



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 Assembly's 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 and international rail passengers using Eurostar.

Our aims

We aim to secure a better journey experience for everyone travelling in and around London: commuters, leisure travellers, visitors and tourists however they travel. Our multi-modal remit reflects the way most people use transport in London – making active choices between modes, and interchanging from one mode to another in the course of a typical journey.

We:

- press for a better deal for London's travellers
- seek value for money for passengers 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 all involved remain aware of the experiences and concerns of the travelling public.

Researching

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

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 to their original complaint, and seek to rectify problems or secure compensation where appropriate. Where passengers' experiences highlight ongoing problems that need to be put right, we follow up the issues concerned in our policy and research work.

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 also monitor ticketing including availability and dispensing. 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 own 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.

Our 10 priorities for passengers

- services should run frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week
- networks should be accessible with adequate capacity and easy interchange between different modes 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 and maintained and fully accessible with a good quality waiting environment
- journeys should be safe and free from anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime
- streets should be clean, clear of clutter, properly signed and well maintained for all users
- buses, trams, trains and boats should be accessible for all, comfortable, clean, safe, quiet and easy to identify
- transport providers should communicate clearly and promptly with users, be approachable and open to suggestions, take complaints seriously and have proper mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.

At a glance

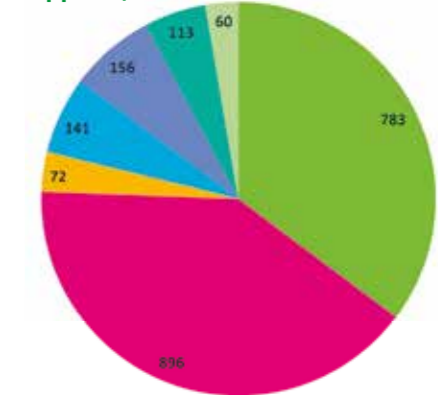


We cost London households less than 1p a week



We represent the interests of passengers in and around London who make around 13.5m journeys a day, (around 5.5m by bus, almost 5m by tube and over 3m by train). This includes around 1.1 million non-residents on an average day (domestic and international visitors, as well as commuters coming from outside London).

Casework requiring further investigation (2,376 appeals):



- Fares including requests for refunds and penalty fares (about half relating to Oyster)
- Passenger unhappy with the way the operator has managed their complaint
- Complaints about staff
- Service performance including delays and engineering works
- Lack of accurate information at point of travel
- Infrastructure issues such as quality on board, at stations including overcrowding
- Other



Chair's & Chief Executive's foreword

Stephen Locke, Chair



Janet Cooke, Chief Executive



The past year has been a difficult one for passengers with some serious and lasting disruption to services. Some problems, such as the prolonged disruption to Southern Rail services have been high profile. Others, such as the steady decline in average bus speeds due to traffic congestion, have been less visible but just as detrimental. And, everywhere, there has been an increasing demand for travel in a system that is often full to capacity.

Faced with challenges like these, the need for a strong, independent body to speak up for London's travelling public has never been greater. London TravelWatch has worked hard to make a difference - both for individuals who come to us with complaints and concerns that have not been resolved by the operator,

and more generally where there are problems that need systemic solutions. One major achievement has been the introduction of 15 minute Delay Repay compensation - a need we were the first to raise given the limited relevance of the previous 30 minute threshold to most train journeys in London.

We were pleased to have been asked by Sadiq Khan, the newly elected Mayor to conduct a thorough, independent review of London Underground's closure of most ticket offices, drawing on the views of passengers and staff. We concluded that the changes could in principle provide passenger benefits, but that they had been introduced prematurely and required a range of improvements before they could be seen as benefiting passengers.

We have also pressed home the interests of bus users, by seeking to give them a voice in local bus operations, and by highlighting the need for substantial improvements in bus priority measures, to counteract the ever slowing speeds resulting from road congestion. We also continued to promote the need for better public transport links to London's airports.

