

LONDON TRAVELWATCH Business Plan and Budget Bid 2016-17

London TravelWatch is the independent consumer body responsible under a series of statutes for representing the interests of all who use public transport in London. It is accountable to, and funded by, the London Assembly. It covers all modes of transport, and its work is underpinned by a series of statutory powers and duties. In particular, it must:

- consider and make recommendations relating to matters brought to its notice by users and transport providers or which it considers merit investigation
- respond to essential consultations on behalf of transport users
- undertake research and investigation into issues of concern, and
- act as an appeals body for consumers who have been unable to resolve their complaints with service providers.

It delivers these statutory responsibilities through its casework and policy teams and the close synergy between these teams is an important feature of its work. It is, for example, crucially important for caseworkers to have easy access to expert knowledge to help resolve complex appeals. On the policy and investigation side, a wide range of evidence, including primary and secondary research, is used to inform the organisation's work, but important policy-related issues emerging from casework also provide a key input to London TravelWatch's work.

We have been particularly successful in recent years, continuing to make a real difference for people travelling in and around London. We stood up for rail passengers affected by persistent delays and disruption, challenging the industry to improve and making the case for better compensation arrangements for commuters. We consulted Underground passengers to ensure their needs were properly taken into account when ticket offices were closed. We developed an online community to help give bus passengers a voice and continued to monitor the reliability of bus services, highlighting the worst performing routes and lobbying Transport for London (TfL) to address the underlying causes. Our report on how to improve public transport access to London's five major airports was well-received by both politicians and the industry and several of our recommendations are already being addressed.

The context for our future work

The major challenge for London in the next 20 to 30 years continues to be meeting the needs of a rapidly expanding and changing city. The 2011 Census showed that there had been a much larger growth in population than forecast in the London Plan. This led to a review of population projections by the GLA that are much higher than previously assumed, up from 8.2 million in 2011 to 10 million by 2030. The growth in population and employment will result in a projected increase in overall travel to 30 million trips a day by 2031, up from 27 million. This predicted growth in population and demand for travel will need to be matched by increases in transport capacity.

Enabling employment growth in central London remains very important as central London will remain the driver of London's economy. Currently 30% of London's jobs are in 2% of London's area and, though there are agglomeration benefits in having high numbers of workers in one central employment area, this requires a dense network of rail, tube and bus routes into the centre. Rising housing costs combined with changes to housing benefit entitlement mean that many people on low incomes who work in central London are having to move to areas of outer London and beyond for cheaper housing. High rail and tube fares can mean that many people have to rely on cheaper modes of travel such as buses despite the far longer journey times. Any reduction in bus service levels in outer London or in bus journey time reliability will impact disproportionately on low income groups.

Works will continue to upgrade London's ageing infrastructure and new schemes such as Crossrail are being developed to expand capacity to try and keep up with growth in the number of passengers, and to improve connectivity further afield. We welcome the infrastructure improvements but they will be accompanied by years of major disruption for transport users, including for those who may not directly benefit from them. Increasing congestion on London's roads affects pedestrians, bus passengers, cyclists and motorists, and their respective needs must be carefully balanced.

London TravelWatch will have a critical role to play in ensuring that consumer interests remain at the forefront of government thinking at both project planning and implementation stages, and then working to ensure they remain so. Policy makers, providers and operators need to remain flexible as, inevitably, changing circumstances can mean all concerned need to adapt and refocus. As a watchdog, it is essential that London TravelWatch is able to monitor progress and challenge operators to work together as effectively as possible, both on planned and unplanned disruption, to ensure that passenger interests are not compromised as complex projects are delivered across London. The industry showed what it could do during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, working together to deal with emerging problems as well as forward planning, and we expect even more from them now when dealing with the huge strategic challenges ahead.

General approach to this business plan

2016-17 will be another important year on many counts. There will be network changes arising from the letting of new rail franchises and other changes from the comprehensive spending review. There will also be changes following the 2016

Mayoral and London Assembly elections. We need to remain flexible in our plans in order to respond to these changes and this will limit our ability to take on new work.

We will further develop the themes from the current year as we follow up on work already underway or arising from our recent research, particularly *'Improving public transport access to London's airports'* and *'Interchange matters'*.

London TravelWatch is strongly committed to working collaboratively with the Transport Committee. We will continue to align work plans where practicable and to prioritise requests to provide evidence to the Committee's scrutinies and investigations. Where resources permit, we will play our part in following up on some of the key recommendations arising from its work by monitoring the progress made by operators, particularly TfL, in implementing them.

