



The voice of London's travelling public

**Representing and advocating for all who travel
in London**

Business Plan 2020/21 and beyond



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1 Foreword

At a time of increasing pressure on transport services across London, listening to the voice of the user is now more crucial than ever.

As an expanding city, London faces fresh change and challenge in meeting the demands of millions of transport users. Imminent change includes the roll-out of Crossrail, widespread alterations to bus services, and new ways of managing road traffic in the central area. In addition, walking and cycling opportunities need to be promoted actively, and there is a need for greater focus on making transport accessible to all.

London TravelWatch (LTW) remains at the heart of many of these changes and will hold transport operators and providers to account to improve journeys in and around the capital.

With a fresh board and leadership, LTW has created a 2020/21 business plan that will focus attention on the views of passengers and other transport users whenever key decisions are taken.

We will build on our successes of last year (set out in section 3 and illustrated below) and protect the needs of *all* travellers, especially the most marginalised and those who feel their voices are not heard.

In doing this, we will:

- Demand best use of capacity across all transport networks, considering users' needs from the outset
- Seek to make sure that transport is more accessible to all and that travellers always have the clearest information about services, simpler fares and ticketing, and disruption.
- Work in the most efficient and effective way possible, making best use of our budget (section 10) and use information directly from passengers and evidence-based research to drive service improvements.

Arthur Leathley
Chair, London TravelWatch



New information jackets



Walking distances between stops



Free public toilets

2 Context and introduction

Context

Next year will be the 20th anniversary of London TravelWatch's establishment in its current configuration as part of the wider GLA family. As we look back on 20 years of operation, we also look forward to the 20 year time horizon of the Mayor's Transport Strategy for London, with its ambitious targets for 2041 for modal shift and changes in the way our transport system operates.

It is a time of significant change, with uncertainty at a national level about the outcome of Brexit and its subsequent impact on the economy, and Mayoral and Assembly elections next spring which will bring forward a range of new manifesto proposals.

Amidst this, challenges already exist. The pressure on London's travel network has never been greater, yet funding is tight and set to continue this way. The Healthy Streets agenda sets important targets for more active travel through walking and cycling yet there is finite space available on our road network to accommodate extra users. Much remains to be done to persuade outer London residents to give up their cars and switch to public transport, and the pace of change needs to be improved if targets are to be met.

New solutions will be needed to these and other challenges and difficult choices will be required in coming years. London TravelWatch is determined to make sure that the user voice is heard throughout this and to help Transport for London and other providers as both critical friend and supporter to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved for the travelling public.

Our new approach

We recognise that we need to be more outwardly focused, and we hope that colleagues will have started to see a new tone and approach, with a greater focus on external engagement and being more helpful and useful to Assembly colleagues. We are a small organisation, which has advantages as it enables us to be flexible and fleet of foot, but at the same time we still have to provide everything that larger organisations do, but without the same level of resources.

Mindful of this, and also of the need to demonstrate increased effectiveness and value for money, we are preparing for an exciting new partnership with our sister organisation, Transport Focus. We are confident that this will improve our resilience and strengthen the resources available to us, but more importantly, that it will help us to have a stronger voice for transport users in London.

Previous business plans have struggled to differentiate between the core work we do on a day to day basis (which often takes many years of painstaking work to come to fruition) and the bigger projects which can be completed in a shorter period. In this document we separate these aspects out to give a clearer picture of our work.

How this plan is organised

- **Section 1** is the foreword from our Chair
- **Section 2** provides some context and introduction
- **Section 3** outlines our key successes last year, with headline details of what the issue was, what we did and what the outcome was
- **Section 4** covers what we do currently
- **Section 5** looks at what we want to do in the future, and how the partnership with Transport Focus will help us to achieve this
- **Section 6** is about our evidence base and how we plan to strengthen the user voice
- **Section 7** covers campaigns and major policy work including a proposal to update “London on the Move” our original baseline report about transport issues
- **Section 8** details our core workload, and gives a sense of how this fits together in different categories
- **Section 9** brings all the proposals together in summary form, and distinguishes between targets for next year and those that will be progressed over a longer period
- **Section 10** is about our resources and budget bid
- **Appendix 1** details our casework
- **Appendix 2** is our budget bid

Targets

Next year will be a year of transition for us as we embed our new approach and work to establish the partnership with Transport Focus. It is also potentially a year of change for transport policy, with Assembly and Mayoral elections and uncertainty about the economic outlook following Brexit. Given this, our plan has been written with two sets of targets.

These include some longer-term targets for our core day to day business and some one-year targets for the more significant policy work which will allow space for a stock take (and potential flex) next year once the landscape is clearer.

3 Achievements in 2018/19

What was the issue?

What did we do?

What was the outcome?