We were shocked and saddened that 7 people were killed and 51 seriously injured when a tram derailed at Sandilands in November. We will do all we can to make sure that the passenger interest is properly taken into account in forthcoming investigations.

Sadly our Deputy Chair, Ruth Thompson lost her long battle with illness and died in July. A keen cyclist

herself, she was a tireless campaigner, especially for the users of London's streets. She also had an outstanding knowledge of good governance and accountability from her long experience of public service. In her memory, London TravelWatch has inaugurated an annual lecture, drawing together academics, practitioners and others, to explore the links between transport policy, operations and research.

At the end of 2016, we thanked and said goodbye to retiring Board members, Abdi Rage and Chris Brown and welcomed Jackie Ballard, Alan Benson and Abdi Osman to the Board.

Retaining our Investors in People Silver level accreditation during the year was a real testament

to the commitment of everybody. We are grateful for the excellent support provided by Board and staff colleagues whose hard work and enthusiasm continue to be such an asset.

Stephen Locke, Chair/Janet Cooke, Chief Executive



Ruth Thompson



Our achievements

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 complaints made to 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. When we resolve an issue for an individual user who has appealed to us, we are well placed to use their experience to argue for improvements which make a real difference for everyone.

We secured a significant victory for Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) passengers when the operator decided to reconsider its plans to alter ticket office hours at a number of stations in the area we cover after we voiced serious concerns that the programme was being run prematurely without sufficient attention to likely detrimental effects. This followed a consultation during which we received around 9,000 responses. Instead, GTR agreed to pilot its proposed changes at a few stations before contemplating further expansion. They also said that passengers would still be able to buy the same range of tickets and railcards and that there would be protection for passengers against future reductions in the facilities and staffing at stations.

In September 2016, the new Mayor of London commissioned us to conduct an independent review of TfL's Tube ticket office closures. We were asked particularly to look at the impact of the closures on passengers' ability to feel safe travelling on the Underground, purchase the right ticket easily, and access the information and support they need to get around.

We concluded that the new arrangements could, potentially, deliver good customer service. However, we identified significant issues that TfL still needed to address before full reassurance could be given. These included having a clear focal point where assistance was available, the services provided by ticket vending machines, staff training, visibility and availability, and assistance for people with disabilities. The Mayor welcomed the findings of our review and asked TfL to draw up a full action plan to address the problems identified.

One ongoing feature of our work is our monitoring of train operator performance in our National Rail performance reports. Over the past year we have continued to highlight the poor performance of GTR services, showing the extent to which the operator's poor performance covers all services operated under the franchise and not just those operated by Southern which have been exacerbated by industrial action and developments at London Bridge.

We welcomed the Mayor's plan for an extension of the DLR to Thamesmead, arguing that the extension

would increase travel opportunities for people in an area with poor transport links. We also supported the idea of a new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf. We stressed the importance of transport links keeping up with plans for new housing - a critical issue for East London but vital for the rest of the capital too.

Paying for travel

The cost of travel and the ability to buy tickets easily are fundamental for passengers. Last year we heard from people 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. We also heard from those unhappy with high ticket prices. As well as campaigning for fares to be held at a reasonable level, we advise people on how to get the best value fares and encourage transport providers to simplify and clarify their fare structures.

Over the last two years we have been highlighting rail passengers' frustration with what has been a wide-

ranging deterioration in service performance. Many London commuters were persistently suffering delays of 15-20 minutes on journeys scheduled to take 20-25 minutes but were not entitled to compensation. Two years after we first raised the issue we succeeded in getting the principle of compensation after 15 minutes accepted by the Government.

The GTR franchise became the first to compensate passengers suffering delays of between 15 and 29 minutes in December 2016. In the longer term, we want passengers to receive automatic delay repay compensation through their contactless or Oyster cards, and we will keep pressing this case.

We welcomed the introduction of a one hour 'hopper' bus and tram ticket by the new Mayor of London. We hope this will enable people on low incomes to consider jobs in areas they may have previously found too expensive to get to. We also hope it will have encouraged more tram users to use Oyster or Contactless cards, saving them money when they travel on other parts of London's transport network.

