

Public Board meeting

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LONDON
TRAVELWATCH

Chief Executive's report

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Board paper no: LTW790

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Business Plan themes: update and status

Themes	Lead	Update	Status
1 More seamless journeys	MR	Street space research with stakeholder interviews and survey of Londoners complete with analysis to be presented at Board meeting. Continuing discussions with Transport Committee about feeding into their work on topic.	
2 Better transport services	AS	Reviewing issues on Bakerloo line and our approach to it as part of pain points work. Ongoing comms and engagement work on bus improvements. Discussions about next steps on value for money taking place with view to finalise approach shortly.	
3 More accessible, inclusive & secure transport	AS	Continuing engagement with industry on digital exclusion, considering next steps with a view to it becoming a "watching brief". Scoping personal security and accessibility work while continuing to engage with industry on accessibility issues.	
4 Greater TfL ambition in building trust	MR	LTW awaiting TfL invitation to a session on customer care with Institute of Customer Service. Awaiting details on how LTW can contribute to development of next TfL business plan. Both items to be raised at a meeting with TfL due on 23 rd July.	
5 Closer working with Transport Committee	AS	Continuing regular engagement with AM transport leads and Transport Committee staff, including conversations about how we can support their 2025/26 work plan. Michael invited to be a panellist on their recent session looking at fare evasion.	
6 Improved casework operations	SJ	Waiting for feedback from TF about changes to the initial contact process. Flow chart on managing challenging contacts completed (with RDG).	

Completed or going well	Under way or ongoing	Not going well	Not started	No longer applicable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

Since my last report to the Board (when all business plan themes were categorised as amber), there has been a change in the status of themes four and five. Further detail on themes one and four, where I have the lead, is provided in the section below.

July has been characterised by two significant anniversaries. Tricia and I attended the service of commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral to mark the 20th anniversary of the 7/7 London bombings in 2005, killing 52 innocent people and injuring hundreds of others. It was a moving event and we really appreciated being invited by the Greater London Authority.

We also marked 25 years of London TravelWatch in its current guise, including through our first podcast, featuring Tricia and me reflecting on past and potential developments. Thank you to Board members for your supportive comments on this initiative.

2 Business plan themes 1 and 4

One of the strands of activity we had anticipated under theme 1 (more seamless journeys) was to use our membership of TfL's Healthy Streets Advisory Group (HSAG) to greater effect in holding TfL to account. We confirmed in February that TfL was thinking about the future operation of the group, but little appears to have happened in the period since then. We are due to discuss this issue when we meet the new TfL engagement manager who has been given responsibility for HSAG on 17th July.

Under theme 4 (greater TfL ambition in building trust], at the May Board meeting I reported on the slow progress being made with TfL (see the table on page 1). Following earlier discussions with TfL, we had hoped to provide input to their development of a new customer care target as part of their next business plan due to be published at the end of the calendar year. We were informed the process for putting together the TfL business plan was heavily contingent on the outcome of the Government's Spending Review. Now that that is known, we will seek clarification of next steps at our meeting with TfL's Chief Customer and Strategy Officer due on 23rd July and report back to the Board meeting on the following day.

3 Stakeholder engagement

Transport for London

In May and June, Trevor and I were given detailed briefings by TfL Director of Bus Operations Lorna Murphy and fellow TfL directors on measures to improve bus journey times and customer experience more broadly:

- road traffic flows were marginally lower than immediately before Covid, but congestion had increased because released road capacity had been

prioritised, for example, for safety measures. Bus speeds had been flatlining overall, but the picture varied – speeds had increased in central London, but had decreased in inner and outer London

- TfL's plan includes 25 measures to improve bus performance, seven of which (the "BP7") are believed to be the ones which will most significantly turn the dial. These include working with boroughs to tackle roadworks and improving flows/increasing bus priority at traffic signals
- roadworks accounted for c 20-30 per cent of the increase in journey times and two-thirds of delays occurred on borough roads. The trial extension of TfL's lane rental scheme to the boroughs aimed to tackle the top 30 per cent of roadworks: nearly all boroughs had now signed up to the trial in some form or another
- migration from the existing SCOOT system to the FUSION system, covering signals at 6,400 junctions, aims to speed up the responsiveness of the traffic management system. The roll out will start with 100 junctions over the next three years to serve a range of priorities (safety in central London, bus journey times in inner London, a mix in outer London)
- real-time information is currently provided in some form at 2,700 bus stops/shelters: the ambition is to roll out to c 5,000 more by 2030. This would represent fewer than 50 per cent of the c19,000 stops but cover more than 50 per cent of bus passengers. There has been a drive to improve maintenance of and lighting at bus shelters, which has seen a significant improvement in satisfaction scores with the environment at bus shelters.

