

# Board Meeting

29 November 2022

## Chief Executive's report

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Agenda item: 4

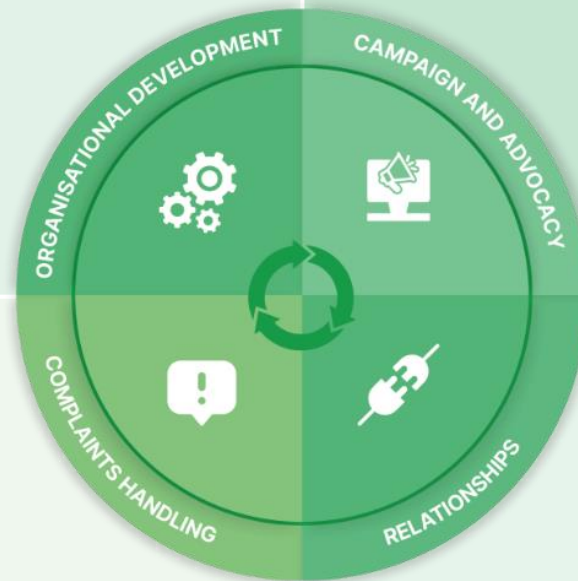
LTW695

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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**

As these papers are being finalised we have just received the outcome of the Mayor's consultation on plans to make cuts London's bus network which had the potential to involve 1 in 5 night bus passengers having to change buses in the middle of the night, in some cases at a completely different bus stop. It additionally proposed that 93,000 journeys would involve a change of bus.

An initial review indicates that the vast majority of our recommendations have been taken on board which is a major success. We specifically objected to detailed changes to 15 routes and none of these are now going ahead. Additionally, the vast majority of night services have been protected. This is great news for Londoners.

We were pleased to meet with Tom Cunnington, Head of Bus Business development at TfL to discuss their priorities over coming months.

We also spoke on the panel of the "On the Buses" event ran by Urban Design London and the London Technical Advisers Group. The discussion focused on how TfL and London Government can work together to support improvements to bus services across the capital, delivering "a renaissance for the most accessible and affordable form of transport".

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

We continue to talk to police and transport bodies about personal security, and further work has been included in the new Business Plan. This will focus on developing a 'scorecard' to measure the progress of operators, and new research into how LGBTQ+ Londoners experience the transport network.

The first meeting of the proposed new Personal Security Alliance is being planned for February, and it is intended that this will be the spur to developing closer relationships with relevant partners across London, including the Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit.

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

We are still awaiting details of the timing of the planned consultations on potential ticket office closures. This could affect up to 300 station ticket offices in the London area which may be subject to closure or changes to their opening hours. We have some provision in the budget for additional support should the train companies all conduct consultations at the same time, and I am currently exploring whether we could use Ventrica for this work, in line with the approach being taken by Transport Focus. This would avoid a reliance on having to bring in temporary staff at short notice.

**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. There is no significant update from the last board report although more work is planned to build on the diversity of this group next year through wider partnerships with different stakeholder groups.

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

We filmed a series of four short video clips of our Vice Chair, Alan Benson, using the Elizabeth line shortly after Bond Street station had opened. These clips have been shared on social media channels. Feedback was given to TfL based on some of the issues we encountered including poor signage (especially around lifts) and bumpy boarding.

In this period, in line with our objective to publish more engaging, visual content, we created and shared 11 videos, with 39 photos, and 51 links. Our most popular tweets in the period were 1) introduction of new DLR trains in 2024 and associated engineering work 2) TfL bridging device trial at Jubilee stations 3) How accessible is the Elizabeth line? (Video of Alan Benson at Woolwich station).

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

Whilst there has been no formal announcement yet, at our most recent meeting with the Rail Delivery Group we were advised that this project is close to completion. This will be a major step forward as it is something we have campaigned hard for over the past few years, and once in place will help improve accessibility across the transport network.

## **Organisational Development**

### **Implement the recently agreed Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

We now have a plan for progressing the strand of the EDI strategy about designing an Equity Decision Making framework for LTW. Board member Tiffany Lam and Campaigns and Advocacy Officer Sasha Langeveldt are working together to bring this project to fruition, and a draft framework is currently being finalised internally.

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

Alex Smith and Eloise Williams ran a very helpful session on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace at a recent staff meeting which included some very practical links to external resources. We are also planning to get an outside speaker to come in and help us to promote the issue later in the year.

## **Complaints Handling**

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

Since the last meeting we have received quotes from two web developers to design the new webpages but have concluded that they do not offer good value for money. We will discuss this further with our incoming new website provider, but it is unlikely that this will be able to be set up this year.

## **Relationships**

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

There is no further update on this objective for this Board meeting.

