Board meeting 24.05.11



Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 10 LTW 381

Work plan 2011-12

1 Purpose of report

1.1. To show how London TravelWatch plans to deliver the key objectives set out in its 2011-12 Business Plan.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are recommended to note this report and to give comments on the attached work plan.

3 Background

- 3.1 London TravelWatch has a wide statutory remit and the vast majority of the work it carries out is designed to help it meet this remit. However there can be a slight change of emphasis each year as the organisation reacts to current problems which are affecting transport users, or takes pre-emptive action to encourage transport providers and operators to address issues before they become major problems for passengers.
- 3.2 A business plan is produced annually, set in a three year context, describing what the organisation proposes to do in the year ahead and making a bid to the London Assembly for the budget with which to carry out the work. The process of developing the business plan and budget bid, reflecting any guidance given by the London Assembly's political transport leads, takes place usually between July and September. This is then submitted to the GLA's Transport Committee and forms part of the London Assembly's budget bid to the Mayor. Final confirmation of what our budget will be for the financial year ahead is not received until mid-February. This process started even earlier last year at the Mayor's request and meant that our business plan and budget bid had to be completed during August.
- 3.3 This long lead-in time is not as problematic as it might be because so much of the organisation's work arises in reaction to external events or requests from third parties. The business plan always identifies the need to remain flexible and this was particularly so last year. The 2011-12 Business Plan was written before the London Assembly's review of London TravelWatch had been published and in the knowledge that London TravelWatch had just embarked

- on an internal review which was expected to substantially reduce its staffing establishment.
- 3.4 The 2011-12 Business Plan identified particular issues that London TravelWatch expected to address during the year as part of its core work for transport users and these are all reflected in the work plan which is attached to this report. For example:
 - Impact of major infrastructure works on transport users
 - Particular concern about the scale of disruption caused by LUL's (London Underground) extensive track and signalling upgrade works and the need to ensure passenger views were taken into account
 - Impact of anticipated service cut backs on passengers
 - Concerns arising from the extension of the use of Oyster PAYG (pay as you go)
 - Anticipated changes to fares and ticketing arrangements
 - Need to take every opportunity to influence transport planning
 - Monitor performance standards and where necessary use our influence to force improvements or operation changes
 - The importance of maintaining an expert knowledge base so we can respond effectively to consultations and events
- 3.5 The strategic priorities which underpin the work of London TravelWatch are set out in an appendix to this report, including the three year strategic objectives which were initially agreed for the 2009-12 Business Plan.

4. Work plan 2011-12

- 4.1 The attached work plan reflects the organisation's statutory work, including the issues in paragraph 3.4, and is updated to reflect changes that have occurred since August 2010.
- 4.2 The 2011-12 Business Plan proposed that London TravelWatch would continue, where possible, to focus particularly on the needs of bus passengers. However, as previously agreed with the Board, it is intended that focus this year should be on the needs of LUL passengers in view of the scale of the upgrade work still to be done and what seems to be an increasing incidence of unplanned disruption to passenger journeys.
- 4.3 Some changes have been made to London TravelWatch's strategic objectives to reflect current circumstances:
 - The original objective 1 to further raise the standard of our appeals casework service has been amended in light of the substantial improvement that has already been made
 - The wording of objective 3 has been amended to remove the focus on bus passengers
 - Objective 5 (engaging with decision makers and service providers) has been extended to include what was previously a separate objective (to continue to meet regularly with transport operators to put the consumer

- view) as in practice the actions to meet these two objectives are so similar
- (What has now become) objective 9 has been expanded to reflect the need to downsize the organisation.

5. Financial and resource implications

- 5.1 Although in preparing the 2011-12 Business Plan we had to exemplify the impact of four different budget reduction scenarios, in the event our budget for 2011-12 was set at 10% less than it had been for 2010-11. This was the biggest reduction of the four but the one which we expected.
- As a result of the internal review and subsequent restructuring, during the coming year London TravelWatch's staffing establishment will have reduced by approximately a third since the Business Plan for 2011-12 was submitted to the London Assembly's Transport Committee. However, as anticipated in the business plan, the organisation has been careful to protect its core functions of casework and research and the majority of the reductions will be achieved through cutting back office costs, streamlining the way that the organisation works and reducing considerably the number of Board and committee meetings.
- 5.3 There has been a small reduction in the size of the two core teams but it is expected that this can be accommodated because of the time that will be released by the reduction in the number of Board and committee meetings (for the research team) and a reduction in the number of incoming telephone calls from bus passengers as well as a reduced need for a corporate reception function (for the casework team). The work plan makes reference to developing new ways of working to ensure that the focus of the organisation's work remains on its core statutory functions.
- 5.4 In order to achieve budget savings, the organisation has not used agency staff for some time. However with a reduced staffing establishment there may be a need to use specialist consultants, temporary agency staff or work placements from time to time to deal with peaks of incoming work or to cover for absence.
- 5.5 The budget for 2011-12 has been recast to reflect the attached work plan.

