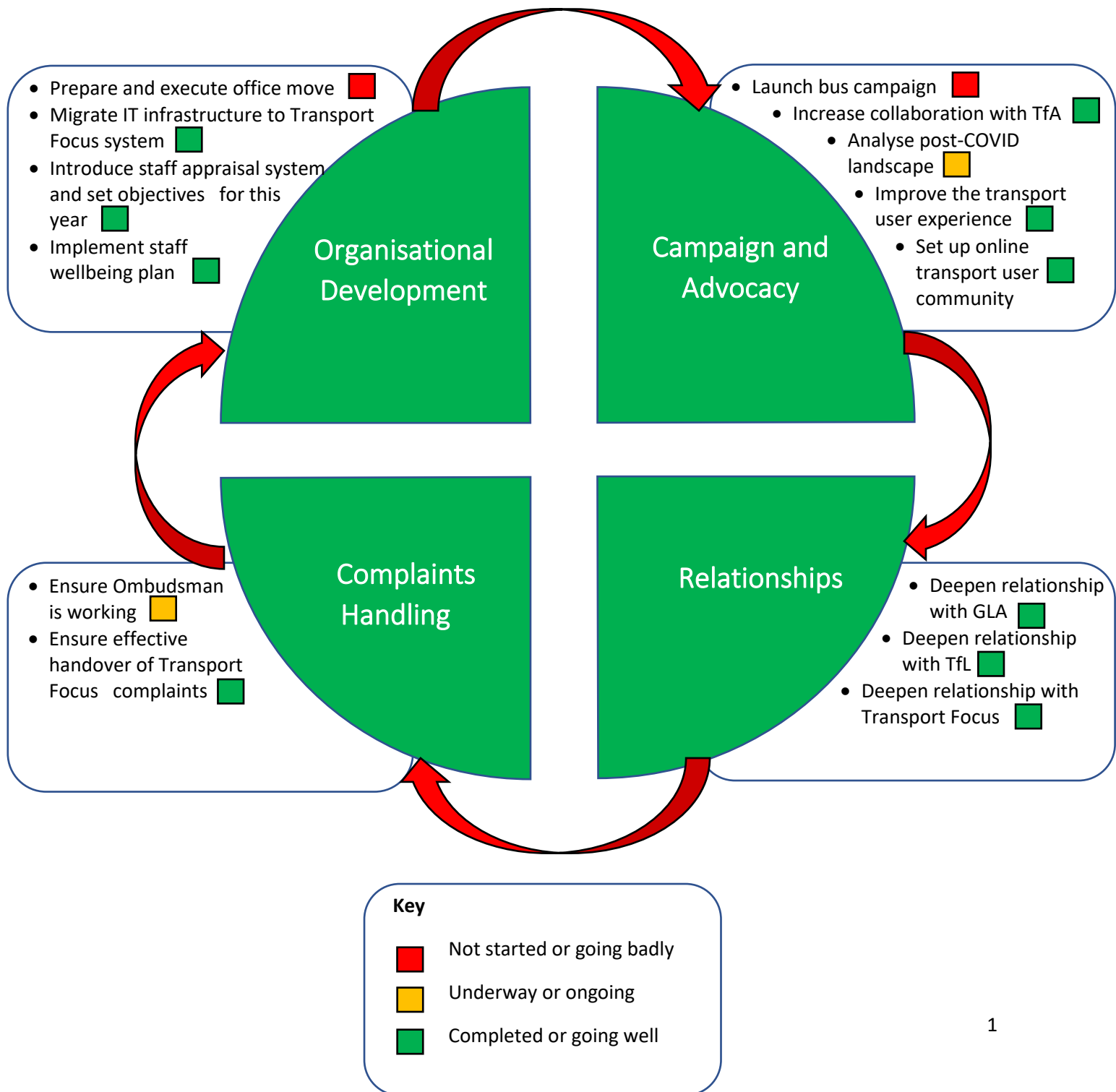


Objectives Dashboard



1. Introduction

London TravelWatch continues to advocate for the needs of transport users during the pandemic, through both casework and the lobbying of transport providers. Evidence that we are providing a useful and relevant service comes via: positive feedback from Assembly Members and their staff; excellent feedback about our complaints resolution team; feedback from stakeholders like TfL; and our increased level of media coverage on the transport issues affecting Londoners. We are also starting to see increased digital engagement of transport users.