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

We continue to work closely with Transport Focus on the GBR reforms, as well as the ticket office closure consultation process, by sharing information. We have also had several joint meetings with them and the DfT to talk about the forthcoming consultations on ticket office closures which we will be running.

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

We continue to work well with TfL's Bus Directorate but there is no specific update on this objective for this Board meeting.

**Other updates**

- A considerable amount of time has been spent responding to bus and rail strike activity and we have been commended by TfL for the extent of our feedback to them during strike days. Many of our recommendations have been acted on immediately and I would like to particularly commend Trevor Rosenberg for his detailed work on this.
- We have had considerable engagement about the potential impact of the changes to Southeastern's timetable from December 11<sup>th</sup> and have provided detailed briefings to a number of local stakeholders. The company was given permission from the DfT not to consult on these in advance, despite the extent of the changes. We have raised concerns about this with Southeastern and the DfT given the potential precedent for other proposals. We also plan to carry out some joint research in January with Transport Focus on the impact of these reductions.
- Eurostar's phone lines have now reopened which has lessened the pressure on the number of calls received by Ventrice, but a new issue has arisen in relation to the proposed requirement passengers from the UK being required to have a visa to enter the EU. Current proposals require visas to be purchased at the point of departure from a machine. This will particularly impact on St Pancras, and we have had early conversations with Eurostar about what this will mean for their services, with concerns around the challenges this may present. This includes needing space for visa machines, and potential delays with high numbers of passengers queuing to get their visas. We will continue to engage with Eurostar to support their efforts in minimising disruption to passenger travel.

- We have received the initial results of our research into Digital Exclusion and are working with Transport for All on the report which will be presented to the next board meeting for approval.

## **2 Finance Update**

The finance report shows a healthy position this year, although much spend is back ended due to staffing gaps earlier in the year. As indicated above, we are keeping some provision for additional staffing support for the proposed ticket office consultations, and this may need to be carried forward to next year if there is further delay.

We are currently projecting £50,000 in reserves at year end, but I am concerned that this does not provide sufficient flexibility for unexpected changes in requirements. This year alone we have needed provision for maternity leave, extra casework volumes and ticket office closure support. This has been manageable given staffing gaps earlier in the year but would not be in a year when we were fully staffed throughout. Whilst in extremis there is the possibility of approaching the GLA for assistance (as happened in 2019), there would need to be very exceptional circumstances for this to be provided.

Good practice in reserves policy would normally be to hold 3-6 months operating costs, which in our case would be circa £200,000 - £400,000. The lower end of this is more practical in our case and I recommend that the board adopts a reserves policy that aims to gradually build the reserve to £200,000 over the next five years.

## **3 Communications update**

Since the last Board meeting, London TravelWatch has been quoted in publications including the Evening Standard, BBC News, MyLondon, OnLondon, London Post, News Shopper, South London Press and Tribune magazine. Trade press publications such as Rail News, Highways Magazine, Rail Business, Railway Gazette and Urban Transport Magazine have also featured LTW.

Our main proactive release focused on issues around smart devices and how [some people are being double charged by TfL ticket readers.](#)

We also tweeted threads on a number of topical issues which generated coverage including delays to Great British Railways legislation, the

Southeastern timetable cuts scheduled for December, service disruption in the days after strike action, e-scooter trial extension.

This period we also restarted using the LTW LinkedIn account. This is being used to increase engagement with corporate stakeholders and the wider industry.

Earlier this month, we launched our [new media centre](#). We now have a fully integrated press and stakeholder database on PRGloo. This will allow us to extend our reach with key publications and organisations. We announced the appointment of our new CEO during the Transport Committee session using PRGloo and this generated positive coverage and follow-up questions from stakeholders across the capital.

During this period relevant staff attended a training session on Tone of Voice. An external agency held the workshop at LTW and it was received positively. An audit of the website will start in the next period to make sure our language is easy to understand and accessible.

As well as engaging with new ministerial appointments at the DfT, we issued briefings to MPs and Cllrs on the line of route(s) affected by Southeastern railway's December timetable cuts. We also responded to a flurry of correspondence from Southeastern passengers.

We issued an email to our Digital community in this period asking for their feedback on how strikes are being communicated by transport organisations. The open rate = 41.4% versus average campaign rate of 38%, versus peers' average performance = 34%. Results from the survey we linked to were shared with rail and TfL colleagues to encourage changes to the way strikes are communicated in future. Qualitative feedback was also [anonymised and shared online](#) (website and social media channels). We will conduct a follow-up survey in the next period as more strike dates have been announced by the RMT Union.

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

The Board is asked to:

- 1) Adopt a new reserves policy as outlined in section 2
- 2) To note the report.