

“The only independent London-wide body standing up for the capital’s travelling public, however they choose to move around our city.”



“A vigilant watchdog ensures that potential problems can be identified and resolved before they become an issue.”



Our role

London TravelWatch is the operating name of the London Transport Users' Committee. It was set up by Parliament as the official voice of London's travelling public. We speak up for all those who use buses, the Underground, the National Rail system, the Docklands Light Railway, trams, taxis, Dial-a-Ride, Thames piers and London's principal road network (including cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians).

Our aims

We aim to be an effective champion for those travelling in and around London: Londoners, commuters, visitors and tourists.

We:

- press for a better travel experience for those travelling in and around London
- ensure that the particular and specific needs of London and Londoners are taken account of in all transport policy and planning decisions
- help the travelling public understand their rights by providing information and advice
- speak for all transport users in London, on all modes of transport in London, and are the only body to be completely multi-modal.

Our responsibilities

Representation

We speak for the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and decision makers at all levels: local councils, the Mayor, the London Assembly, as well as at national and European level.

Discussion

We meet with all parts of the transport industry regularly, about services and plans which affect the travelling public, including timetables, routes, frequencies, fares, ticketing, station standards, access, vehicles, personal security, safety and the provision of information to passengers and road users.

Investigation

We examine all complaints brought to us by people who are unhappy with responses they have received from service providers, and seek redress on their behalf where appropriate.

Scrutiny

We monitor developments and patterns in the quality of service, such as punctuality, reliability, crowding, congestion, cleanliness, accessibility, staff attitude and station and waiting facilities, and try to ensure they do not drop below the standards passengers expect and deserve. This is informed by our casework, which helps us understand the day-to-day concerns facing transport users in London.



Our vision

“Our good relationships with London’s many transport providers means we can promote a truly integrated and co-ordinated transport system.”

We think that:

- services should run frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week
- networks should provide good access, have adequate capacity and offer easy and convenient interchange between different types of transport
- staff should be helpful, informed, alert and committed to offering high-quality customer service
- information should be understandable, relevant, up-to-date, accurate and available in suitable formats before and during travel
- tickets should be easy to use, easy to understand, flexible and integrated between appropriate operators and modes of transport
- stations or stops should be well-designed, properly maintained, fully accessible and offer a decent waiting environment
- journeys should be safe and free from crime and the fear of crime
- streets should be clean, properly signed, uncongested and properly maintained so that they can be used confidently and jointly by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists
- vehicles should be accessible, comfortable, clean, as safe as possible, quiet, identifiable, and suitable for passengers travelling with luggage, shopping or children
- transport providers should communicate well with their users, be approachable, be receptive to suggestions, take complaint seriously and have proper mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.



Chair's report

Sharon Grant, Chair



For London TravelWatch, this was a year of consolidation. The changes we made in 2009/10 to our organisation, staffing and committee system were implemented and tested. Important work was done to develop a three-year strategic plan to serve as the basis for our work going forward, and just as importantly, we worked hard to improve understanding of roles and relationships internally.

The board has concentrated on its role in strategic oversight, as well as improving its knowledge of London's transport system by undertaking several site visits, including the 'transport surgeries' in Croydon and Romford.

In its first full year, the new committee system has worked well, focusing members' involvement in key areas and making best use of their individual skills.

It was essential that we dealt with the plethora of issues facing transport users in recession-hit London, both immediately and in medium- to longer-term transport planning. We monitored the activities of transport operators closely as the fallout from the recession took its toll, taking up a wide range of concerns on behalf of travellers: from fare rises to customer services, ticketing systems and service changes.

We highlighted the importance of buses in London, not least for passengers in outer London, and the importance of ensuring that all Londoners have access to good efficient services, with ease of interchange, especially where the labour market is uncertain.

It is widely accepted that we are at the beginning of a period of austerity in transport, as in most other spheres in London and the UK. As we have already seen, the voices of the transport industry, and indeed of politicians, will be loud during the debates that follow. As the statutory voice of the traveller in London - whether it is the passenger, the driver, the pedestrian or the cyclist - our voice will need to continue to be loud, clear and distinctive.

