

Chief Executive’s report

Board paper no: LTW777

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Business Plan priorities: update and status

Priority	Lead	Update	Status
1 More seamless journeys	MR	Good post-September Board discussion with member lead (RH), but plan to hold stakeholder event on hold. Exploring other options to establish focus of our future activity on this theme.	
2 More accessible transport	AS	Useful meeting with TfL about Equity in Motion strategy, including progress and future focus, with agreement to continue check-ins going forward. Continue to engage with RDG on Welcome Points.	
3 Greater TfL ambition in building trust	MR	Good follow up meetings (Feb) to Andy Lord discussion. TfL/LTW/ICS discussion to come as part of input to new customer care target due in next TfL business plan (late 2025).	
4 Better transport services	AS	Pain points – continue engagement on Euston station and Central (timetable now largely restored). Bus work continues with TfL and Bus Alliance. Value for money report underway.	
5 Further action on inclusion	AS	Personal security summit went well, reviewing the discussions to identify follow-up actions. Digital exclusion mystery shopping and initial analysis complete, compiling findings for output.	
6 Closer working with Transport Committee	AS	Continuing regular meetings with AMs and officers, relationships are generally good. Fed into discussions on potential areas of focus for the committee in 2025/26.	
7 Improved casework operations	SJ	Casework objectives completed for 2025/25. Ongoing engagement with TOC and ticket retailers (RO now dealing with Trainline appeals). Working closely with TF to update CW objectives.	
8 Improved LTW insight	AS	Revised passenger priorities proposal in light of board feedback (shared 7 March). Readying first project in the second strand (deep dive into views on street space) to go out to tender.	

Completed or going well	Under way or ongoing	Not going well	Not started	No longer applicable
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1 Overview

The RAG status for this year's business plan priorities remains unchanged from my previous report with the exception of Priority 1, which has moved from amber to red. Further detail on Priorities 1 and 3, where I have the lead, is provided in this paper.

In the period since my previous report, the Government's Railways Bill consultation document has been published and I have worked with Tricia to start developing our views on the proposals: this will continue to be an important area of activity for us in the coming months.

2 Business plan priorities 1 and 3

On Priority 1 (more seamless journeys), I have not been able to give this the level of attention I had hoped when I last reported to the Board in January. As a result, we will not be able to meet our aim of holding a workshop with stakeholders in this business year to help identify a focus for London TravelWatch's work on this topic. Instead, we are:

- Preparing to survey the public's views on street space in London, as part of our revised passenger priorities research on which Alex emailed Board members 7th March (see the Campaigns and Advocacy report);
- Seeking clarity on the future activity of TfL's Healthy Streets Advisory Group (HSAG). In our business plan for 2025/26, we anticipated using our membership of the group more actively to promote better connectivity to and from the public transport system by modes such as walking, wheeling and cycling. TfL's Director of Strategy has confirmed they are reviewing how best to use HSAG in future and will follow up with further details;
- Following up one of the specific suggestions made at a previous Board meeting, to consider the quality of connectivity from housing to public transport as a possible area of focus. Rick Hebditch suggested making contact with Transport for New Homes and a meeting has been arranged for later this month.

On Priority 3 (greater TfL ambition in building trust), following our useful session with Andy Lord and colleagues in December, we are looking to help shape TfL's thinking as they work towards adopting a new customer care target in the next TfL business plan, due to emerge in late 2025.

In the first of two meetings with TfL in February, Susan Stockwell discussed the issues to consider in using balanced scorecards (with customer care as an element within that) and in presenting their outputs. At the second meeting, TfL (which has reached out to international institutions for ideas) agreed to arrange a three-way conversation on this topic with us and the Institute of Customer Service. TfL also said they would let us know more about when we might engage with this specific strand of their business plan process.

3 Next year's business plan

Over the last few weeks, Susan, Alex and I have been preparing project plans for each of the 6 themes in the 2025/26 business plan agreed with the Transport Committee. These internal documents capture a brief description of the intended activity, deliverables, impact, resourcing and risks under each theme.

The document for theme 1 is still being drawn up, but drafts for themes 2-6 are being provided to consider alongside this paper. There will be limited time to discuss the drafts at the meeting, but any initial views from Board members (particularly where you have previously expressed an interest in a theme) on our emerging thinking would be welcome, either at the meeting or over the following two weeks.

The project plans are still work in progress and subject to further discussion with other colleagues, but we are at a more advanced stage of planning than at this point last year. This should help us be more effective in delivering our commitments over the coming 12 months. As we work towards finalising the individual plans in April, we will look to ensure that the overall level of activity is manageable through the year and we will produce a single summary timeline capturing the most significant milestones across the six themes.

