



Our role

What we do

London TravelWatch was set up by Parliament to be the official voice of London's travelling public. We are funded by the London Assembly and are accountable to it via the Transport Committee. We speak up for all those who use buses, the Underground, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), dial-a-ride, trams, taxis, cable cars and river transport, as well as cyclists, motorcyclists, pedestrians and other users of London's principal road network. We also represent users of the national rail network in London and the surrounding commuter belt.

Our aims

We aim to secure a better journey experience for everyone **travelling in and around London**: Londoners, commuters, visitors and tourists, however they travel. We are the only statutory transport user body to be completely multi-modal.

We:

- press for a better deal for London's travellers
- seek value for money on all transport services in the capital
- ensure that the particular needs of London and London's transport users are given due priority in transport policy and planning decisions
- help the travelling public understand their rights and find good deals by providing information and advice
- enable consumers to understand and exercise their rights when things go wrong
- work to ensure that transport operators deal with complaints appropriately and efficiently
- speak for passengers and the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and decision makers at all levels: including local councils, the **Mayor of London**, the **London Assembly**, the Government, Parliament and the European Union.

Influencing

We regularly meet and seek to influence the relevant parts of the transport industry on all issues which affect the travelling public including timetables, routes, frequencies, fares, ticketing, station standards, access, vehicles, safety, personal security and the information provided both to passengers and to users of London's principal roads. We also work with a wide range of public interest organisations, user groups and research bodies to ensure that we remain aware of the experiences and concerns of the travelling public.

Researching

We commission and carry out research amongst consumers, and evaluate and integrate the research carried out by others, to ensure that our work to influence transport policy and operations is based on the best possible evidence.



Our priorities for passengers

Investigating

We examine all appeals brought to us by people unhappy with the responses (or lack of them) that they have received from transport providers, and try to rectify problems or seek compensation where appropriate.

Analysing

We monitor the quality of transport services, including punctuality, reliability, crowding, congestion, cleanliness, accessibility, staff attitudes and behaviour, and station and waiting facilities. We seek to ensure that they meet the standards travellers expect and deserve.

Connecting

The above activities all contribute to our extensive evidence base. In addition, our experience of using London's extensive public transport network, paying for travel, and seeing for ourselves on a daily basis what transport users go through, helps ensure we remain connected and up to date.

We think that:

- services should run frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week
- networks should provide good access, adequate capacity and offer easy and convenient interchange between different types of transport
- staff should be helpful, informed and committed to offering high-quality services
- information should be readily available, understandable, relevant, up-to-date and accurate
- tickets should be easy to purchase, use and understand, flexible, and properly integrated between different service providers and modes of transport
- stations or stops should be well-designed, properly maintained, fully accessible and offer a good quality waiting environment
- journeys should be safe and free from anti-social behavior, crime and the fear of crime
- streets, both footways and carriageways, should be clean, properly signed, uncongested and well maintained so that they can be used confidently by all, and especially by people with mobility or other impairments
- buses, trams, trains and boats should be accessible, comfortable, clean, safe, quiet, easy to identify, and suitable for passengers with mobility difficulties or travelling with luggage, shopping or children
- transport providers should communicate clearly and promptly with their users, be approachable and open to suggestions, take complaints seriously and have proper mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.



Chair's & Chief Executive's foreword

Stephen Locke, Chair



Janet Cooke, Chief Executive



The capital's transport users have never been in greater need of a strong, independent and London-focused watchdog to speak up for them. We face, above all, the twin problems of rapid population growth and ongoing disruption as London's ageing transport infrastructure is upgraded. 2014-15 has been an exceptionally busy year, but one in which we have achieved real influence across a wide spectrum as this report demonstrates.

For Underground passengers, we carried out a major consultation – the only one of its kind – on TfL's plans for modernising ticket offices. We received more than 2,000 responses from Tube users right across London, which gave us invaluable insight into the needs of passengers and how these might be affected, in particular by proposed ticket office closures. The proposals themselves are now being phased in, but we are closely involved in monitoring their impact and are well placed to raise any emerging concerns.

Rail passengers have had an exceptionally difficult time during the year – especially users of services to

and through London Bridge. The levels of disruption due to major building works have been intolerable at times. We have played an active part in ensuring that lessons were learned (including the need for much better passenger information) by all the parties involved. But problems will continue during the construction, because of the weak resilience of the network as a whole. We continue to press the case for changes to compensation arrangements for passengers – the present 30-minute threshold for Delay Repay is inadequate for most commuters where persistent delays of 15-30 minutes can be seriously disruptive.