London Overground proposed to close 51 ticket offices across their network.	We held a consultation on London Overground's proposals to close the ticket offices, receiving over 6,500 responses from a range of organisations and individuals.	The Mayor announced in April 2019 that 47 of the 51 ticket offices previously proposed for closure would remain open after our pressure. We also secured significant investment in ticketing and customer services.
We know from our research that passengers place great importance on the availability of free toilets and resent having to pay extra to use them.	We lobbied Network Rail, asking them to remove charges to use the toilets at all the stations they manage in London.	Network Rail removed charges to use the toilets at London terminus stations.
There are many dispersed interchanges where it is easy to walk between two nearby but separate stations. However, this is not always clear to passengers.	We raised this issue in our Interchange Matters report in 2015 and took up the matter in meetings with the RDG and TfL.	The London's Rail & Tube map now includes walkable interchanges, opening up and promoting additional travel options for passengers.
Rail fares vary considerably in price across the area we cover, with passengers sometimes resorting to driving to stations further away to take advantage of cheaper tickets.	We have highlighted this problem for many years but have increased our calls for reform over the past couple of years, highlighting some of the worst fares discrepancies.	We were instrumental in getting people together, convening a series of fares and ticketing seminars with key stakeholders. Many of our proposals were included in the RDG's final consultation report. We await results.
There was a risk that passengers would lose out if TfL went ahead with planned bus changes before the core section of Crossrail opened to the public.	We suggested some urgent questions for London Assembly Members to ask at a Plenary meeting of the London Assembly, which focused on the implications for bus users.	Assembly members drew on our suggestions. As a result, TfL assured passengers that all service alterations that directly depended on Crossrail opening on time would be paused.
Greater Anglia proposed not to sell advance and super off-peak tickets at ticket offices.	We objected to this proposal, raising the matter with the Department for Transport.	Greater Anglia abandoned their proposals as a result.
Passengers value visible staff at stations, both in terms of being able to get assistance and feeling safe.	In our review of London Underground's ticket office closures, we called for changes to the uniform worn by frontline staff to make them stand out more at busy stations.	As a result of our lobbying, millions of passengers will now be able to spot London Underground station staff more easily in new bright red vests with the words 'here to help' on the back.
When large redevelopment projects take place at major London stations, those involved have not always thought about the impact on passengers.	We have pressed for a more passenger friendly approach to major works at stations.	We are pleased to see an improved approach to the current worksite at Euston.

4 London TravelWatch today

What we do

London TravelWatch is the 'voice of London's travelling public' representing and advocating for the benefit of all those who travel in London. We are the statutory watchdog set up by Parliament to represent the interests of transport users in and around London, accountable to, and funded by, the London Assembly.

We cover London's buses, the Underground and Overground, the National Rail services to and within the capital, Eurostar, Docklands Light Railway, Tramlink, taxis, and the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists using the main road network controlled by Transport for London. We:

- Investigate suggestions and complaints from users who are dissatisfied with the response received from their service provider and deal with appeals;
- Act as a point of contact/information for passengers about their rights when travelling;
- Use the evidence base from our casework to help inform and shape our policy priorities
- Monitor trends in service quality, including reliability, accessibility, comfort, cost, information and safety;
- Undertake research and investigation into issues of concern to users;
- Maintain a dialogue with the service providers about all aspects of their policies and plans affecting transport users;
- Make evidence-based representations to government and industry regarding passenger interests ; and
- Actively lobby national and local government on behalf of London's travelling public

Our history

We were set up in our current form following the establishment of the Greater London Authority in 1999, but our origins go back to 1947 when the British Transport Commission was set up as a state owned corporation responsible for most modes of transport nationally,

including London Transport. In common with other nationalised industries of the period, a system of advisory committees was set up to represent the public interest and we came into existence as one of a number of regional Transport User Consultative Committees.

Where we are now

Our strengths are our multi-modal remit; our dedicated and knowledgeable staff; our solid body of work which has stood the test of time; our new leadership and our appetite for making more of a difference for London's travelling public.

We recognise that in recent years there has been a tendency towards us sometimes seeming to take an expert perspective as opposed to the passenger view. Reductions in public funding have also had a major impact on our capacity.

However, our new Board wishes to be bolder and to reclaim the space that we previously occupied as the leading consumer voice for London's travelling public, dedicated to advocating, influencing and lobbying policy makers and providers to ensure the key consumer elements of *access, choice, safety, information, fairness, redress and representation* for all.

To do this we need to change the way we work and to become more resilient as an organisation, and to achieve this we will need to be more outward looking, to establish partnerships with others who share our vision and values, and to focus more on outcomes.

What we believe

For most of us transport is a means to an end. People want to (or must) do things that cannot reasonably be done immediately on their doorstep: journeys to work, leisure trips, visits to friends and family or day to day personal business. And transport can be the means to a desirable end. It can give people the ability to have the sort of interaction that makes us a society as opposed to a collection of individuals; the ability to choose the job we want rather than take the nearest one on offer; or simply the ability to have a change of scenery.

In the alternative language of economics, if transport is a means to an end, then transport is a cost that users must pay in order to 'acquire' the end – a cost paid not just in money but in time, frustration, stress, injury, or pollution. Often, these costs are paid by non users too. Our goal is to speak out for consumers to minimise those costs and the negative impact they can have on their lives.

5 London TravelWatch in the future

Deepening our relationship with the Assembly

A key priority for us over the next year will be to deepen our relationship with the Transport Committee and Assembly and to become more useful and valuable as an organisation whether at a policy level where we seek to be seen as a trusted advisor and source of expertise on transport for the Committee, or more practically, as partners who can help resolve thorny problems with different transport operators.

