

LONDON TRAVELWATCH

Business Plan 2023 - 2024



Working in Partnership with

LONDON
ASSEMBLY

transportfocus 

Introduction

It's been another turbulent year for transport in London with Transport for London's (TfL's) funding taken to the cliff-edge multiple times. Covid was still preventing people from travelling at the beginning of the year, and new working patterns are still taking time to settle down, but it's evident that some degree of homeworking is becoming the new normal for those who have the kind of jobs where they can work at home.

TfL have thankfully now secured a longer term funding deal with Government, which includes support for operational costs until April 2024. A condition of the deal is that no further cuts will be made to bus and tube services (above the 4% cuts to bus routes already planned) but TfL will need to make further 'efficiencies' as part of the deal and we won't see these spelt out until TfL produce a new budget in January.

We will monitor the impact on the public of these efficiency changes, for instance on the ability for people to travel free from crime such as sexual harassment, or the ability of disabled people to travel on a 'turn up and go' basis.

There is significant uncertainty about the future of Great British Railways and whether the planned reforms will go ahead. The second half of this year has seen unprecedented strikes on the railway, and funding for Britain's rail network is under pressure because so many commuters are choosing to stay at home.

For the last two years London TravelWatch have planned around 50% of campaigning work in advance, leaving space for us to add in new projects during the year as issues appear. For example, by reacting to events last year we commissioned research on personal security. And this year we're commissioning research into digital exclusion to understand more about the demographics of those whose travel is affected by difficulty using digital services.

We appreciate the support we have received from the Transport Committee for this approach. Given the number of uncertainties and further turbulence to come next year, we plan to continue this way in 2023.



Arthur Leathley

Chair, London TravelWatch

Survey of Londoners

This year, we have taken a broader approach to developing our business plan, by consulting more people about its content. Having endured the pandemic, we thought that this was a good time to see if people's priorities had changed since we first asked about that in 2020.

At the start of June, we sent out a list of 13 statements (see below) to a wide range of stakeholders asking them to let us know the two or three that were most important to them. The aim was to get a sense of what people 'on the ground' thought we should prioritise next year. We set ourselves a target of 1,000 completions.

The survey went out to the 4,500 people in our digital community and the 2,000 Londoners on the Transport Focus panel. It was also posted on the Mind the Gap Facebook page run by My London newspaper which has 19,000 followers, and other organisations shared the survey, including a number working with younger people.

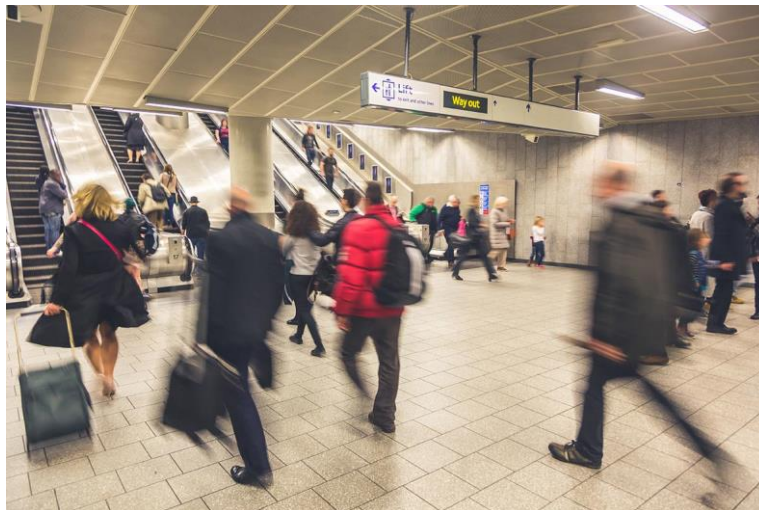


When we closed the survey after two weeks, we had 1,266 responses. We have no way of tracking exactly where responses came from but based on the spikes in survey completions and when they were sent out it looks like we had several hundred surveys from young people.

