding it may not be possible to continue this policy while also making much-needed improvements to other aspects of the service. We are concerned, however, about the need to avoid too much adverse impact on people on low incomes or living in poverty, who also have a right to move around the city and use its transit systems and would like to see proposals from Sadiq Khan which take into account the needs of this group and ensure that all Londoners are still able to use a variety of modes of transport to get around.
5. ASLEF is aware that Transport for London has processes in place to improve the diversity of people hired, particularly in operational roles including train driving. We would like to see in this manifesto a continued commitment to diverse hiring, building on the success so far in this area.
6. Similarly, where it is possible, ASLEF would like to see continued and further commitments to offering good apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for young BAME Londoners.

7. As the trade union representing train and tram drivers, it is important to the union and our members that terms and conditions in the workplace are maintained and improved in line with the ASLEF charter aspirations. ASLEF works with Transport for London and other stakeholders on this priority, and would want to see a commitment to improving parental leave arrangements to further equality in the workplace, along with a continued strategy to ensure that workers' terms and conditions consistently improve.
8. While the train driving grade does not have a pronounced gender pay gap, and Transport for London's reported pay gap is much smaller than many comparable organisations, the union is aware that there are large numbers of lower-paid staff often working on outsourced and non-direct employment contract. These workers are in roles such as cleaning and catering, and the majority are BAME women. The union would seek to see all roles across the London transport network in-sourced and steps taken to ensure that the gender pay gap across the organisation is kept as small as possible.
9. ASLEF members elect equality representatives at branch and district level to represent workers in potentially disadvantaged groups including women, BAME, LGBT+, young and disabled workers. While local and Health and Safety reps are entitled to trade union facility time to enable them to adequately represent the needs of union members, equality reps are currently not entitled to this time. This puts the equality agenda at a disadvantage. Allowing equality representatives facility time will have effects beyond those workers, as promoting equality in recruitment and retention of staff stands to benefit all workers and the organisation as an employer.
10. The union would also like proposals to be considered for the inclusion of a dedicated equalities representative on the board of Transport for London.

### **Driver Conditions**

11. Drivers on the London Underground and other TfL networks need to have the best possible working conditions in order to be able to do their jobs effectively. Train drivers are responsible for the safety of passengers and other railway users when they are in charge of a train.
12. The union is keen to ensure that drivers' conditions are taken into account both operationally and in terms of any future procurement or planning of rolling stock, stations, lines or routes.
13. Drivers' cabs vary across TfL, with some exemplifying the best possible design and others leaving much to be desired. The union would like to see a commitment that when new rolling stock is to be procured, drivers are consulted through their union on cab design at the outset, prior to procurement, on the design of cabs in order to ensure that the cabs are designed around the driver and are fit for purpose. Rather than an afterthought, or a

standard version from an 'off the shelf' rolling stock purchase, the Mayor should aspire to the highest quality and safest design possible.

14. Drivers will sometimes be on shift for several hours at a time with only a couple of minutes to change ends at end of line stations. This pattern of working can make it difficult for drivers to be able to access toilet and hygiene facilities, and it is therefore very important that where drivers are able to leave the cab during their shift, high-quality toilet and hand washing facilities are available. We are encouraged to hear that, following successful similar work to improve facilities for bus drivers, this is something that the Mayor will commit to working on if re-elected.
15. The general health, safety and wellbeing of staff, and specifically drivers, is also important to maintain in order that drivers can do their jobs effectively and play their part in keeping the network safe and efficient. The union continues to work with Transport for London and other contract-holding employers to ensure a healthy working environment with relevant support available for mental and physical health. We also note the steps that have been taken so far towards combatting the threat of third-party harassment, abuse and violence and would want to see this work continued and strengthened in order to keep workers safe.
16. We welcome the Mayor's 'Good Work Standard' for London programme to encourage employers to put in place high workplace standards in order to improve the working environment for employees, and outcomes including retaining staff and reduced absences for the employers. We would like to see a proposal to require any organisation doing business with City Hall or Transport for London, including those operating rail or bus contracts, to be required to recognise a trade union, and to have achieved the Good Work Standard.
17. When drivers are brought across from one employer to another (for example in the case of those now employed by MTR Elizabeth Line being TUPE transferred from previous employment on Greater Anglia, and drivers transferred at Chingford from Greater Anglia to London Overground), their employment rights must be preserved under the TUPE regulations. Currently travel facilities and travel in retirement are not packaged as rights in this process so drivers who have built up years of service are in effect 'losing' their former service when they transfer. This is an unacceptable situation as drivers with equivalent lengths of service who have not happened to be involved in a TUPE process have greater rights to travel facilities. ASLEF would like to see the full length of service for employees already TUPE transferred into TfL count towards their potential travel facilities in retirement. The union would also want to see a commitment that any future TUPE transferred employees (such as if TfL is to take on part of the national network on suburban commuter lines) are given this same right and their prior service is counted towards potential travel facilities.