In the future we want to be clearer about both the distinctions between the different roles we play – campaigners over the longer term, drivers of incremental improvements, critical friend, and on performance – identifying which operators are doing well and which not. Going forward, we want to be bolder and showcase the former and expose the latter.

This will be a year of transition to enable us to embed this work and build our partnership with Transport Focus and we will test our success from an Assembly perspective with a satisfaction survey at the end of the year.

Working with Transport Focus

The aim of Transport Focus and London TravelWatch working more closely together is to ensure that, both jointly and individually we are making more of a difference for transport users and delivering better value for money for sponsors and funders.

As the Transport Committee has noted in the past, we have similar responsibilities and there are areas such as responses to rail consultations where there is currently an element of overlap and duplication.

Some joint working already takes place, for example we carry out transport safety work for Transport Focus as so much of what we are consulted on, or the focus of key safety working groups in which we are involved applies equally to passengers across the country irrespective of where a particular incident may have occurred. We are reimbursed for 50% of the time we spend on this. Likewise, our casework team work together with their opposite numbers on common issues such as the introduction of the Rail Ombudsman service.

There is potential for greater streamlining over time as well as for the two organisations to learn from each other and to make more of the collective body of research and data. We believe that this will lead to more resilient organisations, and for London, the chance to focus more on the London transport user voice as being nestled within a larger organisation will reduce the need for time to be spent on the general management of support functions.

Both boards are very mindful of the need to maintain independent governance and accounting and have built this into the way we propose to work together. We see the arrangements operating in the following way:

Leadership

- A new joint chief executive arrangement will be put in place – the current Transport Focus chief executive will take on this role in the first instance. This role will take the overall responsibility for corporate management and act as the accounting officer, allowing the new director to focus on London relationships and driving change for London's transport users
- A new London TravelWatch director will be appointed by LTW/GLA reporting to the joint chief executive
- The London TravelWatch director will be part of the Transport Focus Management Team and act as the key point of liaison with the Assembly and Transport Committee
- Our existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Assembly provides for the GLA (through the Transport Committee) to approve and take part in the recruitment and selection process for any vacancy at chief executive level. This would be amended to ensure that this requirement was replicated for any future vacancy in the shared chief executive role

Working with devolved governmental bodies and protecting the London voice

- Transport Focus understand the importance of London TravelWatch retaining a distinctive London voice in the future
- They already have experience of working with devolved governmental bodies through their work in Scotland and Wales, and with Combined Authorities outside London and recognise the need to ensure that work programmes reflect the requirements of different funders and sponsors
- The devolved governments and the London Assembly all nominate one member to the Transport Focus Board (the London representative is currently the Chair of London TravelWatch), providing a further counterbalance to ensure that respective interests are protected
- Both parties recognise that there may be occasions where the geographic interests of both organisations may differ and they retain the right to publish or comment on issues in a way that reflects the respective statutory and other duties of the organisations
- It is proposed that measures to protect the distinctiveness of the London voice in this new arrangement would also be set out in the revised MOU between the Assembly and London TravelWatch

Identity and accountabilities

- Both London TravelWatch and Transport Focus will retain their existing boards and governance arrangements but behind the scenes staff will work together to make best use of the overall resources
- London TravelWatch and Transport Focus will retain their own current corporate identities and identities: logos, websites, nameplates and contact details. However, consideration will be given to a new joint website 'landing page' so that transport users can have an easier route to the information they need

- It is anticipated that joint work and communications will be possible on many issues of joint interest
- There will be no change to current staff terms and conditions of employment

How will this benefit transport users?

Transport Focus and London TravelWatch will work more closely together to ensure that, both jointly and individually they are making more of a difference for transport users and deliver better value for money for sponsors and funders. Where appropriate, teams made up of staff from both organisations will work on common transport user issues and plans will be shared so we can better co-ordinate user representation activities.

We believe that both organisations will become more effective, able to make more of a difference as knowledge, information, skills and resources are pooled – the ‘marriage value’ of the new relationship is considerable. More joined up representation on issues affecting transport users across London and South East will benefit all users.

Notwithstanding the need to ensure that the distinctive London / National voice is retained, we aspire to work seamlessly together as an integrated whole, sharing resources, aligning business planning, policy development, advocacy and research activity, under a coherent and unified management structure.

In the future

In the future we want to be:

- a trusted adviser and problem solver
- a critical friend on behalf of those without a voice
- making best use of all resources – both financially and in terms of where and how best we intervene
- having a different way of working with TfL – more strategic, linked to the different parts of the business planning cycle and with greater clarity about what our role is in each
- helping with the review of projects, giving a passenger not technical perspective
- making a difference to transport users day by day but still challenging on the big picture
- prioritising work with the most impact for users

We believe the biggest gain from our new approach in year one will be from improved data and information plus the addition of Transport Focus’s national muscle on the delay repay campaign for better take up of compensation payments.

6 Strengthening the transport user voice

What we do

London TravelWatch has a key role to make sure the user voice is heard loud and clear in both the planning and day-to-day operations of the transport systems we all use. This is even more important where those services are offered by only one operator – feedback from users in these situations is crucial to drive improvements and measure changes.