Many passengers will stand to benefit from the

Mayor of London's decision to freeze fares on the TfL network from January 2017. However, we expressed disappointment that long-suffering passengers in and around London had to face another National Rail fares rise, albeit one capped at inflation. We pointed out that the average increases of 2.3% largely outstrip average earnings increases.

These fare differences highlight the large disparities in the percentage of income spent by people living in different parts of London to get to work. We expressed concern that these disparities will widen, as those using purely TfL services will benefit from the Mayor's fares freeze but those travelling on National Rail services from areas where they need to use a Travelcard or caps on Oyster Pay As You Go or contactless cards will face fare increases.

We also remain concerned about the large and confusing variations in the cost of travel from various different points around London's commuter belt. For example, weekly season tickets from Redhill and Sevenoaks which are both 21 miles from their London terminus station cost £68.60 and £84.50 respectively,

while you can get a season ticket from Gatwick Airport Station, which is 27 miles from London for £60.90. This leads to undesirable distortions in the travel market, including passengers taking otherwise unnecessary car journeys to stations where they can get a cheaper deal. We will continue to lobby for fare simplification.

Meanwhile the outcome of TfL's consultations on the regulation of taxis and private hire vehicles produced welcome results following our representations. TfL announced that there would be no more surcharges for passengers paying by card in taxis and private hire vehicles and from October 2016 all drivers were obliged to accept cards including contactless payment cards. They also confirmed that all licensed private hire services would have to provide a call centre to enable telephone contact by passengers, for example in an emergency.

We made a detailed assessment of the application of the 2015 Consumer Rights Act to train operators after it came into force for these services in October 2016. In particular, the Act requires services to be provided with reasonable care and skill – and the consumer has rights to compensation where this has not been done. The legal implications are still being developed but we now ensure that our day to day casework takes account of this recent change - for example in pressing for reasonable compensation for passengers where there are very clear cut cases of consequential loss following a delayed or cancelled train. In February 2017, we supported the call from consumer organisation, Which? for train operators to stop hiding behind industry-wide terms and conditions which make it difficult for passengers to claim for consequential loss.



Standing up for transport users

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

A major disappointment during the year was the Secretary of State's decision not to devolve London commuter rail services to TfL in the next round of franchises. This would have allowed other parts of London's network to benefit from the successful models of London Overground and TfL Rail. The approach taken has led to very significant improvements, even where there has been little new infrastructure investment. We are now calling on the Government and rail companies to guarantee that passengers receive the service they would have had if devolution had occurred. This will apply especially to the forthcoming renewal of the South Eastern franchise, which is crucially important to passengers in large areas of south east London who are almost a captive market. Looking further ahead, we remain strongly of the view that future franchises including a significant London element should provide for devolution to TfL.

Throughout the year we flagged up the problem of falling bus speeds, particularly in central London. We were the first organisation to highlight this problem, which has now led to a reduction in bus passenger numbers. To counter this we continue to argue for more priority for buses on London's roads and for

stronger enforcement of yellow and red line controls. With other transport modes running at or close to full capacity, it is critically important that London is able to make good use of its bus network.

We welcomed the Transport Committee's report *London Stalling* which recommended that the Mayor develops proposals for replacing the Congestion Charge with a new citywide road pricing scheme, which charges vehicles according to the extent, location and timing of their road usage. We called for a detailed assessment of the scope for road pricing, and a full public debate on the issue.

We warned both parties involved during the ongoing industrial dispute affecting Southern Rail services that they were increasingly treating passengers like collateral damage. On behalf of passengers, we sought assurances from Southern Rail after they cut their timetable by a further 15 per cent on top of cuts already made. We wanted to see good publicity about the changes, visible staff, improved compensation and the declassification of first class accommodation to reduce overcrowding.



When things go seriously wrong, it is important that lessons are learned by all the parties involved and effective plans developed for the future. We therefore welcomed the Government-commissioned review of Thameslink and Southern's poor performance, by Chris Gibb. We had several meetings with him to provide input on behalf of passengers.