London TravelWatch faced expenditure cuts this year, and will face further ones. Our resources have been stretched, and choices will need to be made about our role and priorities as an organisation.

The board welcomed the announcement of a review, by the London Assembly, of our role and function, and resolved to work closely with the review panel.

“London TravelWatch represents not just commuters, but also the millions of visitors and tourists who come to London.”



Chief Executive's report

Janet Cooke, Chief Executive



London TravelWatch has continued to speak for London's passengers and ensure that they are represented at all levels, as well as working in London boroughs, listening to specific concerns of local people.

There was an increase in demand for our services through the year, including 30% more casework than two years ago, which indicates the very real need for a body to speak up for passengers, especially in times of cutbacks and the risk of a reduction in services.

We want everyone to have the best possible travel experience, and our unique role and perspective is vital in achieving this. Regular meetings and discussions with the industry, decision-makers and planners give us a chance to point out potential problems or concerns before they happen.

We responded to nearly 500 statutory consultations covering subjects as diverse as timetable changes, parking restrictions, changes to stations and future of bus routes.

We continued to give evidence on behalf of London's travellers to scrutiny panels of both the London Assembly and Government.

As you will see from this review, we can influence the strategic transport decisions as well as having an impact on local decisions, which can make a massive difference to our everyday journeys.

This year, we said goodbye to two long-standing members of staff: our Casework Manager, Christine Evans, who retired after 25 years championing the rights of passengers at London TravelWatch and its predecessor bodies, and Jerry Gold, who retired after a long career in transport, mainly with London Underground, before joining us ten years ago to draw on his industry insights for the benefit of passengers. We thank them both for what they did, as well as others who left us and, of course, all the staff who have worked so hard during the year.

I am proud of the work we have done and continue to do, making a genuine difference to Londoners and their travelling experience.



Our achievements

Every year we are kept occupied by examining consumer concerns and performance on transport. Our work ranges from high-level scrutiny to assisting individuals with specific problems, relating to a wide variety of concerns on all forms of transport in London. Our postbag informs the advice we give to policy-makers and informs London TravelWatch's strategic priorities and what we decide to campaign on.

Speaking out

London TravelWatch responds to consultations from the Mayor, local authorities, London Assembly, the Government, regulators and transport providers. This way we ensure that London passengers' perspective is always at the heart of decision and policy-making.

We called for all parties in the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) on the tube to put passengers first. We gave oral and written evidence to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee's inquiry looking at the PPP agreements. We called for all parties to ensure that disruption be kept at a minimum, and to ensure that the tube network was properly maintained and developed for the future.

We gave written and oral evidence to the London Assembly's Transport Committee investigation looking at congestion on Oxford Street, Bond Street and Regent Street.

We raised concerns at proposals to remove buses from Oxford Street. We showed that road space efficiency could be improved in this area by prioritising pedestrians, restricting taxis, closing off more of the north and south side roads which cross Oxford Street and reducing the number of buses terminating at Oxford Street.

We gave evidence to the House of Commons' Transport Select Committee inquiry into rail franchising, and were pleased when it adopted in its final recommendations our suggestion that the Government should look at a different franchising model. The franchisee must be given a clear, precise specification in the levels of quality of service expected on trains and at stations.

Paying for travel

The level of fares and the ease of ticket purchase is hugely important to passengers. We hear constantly from people who are concerned about how and where to buy tickets, how to obtain refunds when journeys have been delayed, from people unable to appeal a penalty fare as well as those unhappy with the level of fares on the transport network. As well as campaigning so that passengers pay a reasonable amount to travel, we give advice on how to get the best fare available and encourage the industry to simplify and clarify their processes.

“London is a 24 hour city and needs transport services to match.”



Our achievements



We were delighted that, after a long campaign, Oyster Pay As You Go was finally made available on national rail services in London. We thought it was an important step towards the integrated transport system that Londoners need and deserve. However, we were disappointed that some train companies still refuse to retail Oyster products.