We already use evidence from our casework, public meetings, seminars and research to inform our policy work and responses but our new partnership with Transport Focus will help us strengthen this work by giving us access to information not previously available and hence deepen our collective insight.

The National Rail Passenger Survey

The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) is the largest published rail passenger satisfaction survey in the world. It supplies an official statistic that is used as a key performance indicator in most rail franchises.

Transport Focus consults more than 50,000 passengers a year to produce the NRPS – a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel. Passenger opinions of train services are collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys. Working with our colleagues at Transport Focus we will tailor the NRPS for London and use a 'cut' of the data to help us evidence passengers' priorities for improvement.

Transport Focus has also been trialling a new product. 'Spotlight' is phone based and asks two questions: 'how was your last journey?' and 'why did you say that?' AI analyses, categorises and groups the responses.

London TravelWatch would like to trial Spotlight on a larger scale across the transport modes in London and move towards fully digital, always on, instant feedback.

Transport Focus User panel

Transport Focus has a panel of transport users who have agreed to give their views about specific issues on a regular basis. Panel surveys give a quick sense of events happening 'in the moment' and can be used to support findings collected through larger and more complex research projects. For example, research using the panel has, in the past, helped to inform those managing upgrade work at stations on how to keep passengers informed. This panel includes members who live or travel into London and our partnership will make this research and resource available to London TravelWatch too.

The Rail Ombudsman

Since the introduction of the new rail ombudsman service the comparative level of appeals being made under the new system has dramatically reduced and we have evidence to show that not all operators are promoting the scheme fully. Over the next year we will focus on making sure that:

- rail passengers are informed as soon as possible in the complaints process about the existence of the ombudsman;
- that the new scheme produces high quality data that can be used to help improve services;
- all operators inform passengers of their rights to appeal in a clear and timely manner; and
- we will work with Transport Focus to mystery shop the scheme to evaluate ease of use and information

Convening the transport user groups in London

We are in touch with some, but not all of the transport user groups across London. Next year we want to establish a forum to bring them together to improve coordination and feedback and, in the future, we will work with them in a more systematic way to collect and highlight strategic priorities and consumer themes, in line with previous suggestions by the Transport Committee.

The Williams Rail Review

We await the outcome of the Williams Rail Review as this plan is being drafted and although we do not know what the government's response will be, we do know that there are some radical and far reaching proposals. Depending on the outcome, there may be major changes in how rail services are provided in London and early decisions will be needed for forthcoming rail franchise renewals.

We hope that this will include greater devolution to TfL for rail services in London as we have long advocated for this and we will continue to make this call.

Feedback from satisfied customers

“Travel watch were more professional and looked at the full picture; unlike x provider who just refused my complaint to them twice. I only explained it to Travelwatch once and provided the receipts; they seamlessly contacted x provider and resolved the issue.”

“Very quick replies and well kept up to date to help alleviate further stress.”

“My Casework Officer was very helpful and always kept me up to date with clear and timely information. Please pass on my thanks.”

“My complaint with TFL would not have been resolved without the help of London TravelWatch. Thank you so much.”

“I got a response from TravelWatch the next day I logged my case. The caseworker was extremely helpful and my case was dealt within 2 days. I am extremely happy with their service.”

7 Campaigns and major policy work

Campaigning

A reliable railway remains the key driver of passenger satisfaction. While there has been a welcome spread of entitlement to Delay Repay compensation, claim rates remain low. As claim rates rise, so too will the pressure on train companies and Network Rail to get services to run on time. We will join Transport Focus in their *Make Delay Pay* campaign, to boost awareness in London and increase take up rates.

Boosting levels of Delay Repay Compensation

Push the Rail Delivery Group, train companies, and the regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, to boost awareness and make it easier to claim and introduce more automated claims

Publicise entitlement awareness and ease of claiming

Help the industry drive up the levels of Delay Repay claims to at least 50% – currently just 35% of those eligible to claim do so

Where necessary, name and shame any operators that do badly or fail to improve

Beyond 2021, we will work with the industry to increase take up rates still further



Penalty fares compensation

Our casework team have uncovered a problem with the way that the new penalty fare regulations are being applied. Investigations following complaints made to London TravelWatch and Transport Focus have revealed that penalty fares issued at twice the single fare have been calculated at the anytime walk up fare. This has meant that the day and time of the journey made has not been taken into account when the penalty was calculated.

In addition to being overcharged, some passengers may have faced prosecution or been prosecuted for an unpaid penalty fare that has been incorrectly calculated. We have raised this with the Rail Delivery Group who have confirmed that the time and day of travel should be taken into consideration when issuing a penalty fare, and that all customers who could have potentially been overcharged on their penalty fares will need to be contacted and refunds issued where appropriate.

A conservative estimate made by one of the appeals bodies put the number of penalty fares that would require checking in the thousands. Where miscalculation has occurred, the passenger is entitled to a full refund because where a penalty fare is issued, and the regulation has not been properly applied, it is therefore void.

We hope that this will be resolved quickly, with continued pressure from us and Transport Focus, but if not this will be an important campaign next year and we will work hard to make sure that refunds are issued to all affected and that the regulations are interpreted correctly in the future. We will not rest until all operators match the performance of the best.