4 Stakeholder engagement

Transport for London

In February, Tricia and I had our latest meeting with Alex Williams, TfL's Chief Customer and Strategy Officer. The main focus of the discussion was the Government's Railways Bill consultation document. We agreed that the document could have done more to articulate how customers will benefit from the proposals. We also reflected on how experience with London Overground had shown what devolution could achieve and discussed potential models for further change, from outright transfer of responsibility for service provision to joint decision-making between TfL and Great British Railways.

National Rail

I attended the latest meetings of the Euston Oversight Group in January and March. The general sense of the group is that the work to Christmas on the Five Point Plan had gone well, though work continues in several areas. Timely display and removal of disruption information on the main concourse screen (for now, still without advertisements) is one area still to work on, and options on what to do with the two tree screens on the concourse are due for discussion in March/April. Further attention is also being given to ensure that more long distance services start boarding 20 minutes before departure. Some remaining small scale physical improvements on the station (such as toilet refurbishment) are due in the next couple of months as the focus of the group starts to turn more to identifying medium-term improvements at Euston.

In February, Alex and I met Stuart Meek, interim Managing Director at South Western Railway (SWR), as part of our round of regular meetings with the main rail organisation in our area:

- SWR has seen commuter demand recover to c 70% of pre-pandemic levels, compared with c 80-85% in the case of Southeastern (the difference potentially due to the different labour markets served by the two operators), combined with much more peakiness particularly in the morning peak. The recovery in SWR's leisure market has been stronger;
- SWR were upbeat about customer perceptions, noting an increase over 4 years in top scores (5/5 and 4/5) given for overall journey satisfaction, and highlighting recent improvements such as better WiFi resilience and use of an on-board QR code, both to provide passenger information and enable passenger reporting of issues to SWR;
- improving punctuality and performance remains key to SWR's customer strategy (comprising eight areas of focus). The key initiatives are introduction of the new Arterio rolling stock, a review of the base timetable and ensuring crew operations are more resilient (eg through less reliance on rest day working);
- SWR informed us that their current compliance with Schedule 17 (opening hours for ticket offices) was running at 97%.

I attended a webinar hosted by Rail Minister Lord Hendy for the rail industry and stakeholders on the day the Department for Transport published its Railways Bill consultation document. In response to my question about how the proposals might add to the existing devolution arrangements for London, the Department felt the main opportunity for the Mayor lay in greater partnership with national Government in specifying services coming into London. A further webinar was held on 12th March and we are arranging a meeting with officials for next week to talk specifically about what the proposals might mean for London TravelWatch.

London Assembly

Alex and I had one of our regular meetings with Elly Baker AM (Labour) in February. She confirmed that the Transport Committee was working to complete its report on accessibility following its panel sessions on this topic during last year: we expect the need for better TfL engagement with Disabled people to be a major theme in the report. We discussed rail reform and possible Committee inquiry topics for next year. One area of interest which the Assembly might want to explore in a future session is the level of TfL investment in renewals: we discussed TfL's approach towards "steady state" investment and the need to understand what this really meant.

Meetings with Transport Committee members Hina Bokhari AM (Liberal Democrat) and Keith Prince AM (Conservative) are scheduled for later in March.

I have been looking into the concerns raised about bus safety during our December session with the Transport Committee, including whether the expansion of 20 mile per hour speed limits or the nature of bus operator contracts may be putting bus drivers unsafely under pressure to keep to their timetables. I will be meeting TfL later this month to discuss these issues.

5 Organisational development

Over the last couple of months, the team has completed a mix of online and in-person training on disability equality; race, faith and diversity; and neurodiversity. Overall, the aim of the sessions has been to improve our understanding of some of the key issues covered under each theme and so benefit both how we relate to each other as colleagues and how we engage with/work for the travelling public.

The disability equality training involved making a journey on the transport network accompanied by a sight-impaired facilitator from Transport for All and was extremely useful in understanding first-hand some of the challenges encountered by a Disabled person when travelling around London. We are also following up with Equality and Diversity UK, who provided an excellent session on race, faith and diversity, to establish how they might be able to provide us with ongoing support.

We have commissioned an employment lawyer to review the format of London TravelWatch's contract of employment with staff, following previous advice that this was in need of updating and ahead of potential other changes which may arise from the Government's Employment Rights Bill. This is also a chance to review the accompanying document containing staff terms, conditions and HR policies. This work is at an early stage and will continue into the coming business year, including consultation with colleagues.

The existing four-year contract with our auditors comes to an end this month. The incumbent firm has offered to renew the contract for a lower fee: we are currently discussing the most appropriate way forward with the GLA.

I have worked with Transport Focus colleagues on the annual review and refresh of the collaboration agreement between our two organisations. With Susan's input, we have agreed an update to the section on performance indicators for the casework service we provide to Transport Focus and a final version of the updated agreement is due to be signed off this month.

6 Future Board meetings

The Board is next due to meet as a Members' Event on Thursday 22nd May 2025 at 1000.