Numerous phone calls and letters from the public showed us that there was confusion about the use of Oyster in some circumstances. We continued to give advice to people on how best to use Oyster, and reminded passengers of the introduction of pink Oyster Route Validators which can be used on certain journeys to avoid more expensive via zone 1 fares.

We also warned people about the introduction of the complicated Oyster Extension Permits.

Passengers with a zonal ticket on an Oyster card must use these each time they travel outside their zone on the railway. London TravelWatch has called for these to be abolished.

We completed a campaign objecting to many of First Capital Connect's proposals to reduce ticket office opening hours, during which we received 900 submissions and objections from the public.

We managed to ensure that the proposals were cut back at the majority of stations, and kept ticket offices like Loughborough Junction and Elephant and Castle open at weekends. It is clear to us that ticket offices and staffed stations are extremely important to passengers.



Our achievements

After queries from the general public, we urged people to check whether they were getting the best deal, and to encourage them to make price comparisons before buying season tickets. As Oyster Pay As You Go became available on national rail services in London, we advised that contrary to many passengers' assumptions, it would not automatically be the cheapest option - annual Travelcards and season tickets still offer the best value for money, and have added benefits.

Around ten per cent of appeals London TravelWatch investigates are about penalty fares, a figure which has concerned us for a long time, and we were pleased when the Department for Transport ordered a review of the penalty fares system after our plea that it needed to be fairer. We argued that passengers should be given a reasonable chance to buy the correct ticket before, during and after their journey, and that the appeals system had to be more transparent and independent from the rail industry.

After receiving frequent complaints, we persuaded Transport for London (TfL) to change their rules to allow 28 days in which to claim, rather than 14, in line with train companies. This means that those who use the system less frequently have time to claim any accidental overcharge. We also emphasised the importance of checking Oyster statements to ensure no-one has been charged more than they should have been.

Examining performance

We are consulted by the transport industry about potential routes, timetables, various traffic orders such as on-street parking or bus lanes regulations, in order to speak up for the travelling public early in the planning process, to try to prevent decisions which are not in the public interest being made.

We listen to the public to ensure that services, in terms of routes, timetables and punctuality, are the best they can possibly be so passengers' experiences are as smooth and trouble-free as possible. When services fall short, we explore the reasons and demand solutions for the future, as well as trying to obtain any recompense or seeking explanations for individuals.

We publish a quarterly performance review of the rail companies serving London, which assesses the passenger impact, focusing on punctuality and cancellations. This year, we introduced a quarterly performance report on TfL's services: the tube, buses, rail, tram, DLR, roads, cycling, motorcycling, river, taxis and Dial-a-Ride.

Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategies determine investment priorities, capacity and service levels on the rail network in and around London for a generation. During this year, we worked on strategies for routes up to Bedford and Gatwick and into Victoria, London Bridge, St Pancras, Charing Cross, Cannon St and Paddington. We continued to speak out for Jubilee Line passengers, who endured months of weekend disruption, only to endure further delays, owing to behind schedule engineering work.

After a lengthy campaign to persuade Network Rail, rail companies and local authorities to take responsibility for clearing rubbish from embankments and around stations, we were delighted to broker an agreement between Network Rail and London boroughs meaning that we should all see a cleaner railway environment in the future.



“Making London's transport accessible increases capacity and improves the way we all move around the capital.”



Our achievements

Widening Access

We want to see more Londoners and visitors to London walking, cycling and using public transport. Though there have been many great initiatives, more needs to be done to make London's transport networks more accessible in the widest sense of the word. We have promoted improvements to transport infrastructure, improvements to travel information available to Londoners and have tried to raise awareness of all transport users' needs. In all our work we consider the needs of the disabled and recognise that improvements for vulnerable groups usually offer benefits to all.