2. Progress against our objectives

Campaign and Advocacy

There has been a lot of progress against these objectives since the last Board meeting.

The main achievement has been the launch of our Active Travel Project, aimed at letting Londoners know how to make a comment to their Council or TfL about the changes that are happening to their streets.

The tweet that we sent to launch the project has been our most successful tweet ever, in terms of how much it's been re-tweeted, which is measure of how useful and relevant people have found our 'Have Your Say' Guide.

This project also launched the recruitment of our new digital community of Transport Users. Through our Facebook ads, we intend to persuade 5,000 people to give us their email address by the end of October. We aim to keep in regular contact with these people so that we can approach them for insights and involve them in our campaigns.

As part of this project we have also been having joint meetings with Transport for All and selected London Councils, to talk to them about how to make the street changes more accessible. So far our new partnership with Transport for All is going well and has been useful for London TravelWatch in terms of deepening our knowledge of the lived experience of disabled people.

In June and July our main focus was on highlighting the poor quality of information on TfL's website (including journey planner), for people returning to public transport.

Our pressure resulted in improvements that included a website redesign at TfL, the launch of their station footfall app and the re-release of a 'West End Walking Map' which was put out just before pubs and restaurants re-opened. TfL have acknowledged that our constructive criticism about the quality of their information led to improvements in their communications to transport users.

On a similar theme, we conducted a joint project with Transport Focus to audit train company websites to see if they were giving passengers (and potential passengers) useful information about what to expect when making a train journey. This audit resulted in all train companies significantly improving their passenger information.

In terms of the proposal to remove free travel for some under 18's, London TravelWatch spoke to young people across London to ask them what the impact on them might be. We published these insights in a briefing which was sent to Assembly Members and London MP's, who told us how helpful it was. Our briefing was referred to in an adjournment debate about the Zip card in parliament. The Evening Standard also wrote an article featuring the insights we'd gained from talking to young people.

In August we released our series of 'Travel Hacks', designed to help transport users avoid busier stations in London. This included the release of a map showing the proximity of popular Tube stations to stations on the Thameslink Rail network.

After receiving many complaints to our casework team, and following pressure from London TravelWatch, the Office for Road and Rail wrote to Eurostar, asking them to make their refund policy clearer on their website.

Although we have temporarily shelved our planned campaign to increase bus ridership by speeding up buses, progress was made on one of our suggestions, which is to make bus lanes operate 24/7. After raising this idea in a meeting with TfL's Gareth Powell, we were delighted when TfL announced that they were going to consult on running a trial of 24/7 bus lanes. TfL have also asked London TravelWatch to help evaluate transport user sentiment during the trial.

Also on buses, we had a meeting with Shashi Verma at TfL to talk about how the 2.6% fare rise might be implemented in January. We made the case for keeping bus fares low, because so many lower income Londoners rely on the bus. We also talked to new TfL Commissioner Andy Byford about this when we met with him recently.

We're also nurturing new relationships and future collaborations with organisations like London First, Centre for London and Sustrans London. London First provided a quote for our press release about flexible season tickets. Centre for London are interested in our digital engagement of transport users and we'll be doing a presentation to them on this aspect of our work in September. I've also been asked to join the Advisory Board of Sustrans London.

We've also started some investigations around the e-scooter trial. We're exploring the feasibility of a pan- London trial area with TfL and London Councils. This would mean that e-scooter users would be able to ride across London without worrying about Borough boundaries.

Finally, our media profile has continued to grow over recent months, which is testament to the relevance of the work we are currently doing. As well as

regular interviews with BBC London, I've now appeared on ITV London and LBC for the first time since taking up the post. We've also had our first quote in the Times for almost 10 years. Media appearances help us to get our messages out to more transport users and can help to add pressure on transport operators on issues that we're working on.