Major policy review: Updating “London on the Move”

In 2002 we produced an innovative major report “London on the Move” which set out our vision of the things that policy makers should take into account to satisfy consumer expectations. In its time this was a bold document, advocating strongly for the transport user as a consumer and this work laid the foundation for all of our policy work in the early noughties.

The report was wide ranging and ahead of its time, including commentary on high quality streets and pollution and aspirations for rail timetables as well as the more traditional aspects of transport policy. Many of its targets and standards have been achieved, but *some have not*, and we continue to lobby and advocate for those which remain outstanding.

It is timely that we should review this now, at a moment when we are poised to reinvent ourselves as an organisation. Once again, we expect that this will set the scene and our policy framework for the next 10 years.

We plan to be pragmatic and helpful in tone, but bold in our thinking.

8 Our core work: making a difference for transport users every day

How do we make progress on our day to day work?

Most of our core daily work happens behind the scenes and whilst we can sometimes achieve a quick win, much of our work takes time as transport schemes rarely happen quickly and as a watchdog we can influence and cajole, publicise and denounce, but we are not the decision makers. This is why it is so important that we work more closely with the Transport Committee and GLA.

Our reputation with operators is sound and London TravelWatch is taken seriously by the industry and media as a trusted source of impartial advice and commentary . This comes from the investment we have made over the long term in developing our evidence base through a mix of primary, secondary and casework-based research, and making sure that we put time into getting to know and understand the different service providers.

Much of the work we do will never finish as customer expectations rightly continue to rise and there will always be another improvement that can be made, or a specific operator who is not up to scratch and needs to improve. Progress is made though as we are relentless in doggedly pursuing the issues we are passionate about, and we achieve some impressive successes (as detailed in section 3) although sometimes it can be hard to predict exactly when a breakthrough will occur with a particular provider.

Transport is a consumer necessity

Our day to day work can be considered in a number of ways, for example by the activity we do with different service providers; by type of transport mode; by specific issues; or under the different headings of the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Each of these has merits but also disadvantages as they can fail to give a full sense of our role as not just a transport organisation, but a *consumer watchdog*. In this plan we have therefore grouped our core work under the consumer principles that lie behind the work of all consumer organisations. These are:

- **Access:** Can people get the services they want, and which are suitable for them?
- **Choice:** Is there any? Can users affect how services are provided through their buying decisions?
- **Safety:** Do the services pose any threat of injury or health hazards?
- **Information:** Is it available, accurate and useful?
- **Fairness:** Are some or all consumers unfairly discriminated against?
- **Redress:** If things go wrong, is there an effective system to put them right?
- **Representation:** Do consumers have a say in how goods or services are provided?

- *Step free access in all stations. We want to see the programme for this made less obscure and, in the meantime, we continue to call for change, and comment specifically in our role as a statutory consultee every time there are service changes. Our next big target is to make sure that the improvements to Bank station result in step free access*
- *Press the boroughs to provide fixed stops within Hail and Ride areas to ensure that disabled travellers can access buses in a safe way*
- *Further partnership working (e.g. with the National Autistic Society, Age UK etc.) to both promote awareness of the needs of those with a hidden disability to transport operators and to help specialist organisations understand how transport operators work and to help them navigate to the best advantage for those they represent*

Choice

We want to promote a simplified rail fares structure to reduce the number of fare anomalies and over-complex rules for off-peak travel and enable easy understanding of fares. There are major policy implications in this area so we have to be realistic about what we can achieve but we will continue to be a voice for simplicity. Current targets include

- *Promoting the extension of Oyster/contactless payment card area*

Safety

This is a hugely important area, and rightly recognised as such in the Mayor's Transport Strategy in the Vision Zero target. We have substantial in-house expertise about transport safety and have achieved considerable success in helping transport operators see safety issues from the user's perspective e.g. *how to evacuate people safely*, as opposed to the technical perspective e.g. *how do we get this train moving again?* However, much more remains to be done. Current targets include:

- *Promoting the findings of our 2018 research with Loughborough University into the safety of passengers on buses and asking providers to develop work plans for implementation of the recommendations*
- *Working on improvements as a result of the Lewisham rail evacuation incident in 2018*

Information

Timely, accurate and useful information is important to keep passenger travel running safely and smoothly, and to give transport users some sense of being in control and have stress-free journeys. Reliable journey times are the key factor behind passenger satisfaction and good information helps contribute to that. Current targets include:

- *Working with the TfL Customer Experience team to improve passenger information and assistance during periods of disruption, with a focus on the passenger experience as opposed to the technical solutions*
- *Pressing for better real time information for disabled travellers when lifts and escalators break down*
- *Better and more integrated information about the different boundaries and timings for Oyster, Contactless and Freedom Passes to help passengers understand the rules and avoid penalties*

Fairness

Fairness is an issue that operates at all levels, from the most basic human needs (e.g. not needing to find some change if you get caught short on a journey when you've already paid for your ticket) to major issues of human rights (e.g. not being trapped at home because you can't manage stairs).