We supported the Mayor's aspiration to quadruple cycling in London, and issued a report setting out how we thought it could be achieved. We called for better road 'policing' and for all road users - cyclists, drivers and pedestrians - to respect the rules of the road. We also highlighted the need for investment in cycling to be on roads that cyclists used, not just on dedicated cycle networks.

We pressed the Equality and Human Rights Commission to investigate whether local authorities were breaking disability discrimination law by not ensuring that bus

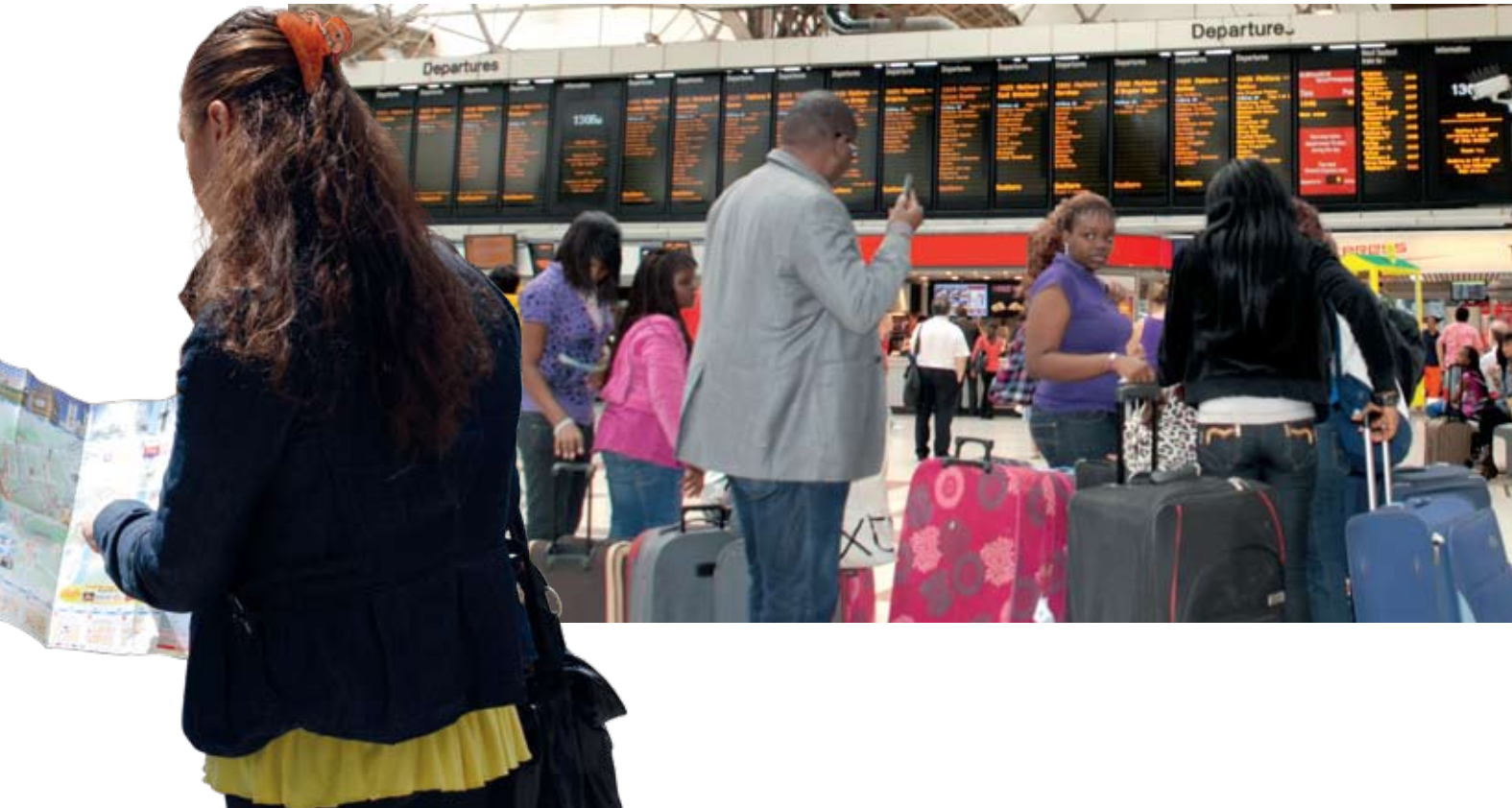
stops were fully accessible. It is absurd that all buses in London are low-floor and accessible but many bus stops are still inaccessible.

