

1. Introduction

This report outlines the impact we have made through our influencing activity; in the media, through social media and our website and at meetings we have attended. The statistics refer to September to October 2020.

We made an impact in a number of areas relating to the Coronavirus pandemic including successfully persuading TfL to add Thameslink services to the Tube map.

Confidential website viewing or social media figures will be circulated separately to the Board at the end of the quarter.

2. Our communications work

This section is split between impacts and outputs and includes an attribution rating for the impacts which makes it clear how much influence we actually had in the achievement. This uses a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is 'contributed' and 5 is 'made it happen').

Impact this quarter

2.1 TfL to add Thameslink services to the Tube map by Christmas

What was the issue?

We have been calling for TfL to add Thameslink services to the Tube map for some time and with the need to socially distance and avoid busy stations and transport services during the current pandemic, it is more important than ever that people travelling in and around London have access to clear information to show all the possible ways they could travel to help them get around safely. But TfL had resisted the calls of London TravelWatch and London Assembly Members.

What did we do?

In our latest attempt to highlight the issue, we commissioned a designer to add Tube stations to GTR's Thameslink map to help people find accessible alternatives to busy Tube stations.

What was the outcome?

The new TfL Commissioner, Andy Byford announced at the London Assembly Transport Committee meeting on 8 October that TfL would be adding Thameslink services to the Tube map by Christmas.

Attribution rating: 3

How did we celebrate this success?

We tweeted about the success and our tweet reached over 27,000 people and was retweeted 43 times with 156 likes.

2.2 Additional help points secured as part of Harringay station ticket office changes

What was the issue?

Earlier this year we held a consultation on the proposed closure of Harringay station ticket office by Govia Thameslink Railway.

What did we do?

We invited responses to the consultation, analysed relevant transaction information and looked at any other possible issues that would negatively affect users of the station if the ticket office was closed.

While we didn't object to the closure of the ticket office which needed to be demolished as part of essential works to the footbridge where it was located, we requested that a new help point be installed at the station's entrance as a mitigation measure.

What was the outcome?

GTR wanted to move a help point from its existing platform location, as a new staff information office will be built on that platform. However, after we highlighted that the view from the current help point to the staff office was potentially blocked, and that passengers might be unable to see staff based further down the platform, GTR agreed to install a new help point in the station entrance as well as retaining the existing help points.

Attribution rating: 5

2.3 Helping make the Rail Ombudsman more accountable

What was the issue?

Rail passengers are often not aware of the work that the Rail Ombudsman does and the details on their website which show how they can help passengers were not as up to date or detailed as they could be.

What did we do?

Representatives from the Rail Ombudsman appeared at our September Board meeting and we raised the issue with them, suggesting that they added some more case studies to their website.

What was the outcome?

Shortly after the Board meeting, the Rail Ombudsman [added several more case studies](#) to their website which highlight the kind of cases they handle.

Attribution rating: 5

Outputs this quarter

2.4 Encouraging people to have their say on Local Traffic Neighbourhoods

What was the issue?

TfL and local councils have been making various changes to streets which are designed to help make walking and cycling easier and safer during the current pandemic and beyond.

What did we do?

We launched a campaign to encourage Londoners to provide feedback on the changes. This included producing a [Have Your Say guide which explains the changes and how people can get involved and respond to consultations](#).

What was the output?

The guide has been well received on social media, and has been downloaded from our website over 500 times. We were also pleased that Vicky Foxcroft, MP for Lewisham, Deptford tweeted about the guide to her 18,500 followers after we wrote to MPs asking for their help promoting it.

2.4 Our omnibus survey work with Transport Focus continues to be popular

What was the issue?

With so many rapid changes in the amount of travel, the way people are travelling and the current pandemic inevitably making some people wary of using public transport, it is important to have a good range of data to help us build a picture of how the network is operating and the needs of passengers, both now and in the future.

What did we do?

We continue to work with Transport Focus on the weekly omnibus survey which has now been going six months and send this out each week to key stakeholders and the media.