For airport passengers, we pressed hard for improvements in access by public transport. The surface links to London's five major airports fall seriously short of what is needed even with existing levels of use, let alone potential future growth. We have highlighted effectively the actions needed to improve this situation, in the short as well as long term.



Bus passengers are often less vocal than others, and, to help ensure their voices are heard, during the year we developed an online bus users community. We also raised concerns about delays to buses due to increasing congestion and will watch this closely as extensive roadworks continue to exacerbate the problem.

Pedestrians and cyclists are also important road users, and we have worked hard on behalf on both groups. For pedestrians we highlighted the problem of pavement obstructions, while we have worked behind the scenes to ensure that TfL's Cycle Superhighway plans balanced the important and growing needs of cyclists with those of pedestrians and buses.

This ambitious agenda has to be set against our resource limitations, which mean that we have to prioritise rigorously, using criteria agreed by the Board, and work smartly within these constraints. We continue to work closely with the London Assembly's Transport Committee by aligning our business and ongoing workplans wherever possible.

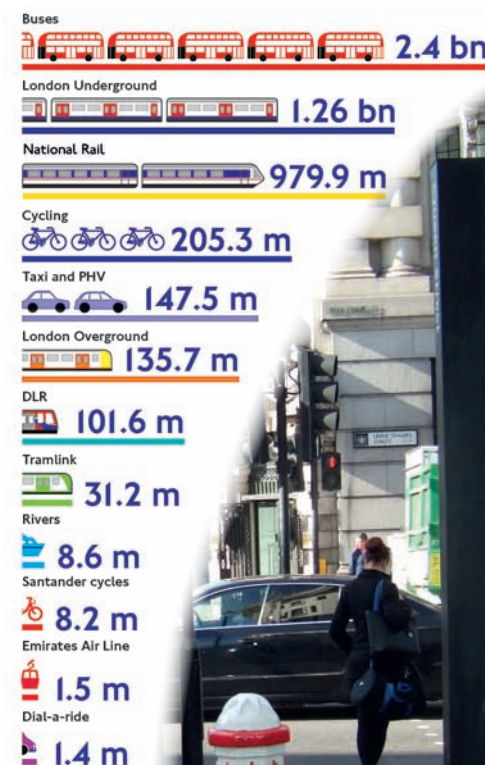
During the year, we moved to premises in the London Fire Brigade's headquarters building alongside several other agencies with a London remit. This has allowed us to enter into a shared services agreement for financial support with the London Pensions Fund Authority.

None of London TravelWatch's excellent work would be possible without the contributions of all our staff and Board colleagues, to whom we give warmest thanks.

Stephen Locke, Chair
Janet Cooke, Chief Executive

Speaking up for London's passengers

We speak for passengers making billions of journeys each year in and around London as shown in the graphic below:



Our achievements

Paying for travel

The cost of travel and the ability to buy tickets easily are fundamental issues for passengers. Whenever we do work with focus groups, whatever the topic, participants want to discuss high levels of fares before anything else. Over the past year we have heard from those who are concerned about how and where to buy tickets, how to obtain refunds when necessary and how to appeal against the circumstances in which penalty fares were charged, as well as from those unhappy with high ticket prices. In addition to campaigning for fares to be held at a reasonable level, we give advice to passengers on how to get the best value fares and encourage transport providers to simplify and clarify their fare structures.

When it became apparent that London Underground were not planning to consult passengers about their [proposal to close all ticket offices](#) we worked with [Ipsos MORI](#) to carry out a consultation of our own. Our six-week consultation asked passengers how they used ticket offices and about any difficulties they foresaw to help us to identify mitigation measures

that could be implemented at their individual stations. We received responses from over 2,000 people and [our findings](#) formed the basis of our representations to Transport for London (TfL).

Following the introduction of cashless operation on the bus network in 2014, we highlighted the lack of Oyster retail outlets in areas served by TfL buses such as Redhill, Woking and other parts of North East Surrey and Kent. As a result TfL appointed new Oyster agents in these areas, including an innovative arrangement with the library in Dorking.

Whilst [we welcomed the Mayor of London's decision to freeze fares on the TfL network](#) in real terms in January 2015, we highlighted the fact that many incomes were not rising in line with inflation, leaving many passengers having to pay a higher proportion of their earnings to get to work. We welcomed changes to Oyster Pay As You Go (PAYG) fares to help those who work part time but were disappointed that they initially meant that a significant number of people faced substantial increases in the cost of travelling from outer London (for example the cap for journeys between zones 1-6 effectively rose by almost 40%).