The rail overcrowding figures released in July 2016 by the Department for Transport showed how ridership was in many areas of London far in excess of capacity. This demonstrated the need for long term investment. In the shorter term, we highlighted the need for operators to do all they can to improve other aspects of passengers' journey experience, with clear information, especially when things go wrong, together with clear signage in and around stations for the benefit of visitors.

Shaping services and improving access

Londoners and visitors need to be able to choose 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 disabled passengers benefit everyone.

We contributed to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee inquiry on *Improving the Rail Passenger Experience* and were pleased that it drew on our evidence including the need for more transparency on operator performance. We pointed out that early on in the franchise our ongoing monitoring revealed poor GTR performance and that we had raised issues such as driver shortages with Ministers in December 2014. We were able to add a London dimension to the Committee's inquiry, pointing out that for high frequency 'metro' services an 'excess journey time' performance measure (which measures the total additional time that passenger journeys would have taken compared with the scheduled time) is a much better measure

of reliability than the current Public Performance Measure (PPM) which is based on whether trains arrive at their final destination within 5 or 10 minutes of the scheduled arrival time.

Responding to the Government's decision to expand runway capacity at Heathrow Airport, we emphasised the need to improve public transport access to all London's airports, to ensure that optimum use is made of existing capacity. We pointed out that our report published in 2014, which we presented to the Davies Commission, showed major shortcomings for each of London's airports. We called for improved connections, direct rail links from South London, North West Surrey and the Thames Valley to Heathrow Airport and prioritising electrification of the North Downs rail route which serves Gatwick. We also made the case for incremental improvements for Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton airports.

Many of the transport aims included in the Mayor's new vision for London reflected the 10 transport users' priorities we published ahead of the 2016

Mayoral elections and discussed with Mayoral candidates' teams. Priorities include ensuring sustained investment to meet London's ever-growing transport needs, reliable bus services that keep up with the pace of change and devolving further London rail services to the Mayor. Many require only modest expenditure and could be implemented quickly. We will continue to monitor progress against these priorities over the Mayoral term.

Thinking ahead, we made the case for a programme of 90 possible infrastructure improvements to complement and follow on from the capital's major projects such as the Elizabeth Line and Thameslink. We started from the proposition that many incremental improvements could be made to the capital's transport network that, even if unspectacular, could produce substantial dividends. Examples of the smaller scale, local improvements we identified included improving strategic interchanges such as West Hampstead and Brixton, electrification of currently non-electrified lines to increase capacity such as Chiltern's routes to Marylebone and providing more cycle routes using identified strips of vacant land.

We carried out a passenger evaluation of TfL plans to change many central London bus services in anticipation of the arrival of Crossrail and the Mayor's aspiration to close Oxford Street to motor vehicles. We pointed out that for many passengers, the proposals would involve a walk, change of bus or use of the Underground, a more expensive and less accessible mode. We urged TfL to redouble its efforts, working with other partners such as local councils and Network Rail, to improve interchanges so that travel can be as seamless as possible. We also called on TfL to implement a systematic

programme of bus priority measures on each of the affected bus routes so that journeys are speeded up not slowed down.

We called on London boroughs to follow TfL's lead and [make it their new year's resolution](#) to clear their pavements of unlawful obstructions and pledged to name and shame the boroughs that do not take their legal duties seriously.

Improving accessibility of bus services has long been a priority for us. The buses themselves have been wheelchair accessible for many years, but there is little benefit in this where bus stops themselves are not also accessible. We are very pleased with the progress that has now been made and we have [congratulated the many London boroughs](#) that have made bus stops in their borough accessible. In Ealing, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kingston, 100 per cent of stops are now accessible. In 2009, when we started to highlight this issue and press for change, only 41 per cent of stops across London were fully accessible but by March 2017 the overall figure had risen to almost 93 per cent.

Engaging with transport users

We aim to make it easy for the travelling public to contact us, whether through casework, at our public meetings and events, or via our [website](#) and social media.