In the middle of this there are huge discrepancies in fares and charging which can make it a lottery for the transport user as to where they live and whether they can afford to get into work. We will continue to campaign for the big things and try to make incremental progress on the smaller but highly important things. Current targets include:

- *Following the success of our work with Network Rail at the major London terminuses, pressing other operators to make public lavatories free at all locations*
- *Continuing our campaign with London MPs to expose the injustice of some same length commuter journeys into town costing twice that of others - the worst example of this being the cost of a weekly season ticket from Oxted in Surrey (20 miles and £57.10) and Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire (21 miles and £92.90)*

Redress

When things go wrong it is important that they are put right quickly, and we deal with thousands of pieces of problems for people each year. We always try to ensure our casework provides passengers with excellent customer service in terms of both our response times and satisfaction levels. Much of this work is individual in nature and success relies on the experience and knowledge of our small team.

Whilst some of our appeal work has transferred to the Rail Ombudsman service we have not seen a drop in the number of overall enquiries thus far as many complainants are still turning to us for help as they struggle to navigate the new system or to get a response. Current targets therefore include:

- *Making sure that the new Rail Ombudsman service works effectively; the first nine months of operation have seen a significant drop in appeals, and we are concerned that not all train operators are signposting complainants in the right way or dealing with problems quickly enough*

Representation

Much of our statutory work relates to representation, using the evidence gained from casework and research to through feed in the passenger voice in responses to consultations on policy and service changes. Current targets include:

- *Promoting further devolution of rail services to TfL in response to the Williams rail review and specifically, depending on the government's response, providing a user voice to any proposals about subsequent changes to franchises*
- *We also plan to provide a briefing pack for Mayoral candidates in advance of the May 2020 elections on our aspirations for the next Mayor and a briefing on key consumer issues for transport*

How do we measure progress?

We measure progress in a number of ways depending on the type of issue. Some areas such as efficiency in dealing with casework, responses to consultations on time etc. are easy to tackle with SMART targets and we monitor these regularly. Others are less under our direct control, but we can publish progress and relate this to the extent that we have been focusing on particular areas e.g. progress on clutter free streets.

In other areas progress is harder to predict as the issues are bigger or even less under our direct control but we do constantly focus on outcomes and ask ourselves what difference we are making. We recognise that in the past we have not always been clear enough about which operators have responded well, and which not and in the future, we want to be much clearer about this.

We have a clear performance management process with internal review by the senior team, quarterly monitoring by our Governance Committee, and then report backs in public to our Board. This covers a full range of activity from casework to communications, through consultation responses to the assessment of trends in respect of safety issues.

In the future we want to have a stronger focus on outcomes as opposed to outputs and we propose to capture stakeholder feedback more systematically. This will begin with a satisfaction survey with Assembly Members to test out whether we have made progress in partnership working.

9 Summary of proposals

Fit for the future

Issue	2020/21	Beyond 2021
Working with the Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed new ways of working • Provide more tangible assistance to Assembly members and the Transport Committee • Test the outcome through a satisfaction survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a trusted source of expertise for the Transport Committee • Contribute to the Scrutiny review programme on a more active basis • Test the outcome through a satisfaction survey
Working with TfL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a more strategic approach to liaison and involvement in the business planning process and business processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve better results for transport users and more targeted interventions
Strategic Partnership with Transport Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver greater efficiency and reduce overlap and duplication

Strengthening the user voice

Issue	2020/21	Beyond 2021
National Rail Passenger Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Transport Focus revise the questionnaire to add London specific information and cut the data for London • Trial the 'Spotlight' tool in London to provide real time information about passenger views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More targeted analysis of the passenger voice • The National Bus Passenger Survey does not currently cover London. Subject to funding, this could be extended in the future
Transport user groups in London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene the local transport user groups in London in a coordinated way • Establish a mechanism for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More comprehensive and cohesive approach to capturing feedback on the user voice to help

	more systematic dialogue	with service planning
Rail Ombudsman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain pressure to ensure increased take up and good performance • Mystery shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further analysis of trends to ensure that all operators are meeting high standards
The Williams Rail Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific work will depend on the government's response 	

Policy and Campaigning

Issue	2020/21	Beyond 2021
Delay Repay Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All providers to actively promote the schemes • Increase take up to 50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase take up beyond these levels
Penalty Fares Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation requirements to be assessed and action taken to implement • Training and information be put in place to avoid repetition of the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor progress • Name and shame if any providers found wanting
London on the Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the research • Publish a revised paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use this to form the basis of future work programmes and policy objectives

Core business

Issue	Action
Core business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As set out in the previous section
Briefing for Mayoral candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pack on our aspirations for the next Mayor and a briefing on key consumer issues for transport

10 Resources and budget bid

Background to our budget bid

For the last five years we have received flat cash limited budgets from the Assembly which has meant that all increases in costs (pay awards etc.) been needed to be absorbed internally, offset against other savings. As a consequence the organisation is now under half the size it was 10 years ago. Last year we also moved offices to smaller accommodation nearby to further reduce our overhead costs. Wherever possible efforts have been made to bring in additional income (for example, last year recharging the Rail Delivery Group for assistance in setting up the Ombudsman scheme), but the potential has been limited. This has combined to put pressure on our budget as outlined below.

Budget review

London TravelWatch ended the last financial year with a deficit of £45,000, which reduced reserves to below our guideline level of £50,000. This is a difficult position for the Board to be facing, and a detailed review of our finances has taken therefore place as part of the preparation for this plan, and we would like to record our thanks to the Executive Director of the Secretariat for his assistance in acting as a critical friend during the process.