6. Legal and equalities implications

6.1 Under Schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority (GLA) Act 1999 (as amended), the London Assembly has various powers and duties in respect of London TravelWatch. These include the powers to: agree London TravelWatch's budget, receive London TravelWatch's accounts and audit and, under section 251 of the GLA Act, to issue guidance and directions as to the manner in which London TravelWatch shall exercise its functions.

- 6.2 The London Assembly has delegated its functions in respect of London TravelWatch to the GLA's Transport Committee. The London Assembly and London TravelWatch have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding which establishes a clear and transparent basis upon which Transport Committee, the Greater London Authority and London TravelWatch will work and interact with each other.
- 6.3 There are no specific equalities issues raised in this report although the workplan does aim to improve inclusion through each of the targets and actions.

Appendix A

Corporate Strategy

The strategic priorities that underpin our work are:

- To maintain an efficient system for handling appeals casework and for responding to consultations
- To develop an independent evidence base of the views and needs of current and future travellers in London, especially those facing barriers to travel
- To maintain awareness of current transport service and future policy issues in our area
- To become influential advocates on behalf of travellers to policy makers, regulators and operators
- To build effective partnerships with stakeholders where it is in the interests of travellers to do so
- To ensure travellers feel their concerns are represented
- To be an efficient and responsive organisation

Strategic Objectives for 2011 – 2013

Our strategic objectives for the next two years are:

- To further raise the standard of our appeals casework service
- To encourage transport operators to improve their complaints handling and approach to customer care
- To gather the views and experiences of travellers through research, and by networking with local authorities, user and community groups, especially of bus passengers, those in outer London, and those who are less able to travel
- To monitor performance of services on behalf of passengers, particularly of the bus network
- To engage with decision makers and service providers on behalf of passengers, with medium to long term strategic planning and to put the consumer perspective into the planning process
- To respond fully to major consultations from the passenger perspective
- To continue to develop constructive relationships with TfL, with the London Assembly, with Passenger Focus and with London Boroughs.
- To continue to meet regularly with transport operators to put the consumer view
- To raise the profile of London TravelWatch so that the transport users feel they are represented
- Whilst continuing to work efficiently, to explore ways of expanding our resources and income

Key targets 2011/12	Key actions and milestones	Target Date	Comments
Objective 1 – Operate an effective, high quali	ty and timely appeals service		Γ
1.1 Continue to improve our internal performance on casework handling.	 Regular & consistent individual and team performance management Quarterly reports on casework performance to Consumer Affairs Committee Implement initiatives to further improve our own quality standards: Call handling training for whole team Review standard correspondence Enhance casework CRM to improve user friendliness 	June 11 Sep 11 July 11	
1.2 Work with service providers to improve the quality and timeliness of their responses to London TravelWatch appeals cases	 Casework team to continue holding regular meetings with TfL & TOCs to discuss response times Chair or Chief Executive to take up issues with particularly problematic operators. Slightly amend format of quarterly casework performance reports to more clearly identify comparative response times by operators 	Oct 11	
1.3 Work with TfL to encourage bus operators to better understand the work of London TravelWatch and the concerns that passengers raise with us.	Speak at, and participate in, TfL's annual Bus Operator Customer Services Workshop	May 11	
1.4 Arrange for removal of London TravelWatch phone number from bus posters	TfL to change posters	May 11	

