

Chief Executive's report

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Agenda item: 4

LTW678

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Implement the recently agreed Diversity and Inclusion Strategy ●

Create a culture where staff feel comfortable talking about mental health issues. ●

Create a new complaints webpage to help passengers resolve certain types of complaint without having to appeal through the LTW casework team ●



- Increase Borough level commitment to bus priority measures
- Key LTW recommendations on improving personal security are implemented
- Produce evidence of the passenger point of view to influence GBR
- Increase the use of video in social media posts and promote better sharing
- Persuade TfL/ Rail industry to provide information about when lifts are out of order
- Continue to grow and improve the diversity of our digital community ●

- Build alliances or partnerships with at least five organisations who we haven't yet worked closely with
- Collaborate effectively with Transport Focus to incorporate the passenger voice into the rail reform process
- Become more influential with TfL's new Director of Buses to help improve bus priority on TfL and borough roads

● Completed or going well ● Underway or ongoing ● Not started or going badly

1 Review of Objectives

Campaigns and Advocacy

Increase Borough level commitment to bus priority measures

We've moved our focus this year onto encouraging the Boroughs to back measures which reduce bus journey times. Our first public work on this has been to direct message (DM) local election candidates via Twitter, asking them to back our series of 'bus asks' to: make existing bus lanes 24/7 except at clearly defined loading times; enforce parking restrictions on bus routes; review parking spaces which slow the bus down; provide more priority for the bus at junctions; and increase the number of bus lanes and other measures which improve bus journey times. Using stills from our bus video, our tweets have been very popular, with retweets from Tower Hamlets Living Streets; Elly Baker AM and some candidates.

We also provided Clean Cities Campaign with information to help them include a 'bus ask' in their local election lobbying campaign. And we continue to work with the Healthy Streets Scorecard coalition to help them to realise their 2022 ambition of publishing data on Borough bus speeds as part of their scorecard.



We've also been extending our network of Borough contacts and recently met with Ealing Council, who have subsequently joined our Bus Alliance.

We are increasingly becoming known as the voice of people who use the bus, filling an important gap in transport advocacy. Stephen Joseph, former CEO of Campaign for Better Transport recently told us that LTW were now the champion of the bus in London.

We're expecting the release of TfL's Bus Action Plan any day now and for the first time we can remember, at February's TfL Board meeting there was an update on TfL's bus priority plans, which stated that improvements have been made at 39 signalised junctions to give the bus priority.

Our [Bus Savings Figures](#) continue to be influential and we have been told that the PM's transport advisor Andrew Gilligan has been talking about the savings that can be made by reducing bus journey times. Conservative AM Nicholas Rogers also recently asked a Mayoral Question in relation to our figures.

We're soon to release a report on the demographics of people who use the bus, which we hope will keep the profile of the bus high, at a time when bus services are under threat.

Key LTW recommendations on improving personal security are implemented by police, transport authorities or transport operators

Having released our report [Personal security on London's Transport network](#) in February, we have been doing a round of meetings to influence transport providers and police to take up our recommendations.

We've had most success so far with our recommendation that bystanders who witness a crime should be given a 'playbook' of how to help, and our [film](#) on this subject has been praised by the BTP and TfL, with TfL sharing it on their social media channels and putting the video on their website, and in a recent blog. We think that the practical tips in the film have encouraged the BTP and TfL to do more in this area, with TfL having plans for a campaign on good bystander behaviour, and the BTP changing the communication plan around their soon-to-be-launched app, so that it focuses on bystander behaviour.

Both the BTP and TfL policing teams have indicated their interest in working with us in future. In a recent meeting with Siwan Hayward, TfL's Director of Policing, she told us that our report came at a great time and encapsulated the key issues. We also had a meeting with Steve White, MD of Southeastern Railway to take him through our recommendations. Southeastern are currently recruiting a Safeguarding Manager who we'll be able to work with in future to implement some of our recommendations for train companies.

We were also pleased to see Caroline Nokes MP, Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee tweeting about our report, after we met with her. And we received mentions from Assembly Members like Elly Baker and Unmesh

Desai, as well as retweets from other organisations working on personal security.

The report was covered in the Standard and on LBC. And our bystander film has been widely viewed on social media.

Produce evidence which shows the passenger point of view in relation to changes to transport services, including the proposed reforms to the railways

We've almost completed our research into what London passengers want from a future rail network. The focus groups are complete and we are now running a public survey which will complete the research.

We've used the initial findings to inform our response to the GBR consultation on the 'Whole Industry Strategic Plan' (WISP). And we also used these findings to put out a media comment on 1 March, when train timetables returned to pre-omicron levels, which was picked up by the Telegraph.

We were pleased to see a recent report put out by the London Assembly Transport Committee in response to the Williams-Shapps White Paper contain a recommendation that London TravelWatch are included in discussions about any changes to the fares and ticketing system, ensuring transparency for passengers in any future structure.

Continue to grow and improve the diversity of our digital community so that it is made up of 40% women; 7% 18-25s; and 20% ethnic minority Londoners by the end of the period

We currently have around 4,400 members of our online digital community, having added almost 400 over the past year. We are currently just short of the target of 40% of subscribers being women, with 39.2%. We have not been so successful when it comes to attracting young people - currently 4.5% of the community is aged 18-25. However, we now have a 50:50 gender split for subscribers aged between 18-44 which is really positive. We will shortly be sending out our first annual survey to enable us to (anonymously) monitor the percentage of BAME people on our lists as due to restrictions on Mailchimp and as a protected characteristic, recording this kind of information and targeting specific groups for recruitment is increasingly being seen as unethical.