We consistently seek to improve our website, ensuring that it is up to date and that the highlighted frequently asked questions reflect the queries that passengers raise with us. Regular monitoring of patterns of use means we know which features are most popular with the public.

Our Board and Policy Committee meetings, at which we discuss current issues in transport, explore problems and look at future services, are open to the public and we live tweet from them to enable those who cannot make it in person to engage with us via Twitter. Key topics discussed in the last year included proposed National Rail ticket office closures, our review of TfL's ticket office closures, Crossrail 2, rail devolution, bus performance and accessibility on the transport network.

Events and visits

We held two successful Interchange Matters best practice seminars which focused on [interchanges in general](#) and [accessibility at interchanges](#). Guest speakers included Professor David Begg; TfL's Leon Daniels and Mark Wild; John Gill from Network Rail; Julian Drury, Managing Director of C2C and representatives from the RNIB, Transport for All, Age UK and the Rail Delivery Group.

We also held a successful [Cycling Cities](#) event in memory of our former Deputy Chair, Ruth Thompson. Over 70 people attended the talk by Professor Ruth Oldenziel from Eindhoven University.

Our performance

During 2016-17 our casework team dealt with 10,719 written and telephone enquiries and complaints. We were able to deal with most of these quickly or pass them on to the operator for an initial reply, as we only consider handling cases as 'appeals' where the passenger has already

complained to the service operator. We investigated 2,376 appeals from members of the public travelling in London and the surrounding areas. The vast majority of cases concerned service performance on both trains and buses, including delays, early departure, penalty fares, lack of travel information and complaint handling by rail operators.

We received three requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, two of which were dealt with within the statutory 20-working-day time period. The delay in responding to the third request was caused by the need to consider whether London TravelWatch was able to disclose information provided to it in confidence.

Our funding

London TravelWatch is funded by the London Assembly in accordance with Schedule 19 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. In 2016-17, our income amounted to £1,058,963 and our total expenditure was £1,055,377. Our full audited accounts are available on our website.

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	We did this	This was the outcome
<p>When service performance problems started on Thameslink and Southern it was clear that many rail passengers travelling in and around London, who make relatively short journeys of 20-25 minutes, were regularly being inconvenienced by delays of around 20 minutes, with no right to any compensation.</p>	<p>We started calling for compensation to be available to commuters after 15 minutes in December 2014. Since then we have made the case for improved compensation in correspondence with the DfT, meetings with Ministers and MPs, in our publications and through the media.</p>	<p>The main political party manifestos picked up the issue ahead of the 2015 General Election and in November 2015's Autumn Statement, the previous Chancellor announced that the Government would take steps 'to ensure that rail passengers have access to compensation when trains are over 15 minutes late'. At the beginning of October 2016, the Government announced that rail passengers suffering from delays of between 15 and 29 minutes will soon be able to benefit from delay repay compensation of 25% of the cost of their fare. GTR were the first to bring this in in December 2016 and compensation after 15 minutes will be included in all new rail franchises. The Government will be negotiating with existing operators to get the threshold included as part of their delay repay arrangements.</p>
<p>GTR planned to alter ticket office opening hours at a number of stations in our area. During the consultation we held on their plan it became apparent that the changes were not in the interests of passengers. We received around 9,000 responses from members of the public, local authority lead members, MPs and London Assembly Members, the majority of which disagreed with the operator's plans.</p>	<p>We reviewed the responses we received and opposed the proposals, particularly the reliability and functionality of ticket vending machines, and questioned exactly how and when the planned station hosts would work, when they would be available and the ability to handle cash transactions. We suggested that GTR develop a more considered proposal which could be piloted at a few carefully chosen stations.</p>	<p>GTR ended its plans to alter ticket office hours at a number of stations in the area. They decided to pilot the changes at a few stations before contemplating further expansion. They pledged that passengers will still be able to buy the same range of tickets and railcards. They also pledged to protect passengers against future proposals to change the facilities and staffing offered at stations.</p>
<p>Passengers with mobility difficulties have told us that although buses themselves are accessible, bus stops are not always so, with kerbs not at the right height, insufficient signage and clutter on the pavement preventing passengers from getting on or off.</p>	<p>We have been highlighting this issue for several years, helping push bus accessibility up the agenda. This led to the previous Mayor of London adopting a bus stop accessibility target of 95%.</p>	<p>In 2009, when we started to highlight this issue and press for change, only 41% of stops across London were fully accessible. Today the figure is 92.69% and in four boroughs; Ealing; Hackney; Hammersmith and Fulham; and Kingston 100 per cent of bus stops are now accessible.</p>