Objective 2 – Encourage transport operators to improve their complaints handling and approach to customer care.			
2.1 Regular meetings with operators to take up problems with complaints handling and the issues arising.			
2.2 Continue to promote best practice in customer care generally and with train operators	 Ensure our responses to consultations advocate best practice as appropriate Conduct follow up to our 2009 complaints handling audit of LOROL 	June 11	
2.3 Participate in specific initiatives to encourage TfL to improve their approach to complaints handling	 Encourage LUL to make it easier for passengers to claim compensation when due by: Extending claim period to 28 days in line with TOCs and London Rail Making improvements to LUL passenger charter to bring it in line with others Enabling passengers to claim on-line Work closely with the London Assembly to help inform their rapporteurship on TfL complaints handling Agree how best to promote any recommended improvements arising from our research into unfinished journeys made using Oyster PAYG 		
2.4 Publicise at an early stage new problems passengers are experiencing to encourage operators to take mitigating measures to minimise their impact on the travelling public	Regular discussions between casework and policy teams identify emerging issues		

Objective 3 – Gather the views and experiences of the travelling public through research, through careful use of external information and by networking with local authorities, user and community groups, where possible having particular regard to those in outer London and those who are less able to travel.

3.1 Complete research projects initiated in 2010/11 and identify how best to take forward work arising from these	 Complete Train Operating Companies' Compensation Scheme research (in partnership with Passenger Focus and First Group) Complete research into unfinished journeys made using Overter PAYC and consider practical colutions 		
	using Oyster PAYG and consider practical solutionsComplete walking and interchange report		
3.2 Commission new research to identify passengers' priorities for improvement on London Underground	 Establish scope and objectives of research Invite bids Complete research 		
3.3 Collect passenger views at local consultation events			
3.4 Maintain our records of key local transport issues across London			
3.5 Maintain a watching brief on the progress of issues we have dealt with in previous years	 Access to healthcare facilities The use of 0845 telephone numbers for complaints Safety for taxi passengers: TfL commitments to improvements Overview of how bus priority measures are implemented and maintained across London 		

3.6 Where opportunities arise, encourage other organisations to conduct research into topics about which London TravelWatch is concerned but has insufficient resources to investigate	 Develop a closer relationship with TfL on research into transport use so as to promote research which considers passenger needs as identified through our own work Recommend possible scrutiny topics to London Assembly's Transport Committee Support Trust for London's research into London's Poverty Profile by identifying questions that will identify areas of transport poverty in the Capital Assist, if appropriate, in informing more specialist research by Trust for London into transport poverty in London 	April 11		
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Objective 4 –To monitor performance of servi	ces on behalf of passengers,		Ι	
4.1 Regularly review the performance information supplied to us by TfL and other transport operators and make recommendations for action as appropriate	Quarterly monitoring reports to Transport Services Committee – follow up action as agreed			
4.2 Continue to monitor closely any proposals by operators to reduce services to passengers	•			
4.3 Monitor how transport operators manage service disruption (planned and unplanned) and recommend improvements as appropriate	•			
4.4 Review what was achieved as a result of focussing particularly on issues affecting bus passengers during 2010-11	Report to Transport Services Committee	July 11		

	s and service providers on behalf of passengers, with ve into the planning process; and continue to meet re		
5.1 Monitor major infrastructure projects to ensure London passenger interests are taken into account.	 Tube upgrade programme including the impact of closures and the provision of replacement services. Pursue with TfL ways to minimize disruption to passengers. Thameslink upgrade programme to ensure that the full passenger benefits are delivered and adhered to Examine the impact of Crossrail works on bus passengers and the road network Monitor Network Rail's plans for London Bridge and its environs to ensure minimum inconvenience to transport users of all modes whilst the station is rebuilt Consider the passenger impact of new infrastructure projects Cross Thames Cable Car 	May 11 and ongoing	*
5.2 Monitor the impact on transport users of transport arrangements being put in place for the 2012 Olympics, particularly to ensure that the needs, views and experiences of nongames users are taken account of by transport operators and providers, and to respond to related consultations	 Regular meetings with ODA/TfL Action as appropriate to advocate amendments to proposals which adversely impact on non-games users when alternatives are available Impact on Greenwich transport users of proposed changes to train stopping patterns at Maze Hill Board discussion with TfL on the proposed communications plan for Olympics Consider the passenger legacy from the Olympics 	May 11 July 11 July 11	*