We championed a better pedestrian interchange between Euston and St Pancras International stations, and held a meeting between train companies, station managers and the local authority to ask them to work together to improve the access at the busy local, regional, national and international

route, which will be an Olympic Gateway in 2012. We were delighted when Camden council committed to fund the improvements, which included improving the route and signage.

After promoting the importance of the new ticket hall at Kings Cross St Pancras station for many years, we were very pleased to see it formally opened. It was a massive step forward for the station's accessibility, as well as reducing interchange times and easing congestion.

We were asked to be an independent co-ordinator regarding a proposal to close an access ramp used as an entrance and exit at Lewisham station. We received over a hundred complaints and a petition with several hundred signatures all objecting the closure. After examining the complaints on-site, looking at the increased walking times for passengers living west of the railway line and further consultation, we concluded that the closure should only be permitted once a replacement entrance and exit had been opened.



Our achievements

Keeping in touch

We have regular meetings in public, to which experts, opinion-formers, decision-makers and other stakeholders are invited to discuss issues affecting the travelling public. These meetings help to provide us with evidence of the actual passenger experience, help us to understand where and why things may have gone wrong, examine potential improvements, as well as allowing us to maintain and develop working relationships within the transport industry. The meetings also give the public a chance to see the work we do.

Our postbag dictates much of the work we do, and we talk regularly with all the major service providers about the complaints we receive, and often have urgent talks when we can see specific problems emerging from our caseload.

We called for TfL to take account of the faith and cultural make up of London and Londoners when it planned bus routes, after we investigated the transport needs of some minority faith communities in the capital.

We commissioned a survey into the demand for a route linking Golders Green and Stamford Hill in North London after hearing from the local Orthodox Jewish community. We also called for more research into other minority faith and cultural communities as these were often among the most socially-excluded in the capital.

After Eurostar suffered days of delays around Christmas when five trains broke down in the Channel Tunnel, we listened to passengers' experiences, and then gave evidence to the independent review into how Eurostar coped with the disruption. We were particularly concerned about the lack of management and the lack of information given to passengers - many of them in a foreign country - and urged Eurostar to implement the report's recommendations urgently.

During the severe weather at the beginning of the year, many people came to us when they could not get through to usual transport enquiry services or when websites crashed. We provided as much information as we could and our website had a record number of visits as people tried to find out what transport was running. We also held a meeting inviting people to tell us of their experiences, which was shared with transport and local authorities.

Our board spend a day travelling around the system looking at all forms of transport: walking, rail, tube, bus, DLR, cycle lanes and looking at stations. The visit covered north, south, east and west of London, and gave everyone a chance to undertake unfamiliar journeys and see unfamiliar

stops and stations. While most of the services were good, many of the stations were below standard, in terms of facilities and upkeep. These observations were taken up with the companies responsible.

We held two successful 'transport user surgeries' in Croydon and Romford. From a bus (kindly lent to us by the local bus companies) parked in the busy town centres we spoke to hundreds of people about their experiences of transport, listened to their concerns and also heard many positive comments. Representatives from local transport companies were on hand to offer advice, local knowledge and practical help, such as demonstrating how the bus ramp worked and advising how to avoid local road closures!

We were very concerned about the decision not to proceed with the introduction of a rail service in South London between Victoria and Bellingham which had been promised as a replacement for the existing Victoria to London Bridge via Peckham Rye service. We studied the usage of the line which showed that passengers would be severely disadvantaged if the promised service did not go ahead. After setting up a forum attended by local users and local councillors and MPs affected by the changes, we set up a joint study with TfL looking at options for providing an alternative service.