## **Industrial Relations**

18. ASLEF is concerned that the use of agency staff continues in some Transport for London and contractor-operated areas including Croydon Tramlink. The union is fundamentally opposed to the use of agency staff to cover substantive roles, and would like to see a commitment to end the use of agency staff. Where job roles exist, they should be filled by permanent staff with full terms and conditions in all circumstances.
19. The overall approach to industrial relations between drivers, represented by ASLEF, and Transport for London as the employer has developed over time and too often is approached in a way that forces disputes where they are not necessary. As a trade union we are always committed to negotiation and discussion in order to resolve any issues as fairly as possible without having to resort to dispute procedures including balloting for industrial action. ASLEF would like to see Sadiq Khan implement policies at Transport for London in which issues can be resolved through negotiation and discussion so that continual disputes and threads of industrial action are no longer the required modus operandi.

### **Rail Freight in London**

20. Moving freight onto rail reduces carbon emissions and makes our roads safer – the capacity of one freight train can replace around 80 HGVs, and rail freight typically produces 76% less CO2 emissions than the equivalent road journey.
21. The two key freight issues in the capital are capacity (both protection of existing paths and provision of new ones) and the need for more terminals and interchanges.
22. Currently over 40% of aggregates coming into London are delivered by rail to a range of terminals. There are 11 aggregates terminals and 4 cement terminals in London. Tarmac has at least five rail freight terminals in urban London for aggregates and other component parts of concrete are transported by rail from Greenwich to Battersea and Kings Cross terminals.
23. Over the last 5 years, rail freight tonnage of construction materials has increased by 21%, and tonne kilometres by 25%. Waste is also moved by rail from a waste transfer station in West London to the Severnside energy recovery centre in South Gloucestershire.
24. Rail Operations Group UK is due to operate a trial between London Gateway and Liverpool Street starting in April 2020. Cargoes have not yet been confirmed but the plan is to transfer freight to battery operated vehicles.
25. Rail freight volumes cannot be increased without more road/rail transfer points, so it is crucial that local authorities safeguard potential sites for rail freight terminals and support the transfer to rail in their local plans.
26. The GLA and TfL, which has spatial planning powers, need to give direction to London boroughs to support rail freight.
27. Medium and small terminals fall under the London Plan. Developers currently have difficulty getting permission for medium and small terminals primarily because of local opposition to increased HGV movements and noise, despite the wider benefits of the modal shift to rail.

28. This is why it's important that the London Plan, and manifesto, goes further than its current support for more aggregates terminals to also promote the need for intermodal terminals.
29. There is also consideration to be made of the intersection with other policy areas such as the design of road systems to cater for HGVs, or provision to interchange from rail to sustainable modes of onward transit.
30. The other challenge for rail freight is network capacity. This problem relates to both existing and potential new freight paths, with a conflict between freight and increasing the frequency of passenger services.
31. The North London and West London lines are the highest profile problem areas for this conflict. In reality the majority of freight paths are outside peak times and will continue to be needed.
32. TfL and Freight on Rail agreed in February 2018 to a capacity study. This is now in progress, under Network Rail's System Operator Section. Growth from new terminals on the Brighton Mainline is an emerging issue, along with potential future capacity issues at Nunhead, Hither Green, Sidcup and Hoo Junction.
33. A proposed new terminal at Howbury Park (between Slade Green and Dartford) was recently rejected on the grounds of a lack of capacity for four freight paths.
34. TfL is supportive of upgrades to the route from Felixstowe to Nuneaton as a way to reduce freight paths transiting London. While these upgrades are needed, there will still be a need for paths across London to connect ports including London Gateway and Tilbury.
35. ASLEF are calling for Sadiq Khan to pledge to support rail freight in London as part of the Sadiq 2020 manifesto. Increasing the use of rail freight will contribute to several aims and objectives including reducing road congestion and improving road safety; improving air quality in London, and delivering goods and materials efficiently to construction projects and businesses.

### **Strategic Development**

36. The union is aware that proposals for making the underground and other rail networks in London fully accessible exist, and that the primary delay to their implementation has been funding. With the escalating climate crisis alongside priorities of cleaning the air and reducing road congestion, it is more important than ever that everyone is able to use the public transport network in London. The union supports commitments to accelerate the programme of making the network accessible and would wish to see investment channelled into this work pledged in the manifesto.
37. ASLEF is supportive of proposals to increase the number of people using public transport in London, and aware that there are a number of capacity-building projects in discussion and planning stages including the Bakerloo Line extension and Crossrail 2. Alongside this we are

aware of proposals to consider bringing the operation of regional commuter rail under Transport for London. With each of these potential major projects, we would hope to see in the manifesto proposals set out for how Sadiq Khan would hope to proceed if re-elected, particularly taking into account the impact on train drivers and other affected workers.