You can find out about a number of other areas where we have made an impact recently on our [key achievements webpage](#).



About us

Our people

Members of London TravelWatch are appointed by the London Assembly after public advertisement.

Board (as at 31 March 2017)

Jackie Ballard
Alan Benson
Richard Dilks
Glyn Kyle
Stephen Locke (Chair)
Abdi Osman
John Stewart (Vice Chair)

Staff (as at 31 March 2017)

We employ 11 full-time and 7 part-time staff:

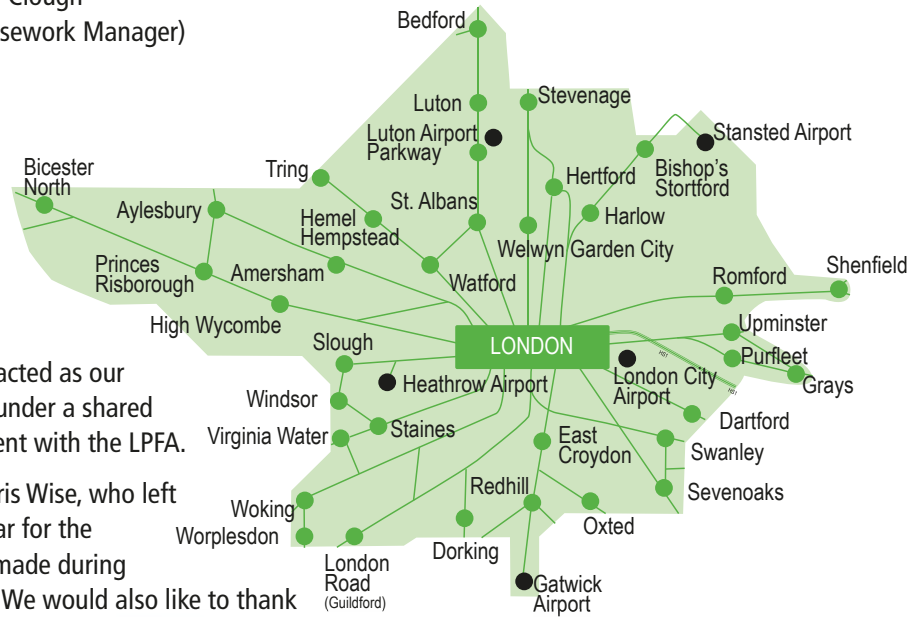
Sandra Ambo
Keletha Barrett
Tim Bellenger
(Director, Policy & Investigation)
Mike Brown

John Burgess
Gytha Chinweze
Janet Cooke (Chief Executive)
Margaret Croucher
Jaskiren Deol
Richard Freeston-Clough
Susan James (Casework Manager)
Sharon Malley
Renee Marah*
Robert Nichols
Fayza Patel
David Rose
Vincent Stops
John Wooster
*joined this year

Stuart Coleman acted as our Finance Adviser under a shared services agreement with the LPFA.

Thank you to Chris Wise, who left us during the year for the contribution he made during his time with us. We would also like to thank

Board members, Chris Brown and Abdikafi Rage whose terms came to an end at the end of 2016 and to recognise the contribution made by our former Vice Chair, Ruth Thompson who sadly died in July 2016.



169 Union Street, London, SE1 0LL
Phone: 020 3176 2999
Email: info@londontravelwatch.org.uk
www.londontravelwatch.org.uk

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