We will work within the framework of our strategic priorities which were updated last year to reflect the new transport challenges facing London, especially the major issue of capacity constraints at a time of tight public spending control. Our prioritisation criteria will help focus our resources on areas where we can have the most impact.

London TravelWatch will work in accordance with its mission and values - putting the consumer view, challenging the industry where appropriate and championing the interests of the travelling public – but always ensuring that our work remains evidence-based and our decision making is independent.

This business plan sets out the key areas of work the organisation will be undertaking in 2016-17 within the context of our strategic priorities. Our mission and values are set out in appendix 1. Our strategic priorities and corporate strategy are set out in appendix 2 and our budget bid for 2016-17 is attached as appendix 3.

Strategic priorities

Our work in 2016-17 will continue to be driven by the need to improve outcomes for transport users. On behalf of transport users we will work to ensure that:

- We support and advocate initiatives which make best use of scarce capacity on all London's transport networks, promoting infrastructure changes that will help do this.
- London has a transport system that is well-integrated and accessible to all, with convenient interchanges, easy-to-use ticketing and good customer service.
- All decisions about transport in London take account of transport users' needs and priorities.
- The travelling public are well-informed by service providers, they get high quality and timely information about services available, fares and ticketing and any disruption to their journeys.
- Our work is delivered by an efficient and responsive organisation.

Underpinning our work will be our belief that passengers should get the best value for money possible for the price they pay for their ticket; that services should keep pace with demand, running frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week; and that journeys should not just be safe but also feel safe. All transport users should have easy access to an effective complaints service from transport operators and providers, backed up by a robust appeals system when they are not satisfied with the response they receive.

Objectives for 2016-17

How the organisation will address these issues, as well as other key work areas, is set out below within the context of our five strategic objectives.

1. Support and advocate initiatives which make best use of scarce capacity on all London's transport networks and promote infrastructure changes that will help to do this

- Promote suggestions we have made previously about how to increase overall capacity on the existing bus network by relatively small improvements which make best use of current assets.
- Assess the impact of TfL's bus priority measures.
- Assess the effectiveness of changes to the cycling infrastructure in improving safety for cyclists as well as the impact these have on other road users.
- Evaluate the impact on passengers of timetable changes from December 2016 onwards.
- Provide a passenger input to plans to improve Bank station in 2020 and to other upgrades and extensions to the Underground network.
- Promote the development of new rail, Underground and bus interchange stations where these would make better use of existing capacity.
- Promote the removal of gyratory road systems to improve the capacity and safety of the road network, and conduct a series of case studies to consider particular locations from the different modal perspectives.

2. London has a transport system that is well-integrated and accessible to all, with convenient interchanges, easy-to-use ticketing and good customer service

- Promote good practice at transport interchanges as set out in our *Interchange Matters* report – using the results of mystery shopping carried out by both us and the public to identify best practice and highlight those that fall short of the standards transport users expect.
- Work to improve accessibility by encouraging transport decision makers, providers and operators to take further action - on the railway by doing more to

mitigate the impact of excessive gaps between trains and platforms; on buses by pushing local authorities to adopt the more challenging target of making 95% of all bus stops accessible; and on pavements by highlighting the problems posed to blind and partially-sighted pedestrians by pavement obstructions.

- Assess the impact of changes to the way that London Underground, London Overground and National Rail stations are staffed and intervene where there is evidence that passengers' needs are not being adequately met, particularly those of disabled or vulnerable travellers.
- Evaluate the impact on passengers of major station rebuilding programmes, particularly at London Bridge, Waterloo and Euston, and continue to speak up on their behalf to ensure that the changes best meet the needs of passengers and to help minimise the effect of disruption during construction.
- Encourage transport operators to continuously improve the service they give to passengers and monitor TfL's progress in addressing any issues arising from the London Assembly's Transport Committee's investigation into TfL's customer service standards.
- Follow up work done in 2015-16 regarding the needs of passengers at small stations and suggest how these could be better met.
- In partnership with Trust for London and London Councils, promote measures to mitigate the impact of the cost of travel on people in low income jobs living in outer London who have to travel long distances to work.
- Promote the improvement of surface access to London's airports, both in terms of infrastructure (rail, road, bus) and the terms and conditions that passengers are subject to (rail and bus ticketing, taxi and private hire fares and availability).