5.3 Continue to monitor the impact of fares policies across London, including technological developments affecting ticketing systems.	 Comment as appropriate on any proposals for ticket office closures and changes to ticketing technologies and processes, including changes to conditions of carriage and passenger compensation arrangements. Raise concern about the actions of some train operating companies to cease provision of ticket vending machines which accept cash Input to DfT penalty fares review 		
5.4 Respond as appropriate to emerging trends and problems, with a view to ensuring transport users are not disadvantaged.	 Take up issues identified through casework. Casework Manager and Policy Officer meet monthly to consider relevant issues. Regularly review the performance information supplied to LTW by TfL and other transport providers and make recommendations for action as appropriate. Continue to monitor closely any proposals by operators to reduce services to passengers Monitor how transport operators manage service disruption and recommend improvements 		
5.5 Continue to promote good practice at transport interchanges where passengers are changing from one transport mode or service to another	Continue to encourage the development of a good quality walking route between Euston and St Pancras railway stations	 	

5.6 Continue to take every opportunity improve to raise awareness of the need for clear signage for passengers, especially in locations where they are changing between different transport modes or in times of disruption	 Take opportunities to promote good practice Follow up on problems identified at Paddington Station and its environs. 		
5.7 Enable the public to engage in open discussions with major transport providers	 Public engagement with TfL senior staff at Board meetings: London's Transport Commissioner DLR/Tramlink/London Overground London Buses 	May 11 Sep 11 Feb 12	
5.8 Ensure London TravelWatch continues to be respected for the quality of its work and use this to inform and influence decision makers	 Regular articles in appropriate trade press All London TravelWatch publications, media briefings and public engagement continue to be high quality and accurate Take action as possible to ensure that all third party descriptions of London TravelWatch are accurate 		
5.9 Update our Passenger Manifesto in preparation for Mayoral/London Assembly elections in 2012 in order to ensure that the needs of London's transport users are taken account of in the public debate, regardless of political allegiances.			

Objective 6 – To respond fully to major consu	Itations from the passenger perspective.		
6.1 Contribute to London Assembly scrutinies into matters that affect transport users and continue to respond in a timely way to all requests from committees of the London Assembly for assistance with their scrutinies and the House of Commons Select Committee with its inquiries.	 Contribute to London Assembly's Transport Committee scrutiny of London Underground Assist London Assembly's Transport Committee scrutiny staff with preparations for possible rapporteurship on TfL's complaint handling 	June 11 June 11	*
6.2 Respond to consultations as appropriate on Network Rail's route utilisation strategies (RUS), the McNulty Review where these impact on passengers in our area, and the DfT review of fares and ticketing agreements (RAFT).	 Stations RUS Rolling stock RUS McNulty review conclusions on fares, staffing of trains and stations, ticket offices and delivery systems DfT regulatory agreement on fares and ticketing (RAFT) 		
6.3 Respond selectively to other major consultations from statutory and regulatory organisations on changes that will impact on transport users in our area, liaising as appropriate with the London Assembly. Priority to be given to those consultations which require a statutory response from London TravelWatch.		Ongoing	
6.4 Review and respond to proposals to amend timetables and bus services (statutory requirement).			

Objective 7 – Continue to develop construct with the London Boroughs	ive relationships with TfL, with the London Assembly,	with Pass	enger Foo	eus and
7.1 Liaise regularly to avoid duplication of effort between London TravelWatch and the Transport Committee	•			
7.2 Consult regularly with Passenger Focus to identify opportunities for joint working and to eliminate duplication				
7.3 Develop a closer relationship with TfL on research into transport users' needs and experiences				
7.4 Have regular meetings with London Councils to consider transport issues that impact on local boroughs				

Objective 8 – Raise the profile of London TravelWatch so that transport users feel they are represented				
8.1 Arrange two or more local transport user consultation events with a view both to raising awareness of the complaints system and collecting the views of consumers	 Hold surgery in Kingston (delayed from 2010/11) – or consider holding in alternative SW London venue to pick up Northern Line LUL issues – Morden or Tooting? Target additional event (s) in areas where the community is more dependent on bus travel and/or contains a higher proportion of people from minority ethnic backgrounds, or areas where there are known problems 			
8.2 Ensure the website continues to develop as a source of advice on both passenger rights and relevant consumer issues.	 Working group with Board members established to review approach. The home page of the website reflects our perspective on current issues and provides high quality advice for passengers and transport users 	June 11		
8.3 Publicise transport user issues as appropriate through media, social media and stakeholders so that passengers feel that they are represented and – where appropriate – pressure is kept up on transport providers.	 Continue to develop systems to capture the type of issues raised in appeals more effectively. Look for ways of broadening awareness of our work amongst sections of the community who are underrepresented in our casework, for instance through collaborative work with other organisations. 			
8.4 Local press coverage publicises how our work directly impacts on the daily experience of transport users in that area.	Continue, where appropriate, to distribute localised stories arising from our general work			