What was the outcome?

The Evening Standard (which has a daily print circulation of 860,000, a daily readership of 1.6m and 600,000 unique daily visitors to its website) is now regularly drawing on the insight provided by the omnibus survey results which we circulate every week, mentioning our work in a story on people returning to public transport in mid-September and following this up with a mention in their editorial on 18 September and a further piece at the end of the month about the wearing of face coverings on public transport. LBC also did two more interviews with our Director on a Friday to discuss the week's results. Transport Professional (the magazine of the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation, which has 16,000 members and 12,500 weekly newsletter subscribers) also cited our research in a story on rising car use. The data also provides useful background for other media work.

2.5 London TravelWatch blog helps reignite the debate about roads pricing

What was the issue?

As TfL approached the deadline for agreeing a funding deal with the Government, one of the measures which was likely to be included was an extension of the Congestion Charge out to the North and South Circular.

What did we do?

We published a blog about how the [proposal to extend the Congestion Charge](#) zone can reignite the debate on roads pricing and shared this with journalists and on social media.

What was the output?

Our views were picked up [in the Guardian](#) (which has a print circulation of 170,000 and a daily average of 10.3m unique website views) and the blog proved popular on social media with a retweet from Transport Committee Vice

Chair, Caroline Pidgeon (who has over 14,000 followers) and a mention in a tweet by Green Assembly Member, Sian Berry who has over 46,000 followers. And our post on Facebook (where our profile has been growing slowly since we joined in August) reached 900 people.

3. Other media coverage

We received some really good coverage in the press as our media profile continues to grow.

In addition to the LBC interviews mentioned earlier, the Chair took part in an interview with LBC about the launch of our future transport investigation.

We also featured in an article in Rail Professional on the end of rail franchising and in several pieces in the Railway Herald.

A full list of our media coverage in September and October is appended to this report.

4. Popular news and pages on our website between September and October 2020

The number of website views increased again in September and October having gradually increased since the lockdown was introduced towards the end of March although they are still nowhere near their pre-Covid levels.

The most popular webpages in September and October were:

1. /faqs/oyster/where_can_i_use_my_pay_as_you_go_oyster_card_
2. /home/
3. /faqs/general/freedom_pass
4. /faqs/oyster/where_can_i_top_up_my_oyster_card_
5. /consumer_advice/peak_offpeak_travel

The most popular news items included:

- 1) Proposal to extend Congestion Charge zone can reignite the debate on roads pricing (22 October)
- 2) Watchdog calls for TfL to focus on outer London public transport connectivity in new budget (23 September)
- 3) Six months on from lockdown (16 September)

- 4) Watchdog publishes map with less busy alternatives to popular Tube stations (26 August)
- 5) Have your say on local walking and cycling improvements (20 August)

More detailed website statistics covering the whole of the third quarter of 2020/21 will be circulated to members separately.