Following calls from London TravelWatch and others, the Mayor later cut the off peak fares cap for part time commuters travelling two or three days a week.

After TfL's initial announcement that contactless payments would be extended to the Tube, DLR and London Overground but not to National Rail services in London, we urged TfL and train operators to work together to resolve the issues that were preventing this. We warned that it was a recipe for confusion amongst passengers, highlighting the experience from when Oyster PAYG was only partially implemented on the transport network in London. We were therefore pleased that, having come to an agreement with National Rail operators, TfL subsequently announced that contactless payments would be extended to National Rail services in London at the same time as the extension to TfL modes.

The fact that fares are high makes it more important than ever that passengers get value for money for what they pay. The research we undertook for London Rail, [Value for money on London Overground: what passengers think](#) identified a number of actions that London Overground need to take to give passengers



better value for money. These included establishing line based sub-brands, making ticket buying easier, making stations and trains more accessible, gating more stations, and improving the information given to passengers, particularly at times of disruption and where several operators serve the same station. We also recommended that London Overground pay to extend the [National Rail Passenger Survey](#) to cover all stations operated by London Overground and Greater Anglia not previously surveyed, both before and after the change of concession in 2015. We are pleased that London Overground ticket machines now advise how to buy a ticket from another station or a different Boundary Zone as we recommended, and are particularly pleased that TfL are using our report to help them design the contract for the new London Overground concession which starts in 2015.

We promoted our research on passengers' ticket purchasing and journey experiences at meetings with TfL and others. As a result, some operators, such as Southeastern, have made the signage around Oyster card validators more obvious and TfL have produced detailed pricing tables to clearly show off peak and peak pricing at each London Underground station.

Our [research into passengers' perceptions of value for money on public transport](#) led some operators to produce leaflets and posters and [dedicated webpages](#) which better publicise the benefits of season tickets. We also worked with the DfT and the industry to find ways to give better value for money and to draw on best practice from other industries.

[Making a difference for passengers](#)

Every year we investigate a wide variety of consumer concerns. Our work ranges from high-level scrutiny of policy to assisting individuals unhappy with the responses they have received from transport providers. Regular contact with transport users gives us the insights which underpin the independent, expert advice we give to policy-makers as well as informing our research and campaigns. Having resolved an issue for an individual user who has appealed to us as they were dissatisfied with the response received from a transport operator to their original complaint, when we can, we will use their experience to argue for improvements which make a real difference for everyone.

We provided a passenger perspective on the

multi-agency Travel Demand Management Board set up to co-ordinate passenger communications during planned disruption during the rebuilding of London Bridge National Rail station and other key events affecting travel in London. We have been pressing for the remit of this group to be widened to include arrangements for dealing with unplanned disruption and are very pleased that a comprehensive review of its terms of reference is now underway.

We worked with [Reigate & Redhill District Rail Users Association](#) to put the case for extra Redhill stops to be added to Bedford to Three Bridges services. This resulted in stops being added to the 1720 and 1810 services from the beginning of March 2015.

On behalf of passengers we monitor performance data relating to all modes of transport in London. Our quarterly monitoring reports provide independent scrutiny of transport operators' performance from the passengers' perspective, highlighting areas for concern that we raise with operators to secure improvements.



Standing up for transport users

London TravelWatch responds to consultations from the Mayor, London Assembly, the Government, regulators and transport providers to ensure that the London travellers' perspective - which is often very different from that of passengers elsewhere in the country, given the nature of journeys taken and the pressures on capacity - is at the heart of policy-making. Decisions are being taken now which will set the framework for years to come and it is important for London's transport users that service specifications are right.

We made detailed recommendations to the DfT ahead of the Direct Award of the Southeastern franchise, securing a number of improvements for passengers including more services between Dartford and Victoria (introduced in January 2015), later evening 'Metro' services (from May 2015), a commitment to extra staffing at stations and the extension of Oyster PAYG to Dartford and Swanley. However, we were disappointed that the franchise does not include a commitment to a four train per hour off-peak service on the Catford loop or improved weekend services to Bromley North. We had hoped that the franchise would include plans for improved ticket machine functionality and further gating

of busy London stations to improve security and reduce fare evasion but it did not. We also pointed out that the £4.8 million allocated for station improvements is not much for a four and a half year contract which covers 184 stations, including 81 within the London area.