We experimented with recruiting new people to our digital community via the 'day in the life of the bus' video, which did not result in significant sign ups. So we then trialled some advertising on Instagram (which skews younger and female), linked to our work to promote our personal security report but while it has proved really successful in getting our videos viewed by our target audience, it has not succeeded in getting sign ups to our digital community.

Having tried three times in total to recruit new community members via our campaign projects, we've come to the conclusion that asking for an email address from people who are not familiar with our work, is setting the bar too high, especially for younger people. It would seem that our original Facebook campaign which recruited the first community members reached everyone who was 'warm' to joining us in the first place. So, we're having a re-think about whether the objective of 'diversifying our digital community' is the right one. And whether we can meet the original aim of this objective, which is to make sure that we're gaining insights from a representative cross-section of Londoners, via alternative means. This could involve ideas such as creating a youth panel or striking up a relationship with the UK Youth Parliament to get feedback on our work.

Increase the use of video in social media posts and build relationships with organisations who can share our posts, to increase our reach

Over the last few months we have made much more use of videos in our social media with our 'Day in the Life of the Bus' proving popular and our short videos on personal security have been widely viewed and shared by Assembly Members, MPs and organisations we have been working with including Centre for London, Transport for All, Our Streets Now and TfL. This and some targeted advertising on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram has helped take our social media engagement to new heights (further details can be found in the communications update report).

Persuade TfL and the rail industry to complete their project to provide information to passengers about when lifts and escalators are out of order

This project is progressing slowly, because of delays with the rail industry providing the most up to date information for the new online tool. I've been promised an update meeting on this soon. And I also had a positive meeting with the ORR, where they expressed interest in helping LTW to speed the project up, by getting involved themselves.

Organisational Development

Implement the recently agreed Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

We're moving onto implementation of the plan, with Susan James becoming our Race Equality Champion and Richard Freeston-Clough our Wellbeing Champion on the Management Team. Susan will shortly host a staff meeting to launch her ideas for what we'll tackle first, with an initial focus on inclusive language. We're talking to our HR advisor at Transport Focus to see if they have time to review our recruitment process for unintended bias this year.

Create a culture where staff feel comfortable talking about mental health issues.

We have just surveyed staff to get a baseline figure to measure future progress when it comes to how comfortable staff are talking about mental health. Staff were asked to say how comfortable they felt talking about mental health at work on a scale of 1-10. All staff completed the survey and scores ranged from 2-9. The average was 6.45.

We had some useful feedback from the free text responses about how people felt. A few people said that it depended on who we were talking about – they were happy listening to other people but not as comfortable when it involved them talking themselves about mental health issues.

We aim to continue to make progress in this area by marking awareness weeks such as Mental Health Week and signposting to resources but also using staff meetings to discuss particular issues. We are considering getting outside speakers to come in and help us to promote the issue.

Complaints Handling

Create a new complaints webpage to help passengers resolve certain types of complaint without having to appeal through the LTW casework team

We are researching ways of how we give passengers the opportunity to 'self serve' and locate the information required using the website and we are using one topic as a trial. The information that passengers will require has been drafted and the next step is to find the most appropriate way to display this on the London TravelWatch website.

Relationships

Build alliances or partnerships with at least five organisations who we haven't yet worked closely with

We're currently planning a joint webinar on e-scooters with Centre for London, who we've never formally worked with before. And our collaboration with Clean Cities campaign over their local election lobbying is the first time we've worked so closely together. It's also been pleasing to see a wide range of organisations in our current alliances sharing our job ads with their networks.

Collaborate effectively with Transport Focus to incorporate the passenger voice into the rail reform process

In addition to our monthly rail catch ups with Transport Focus we liaised with them on our response to the Great British Railways consultation on the WISP and the consultation on changes to the Schedule 17 ticketing regime relating to applications by train companies to close or alter the opening hours of ticket offices.

Become more influential with TfL's new Director of Buses to help improve bus priority on TfL and borough roads

A meeting with Tom Cunnington, who deputises for the Head of Buses at TfL is in the diary for March. We were pleased to be asked to provide a quote for a TfL press release about the launch of the new 63 bus.

Other updates

- We were disappointed to hear that overall, bus fares would be rising at a greater percentage than Tube fares on 1 March. We wrote to the Mayor asking him to re-consider but weren't successful with our request. We'll continue to make the case for the needs of people who use the bus regularly, who are often on lower incomes, and our demographic data will help us to do this. Our comments on the bus fares rise were covered in the Telegraph, Daily Mail, Guardian and in a BBC interview. They were also mentioned in a blog by Conservative MP Bob Neill.
- TfL's funding deal has been extended to 24 June but we are concerned that new 'service level reviews' of bus, Tube and train ridership numbers will be conducted in April, with a view to cutting the frequency of services after 24 June. We think that a review at this point is premature, as TfL don't expect to see the 'new normal' of passenger numbers before the summer.
- We submitted a joint letter with Transport for All to TfL after being briefed on their plans to reduce staffing at Tube stations. Our response

focused on the potential detriment to personal safety, particularly in relation to women and girls. And also on the ability of TfL to retain a turn and go assistance service for disabled people.

2 Finance Update

As we approach the end of the financial year our spending is more or less as forecast, and we'll be ending the year with a small underspend, on top of our agreed reserves.

3 Conclusion and recommendations

The Board is asked to note the report.