5. Social media

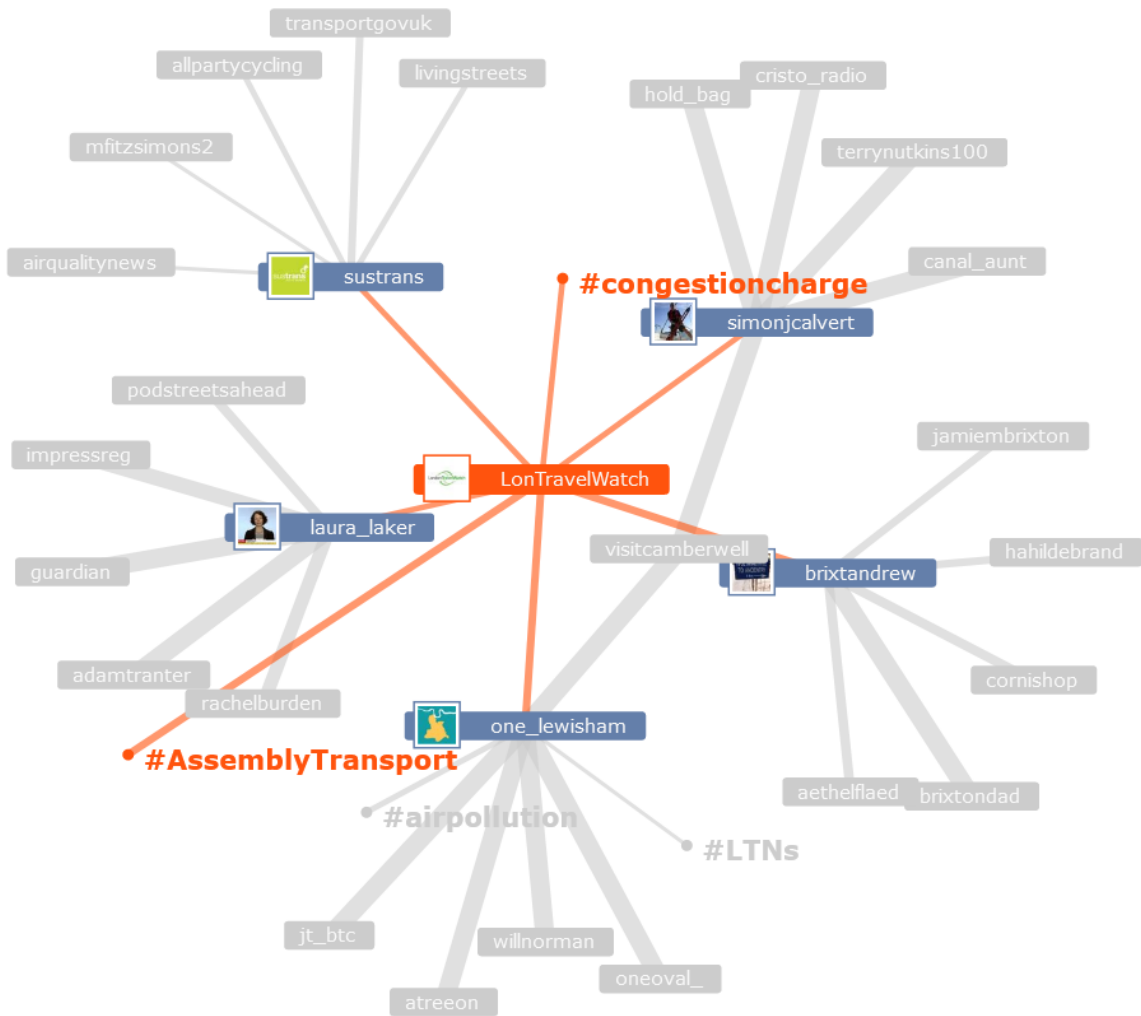
On 20 August we launched our active travel campaign which aims to encourage and empower transport users to feedback and engage in consultation with their local streets authorities and help us build a digital community of transport users we can keep engaged and updated on changes across London

During September we found that we were 'saturating the market' with our Facebook ads much more quickly than we anticipated and value for money was decreasing. However, having adjusted a few Facebook advertising details the numbers started to pick up again towards the end of October until we decided to stop the advert when the cost of acquiring new members started to cost far more than our upper limit. We acquired 3,730 subscribers as a result of the advertising campaign.

Mid-way through the campaign we sent a survey to our digital community subscribers and received over 500 responses, a very good response rate but it showed that we have work to do to make the audience more diverse as around two thirds of our members are male and 60 per cent are over 60 years old.

Now we have stopped the advertising, we will continue to encourage people to sign up to our online community, particularly those in groups which are currently underrepresented in our data, such as younger people and women.

The 'mention map' below shows the people who have connected with us on Twitter during the past three months, their connections and popular associated hashtags. It shows the diverse connections you can make on Twitter and the potential to reach a wider audience through prolific tweeters with a broad range of followers.



Detailed social media statistics covering the whole of the third quarter of 2020/21 will be circulated to members separately.