Having identified the consistently **poor performance** of Thameslink, Southern and Southeastern services before Christmas, we started to call for **fair and easy compensation** for the London commuters affected. Our case for change has been reinforced by the serious and persistent delays passengers travelling to London Bridge have continued to experience since then. We highlighted the fact that many passengers were suffering continual delays of 15 to 20 minutes on journeys scheduled to take 20-25 minutes yet would receive no compensation as this is only payable for delays in excess of 30 minutes. We urged National Rail operators to bring their compensation arrangements into line with those of London Underground by paying out for delays after 15 minutes and by making automatic refunds to Oyster and contactless payment card users. We succeeded in getting the issue of compensation on the agenda for politicians of all

parties as well as the Association of Train Operating Companies, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Transport Focus, and will continue to seek a change of policy in the year ahead.

We were disappointed that passengers' needs were not taken into account when planning for the engineering work that was carried out over the Christmas period, particularly as many of those travelling were occasional travellers with heavy luggage or children. We welcomed the **ORR's** investigation into the unacceptable level of disruption experienced by passengers at King's Cross and Paddington when engineering works overran. The industry must learn lessons for the future because major upgrade works will be a feature of the rail and Underground network for many years to come.

We continued to make the case for further devolution of the capital's surface rail services to the Mayor of London so that transport users can benefit from wide ranging improvements they have experienced on London Overground.

We supported the **proposed extension of the Bakerloo**



line into South East London in [our response to TfL's consultation](#). Our view is that this would result in a significant increase in public transport capacity in South East London, both from the extension of the Bakerloo line itself and because this would release rail and bus capacity for use on other routes.

We helped to inform the debate on TfL's cycle superhighway plans, meeting the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner to highlight our concerns such as the need to balance the needs of cyclists with those of pedestrians and bus users. We [called on TfL](#) to clarify the impact on the daily journeys of passengers on the 16 London bus routes affected by changes to the road layout at Vauxhall and Oval which could have an impact on nearly 100 million bus passenger journeys every year. Once we received this information from TfL, we [displayed it on our website](#) to help passengers understand how much longer their journeys would take. We continue to monitor potential issues such as bus stop bypasses that might lead to conflict between the needs of pedestrians and cyclists to discuss these with TfL.

In our [response to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee inquiry on security on the railway](#), we called

for greater priority to be given to the availability and prominence of staff at stations and on trains to deter anti-social behaviour and increase public reassurance.

In our submission to the [Select Committee inquiry on investing in the railway](#) we made the case for sustained investment in the railway beyond that already committed up to 2019 as projects such as Crossrail 2 are needed to provide increased capacity. We continued to argue strongly that more should be done to reduce the large gaps between platform edges and trains. We also advocated that every opportunity should be taken to make railway stations more accessible, whether through major improvement projects or through smaller incremental schemes.

We presented a petition on the HS2 Hybrid Bill to Parliament focusing on the potential impact on London's travelling public and the significant extra burden it would place on existing facilities, especially in the Euston area, and to highlight the need to take account of passenger access to connecting transport services. We pointed out that the effect on passengers of the extra numbers of people using London Underground from Euston or Euston Square without additional public

transport provision would be serious, with additional overcrowding and extended journey times, particularly given that sections of the lines from Euston are already amongst the most congested on the network.

[Shaping services and improving access](#)

We want Londoners and visitors to benefit from a wide range of transport options whether they want to walk, cycle or take the bus, train, tram or Underground. While great progress has been made, more needs to be done to make London's transport networks accessible in the widest sense of the word. In all our work, we consider the needs of passengers with disabilities and recognise that most improvements for these groups also offer benefits to all.

Following work we have done previously to raise awareness of the issues, we welcomed [TfL's decision to step up enforcement against illegal pavement obstructions](#), particularly freestanding advertising boards, building on similar moves by the [City of London](#) and the good work of a few other London boroughs who take seriously their legal duty to keep pavements clear. We have received support for our campaign from



Lady Tanni Grey-Thompson, who chairs TfL's Surface Transport Panel, and will be holding a seminar to highlight best practice on this issue.

The new link between Walthamstow Central and Walthamstow Queens Road stations was completed in August 2014 following 10 years of campaigning by London TravelWatch, including an appearance at a planning enquiry when the developer of the adjacent homes wanted the link removed from their list of planning permission conditions.

