

London's Transport Commissioner Andy Byford to leave TfL next month

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Transport for London (TfL) has confirmed that London's transport commissioner, Andy Byford, will be leaving the organisation to resume life in the United States, having delivered against the priorities he set at the start of his tenure – to get the Elizabeth line opened without any further delay, and to lead TfL out of the financial crisis caused by the pandemic. Byford will leave TfL at the end of October, closing out a 33-year public service career, with current chief operating officer Andy Lord taking on the role of Commissioner on an interim basis from 25 October.

Byford became transport commissioner in June 2020 and has worked to lead TfL out of the pandemic and focus the organisation on the work of supporting London's recovery.

TfL said that key to this has been the opening of the Elizabeth line, over which he took personal control, and which was opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 24 May.

The next stage of the transformational Elizabeth line has now been confirmed, with trains running directly from Reading and Heathrow to Abbey Wood and from Shenfield to Paddington to begin on 6 November. This will mark another leap forward for London's transport network and Bond Street Elizabeth line station,

which will form the jewel in the crown of the West End's transport provision, will open before that time.

Andy Byford's other major focus has been on ensuring a long-term funding agreement with Government, which enables TfL to support London's recovery and gives certainty to staff, suppliers and stakeholders both in London and in TfL's supply chain that stretches across the country.

Since the start of the pandemic TfL has secured around £6 billion in government funding against a what it calls a "very difficult economic backdrop", with the combination of the latest agreement with government, and an additional facility from the Greater London Authority, meaning that TfL can balance its budget and move away from a period of threatened managed decline to look forward positively and deliver for London.

Andy Byford has also overseen the creation of a new, more efficient organisational structure at TfL and the introduction of a new TfL vision and set of values, with the organisation now focussed on winning back customers, supporting the city's economic recovery and helping to build a greener city with sustainable transport at its centre.

Over the last couple of weeks, he has also overseen the delivery of transport plans to support the events marking the passing of Her Majesty the Queen. The influx to London of people wishing to pay their respects to Her Majesty presented TfL with a significant operational challenge, and required a huge coordinated effort – with thousands of staff working around the clock – to ensure that everyone could travel safely.

Before TfL, Byford was president of New York City Transit, and it is to the United States that he returns after a transport career that has spanned 33 years and three continents.

Andy Lord joined TfL in November 2019 as managing director of London Underground, and became chief operating officer for all of TfL's operations earlier this year.

As chief operating officer he is responsible for the safe, reliable and effective operation of TfL's entire rail services, which include London Underground and the Elizabeth line, along with London's strategic road network, bus services, cycle hire, river services, London Cable Car and trams.

As MD of LU, Andy Lord led the transport network's operational response to the Covid pandemic, ensuring LU and other TfL services kept running for key workers.

He has been responsible for the safe and reliable introduction of Elizabeth line services, the Northern line extension, the upgraded Bank station, the extension of London Overground to Barking Riverside, and the completion of the automation of the Circle line. As TfL's chief operating officer, Lord has led the operational transport response for key events across the city, most notably The Platinum Jubilee and the ceremonial events marking the passing of Her Majesty the Queen.

Before TfL, Lord spent nearly 30 years in the commercial aviation sector, including 26 years at British Airways that culminated as director of operations for just over seven years. Lord is also a non-executive director for the UK MoD's Defence Equipment and Support Agency. Arrangements for a new chief operating officer will be confirmed in due course.

Andy Byford, London's transport commissioner, said: "When I came to TfL I set two clear priorities – to get the Elizabeth line open without further delay and to lead TfL out of the pandemic and into a financially sustainable future. The opening of the Elizabeth line was, without doubt, the highlight of my career – made truly poignant as it was one of the last major events attended by Her Majesty the Queen. It was an honour to meet her, and an honour to oversee the transport arrangements for the ceremonial events to mark her passing.

"With a longer-term financial settlement with government now in place I can now leave with TfL set fair to move positively into the future – supporting London's recovery from the pandemic and truly becoming the green heartbeat of the city.

"It has been a huge privilege to have served as commissioner, back where I first started as a Station Foreman. I have been blessed to have had such an amazing transport and public service journey and now is the right time to bow out and resume life in the U.S with my wife. I have hugely appreciated the support of the Mayor and of two outstanding Deputy Mayors. Together we have navigated some dark days through the toughest period in TfL's history, always seeking to look after our colleagues and our customers as we steered TfL towards a brighter future.

"None of this would have been possible without the dedication and brilliance of the TfL leadership team, including Andy Lord who will now take up the mantle of interim Commissioner. Any success we have had, I dedicate to the thousands of transport professionals who set out every day to provide excellent service, to keep London moving, and to build a better transport network and a better city for this generation and for all yet to come."

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "Andy Byford deserves huge thanks for his hard work and dedication, leading Transport for London through an exceptional time in its history.

"From keeping the city moving during the COVID-19 pandemic, to the historic opening of the Elizabeth line this year, Andy has provided Londoners with an exceptional service and his work has ensured that despite the challenges we have faced, our public transport network remains world-class.

"I'm grateful to Andy Lord for stepping into the role of interim transport commissioner. Andy brings with him a wealth of experience and commitment to leading our city's public transport network, and the recruitment for the new permanent Commissioner will commence shortly.

"I want to thank Andy Byford for his service to Londoners and, as he and his wife move back to the United States, I wish them all the very best."

Andy Lord said: "The work of TfL staff has been key to London's recovery from the pandemic so far. I am hugely honoured to take on this role and to have the opportunity to steer the organisation as it continues this work and focuses on making our city an even greener, safer and better place."