LONDON
TRAVELWATCH

Minutes of Members Event
16.09.26

Venue: Europoint, 5-11 Lavington Street, London SE1 0NZ

Attendance: Tricia Hayes, Chair (TH), Richard Hebditch (RH), Eddie Lynch (EL), Lara Sonola (LS), Susan Stockwell (SS), Priya Khullar (PK)

Apologies: Tiffany Lam (TL), Shahid Mohammed (SM)

Secretariat: Michael Roberts (MR), Susan James (SJ), Sonya Dallat (SD), Alex Smith (AS), Catherine Williams (CW), Emily Bastin (EM),

Transport for London Guests: Mark Evers - Chief Customer Officer, Lorna Murphy - Director of Buses and Lauren Whitney - Engagement Officer

1. Chair's introduction, apologies, minutes and matters arising from private board meeting 15.07.26

Tricia Hayes (TH) opened the meeting and the minutes of the Public Event meeting on 15th July 2026 were approved. Actions from the previous meeting were discussed and updated and reflected in the revised action log.

2. Chair's update

- **MR's retirement:** MR shared his plans to retire at Easter next year. The Board expressed its appreciation, thanks and support and will work closely with him and the wider team to ensure a smooth transition over the next six months.
- **Board recruitment:** Recruitment for Deputy Chairs and Board Members has closed. The longlisting process is underway, with interviews scheduled for 2 November. The Chair was positive about the strength of the candidate field.
- **Rail complaints reform:** TH and PK had attended a joint workshop with Transport Focus and industry representatives in July which had highlighted that complaints handling is not currently a day-one priority for rail reform. Complaints are expected to sit primarily with individual operators, but this would raise questions about handling cross-operator and network-wide complaints. London TravelWatch and Transport Focus will revisit this in the autumn, seeking greater clarity on the approach and timescales. AI-generated complaints and AI-supported complaints handling were also discussed.
- **Devolution:** The Board noted developments in regional devolution under the current Government, including increased financial freedoms for Mayors and the potential introduction of a tourism tax in London and elsewhere. The Board will monitor differences between London and other regions, particularly ahead of the expected Devolution Bill alongside the Budget in October.

3. CEO Report

MR highlighted some key points in his report:

- **Strategic priorities:** Progress has been slower on his personal lead priorities due to his recent focus on organisational development, with more time expected to be given to these priorities over the next six months.
- **Rail Reform:** MR had met with Claire Mann at TfL and had had a positive discussion of the need to establish joint rail priorities between TfL and GBR, including better coordination of investment and improvements to shared assets.
- **Railways Bill and London TravelWatch's role**: Work continues to secure statutory consultee status for London TravelWatch under rail reform. Further discussions with Government are expected before the next stage of the Bill.
- **HR transition:** Migration to HR Inspire is underway. A payroll provider change is being considered, subject to the Civil Service pension scheme requirement of six months' notice to leave the current provider.
- **Seamless Journeys and the Street Care tool**: EL commented on the lack of public awareness of the TfL Street Care reporting tool and said it was not widely advertised to the public. MR said TfL were in the process of changing the contract with the current provider, so the LTW team would come back on this point when there was a new model introduced.

4 TFL Bus Complaints

Lorna Murphy and Mark Evers gave a slide presentation on TFL Bus Complaints**.**

- TfL explained the complaints data in greater detail and highlighted reliability, congestion, service disruption and driver interactions as key factors, with complaints increasing from around 3.5 to 4.3 per 100,000 journeys over four years.
- TfL outlined their actions including better use of the complaints data, targeted operator interventions, driver training, improved communication with customers and a move towards more proactive management of issues.
- TfL reflected that it was important to praise drivers for examples of good practice, so they were strongly supportive of commendations where things had gone well.
- EL said that he had undergone TfL's EDI training for bus drivers and had not been impressed. He felt that participants left the training without a clear understanding of their legal obligations under the Equality Act or the rights of disabled customers when accessing bus services. EL also pointed out that there were no disabled passengers or trainers there to feed in their experiences. ME said that this was certainly not the intention of the training but appreciated the feedback and said he would investigate the points raised.
- The Board discussed TfL's analysis of rising bus complaints in detail. They welcomed the detail and transparency of the action plan and would be keen to understand its impact on complaints volumes and satisfaction with complaints handling.
- They agreed to follow up with TfL to review the bus complaints statistics again in 6 months.

