

Chief Executive’s report

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Agenda item: LTW703

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- Create a culture where staff feel comfortable talking about mental health issues.
- Implement the recently agreed Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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



- Produce evidence of the passenger point of view to influence GBR
- Increase the use of video in social media posts and promote better sharing
- Key LTW recommendations on improving personal security are implemented
- Increase Borough level commitment to bus priority measures
- 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● Completed or going well    ● Underway or ongoing    ● Not started or going badly    ● No longer applicable

## **1 Campaigns & advocacy**

### *Road user charging*

I appeared before the Assembly's Transport Committee second session on smart road user charging, alongside representatives from TfL, TfWM and RAC Foundation. The Mayor's Transport Strategy has flagged the potential for smart charging to replace the existing suite of road charges in London. The sense from the session was that TfL's thinking on what a new scheme might look like is at an early stage; and that, unsurprisingly, this is a politically contentious topic. My key point was that TfL should seriously consider co-creation, rather than just consultation, as it develops any proposals – while keeping an open mind as to whether a scheme would work for London.

### *Southeastern Trains*

Together with colleagues from LTW and Transport Focus, I met Steve White (MD Southeastern) and senior members of his joint team with Network Rail to talk about performance since the introduction of December's new timetable. It was a chance for an open exchange of views and concerns: I subsequently posted a blog (24<sup>th</sup> February) referring to the topics covered in the meeting. This continues to be a live area of interest for us (see the Campaigns and Communications Reports for this Board Meeting) and we expect to meet Steve and his colleagues again soon.

### *Rail ticket offices*

We continue to prepare for the anticipated consultations on possible ticket office closures (see the Campaigns Report). The expected scale of proposals, if they are all formally published at the same time, presents a potentially major logistical challenge to London TravelWatch in terms of processing responses received from members of the public. We are actively discussing how best we can manage this with Transport Focus.

## **2 Relationships**

### *Assembly and Mayor's office*

Alongside my monthly catch-ups with the four political lead Members on the Transport Committee, I have continued my programme of introductory meetings with other political figures within the London governance bodies, including Len Duvall AM and Deputy Mayor Seb Dance. Topics covered across all these meetings included the Mayoral budget debates, ULEZ, smart road user charging, the future programme of the Transport Committee and the

2024 London elections. My next meeting with the GLA Executive Director (Helen Ewen) is due later in March.

The next meeting of the Transport Committee takes place on 21<sup>st</sup> March and is a Q&A session with the TfL Commissioner and Deputy Mayor; the one after that will be in May and is due to feature a new chair, under the usual arrangements for rotating the role between the political parties represented on the Committee.

#### *Transport for London*

I have met Gynn Barton (COO), Louise Cheeseman (Director of Buses) and Matt Brown (Director of Communications) as part of my round of introductions to the TfL senior team. They have provided a very useful briefing on TfL's current priorities, ranging from TfL's need actively to increase passenger numbers, to its ongoing conversation with national Government about funding. The relationship between TfL and London Travelwatch feels appropriately healthy, and is one on which we will seek to build, in our role as advocate for the travelling public.

#### *Transport Focus*

I joined members of the Transport Focus team for a meeting of the group (CARGO) previously set up to review formally the collaboration agreement between our two organisations. We considered the strategic value which TF and LTW bring to and experience from the agreement: while there were variances against assumptions made at the start of the business year, after adjustments these were felt to be reasonable and that overall the arrangements were working well. TF are preparing a 2023/24 budget of strategic value which will be considered by CARGO later this month.

#### *Other organisations*

Caroline Stickland (Chief Executive, Transport for All) briefed me on the development of TfA's five-year strategy and we look forward to hearing the outcome of their next bi-annual survey on transport accessibility priorities later this year. I also met Claire Walters (Chief Executive, Bus Users UK) ahead of her participation in the discussion at this Board meeting about the Mayor's Bus Action Plan. Forthcoming external meetings include ones with Rail Delivery Group, South Western Railway, Govia Thameslink Railway, RAC Foundation and BusinessLDN.

### **3 Complaints handling**

Susan James and I will be meeting Transport Focus (Mike Hewitson and Linda McCord) in March to consider the review of TF casework handling carried out by Susan and Linda, and identify any next steps.

We have received a response from RDG to our letter, prompted by the casework team, raising concerns about what we regard as misleading representation of “cheapest fares” in the London area on National Rail Enquiries and some TOC websites. We will be following this up in the first instance in my meeting with RDG Chief Executive Jacqueline Starr.

### **4 Organisational development**

The LTW team held a constructive awayday, informed in part by results from a staff survey. We agreed actions on a range of topics, including how to improve approach to EDI, our hybrid working arrangements and our priorities for 2023/24.

I have had a positive discussion with diversity and inclusion consultants A New Normal to explore whether they can support LTW in developing our approach to EDI. They had previously been in contact with Emma Gibson and have worked with Transport Focus. We aim to hold a facilitated workshop for the whole LTW team as a first step towards agreeing any actions; this will also allow us the chance to consider how best we take forward our recently-agreed Equity Framework.

We have begun work to help us decide what to do in light of the end of our office lease later this year. As part of that, I have met a consultant who has worked with Transport Focus on two of their previous office moves and with whom I intend to work on the next steps, including initial engagement with our existing landlord.

### **5 Future Board meetings**

The next meeting of the Board is as a private members’ event on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, followed by the next public meeting of the Board on 19<sup>th</sup> July. The latter will take place at City Hall and will include a session with the TfL Commissioner Andy Lord.