Transport for London (TfL) understands that learning and development should be central to its strategy. As the population of London has grown, the key challenge is to keep up with demand and the changing needs of customers – all against the desire to make savings.

The Fit for the Customer Services Transformation programme was designed to deliver the biggest transformational change to London Underground in a generation. With restructured teams came the introduction of new roles in stations, creating learning requirements for 5,000 employees, including 1,000 moving into management roles. A large-scale and effective learning programme was vital to ensure all employees were change-ready.

The strategy had to address not just these changes in roles, but the introduction of new processes and technology. Some of these processes had been in place for more than 80 years. With an average length of service of 25 years employees had been conditioned to work a certain way. TfL needed to overhaul its learning delivery processes with a new blended approach.

The diagnosis phase began in 2013 when customers were asked for feedback on their experiences. Armed with this information the HR team was able to circle areas that needed improvement, and focus training around these skills. They started to create a blended learning programme for each zone of the organisation that could also be sustained post-delivery and after the changes have been implemented.

The focus in the last 30 years was primarily on operational and technical aspects of the role, so training 900 supervisors to become people managers was bound to be difficult. However, with skills coaching supported by HR the training was a success. Employees were equipped with handheld devices containing up-to-date travel and ticketing information, and introduced to bespoke new processes to make essential station tasks easier and quicker. This ensures that station admin will take less time, and enables staff to be more mobile.

TfL has seen some excellent benefits already. Its customer satisfaction survey shows that the ability of workers to assist customers at ticket machines has improved by a third (from 36% to 65%), a huge increase that recognises the success of this highly effective learning programme. Customer satisfaction and mystery shopping scores show an increase in employees’ helpfulness by 3% as travellers are benefitting from more available and visible staff.

“Stations have been transformed,” said Pat Hansberry, operations director of London Underground. “Staff are working in new ways; engaged and motivated to provide world-class customer service, and customer satisfaction is improving.”

Additionally, by delivering the course digitally, TfL saved 30,000 days of staff release, equating to productivity savings of approximately £4.4 million. Positive uptake of this e-learning has enabled 68% of employees to achieve the required advanced ticketing TMS qualification in just four months, between November 2015 and April 2016.

The judges praised the remarkable scale of the operation, and the ambition involved in bringing this to success. They are pleased to announce TfL as the victors in this category.

When you think of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) you’ll probably be imagining tigers and gorillas. It is easy to overlook the homo sapiens keeping the organisation running smoothly. But someone who has not forgotten them is HR director Fiona Evans.

Evans and her team decided to implement a programme to help develop ZSL’s leaders and their behaviour. Being a science-based organisation, fact and research needed to guide the plan. Being a charity, it needed to be effective but low cost.

Over the last two-and-a-half years they have observed numerous improvements. The number of survey respondents who said their manager inspires them to do a good job rose by 12%, the amount who felt that way about their department director rose by 19%, and 10% more people reported they had confidence in the leadership team.