We continued (largely behind the scenes) to raise awareness of the problems passengers have with the large gaps between trains and platforms. Our work has contributed to a shift of emphasis in the industry, with the introduction of a number of initiatives and programmes to address the issues. This included setting up the cross-industry strategy group, which will include our Safety Adviser to represent the needs of passengers. We continued to highlight the fact that crowd congestion is now emerging as a challenge at more stations around the network, not only as a result of increased patronage, but also during service disruption and station construction work. The ORR's Annual Health and Safety report recognised this and we will continue to work with the industry to ensure this remains a high priority.

During the year we continued to highlight the need to improve signage in and around London's major rail terminals, particularly those like Victoria where major work is underway, so that people can find their way more easily through areas which are already crowded. We also pointed out that providing and promoting opportunities for passengers to interchange can help relieve congestion by encouraging people to avoid some of the most congested parts of central London.

We chaired a panel session on 'Supporting cycling while keeping pedestrians safe' at TfL's highly successful 'Access All Areas' event in October 2014.

We welcomed the Government's decision to award additional Access for All funding for improvements at several stations in our area, particularly the provision of lifts at Alexandra Palace Station which we had called for in 2012 when major redevelopment works were carried out. We negotiated with TfL to provide step-free access to the Central line platforms as part of the redevelopment of Bank Station, pointing out that it was unacceptable not to take this once in a 100 year opportunity.

Our submission to the Mayor's 2050 Infrastructure Plan consultation offered some possible solutions to the growing challenge of providing sufficient capacity on the capital's transport network to cope with growing demand, whilst at the same time trying to reduce the environmental impact of transport and congestion and enable economic growth.

We contributed to the London Assembly review of TfL customer service, calling for better training for call handlers and for TfL's helpline menu to be simplified. We also called for responses to passengers to be made by the communications method they requested. We will be supporting the Transport Committee in helping to ensure the recommendations are taken forward.

In response to the interim report of the Airports Commission's report on airport expansion we published a report highlighting the problems passengers face with getting to London's airports. We identified a number of steps that could be taken, often at little cost and using existing infrastructure, to provide passengers with more choice and better value for

money and make it much more attractive to use public transport to get to London's airports. We recommended extending London's Oystercard/contactless payments ticketing system to all London's airports and improving the range of National Rail tickets on sale at airport stations. We also want a joined up approach at every stage of a passenger's journey between the airport and their home and for Crossrail to stop at Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport, the busiest terminal in the country. The Minister invited us to discuss our recommendations and the Mayor of London confirmed that TfL would take forward the issues we raised. We will continue to lobby for improvements to be made for passengers travelling to airports.

Engaging with transport users

To represent travellers in London effectively, we need to encourage them to share the results of their journey experiences with us. We aim to make it easy for the travelling public to contact us at our public meetings and events, or via our website and social media. Our website is frequently updated to the queries that passengers raise with us.

Our Board and committee meetings, at which we discuss current issues in transport, explore problems and look at future services, are open to the public. Topics last year included bus performance, TfL's future tube programme and cycling highways schemes, while Transport Commissioner, Sir Peter Hendy attended October's Board meeting.

We launched an online bus users' community to keep bus users informed about the issues affecting their particular services and encourage them to give feedback to TfL. This is particularly important in light of major redevelopment works on London's road network.

Our performance

During 2014-15 our casework team dealt with almost 6,000 written and telephone enquiries and complaints. Most of these could be dealt with quickly or passed on to the operator for an initial reply, as we only consider cases where the complainant has not already complained to the service operator. We investigated 1,107 appeals from members of the public travelling in London and the surrounding areas. The vast majority of cases concerned service performance including delays and early departure, penalty fares, lack of available information at point of travel and complaint handling by rail operators.

Our funding

London TravelWatch is funded by the London Assembly in accordance with Schedule 19 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. In 2014-15, our total income amounted to £1,063,412 and our total expenditure was £1,051,881. Our full audited accounts are available on our website.

We would like to thank [London Councils](#), [Network Rail](#) and [TfL](#) who helped our resources to go further by providing meeting rooms and refreshments free of charge when our usual venues for public meetings were not available.

Other numbers



We cost the London council tax payer less than 1p a week



We represent the interests of passengers in and around London who make more than 13m journeys a day, (around 6m by bus, 4m by tube and 3m by train). This includes around 1.09 million non-residents in London on an average day (domestic and international visitors, as well as commuters coming from outside the capital).

Making a difference for passengers

The following examples summarise some of the key achievements already mentioned in this annual review, showing how we follow up individual complaints to help improve the overall passenger experience.