“Your complaints not only ensure *your* problems are resolved but those of your fellow passengers, too. ”

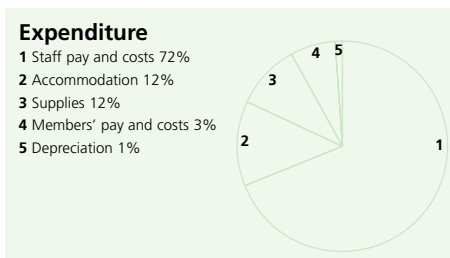


Our performance

Our funding

London TravelWatch is funded entirely by the London Assembly in accordance with Schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, apart from payment from Passenger Focus for consultancy services and small sums received in bank interest.

We are grateful to the London Assembly for its continuing support of our work. In 2009-2010, our total income amounted to £1,647,000, and our total expenditure to £1,713,000. Our full audited accounts are available on our website.



Staff pay and costs 72% £1,228,000
 Accommodation 12% £203,000
 Supplies 12% £204,000
 Members pay and costs 3% £57,000
 Depreciation 1% £21,000

Our performance

During 2009-2010, we received 3594 complaints and enquiries from the public, 1376 of which were initial complaints which we dealt with directly or forwarded on to the relevant operator. We also received around 7000 telephone enquiries, where we provided any information requested, or pointed people to the appropriate transport provider.

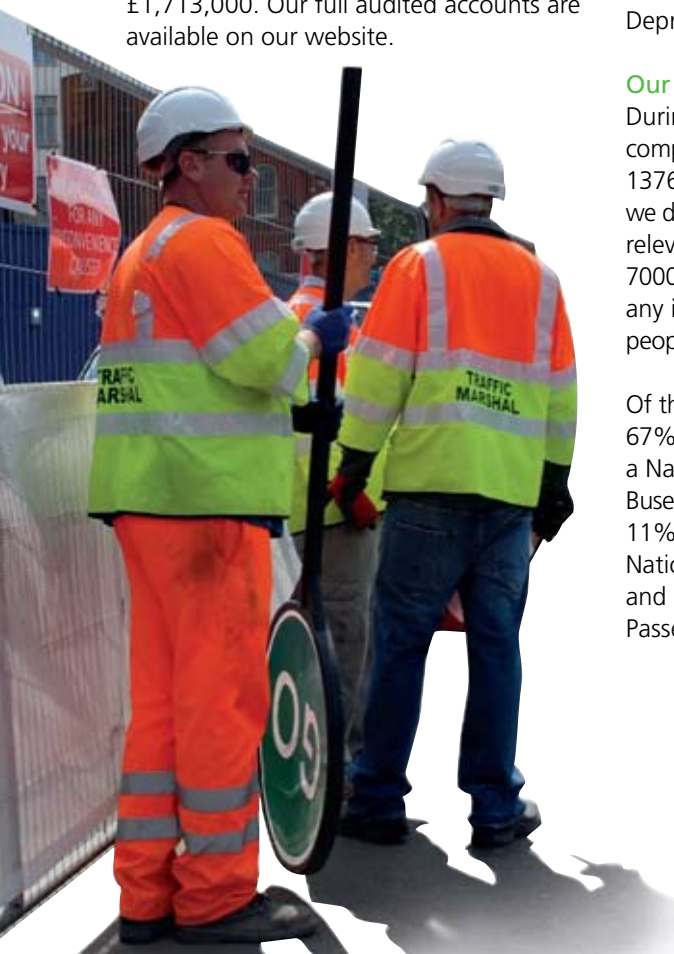
Of the 2218 issues we examined as appeals, 67% were about problems encountered with a National Rail service, 16% about London Buses, 7% about London Underground and 11% about other TfL products (or jointly with National Rail) such as Oyster or Travelcards, and by London boroughs, such as Freedom Passes.

The main issues for bus users were service levels, timetables and connections, staff conduct and availability and performance. The main topics raised by National Rail users were fares, retailing policy and refunds, service levels, timetables and connections and station quality. Underground users' main concerns were fares, retailing policy and refunds, problems with complaints handling and service performance.