3. All decisions about transport in London take account of transport users' needs and priorities

- Give bus passengers a voice by further developing our online bus community and by supporting up to three new bus user groups.
- Monitor closely the new rail franchises on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern and Essex Thameside routes to ensure the services they provide meet the needs of passengers as promised in the franchise bid, and provide input from the London passenger perspective to the Greater Anglia and SouthWest Trains franchises before they are tendered.
- Provide input to and monitor progress on direct award rail franchises to ensure services meet the needs of passengers as promised in the terms of the franchise award (Southeastern and First Great Western).
- Provide input to new rail concession competitions by TfL for London Overground (and potentially the Metro part of SouthWest Trains).

- Track the legislative and decision-making process for HS2, speaking out at appropriate points to ensure that London passenger interests are properly taken into account in relation to Euston and Old Oak Common stations.
- Work to ensure that the investment in Crossrail brings maximum benefit to passengers – that stations are accessible and well-connected with local bus services, and that there is a direct link to Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport.
- Promote better access by public transport to London’s major airports and take opportunities that arise to improve access to healthcare and education services, particularly when new or reconfigured services or facilities are being planned, as well as to major new housing, enterprise or retail developments.
- Ensure that the needs of taxi and private hire passengers are considered in any future changes to taxi operation and licensing.
- Use our influence to ensure that Crossrail 2 is developed with passenger needs considered as a key element of the planning process.
- Use our *Key priorities for transport users*, developed for discussion with the candidates for the 2016-2020 mayoralty, to guide our response to the new Mayor’s Transport Strategy as well as our ongoing work.

4. The travelling public are well-informed by service providers, they get high quality and timely information about services available, fares and ticketing and any disruption to their journeys

- Provide a strong consumer voice on the multi-agency London-wide Travel Demand Management Board set up to coordinate passenger communications during planned disruption, and to learn the lessons from incidents of unplanned widespread disruption.
- Use our influence to try and accelerate the extension of the Oyster pay as you go and contactless smartcards to Gatwick, Luton and Stansted Airports and other stations within the London Railway area.
- Evaluate the impact on passengers of new ways of paying for travel like contactless cards, other forms of electronic ticketing and part-time season tickets.
- Identify and work to resolve any issues arising from the extension of different National Rail ITSO or other smartcards onto the London transport network.
- Encourage transport operators to be more transparent with passengers about the circumstances in which penalty fares are levied and to raise awareness of the importance of having a valid ticket or touching in with Oyster pay as you go, contactless smartcards or other electronic payment means before travelling.

- Negotiate to ensure that new ticket machines are designed to be user-friendly and encourage operators across the industry to adopt consistent design principles so that passengers develop greater confidence in using these.
- Promote the simplification of ticketing arrangements in London to enable easy understanding of these by passengers, wherever they are travelling to or from.

5. An efficient and responsive organisation

Communications

We will focus our communications work on influencing key debates and targeting our resources on the most significant audiences. We will prioritise continuing our regular dialogue with key stakeholders and decision-makers to ensure that the transport user voice in London is heard when decisions are made. We will continue to highlight the impact that our work achieves.

We will further develop our website and social media presence to help promote our work more widely but at minimal cost. For example, we have established our interchange matters blog, an interactive forum which will not only allow us to share good practice information, but will also enable the public to help us by surveying their local interchanges and feeding the results back to us.

Board

We will maintain and underpin the strategic role of the Board through our streamlined committee structures and high quality briefing papers. The terms of appointment of our current Chair and Board all expire at the end of September and December 2016 respectively. We will plan a comprehensive induction programme for the newly-appointed Chair and Members at the beginning of their terms of appointment.

Staffing

Staff remain our key resource and we aim to be an excellent employer. The award of the Investors in People accreditation at silver status provided external confirmation that our investment in staff development is well-aligned with our business objectives and we aim to retain this in 2017.

We will continue to pay the London Living Wage, participate in the Cycle to Work Scheme and help to support people into employment by taking on at least one apprentice or trainee.

We will continue to ensure we get best value in all that we do by maintaining our shared services agreement with the London Pensions Fund Authority for our senior finance work. We will continue to be alert to any other such opportunities where we are sure that there are real cost savings to be made.

Our permanent staffing establishment is now 15.76 full time equivalent posts. The current staff structure is attached as appendix 4.

Information technology

As we have reduced the size of our staffing establishment over recent years, making best use of technology has become even more important in ensuring we are as productive as possible. In the past two years we have upgraded our website and our CRM casework management system and in the year ahead we plan to replace our desk top computers.

