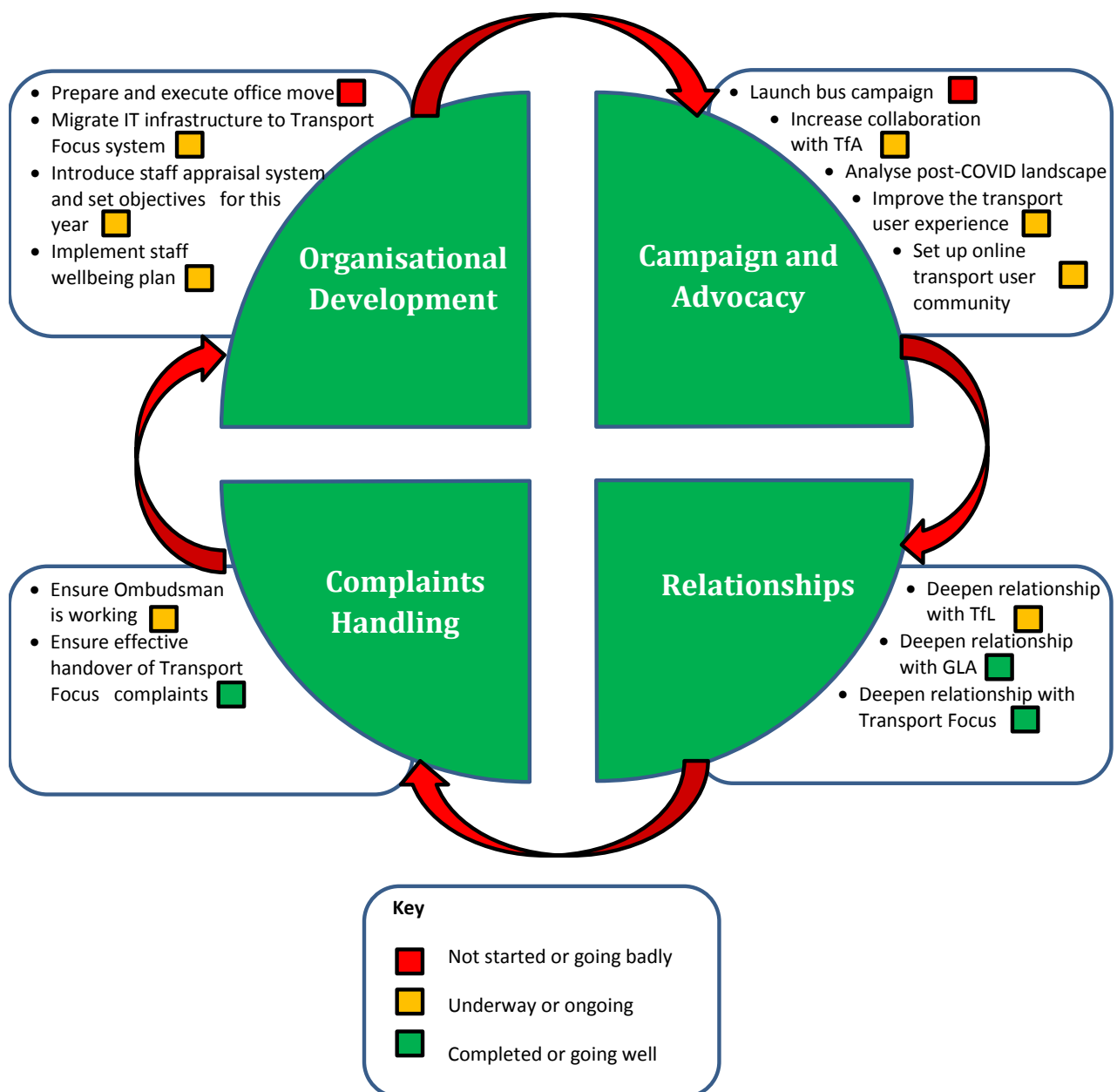


### Objectives Dashboard



## 1. Introduction

London TravelWatch continues to enjoy good organisational cohesion during lockdown and I'm confident that we are focusing on the right issues for transport users at this time.

## 2. Progress against our objectives

### Campaign and Advocacy

Our focus has moved somewhat from season ticket refunds and has been mainly concentrated on passenger safety on public transport, as numbers of users creep up. We've had several meetings with both TfL and Rail Industry contacts to find out what they are doing to keep passengers safe and to lobby for further improvements. We published a Guide on what passengers can expect if they are travelling on public transport, containing information that we'd gleaned from these meetings.

The Government bail-out of TfL produced some unexpected threats to long-standing concessionary benefits to passengers. We've been asking a constant stream of questions to TfL to clarify the implications of the changes for Freedom Pass holders and Zip Card holders, including asking to see Equality Impact Assessments for the decisions and to question how long the 'temporary' measures are set to last. We've worked with both Age UK London and Transport for All on the Freedom pass changes. We're currently working with Child Poverty groups on the Zip Card issue and have written to London MP's to ask them to write to the Secretary of State about the proposed change.

We'll also be meeting with TfL to discuss the proposed fare rises in January and will be asking them to make sure that disadvantaged communities are not further disadvantaged, for example by steep rises to bus fares.