Actions:

- Send TfL details of EL experience/observations on TfL's EDI training for bus drivers.
- Follow up with TfL: wash up re discussion (next Customer meeting) plus review bus complaints statistics again in 6 months.

5 London TravelWatch Strategy and Business Plan

The Chair introduced the full draft of the strategy and three-year business plan which had been the product of extensive work consultation and earlier work including by Board Members. The Board reviewed progress on the new three-year strategy and business plan, discussed a proposed request for additional funding from the London Assembly, reflecting earlier discussion on organisational capacity and future priorities.

Key points:

- MR reported positive initial feedback from the Assembly Secretariat regarding the additional funding request set out in the papers – this would provide an interim post of Head of Corporate Services for a trial period alongside an additional campaigns officer to lead LTW's work on rail reform, and which would sit under AS's team.
- EL suggested building a stronger business case for this in the budget presented to the Assembly to strengthen the request for the decision-making process.
- RH said that the strategy document was generally in good shape, but also needed to include the impact of the changing climate and its effects on issues including network reliability, lack of air conditioning for bus drivers etc. Board members supported this addition.
- EL commented that safe streets (walking, wheeling, cycling) was missing from the business plan. MR reflected that most of LTW's work focused on public transport issues but agreed to review the references in the plan. PK suggested leveraging organisations who were already championing this area and partnering with them.

Actions:

- TH and MR to take on Board any further comments on the draft documentation in advance of submitting it to the Assembly for either its November or December meetings.

6. Campaigns & Advocacy Report

- AS and MR had met with Network Rail and the Access for All programme lead. The programme is under review, providing an opportunity for LTW to shape its future activities. Network Rail is also working more closely with TfL to improve step-free access across shared stations, aligning with recommendations from the London Assembly.
- **Personal security research**: The findings of the Yonder personal security research has been well received by stakeholders, including the Mayor's Task Force and Steering Group, but securing commitments from operators remains challenging. The research proposes a standardised reporting process across London's transport system for safety and security incidents, which is seen as attractive in principle but very challenging within current governance and accountability structures. AS and SD were working on a publishable version to share the findings more widely, maintain pressure for action, and help turn positive feedback into tangible outcomes.
- **Buses:** The Board agreed it would be valuable to explore how national trends in bus passenger satisfaction, and the factors driving improvements elsewhere compare with London's bus network. It was agreed that this issue should be revisited by the Board, given the potential transferability of national trends to London.
- **TfL lifts**: Following previous concerns raised by Board Members, a draft letter to TfL is being finalised to summarise discussions to date on lift availability and accessibility, acknowledge the improvements made, and set out expectations for continued progress. Significant work has been undertaken to better understand the underlying data on lift outages, including the impact of both mechanical failures and staff

availability. While the data remains complex, TfL reports improving performance, particularly in reducing outages attributable to staffing issues. Despite this progress, concerns remain that lift outages caused by staff shortages continue to occur at an unacceptable level, and questions persist regarding the long-term sustainability of maintenance and renewal funding. The letter aims to confirm a shared understanding of the current situation, establish accountability, and provide a basis for more informed challenges and scrutiny in future. A copy will be shared with Board members for information once it has been finalised.

Actions:

- Hold future Board discussion on whether national developments on buses should inform TfL's work on buses in London
- AS to send TfL lifts letter to Board members FYI once completed.

7. Communications Report

- SD reported that the latest podcast had achieved the strongest first-10-day performance to date of all the LTW podcasts.
- Previous episodes continue to attract audiences.
- SD outlined the plans for publication of the personal security research publication aligned with Hate Crime Awareness Week in October
- Value for money research publication was scheduled for November.
- Future projects would include lift reliability communications, bus consultation activity and additional podcasts.