The introduction of Oyster Pay As You Go on National Rail services in London led to a reduction in the number of complaints we received from passengers about penalty fares. However, the increasing use of Oyster has led to an increase in complaints from passengers who believe they have been overcharged or are seeking refunds.

Two train operators - South West Trains and Chiltern - consulted on changes to ticket office opening hours. As statutory consultees, we received 88 submissions from the general public regarding the proposed changes. These submissions were important in shaping our evidence to the operators and the Government.

We aim to acknowledge and record all cases received within five working days. During 2009-2010, we met this in 96% of cases, compared to 89% last year. We also aim to refer 75% of cases to the appropriate transport provider within five working days. In 2009-2010, 71% were referred within this time, the same as last year. When our investigations are complete, we strive to send our final reply to the complainant within 20 working days. We met this target in 88% of cases, compared to 84% last year. For those cases where we were able to respond directly without referring the issue elsewhere, we responded to 97% of cases within 20 working days (the same as last year).



About us

Our people

Members of London TravelWatch are appointed by the London Assembly, normally in alternate even-numbered years, for a four-year term. Any vacancies are advertised on www.london.gov.uk

Chair

Sharon Grant

Deputy Chair

Lorna Reith

Board members

Our members at 31 March 2010 were David Barry, Terry Bennett, Kevin Davis, Gail Engert, Daniel Francis, Sophia Lambert, Teena Lashmore, David Leibling, Sarah Pond and Onjali Qatari Rauf.

Also served during the year:
Andrew Probert

Staff

Chief Executive's office:

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive), Keletha Barrett, John Cartledge, Jo deBank, Julie Falano*, Helen Muchmore#, Julia Pearson (maternity leave cover).

Finance and Human Resources:

Patti Tobin (Director), Sandra Ambo, Peter Ellis, Jane Sugarman, Paula Williams.

Casework and Public Liaison:

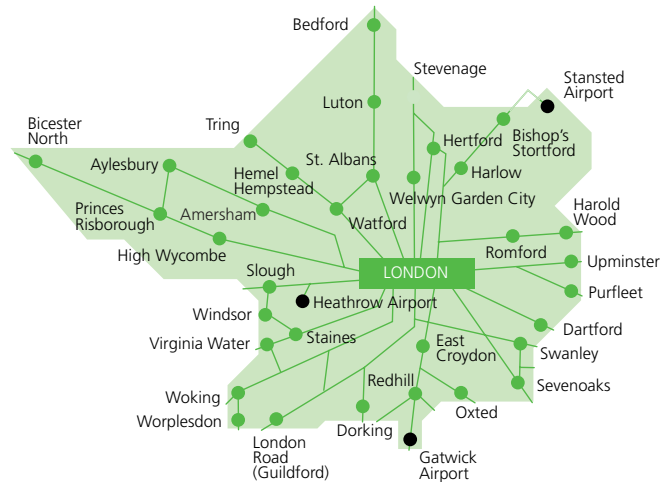
Bryan Davey (Director), Margaret Amu, Simon Barnabas, Margaret Croucher, Jaskiren Deol, Christine Evans#, John Hunt, David Rose, Mike Spittles.

Research and Development:

Tim Bellenger (Director), Carmel Cannon, Mark Donoghue, Jerry Gold# Greg Hargest, Rufus Impey*, Vincent Stops, Poonam Tamana.

left during year

*joined during year



London TravelWatch is the operating name of the London Transport Users' Committee

Meetings of London TravelWatch are normally open to the public. For details of dates, times and venues, please check our website.



The voice of London transport users

6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7JA

Phone: 020 7505 9000

Email: info@londontravelwatch.org.uk

www.londontravelwatch.org.uk

Published by London TravelWatch

ISSN 1475-1750-9610

Designed by Gorard Dean Corporate Communications
www.gorarddean.com

Printed on uncoated recycled paper