Partnerships and additional resources

Partnership working during 2015/16 led to match funding from Trust for London and London Councils being made towards the cost of our transport affordability work. We will continue to collaborate with Transport Focus where appropriate and in the year ahead we will seek ways of making our overall resources go further by working in partnership with other stakeholders.

Premises

Our move in late 2014 to share premises with the London Fire Brigade at their Union Street headquarters has provided us with efficient and good value offices which are closer to almost all of the stakeholders with whom we regularly meet. It is also helpful to our work that other London bodies have moved in (London Pensions Fund Authority, London Waste and Recycling Board, London Ambulance Service and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation).

Risks

London TravelWatch has a comprehensive risk policy and business continuity plan and regularly updates its procedures according to changing circumstances. Risks are reviewed regularly by the staff team and the Governance Committee. We will continue to refer to the organisation's published prioritisation criteria before committing time and resources to new projects to avoid the risk of spreading resources too thinly in response to the many and rising calls on time.

Reserves

For a small organisation entirely dependent on an annual grant, maintaining an adequate level of reserves is essential to ensure that core operating activities can continue during periods of activity involving exceptional levels of unplanned expenditure. London TravelWatch continues to review its reserves policy annually.

Appendix 1

London TravelWatch Mission and Values

Mission

London TravelWatch is the body established by Parliament to be the official voice of transport users in greater London. It has a statutory role in the appeals and consultations process, and in putting the transport user view on transport issues, to improve the experience of travelling in and around the capital.

Values

London TravelWatch aims to be:

- Independent – we are firmly on the side of the consumer and will not bow to outside pressure.
- Authoritative – our work will be evidence-based, rigorous and respected.
- Open – we will share information, and accept new ideas.
- Collaborative – we will work with stakeholders.
- Inclusive – we will represent all transport users in our area.

Vision

That London TravelWatch is the champion of the travelling public in London, successfully influencing decision-making about travel in our area.

Appendix 2

Strategic priorities

Our work in 2016-17 will continue to be driven by the need to improve outcomes for transport users. On behalf of transport users we will work to ensure that:

- We support and advocate initiatives which make best use of scarce capacity on all London's transport networks, promoting infrastructure changes that will help do this.
- London has a transport system that is well-integrated and accessible to all, with convenient interchanges, easy-to-use ticketing and good customer service.
- All decisions about transport in London take account of transport users' needs and priorities.
- The travelling public are well-informed by service providers, they get high quality and timely information about services available, fares and ticketing and any disruption to their journeys.
- Our work is delivered by an efficient and responsive organisation.

Underpinning our work will be our belief that passengers should get the best value for money possible for the price they pay for their ticket; that services should keep pace with demand, running frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week; and that journeys should not just be safe but also feel safe. All transport users should have easy access to an effective complaints service from transport operators and providers, backed up by a robust appeals system when they are not satisfied with the response they receive.

Corporate strategy

The strategic priorities that underpin our work are:

- Maintaining an efficient system for handling appeals casework and for responding to consultations.
- Developing an independent evidence base of the views and needs of current and future transport users in London, especially those facing barriers to travel.
- Maintaining awareness of current transport service and future policy issues in our area.
- Becoming increasingly influential advocates on behalf of the travelling public to policy makers, regulators and operators.
- Building effective partnerships with stakeholders where it is in the interests of travellers to do so.
- Ensuring transport users feel their concerns are represented.
- Further developing as an efficient and responsive organisation.

Appendix 3

London TravelWatch Budget Submission 2016/17	
£k	2016/17
Corporate Plan 16/17	£000
2015/16 Budget	1,056.4
Budget requirement pre growth and savings (below)	1,035.3
Unavoidable growth:	
Accommodation costs:	1.3
Chair, Members' & Staff costs-pay:	0.0
Members' costs- non-pay	0.0
Other Staff related costs-non-pay	0.2
Supplies & Services	0.0
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	2.6
Total unavoidable growth	4.1
Projected Savings:	
Accommodation costs	0.0
Chair, Members' & Staff costs-pay	19.3
Members' costs- non-pay	0.0
Other Staff related costs-non-pay	0.0
Supplies & Services	5.9
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	0.0
Total savings	25.2
Application of reserves	0.0
Budget Requirement-after growth and savings	1,035.3
Guideline target	1,035.3
Excess over guideline	0.0
NB Growth and savings in the same headings have been offset above.	

Structure of London TravelWatch

30 September 2015