8. Casework Report

- **Casework volume:** SJ reported that casework demand remained volatile – the most recent period had seen an increase, but this might or not be sustained. Cases were becoming more complex, placing greater pressure on staff.
- A long-term team member, Fayza Patel had resigned due to family commitments. Natasha Reed has been appointed permanently on a full-time basis, helping maintain capacity and continuity. If demand continues to grow, stricter prioritisation may be required, potentially limiting support for some customers. Capacity pressures will be added to the organisational risk register, with further discussion on mitigation measures including process improvements and prioritisation.
- **Eurostar:** High volumes of casework continue relating to delays, disruption and compensation expectations. The casework team's experience of working with Eurostar suggests that they take a narrow view of entitlement to redress beyond statutory entitlements.
- **Rail Replacement Transport:** SJ raised the issue of statutory accessibility requirements for rail replacement coaches which was limiting the supply of replacement vehicles. There is a risk that passengers could be advised not to travel where accessible vehicles are unavailable. The issue was recognised as an industry-wide challenge with significant impacts on passengers being isolated in certain areas.
- **Heathrow Growth:** SJ reported discussions from the Heathrow consumer forum on which she represents LTW. There is concern within the forum that previously proposed mitigation measures for managing transport impacts on existing users of public transport to Heathrow could be watered down despite continued growth. Engagement with Heathrow, the DfT and other stakeholders continues. Increased passenger numbers at Stansted are also being monitored. A trial of overnight Friday rail services by Greater Anglia proved popular, and there is interest in expanding the service, although no formal consultation has yet been launched.

- **AI:** The Board discussed the potential use of AI to summarise casework, identify themes, collate data, and/or identify where interventions are most successful, in order to help target future resources and priorities more effectively. It was noted that AI could have wider applications across the organisation, including policy work, consultation responses and operational processes. There was support for exploring AI opportunities more systematically, potentially through external expertise, to identify where it could improve efficiency, insight and impact across the organisation

Actions:

- Hold a workshop session on how AI might improve LTW effectiveness (all round, not just on casework).
- Add increase in casework workload and/or complexity to Risk Register.

9. Finance Report

MR introduced the finance item in SM's absence. There were two agenda items: the annual accounts for LTW and the periodic financial report.

- MR noted that the Accounts were not yet being submitted for formal approval due to external auditors having one outstanding query, once resolved the revised accounts would be circulated to the Board for approval in correspondence.
- On the in-year position, management accounts did not currently raise any cause for concern. The six-month financial review was currently underway. More detailed financial position to be presented at the next Board meeting.
- EL queried the pattern in the research spending which had seem a hump at the beginning of the financial year. MR said that this had been a function of research activity crossing the financial end year and the spend being accrued but agreed to check details and revert.
- On the in-year position, the Board noted higher HR costs, consultancy costs and legal expenditure offset by lower-than-budgeted project expenditure
- On a point of detail, the Chair noted that Chair remuneration was not pensionable.

Actions:

- MR to check references in annual accounts to Chair pension (pg.18) and year on year increase in research spending (pg. 19) and provide answers to Board queries.
- Send final version of accounts with highlighted insertion to come following resolution of outstanding point raised by auditors, for sign off by email.
- Update Board members by email on outcome of forthcoming internal half-year budget review.

10. Risk Register

Key points:

- The Board felt that overall, some of the mitigated risk scores were excessively pessimistic if the mitigation plans set out were genuinely on track. MR undertook to review the description of mitigations and the post-mitigation risk rating.
- Increasing casework demand/complexity and associated capacity pressures to be added to risk register alongside refreshed mitigations.
- CEO retirement to be reflected in the risk register and potential resourcing and resilience risks continue to be monitored.

Actions:

- Review mitigation effectiveness and associated risk scoring.

- Include new refs to high casework volumes and CEO retirement to existing risks

11. AOB

None

Next meeting: November 11th at the later time of 12.00pm