We're currently analysing what the changing transport needs of Londoners will be as we come out of the pandemic. This will help us to advocate better for transport users as the new financial settlement between The Government and TfL is being agreed.

Organisational Development

We've now completed the final stage of our IT migration. This means that all staff have the most up to date equipment for home-working, and it will aid our collaboration with Transport Focus as we'll be able to see each others' diaries, collaborate on documents and have full use of Microsoft Teams. There will also be cost savings as a result of this change.

The planned office move is on hold for now because Transport Focus have been unable to progress moving to new offices while the pandemic is going on. A risk assessment process is underway to enable staff who want to return to the London TravelWatch office to do so.

The objective setting process has now concluded for all staff and everyone has an additional Diversity and Inclusion objective this year. These objectives will form the basis of next year's appraisals.

After consulting staff we have introduced a staff Health and Well Being policy which now forms part of our terms and conditions. The policy provides a framework within which the organisation will encourage and facilitate working practices that support employee health and well being, minimising wherever possible the detrimental impact of work-related stress and ensuring staff are appropriately supported in the workplace. As part of the well-being plan we now have an Employee Assistance Programme, which provides emotional support, including counselling for staff who need it. We have also brought in a menopause policy to support our female members of staff.

Relationships

In terms of our key relationships, our relationship with Transport Focus has gone from strength to strength with both organisations recognising the benefits that our partnership is bringing. London TravelWatch continues to benefit from Transport Focus's omnibus and other insights work and we recently held a joint round table with transport operators to discuss what more could be done to encourage passengers back onto public transport.

Our relationship with TfL is developing and we now have weekly contact with staff at all levels and departments within TfL. We were particularly pleased

with the acknowledgement that we got from TfL about the role that London TravelWatch played in improving information to passengers. We send TfL staff the omnibus survey results every week and we know that they are discussed at the highest levels.

Our relationship with the London Assembly continues to improve and we are receiving regular feedback about the usefulness of our work to them. We have just put out a 'satisfaction survey' to Transport Committee members and their staff to get some further feedback about areas where we can improve.

Complaints handling

Despite continued IT glitches related to the new system, the London TravelWatch team is now handling Transport Focus complaints to a high standard, with good success rates. Currently, across the board, fewer than 25% of our cases have an unsuccessful outcome. The casework team have been forming effective new relationships with Train Operators in the North of England, which is key to our success rates.

The Rail Ombudsman will appear at this Board meeting as part of our ongoing scrutiny of their performance.

3. Safety Issues

RAIB is carrying out an investigation into the cause of the Stonehaven train derailment. This investigation is independent of the joint investigation instructed by the Lord Advocate to be carried out by British Transport Police, Police Scotland and ORR. Sitting alongside these formal investigations, Network Rail has also set up two task forces, with independent chairs. One will look at improving Network Rail's understanding of, and response to, severe weather and the other will look at how Network Rail manages its earthworks portfolio. We'll be keeping an eye on the findings as they emerge, to see where there are learnings that are applicable to passenger safety that we can take forward, alongside Transport Focus.

All transport sectors have had to carry out risk assessments for staff and passengers travelling during the pandemic. RSSB has also collaborated with various specialists to estimate the risk of infection from Covid-19 on rail. Their report is here: <https://www.rssb.co.uk/Insights-and-News/The-Coronavirus-pandemic-how-we-can-help-you/Infection-Risks>

We continue to monitor passenger and public attitudes to safety of travel post-lockdown via the weekly omnibus tracker research.

4. Finance update

Our financial situation is sound and a full finance report is circulated with these papers. We are currently undergoing our annual audit which will conclude in October

5. Conclusion and recommendations

London TravelWatch has been doing a good job of responding to events as they unfold and then advocating for the needs of transport users. Once the new financial deal between the Government and TfL has been agreed at the end of September we will have a better idea of where we need to focus our efforts going forward. A Business plan for the year ahead can then be discussed and agreed.

Recommendations:

- 1) The board are asked to note the report

Emma Gibson
Director