We've also met with the Walking and Cycling Commissioner Will Norman to press for measures to help people walk and cycle at this time. We are currently scoping out a project on this theme and are discussing a collaboration with Transport for all on increasing Active Travel.

We have now completed the competitive tendering process for a digital engagement specialist and are looking to deploy them on the active travel project, with the aim of growing a digital base of transport users.

### Organisational Development

The lockdown and subsequent home working for all staff has meant that we have not been able to complete the planned migration of our IT system. In order to work around this problem we will be purchasing laptops for all staff, which can be configured by Transport Focus before being sent out. This will enable us to complete the final stage of our IT migration. It will also mean 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.

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. London TravelWatch staff don't anticipate returning to our office before the Autumn and a risk assessment process to prepare for this moment is underway.

In the meantime, all staff have been surveyed to see if they have the right equipment to be able to work safely and comfortably at home until then. We are in the process of ordering items like office chairs for those who need them.

We are almost ready to restart the annual appraisal process and for the first time, everyone will have an additional Diversity and Inclusion objective.

We have now agreed a flexible working policy, which will form a part of a wider well-being plan for staff. And we are mid-way through the process of qualifying for the Mayor of London's 'Good Work Standard'.

We are also going to join an Employee Assistance Programme, which provides emotional support, including counselling for staff who need it.

We have just completed our first annual staff survey, thanks to Transport Focus, which has given us valuable insights into the areas where London TravelWatch is performing well, and areas where we need to pay some more attention. 90% of staff are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with working at London TravelWatch and there is particular praise for how the organisation has adapted to the Coronavirus situation.

We are about to conduct a workshop to review and update the organisational Risk Register, which will involve both staff and Board members.

### Relationships

This area of our work is going very well. An upside of the pandemic situation has been that it has forced a closer working relationship between London TravelWatch and Transport Focus. This includes conducting joint, weekly omnibus surveys as well as joint meetings every week to look for areas where we can jointly lobby Transport Operators on passenger safety. The two organisations are also planning a joint webinar.

We have recently received some very positive feedback into how our relationship with the London Assembly, particularly Transport Committee Members is improving. Members are finding the work that we do useful and helpful to them in their work. Staff at all levels of London TravelWatch continue to meet with and provide information to the Transport Committee Leads and their officers. The Transport Committee has a new Chair in Alison Moore and there is an introductory meeting set up between myself, Anthony Smith (Chief Executive) and Arthur Leathley (London TravelWatch Chair) coming up.

Our relationships with key TfL contacts are developing and we've had more contact with them during the pandemic situation than we ordinarily would.

### Complaints Handling

The handover of appeals from Transport Focus to London TravelWatch is now complete and apart from some IT glitches related to lockdown, has gone smoothly. There are still some details of the relationship between London TravelWatch and Transport Focus that need to be explored more fully and a process is underway for that. This will include a system for reporting, and quality monitoring of appeals cases.

In terms of London TravelWatch's role in helping to ensure the good functioning of the Rail Ombudsman, we continue to monitor their performance as a member of the ADR Scheme Council.

### **3. Safety Issues**

Aside from the obvious passenger safety issues relating to Covid 19, thankfully this period has continued to be a relatively quiet period for passenger related incidents. On that basis I have incorporated Tim Bellenger's safety report into my update:

We have continued to provide input to the work of the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety (PACTS) and the Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) including work on passenger safety on trains and at stations, and on the Selective Door Operation (SDO) on trains. The Sandilands inquest, where London TravelWatch is now accepted as an interested party is likely to be delayed into Autumn 2020 for its' main public hearings.

We met with Simon French, Chief Inspector at the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) in March 2020. We have commented on one of their accident reports (a derailment and transfer of passengers between trains at Corby in Northamptonshire). This comment related to the decision- making processes at the train operator and Network Rail control function, which led to a poor and protracted outcome for passengers, and also to poor lineside management that led to the flooding and subsequent landslide that caused the train to derail.

The COVID 19 emergency has resulted in disruption to the cycle of meetings of PACTS and RSSB. However, previous work on crowding on trains and on stations has been put to good use in developing the measures to keep passengers and staff safe during this period and it is good to see cross-industry co-operation between operators. The reduction in passengers travelling on the rail network will result in a similar reduction in passenger injuries and incidents that are recorded. However, the principle areas of passenger injuries (slips, trips and falls) are likely to remain concerns, particularly on platforms, on stairs and on escalators, as passengers return to

the network. This shows the importance of handrails in reducing such incidents, but passengers will need reassurance that handrails are regularly and properly cleaned, to allay fears of virus transmission.

#### **4. Conclusion and recommendations**

London TravelWatch staff have adapted brilliantly to homeworking and have stayed focused on our agreed priorities throughout that time. The Casework team have overcome a stream of technical and IT issues relating to the handover of Appeals from Transport Focus but have done this with stoicism and good humour. Many of us have seen our workload increase during the pandemic, but because we view London TravelWatch's work as so important during this period, there was been a willingness to do the job that is needed right now.

Recommendations:

- 1) The board are asked to note the report

Emma Gibson  
Director