The most popular statement by quite a long way was 'Transport that gets me where I want to go' with 60.5% of people saying it was a priority, followed by 'A transport network that is accessible for everyone' (42.7%) and 'A public transport network that is free from violence, hate crime and sexual harassment' (36%).

The full list of statements ranked in order of priority by those who filled in the survey is:

- Transport that gets me where I want to go (60.5%)
- A transport network that is accessible for everyone (42.7%)
- A public transport network that is free from violence, hate crime and sexual harassment (36%)
- A transport network that provides me with value for money (31.9%)
- Clear, joined up information that helps me plan my journey and shows the options available if there is disruption (29.7%)
- A clean and reliable train service (28%)
- Making my bus journeys faster and more attractive (19.8%)
- Simpler train fares which are easy to buy (15.8%)
- More opportunities to cycle safely around the city (14%)
- More night-time bus, Tube and rail services (9.3%)
- Being able to pay for my travel using cash (5%)
- Clear standards and effective processes to resolve issues when things go wrong (4.7%)
- Easier refunds available automatically wherever possible (3.3%)



There was also an opportunity to add free text and the two most recurring issues that came up from that were the need to remove restrictions on using Freedom passes and Oyster 60+ cards before 9am and the need to improve bus services and oppose cuts.

Next year we plan to do a paid poll on these kinds of questions, to enable us to reach a representative sample of Londoners.

What we've achieved in 2022

Campaign and Advocacy successes

- Seen work begin on a new lift at Paddington station which will provide people with step-free access directly from the street to Bakerloo line platforms. This came about as a direct result of our lobbying to keep the lift shaft which had previously been used during the construction of the Elizabeth Line
- Successfully lobbied TfL to **bring in measures which will reduce bus journey times by 10%**
- **Persuaded Chiltern Railways to make toilets at Marylebone station free,** in line with other major London stations
- Persuaded TfL **to reduce the minimum amount you can automatically top up your Oyster card online to £10**
- TfL have included the recommendations from our personal security report in their workplan and **our video on how bystanders can intervene when they see sexual harassment** has been added to the home page of **TfL's website**



Public Engagement

- Increased the number of women members of our 4500-strong digital community to reach an overall target of 40%, and have reached 50% in the 18-44 age group
- Much wider use of video to focus on key issues such as personal security and our bus campaign has increased our reach, with nearly 6,000 views on our YouTube channel
- Worked closely with Transport Focus to reflect passenger reaction to strike disruption, leading to better communication by operators
- Successful webinars, including on rail reform, bus travel and e-scooters have increased profile and created new relationships with partner organisations.

Casework

- Our casework team were the only people able to speak to Eurostar over the summer when they closed their phone lines to the public due to a large backlog of work. Despite the pressure this placed on our small team, we were able to keep resolving cases for passengers
- Caseworkers are often the first people to spot a policy problem, and this year they have found several areas where better information could save people money. We are now actively working these up into policy asks and will shortly be pushing communications out about this
- Introduced improvements to complaint handling to ensure consistent responses
- Achieved improvements to Elizabeth Line signage following confusion at Liverpool St station



Our proposed work in 2023

As explained above, we are proposing to continue to leave space in the work programme to tackle new and emerging issues during the year, so the following campaigns will not reflect the totality of our advocacy work.

Planned Campaigns and Advocacy

1 Minimise the impact of any TfL cuts

In January we'll know more about TfL's budget and in which areas of their business they will need to make cuts. We'll also hear the results of the consultation on cuts to bus services. We're expecting that we will work with Assembly Members and other groups to make the case for protecting passengers from some of the impact

2 Prioritise the Bus

Our campaign to persuade TfL to take steps to increase ridership on the bus has resulted in their recent 'Bus Action Plan' which includes the target to reduce bus journey times by 10%. Since then, there has been an added target set in TfL's funding deal with Government to introduce an extra 25km of bus lanes by 2024/25.

The deal also secures £69m Local Implementation Plan funding for London Boroughs in 2023 which includes measures to improve priority for buses on London's roads.