The briefings were very informative, but still left us unclear about how far the measures aimed at performance were likely to deliver the 2030 target for better bus speeds in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. We aim to factor this into our ongoing advocacy calling for improved bus journey times.

Following meetings with TfL on bus safety mentioned in my report to the May Board meeting, I wrote to the London Assembly Transport Committee Chair in June summarising my observations. In my letter, I suggested some areas for the Committee to probe further at a TfL bus safety briefing later that month for Assembly Members. The Chair acknowledged the letter as very helpful: there was limited scope at the briefing to engage on the points and we are considering how best to follow up.

In June, the Secretary of State set out the outcome of its Spending Review for Transport for London [Transport for London – Spending Review Phase 2 Outcome](#) which included greater longer-term certainty of funding for TfL through to 2029/30. Tricia and I are due to meet TfL ahead of our July Board meeting to try and understand more fully what the settlement means for TfL's priorities and will report back.

In July, Tricia and I met the Chair of the TfL Board's Safety and Security Panel, Zoë Billingham. We briefed her on the work of London TravelWatch and Zoë was interested in strengthening the interface between us and her panel.

National Rail

In June, I attended the latest quarterly meeting of the industry-led Euston Oversight Group which is the forum where initiatives to manage and improve the existing station environment are reviewed. Topics covered included customer satisfaction scores (improving, but more work needed to ensure they are truly representative); quality of Passenger Assist provision (the statistics for inbound services are relatively weaker than for outbound ones); and promoting a "one team" culture at Euston (there are plans to replace the current seven tabards with just one for all concourse staff). Work continues on the totemic issue of making best use of the full concourse screen to provide useful information to passengers.

I discussed rail reform with Transport Focus Chief Executive Alex Robertson (and subsequently with Director of Insight Alex Campbell) ahead of the Government's legislation expected later this year. Transport Focus is starting to consider what it needs to do in anticipation of it morphing into the proposed Passenger Standards Authority: we agreed to liaise in thinking about how it might carry out some of its future key roles which are likely to be of particular interest to us, for example, around consumer standard setting.

London Assembly

During June and July, we completed our regular round of catch-up meetings with the leads of the 4 policy groups on the Transport Committee. Topics covered included safety (buses specifically and roads more generally), the Spending Review settlement for London and our work to understand better Londoners' views on the priorities for street space.

Our meeting with Elly Baker AM also covered the work of the Committee: we discussed the possibility of an informal Committee/London TravelWatch meeting (potentially now in September) to complement the more formal slot late in the calendar year when we consider our proposed annual business plan. We wait to hear whether this session will go ahead.

In July, I took part in a one-session Committee inquiry into fare evasion, at which TfL and RMT also took questions from Assembly Members. The inquiry had been arranged following recent media interest in the topic and it considered TfL's strategy to reduce fare evasion, published in summary form in April. I referred to a snap poll of our digital community: a large majority of respondents felt TfL was not doing enough to reduce evasion.

4 Organisational development

The annual process of setting budgets for the Mayor and GLA will soon start again in earnest. We can expect the focus of attention to be on the value for money of the main delivery programmes: at this stage, the precise implications for the Assembly's budget (and so London TravelWatch's budget as part of that) have yet to emerge. We will continue to liaise with the GLA team ahead of preparing our business plan for 2026/27.

Further to my update to the previous Board meeting, our auditors Wheawill & Sudworth have been re-appointed. They will prepare our annual accounts with a view to securing approval by the Board at its September meeting.

We have commissioned an employment lawyer to review the format and content of London TravelWatch's standard contract of employment and staff handbook. This is driven partly by the need to reflect new statutory provisions and rights, and is an opportunity to make the existing documentation clearer and more concise. We plan to brief and seek input from interested Board members once we have working drafts to share, prior to going to consultation with London TravelWatch employees.

5 Future Board meetings

The Board is next due to take place as a Members Event on Wednesday 17th September 2025 at 1000.