	efficiently, explore ways of expanding our resources and massible to staff and minimises the disruption to our work for		ion
9.1 Invest in training and development for our staff and Board	 Develop a learning and development plan for staff which: Meets ongoing development needs of staff Supports new ways of working Meets career change and support needs of outgoing staff Regular and consistent management support for staff: Staff briefings 12 x pa Whole staff workshops 3 x pa Business plan delivery group meetings 4 x pa Individual team meetings 10 x pa Individual supervision meetings 10 x pa All staff have annual appraisal Continue regular programme of Board briefing and familiarisation visits Provide induction programme for new Board member Hold whole organisation 'Awayday' 	Nov 11	

9.2 Reduce staffing establishment as necessary to meet budget targets whilst continuing to prioritise work on core functions and in accordance with our Employment Protection and Redundancy Policy	 Continue recruitment freeze until restructure implemented Implement programme of voluntary redundancies Job match to vacant posts prioritising staff whose posts remain at risk of compulsory redundancy Finalise job descriptions Monitor impact of changes on individual and corporate workload (including impact of removing our telephone contact number from buses) Once restructure implemented, selective use of temporary staff, consultants or student placements to cover peaks of work or staff holidays where necessary to maintain performance 		
9.3 Provide appropriate and well maintained premises in which to work	 Agree and implement new arrangements for day to day premises management Undertake annual health and safety inspection and implement any recommendations arising from this Reconfigure use of premises in light of restructure Continue to explore opportunities to substantially reduce accommodation costs from 2012-12 by either relocating or reducing occupation of current premises Confirm decision on accommodation Develop project plan for office move in Q1 2012-13 	July 11 July 11 Oct 11 Nov 11 Jan 12	
9.4 Outsource the majority of our finance and HR work in order to reduce operating costs for this activity	 Continue to explore options for outsourcing work to either Passenger Focus or the GLA Explore alternative options in case outsourcing to partner organisations is not viable Decision made 	July 11	

9.5 IT and telephony services	 Continue to maintain existing IT infrastructure Enhance CRM to improve user friendliness Investigate potential to extend CRM system Explore future IT implications of different accommodation options Once decision made on accommodation develop detailed IT strategy to reflect future needs 		
9.6 Risk management	 Review of risk carried out at the end of every Board and Committee meeting SMT meet monthly to consider current risk factors Full review of risk register Annual testing programme for key business continuity items agreed Annual business continuity testing programme implemented Existing business continuity plan updated to cover medium risk scenarios Full review and updating of business continuity plan 	Dec 11 May 11 Mar 12 June 11 Dec 11	
9.7 Effective resource management	 Further develop mechanisms for filtering incoming work, using peer challenge to ensure effort remains focussed on achieving key objectives Encourage ways of working which maximise knowledge transfer Further develop project planning skills particularly in respect of human resourcing implications Better exploit opportunities for working more effectively offered by our current technology Monthly finance reports to Governance Committee Quarterly HR reports to Governance Committee Quarterly reports on work plan to Governance Committee 		

9.8 Ensure compliance with new and existing legislation	 Agree and implement changes to working practices to take account of the Equalities Act 2010 Maintain effective processing requests for information made under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts Maintain up to date record of our statutory duties as the London Transport Users' Committee and the legislation that specifies these Maintain relationship with office of the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure ongoing good practice 	July 11	
9.9 Knowledge management	 Review status of documents held in archives Develop guidelines for future disposal and retention of key documents Succession planning Develop naming and storage conventions and systems for corporate documents Initiate system for regular review of key policy documents Ensure policy guide remains up to date and accessible to staff 		
9.10 Produce key documents on time	 Annual performance report 2010-11 for GLA Annual accounts Annual review Draft business plan and budget submission for 2012-13 Six month performance report 2011-12 for GLA 		

9.11 Explore through partnerships ways of working that will expand the resources available to us to do our work	 Possible joint research projects with other organisations representing consumers and the travelling public, and with transport providers such as TfL where appropriate Take opportunities that arise to recover costs for our core work Host NR secondment delayed from last year 				
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