Our plan is to shift some focus from TfL to the London Boroughs to persuade them of the benefits to their areas of reducing bus journey times, and to encourage them to apply for funds to improve bus priority in their area.

We'll continue to work closely with the Healthy Streets Scorecard Coalition to help them to finalise the bus priority comparison indicator for their 2023 scorecard, which will help to add more pressure on Borough Leaders.

We are the only campaigning organisation representing bus users in London and our voice is highly valued in the debate. We'll continue to grow the Bus Alliance, which is starting to work together very effectively.



3 Improving Personal safety for people in London

We've had a lot of success with our report [Personal Security on London's Transport](#) and TfL have now incorporated our recommendations into their own internal scorecard for measuring their progress on this issue. As a result of our influence, they also plan to run a public campaign early next year on advising bystanders on how to help if they see a crime happening on the transport system.

We've also had some success with pushing this issue up the agenda of train companies and we have worked with the British Transport Police on the design of their recent crime reporting app.

For the first anniversary of our report, we intend to turn our recommendations into a 'scorecard' which we can measure the progress of TfL and Train Companies against. We also want to do some new research in 2023 into how LGBTQ+ Londoners experience the transport network.



4 Improving the Accessibility of the Transport Network

Accessibility was a major theme for Londoners in our survey and we are discussing with others where to put our focus in 2023. Transport for All are currently doing a survey of what the biggest accessibility priorities are for disabled people and when that survey is complete, we'll use it to make our final decision on where to focus. But strong ideas might include a focus on access to toilets. Or the withdrawal of seating (which Transport for All would be keen to collaborate with us on).

We'll also push to bring to fruition the project that we started to get TfL and the Rail Industry to supply joined-up, real time data to passengers about when lifts and escalators are out of order. This project was included in the GBR White Paper and was initially supposed to have been delivered this time last year.

5 Rail Reform

We're waiting to see when and if Great British Railways will be set up and we'll continue to use our research to lobby on behalf of rail passengers for improved accessibility; a simpler fares system and to make our rail industry more focused on the needs of those who use it. Given the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport we know that this this will be delayed, but it still seems possible that some legislation will be brought forward next year.

6 Digital Exclusion

Our research into digital exclusion will be published at the end of 2022 and we will use the findings to inform wider advocacy across our all our work streams in 2023.

7 Statutory duties

As funding for public transport comes under more pressure, we expect to see an increase in the time we spend on our role as a statutory consultee. This is particularly likely in relation to proposals for ticket office closures or reductions in in their opening hours. As this plan is being written, it is still unclear whether the current train company plans will go ahead for consultation this year or be pushed back, despite months of discussion with officials at the Department for Transport. Regardless of timing, it is likely that this will be a substantial piece of work in coming months.

8 Alliances and Partnerships

We will continue building on our partnership working to increase the impact of our work.



This year we have worked with a wider range of partners to build our expertise and amplify our resources and messages, with notable success. Key examples include:

- We continued building upon the Bus Alliance, with members including the Campaign for Better Transport, Healthy Streets Scorecard, Business LDN, Sustrans, representatives from London Boroughs and members of the London Assembly. Successes include building momentum around bus priority, including the publication of TfL's Bus Action Plan, and supporting responses to TfL's summer bus cuts consultation
- We're working with the Healthy Streets Scorecard Coalition, promoting active travel and bus use. This has contributed to bus priority measures being included in their scores, putting pressure on Boroughs to improve
- As part of our personal security campaign, we worked with a range of organisations, including those with expertise in safety and the groups most impacted. Of special note, are Plan UK, Our Streets Now and the Young Women's Trust. This included working with them on our research, using their insight to strengthen our recommendations, and signing a joint letter calling for Public Sexual Harassment to be made a crime
- Working with London First (now Business LDN) London TravelWatch set up a coalition of organisations to make the case that TfL must receive adequate funding in the next finance deal so that service levels of public transport are not cut below what's needed.