You told us

Passengers using Thameslink, Southern and Southeastern services complained about the ongoing poor service and delays in the weeks leading up to Christmas and beyond and the fact that they were unlikely to receive compensation for the disruption as this is only paid after delays of 30 minutes.

Bus passengers were concerned about the introduction of cashless operation on the bus network in 2014.

We did this

We drew passengers' concerns to the attention of a wide range of politicians and called for compensation arrangements to be changed. We also attended a series of meetings with the Rail Minister.

We highlighted that it was not possible to buy or top up Oyster cards in areas such as Redhill, Dorking and other parts of North East Surrey and Kent.

This was the outcome

As the first organisation to speak up on the issue of compensation, we got it on the agenda, paving the way for this to be taken up by the new Government.

TfL appointed new Oyster agents in these areas, including an innovative arrangement with Dorking Library.

We observed

We saw how passengers, particularly visitors to London, often find it difficult to find their way through Victoria between the adjacent streets, the bus station and National Rail/ Underground stations during the works being carried out there, because of poor signage.

We acted

We visited the site regularly and made the case to TfL that more should be done to help passengers navigate around the interchange.

This was the outcome

In response to our calls for a more coherent approach with clearer, more consistent signage, TfL have confirmed that they will now address the issues that we have raised. We will be involved in the working group to ensure progress is made quickly.



Of the casework which required further investigation:

- 35% concerned fares including requests for refunds and penalty fares (23% related to Oyster)
- 21% were from passengers unhappy with the way the operator had managed their complaint
- 9% were complaints about staff
- 8% related to service performance including delays and engineering works
- 7% related to a lack of accurate information at point of travel
- 7% concerned infrastructure including issues such as overcrowding
- 7% of complaints were about the quality on board public transport or at a station/stop
- 6% were a mixture of road Penalty Charge Notices, safety and security and streets

About us

Our people

Members of London TravelWatch are appointed by the London Assembly.

Board (as at 31 March 2015)

Chris Brown
Richard Dilks
Glyn Kyle
Stephen Locke (Chair)
Abdikafi Rage
John Stewart
Ruth Thompson (Vice Chair)

Staff (as at 31 March 2015)

We employ 11 full-time and 9 part-time staff:

Sandra Ambo
Keletha Barrett
Tim Bellenger (Director, Policy & Investigation)

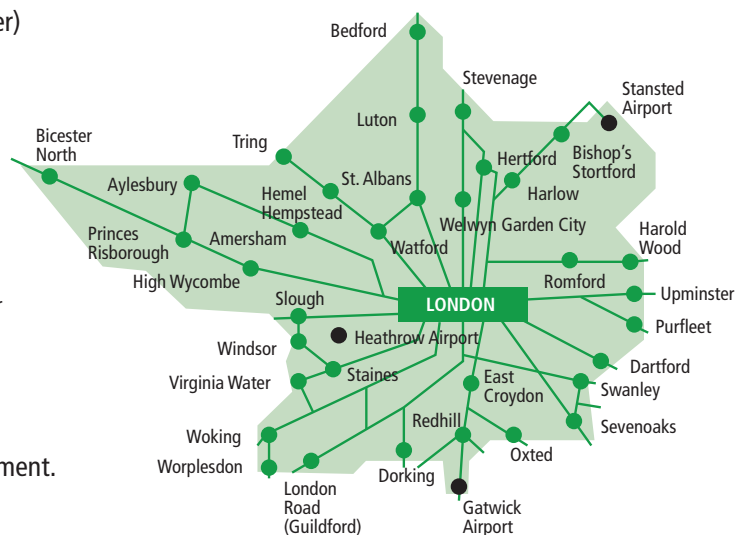
Mike Brown
John Burgess
Gytha Chinweze
Janet Cooke (Chief Executive)
Margaret Croucher
Jaskiren Deol
Richard Freeston-Clough
Rob Gifford
Susan James (Casework Manager)
Sharon Malley
Robert Nichols
Caprice Pompey*
David Rose
Mike Spittles
Vincent Stops
Chris Wise*
John Wooster

*joined this year

Stuart Coleman from the London Pension Fund Authority acted as our Finance Adviser under a shared services arrangement.

Thank you to Peter Ellis and Angela Okello, who left us during the year for the contributions they made during their time here.

We would also like to thank Network Rail and TfL for the use of photos and graphics used on the cover and page 5 respectively.



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ISSN: 1750-9610



Printed on paper sourced from FSC certified forests by a carbon neutral printing company using a waterless printing press, powered by 100% renewable energy.

No chemistry used in the production of this Review is harmful to the environment.