The process has involved a thorough review of all cost centres to identify any potential savings, and an analysis of the movement on staff costs over the last five years. This has revealed some gaps in previous forecasting which have now been remedied.

All budget heads have been challenged and wherever possible costs reduced although the scope is somewhat limited as so much of our spending is on staff. As indicated above, it may be possible to reduce office costs in the medium term through co-location with transport focus but this will take some time to achieve. Likewise, we hope to switch our IT provider at the next break point in 2020. This will incur some modest migration costs but these will pay back over a two year period.

Over the longer term we hope to start to diversify our income stream by bidding for additional work with Transport Focus but this will take some time to develop. In the meantime we face increasing costs with the result that our baseline financial position is worse than previously predicted.

Pressures

Given the small size of the staff team, employee costs now account for over 80% of our budget and this will increase to 90% next year once the 2021/2 pay award and increments is accounted for. Staff are on the same terms and conditions as GLA employees (although

remain members of the central government pension scheme) and we are required to match any pay settlement agreed for Assembly staff.

In order to minimise any further deficit this year the contract of a temporary member of staff has been terminated and we are consulting on a redundancy proposal for two further permanent members of staff. If this is agreed at the end of the consultation period we will end the year with a team of 11 full time equivalent staff. The approach is focused on protecting front line services, and if agreed will strip out any remaining administrative support.

Going forward the position remains very difficult as the full year effect of this year's remaining pressures produces a predicted base budget overspend of £98,000. This has occurred from a combination of an increase in employer's contribution rates for pensions (the central government scheme now runs at an employer's contribution rate of between 26.6% and 30.3%), pay awards and increments, a loss of rechargeable income and an unrealistic allowance for the vacancy factor which has been used to balance the budget. We also currently have a member staff on maternity leave who will return in April who had not been fully accounted for in forward budget projections.

Proposal for an increase in base budget and a two year settlement

Part of the rationale for the partnership with Transport Focus is to enable efficiencies to be achieved and we are confident that the Assembly will see a greater operational impact next year. Our colleagues have an excellent track record in attracting other sources of funding for specific pieces of work and we would hope to extend this to work carried out by London TravelWatch staff.

In terms of our operating costs, we would like to co-locate with Transport Focus to reduce costs but this may not be possible immediately as our current lease is fixed for five years with no break clause (as is standard for short leases). Over time, we would also seek to reduce duplication and potential make a modest further saving on staff.

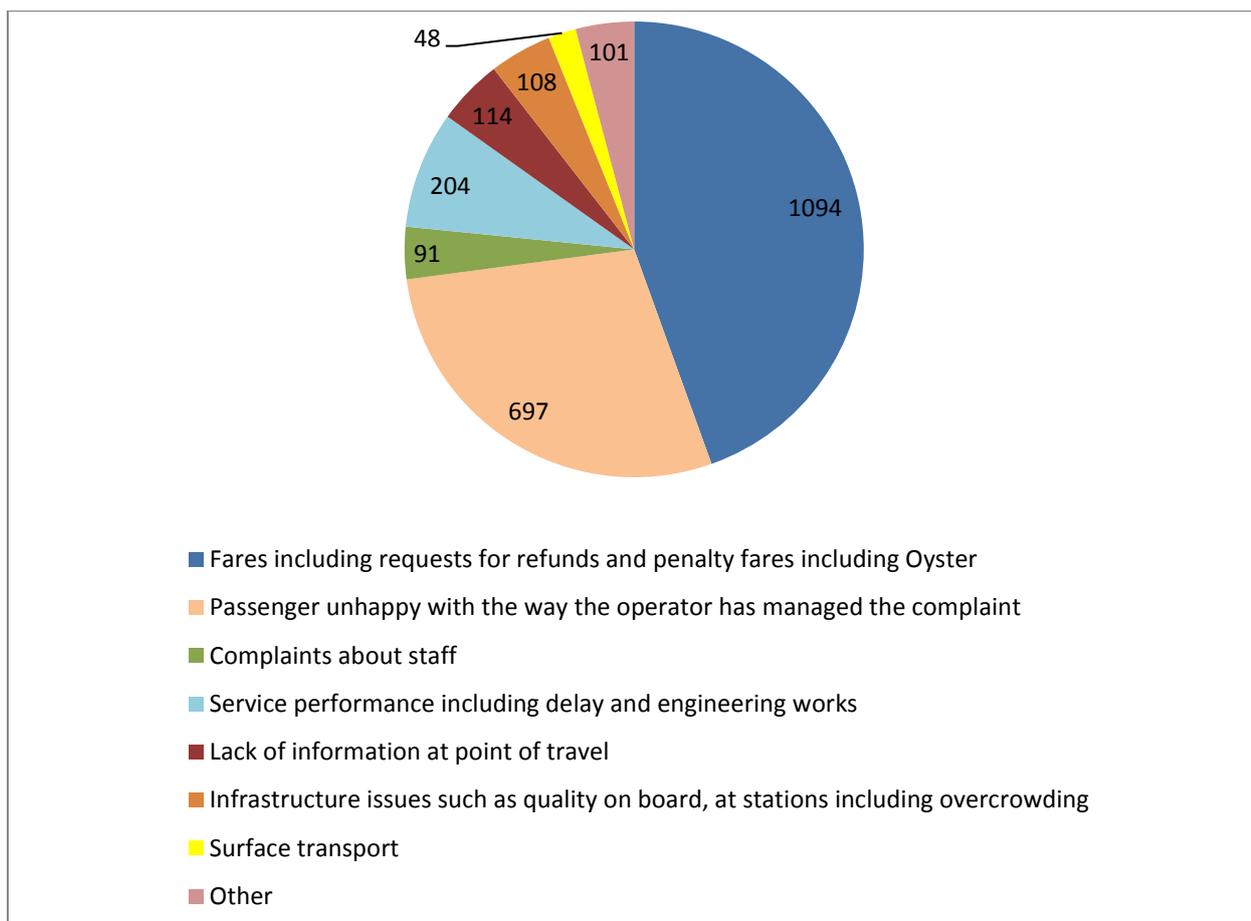
Realistically, though, savings will take some time to deliver as we firstly need to concentrate on making the partnership work and accessing the scope for future change. We are therefore requesting an increase in our base budget of £98,000 to bridge the gap and a two year settlement to enable the partnership to develop, with the expectation that efficiencies will be delivered in year three.