6. Recommendation

Members are recommended to note this report.

Richard Freeston-Clough, November 2020

Appendix – Press mentions/media appearances from September 2020

Rush hour returns: traffic up in major cities – 2 September 2020

The Times

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rush-hour-roads-clogging-up-again-despite-coronavirus-bvmb0clp7>

First revised emergency operating deal signed with FirstGroup – 2 September 2020

Railway Herald

Issue 700

New TravelWatch map shows alternative routes – 2 September 2020

Railway Herald

Issue 700

London public transport use continues picking up since Bank Holiday – 4 September 2020

On London

<https://www.onlondon.co.uk/london-public-transport-use-continues-picking-up-since-bank-holiday/>

Interview about the weekly omnibus findings – 11 September 2020

LBC

Transport for London closes Twitter accounts – 14 September 2020

Railway Gazette

<https://www.railwaygazette.com/operations-and-services/transport-for-london-closes-twitter-accounts/57351.article>

Two-thirds of London Overground users are 'comfortable' during journey, poll finds – 15 September 2020

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-overground-commuter-poll-covid-19-a4547686.html>

The Reader: Pupils must wear masks on public transport – 18 September

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/letters/the-reader-pupils-must-wear-masks-on-public-transport-a4550636.html>

Industry reacts to the official end of rail franchising – 21 September 2020

Rail Professional

<https://www.railpro.co.uk/news/industry-reacts-to-the-official-end-of-rail-franchising>

Improving connectivity – 23 September 2020

Railway Herald

Issue 703

Enhancing Bus and Coach Passenger Safety With Brigade's IP Cameras – 28 September 2020

Brigade Electronics

<https://brigade-electronics.com/enhancing-bus-and-coach-passenger-safety-with-brigades-ip-cameras/>

Transport for London finance fears over Boris Johnson's 'work from home' plea – 29 September 2020

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/transport-for-london-finances-coronavirus-work-from-home-a4558586.html>

Commuters who flout mask rules ‘are putting workers’ lives at risk’ – 29

September 2020

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/public-transport-mask-rules-commuters-flout-workers-lives-at-risk-a4558716.html>

Sadiq Khan seeks £4.7bn government bail-out for TfL – 29 September 2020

London Loves Business

<https://londonlovesbusiness.com/sadiq-khan-seeks-4-7bn-government-bail-out-for-tfl/>

Interview about the weekly omnibus findings – 2 October 2020

LBC

Minority of people failing to wear face coverings on public transport warned ‘wear one or face a fine’ – 8 October 2020

Transport for London

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2020/october/minority-of-people-failing-to-wear-face-coverings-on-public-transport-warned-wear-one-or-face-a-fi>

TfL reports Londoners are slowly returning to public transport – 9 October

SW Londoner

<https://www.swlondoner.co.uk/news/09102020-londoners-slowly-return-to-public-transport/>

Mayor opens 100-bike parking hub at Elstree & Borehamwood station – 20 October

Govia Thameslink Railway

<https://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/govia-thameslink-railway/pressreleases/mayor-opens-100-bike-parking-hub-at-elstree-and-borehamwood-station-3043994>

Why the row over congestion charge expansion could tear London apart – 26

October

The Observer

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/oct/24/why-the-row-over-congestion-charge-expansion-could-tear-london-apart>

Dave Hill: It's hard to see the government's wrangle with TfL ending well – 26

October

On London

<https://www.onlondon.co.uk/dave-hill-its-hard-to-see-the-governments-wrangle-with-tfl-ending-well/>

Interview about London TravelWatch's Future Transport Campaign – 27

October

LBC

Row erupts over London transport support proposals – 29 October

The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)

<https://www.ciht.org.uk/news/row-erupts-over-london-transport-support-proposals/>

TfL bailout deal done to keep London's Tube and buses running – 2 November

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/tfl-bailout-deal-agreed-to-keep-london-s-b36628.html>

Interview following the announcement of TfL's new deal with the Government

– 2 November

LBC