Objectives for 2023/24

Campaigns and Advocacy

- Increased Borough level commitment to bus priority measures
- The police, transport authorities and transport operators implement our key recommendations for improving personal security
- Transport operators become more aware of digital exclusion, and commit to implementing mitigations to reduce the impact on people travelling around London
- We make sure that all our research includes the views of a demographically representative sample of Londoners and includes those who are traditionally harder to reach.
- We embed an ethos of quality, diversity, and inclusion in all external communications – is the content accessible and delivered in various formats for different audiences? (For example, audible web content, improved access for those using screen readers, social media content including description tags, wider use of media outlets to make sure our work is visible to as many Londoners as possible)

Complaints Handling and Casework

- Create a Memorandum of Understanding between LTW, TF and the new rail ombudsman for improved complaints handling
- To use feedback from casework in a more structured way to inform our advocacy work

Organisational Development

- With the appointment of a new Chief Executive, and other recent appointments we will take time to build the new team and ensure that we continue to support and develop our external relationships

Relationships

- Harness partnerships, especially with organisations who can help us to reach more diverse audiences, to maximise impact of our campaigns & communications activities
- Use social media more to reach out to more representative and diverse audiences
- Deepen our collaboration with Transport Focus through greater analysis of the London element of their research

Budget for 2023/24

We wish to keep our current base level of funding (£1,110,000) and would again ask for an uplift for to cover the cost of the staff pay award in 2023/24, the level of which is yet to be decided. London TravelWatch staff terms and conditions are aligned to the GLA, and we have been very appreciative of this link being kept in previous years.

Most of our costs are for the staff we employ (69%) and fixed overheads (16%) which include rent for our offices and IT infrastructure. We keep our back-office costs low through our shared service with Transport Focus which enables us to put more resources into campaigns and advocacy. Our remaining spend is used to fund research and campaigning and we are doing as much as possible to ensure value for money by working with relevant partners where possible.

We understand that the Transport Committee will be considering this bid ahead of decisions being reached on the Assembly's overall budget and that a final decision cannot be made until the Assembly's overall budget is decided. We would expect that any reductions (e.g., application of a vacancy factor for staff budgets) would be applied in the same way.

Grant in aid funding	2022/23	Bid for 2023/24	Comments
Core	£1,111,000	£1,111,000	Plus an uplift for the 2023/24 pay award Less any vacancy factor applied to Assembly staff budgets



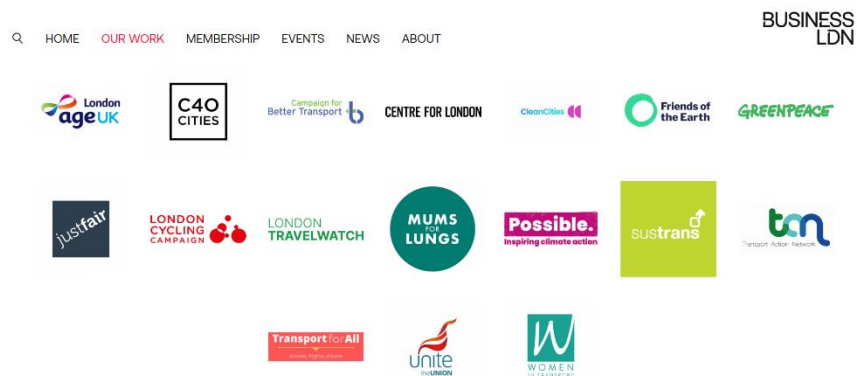
Partnerships and Alliances

Members of the Bus Alliance:

BusinessLDN, Bus Users UK, Campaign for Better Transport, Clean Cities Campaign, Go-Ahead London, Healthy Streets Scorecard Coalition, London Assembly Members, London Borough of Enfield, London Borough of Hackney, London Borough of Newham, London Councils, Sustrans, Transport for All, Unite union

The alliance that we set up to protect funding for London’s public transport:

<https://www.businessldn.co.uk/campaigns/future-of-transport-for-london>



Partners in the Public Sexual Harassment Campaign