Appendix 1: casework performance and sample cases

Our performance on casework in 2018/19

During 2018/19 our casework team dealt with 7,205 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 2,638 appeals from members of the public travelling in London and the surrounding areas. The vast majority of cases concerned refunds and performance following the May 2018 timetable change, penalty fares and complaint handling by rail operators.

Casework requiring further investigation (2,638 cases):



London TravelWatch sample casework successes

South Western Railway

Mr B's train was diverted and did not call at his intended destination so he got off at the first available stop and paid for a taxi. South Western Railway (SWR) originally offered just 'delay repay' compensation but after we appealed they found that the station manager had tried to help him organise alternative transport including a taxi but there weren't any available. At the station manager's suggestion, he organised a taxi with a different company and tried to claim it back from SWR but they initially refused. However, following our appeal they accepted that they should have offered Mr B a refund for the taxi and refunded him in full.

TfL Oyster

Mr M topped up his Pay As You Go Oyster card but it was declined as a cancelled card for an unknown reason when he tried to use it. When Mr M phoned them, TfL said they would credit the full amount of the top up back to a new Oyster card. Having not received his refund despite chasing TfL a few times, Mr M approached London TravelWatch. TfL investigated and confirmed that he had not been refunded. They refunded Mr M in full with a small goodwill gesture in recognition of the delay in issuing his refund.

London North Eastern Railway

Mr R received incorrect information at Kings Cross about the next train to York and was delayed more than two hours getting home as a result. Originally, he was not offered any compensation as the train he was on was only delayed 12 minutes. However, Mr R's ticket documents showed that the operator had given him authority to travel and he should have been allowed on an earlier train. As Mr R had not been allowed to travel and been given incorrect information, he was issued a full refund. Given the way in which the case had been handled, London North Eastern Railway also sent him two 1st class complimentary tickets.

Eurostar

Ms K booked tickets to travel to Paris over a weekend in December but due to the border control issues in Paris her party decided not to travel. She cancelled their hotel but when they tried to change the tickets they were charged £25 admin fees for each of them. On appeal, as Eurostar had already made the decision to allow free exchange of tickets for passengers who were due to travel over the weekend of 7-9 December, Eurostar agreed to offer Ms K an e-voucher for the full the cost of the tickets.

TfL Buses

Mrs J complained because foliage from a resident's garden had covered a bus stop pole and, as a result, some drivers did not realise that there was a bus stop there. TfL apologised but initially said it was the responsibility of the local authority to make the bus pole more visible. When we appealed, TfL agreed that the stop was their responsibility but said it would take a while to resolve, as they would have to contact the owner of the garden first as they could not cut back trees and plants belonging to a private resident. We requested that TfL put in a temporary 'dolly' stop while they liaised with the resident so that bus drivers could clearly see the bus stop as they approached. TfL agreed and installed a 'dolly' stop within 24 hours.

Appendix 2: Budget bid

London TravelWatch Budget Submission 2020/21	
	2020/21 £000
2019/20 Budget	<u>1,035.3</u>
Budget requirement pre growth and savings (below)	1,035.3
Unavoidable growth:	
Accommodation costs:	0.0
Chair, Members' & Staff costs-pay:	98.0 Inflationary costs and pension contribution increases
Members' costs- non-pay	0.0
Other Staff related costs- non-pay	0.0
Supplies & Services	0.0
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	0.0
Total unavoidable growth	98.0
Projected Savings:	
Accommodation costs	0.0

Chair, Members' & Staff costs-pay	0.0
Members' costs-non-pay	0.0
Other Staff related costs-non-pay	0.0
Supplies & Services	0.0
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	0.0
Total savings	0.0
Application of reserves	0.0
Budget Requirement-after growth and savings	1,133.3
Guideline target	1,035.3
Excess over guideline	98.0
NB Growth and savings in the same headings have been offset above.	